

Kilmarnock Neighbourhood Board

Note of meeting – 15 July 2025

Present

1. Fiona McKenzie (Chair)
2. Councillor Douglas Reid
3. Councillor Barry Douglas
4. Eddie Fraser
5. Lillian Jones MP
6. Craig Hume
7. Stephen McGovern

Apologies

1. Colin Blair
2. Billy Bowie
3. Lynne McNiven
4. Chris McMail
5. Richardson Grieveson

In attendance

1. Norman Gill
 2. Colin McKee
 3. Barbara McNaughton
 4. Jane Corrie
 5. Barrie McDonnell
-

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Fiona welcomed those in attendance.

Actions arising:

Not applicable.

2. Actions from previous meeting

- 2.1 Members reviewed the note of the previous meeting and agreed it is an accurate reflection of discussions.
- 2.2 Fiona and Pamela are going to visit Aberdeen Inspired and will then extend an invitation for them to come to Kilmarnock.

Actions arising:

Fiona to extend invitation to Aberdeen Inspired after visit.

3. Chair update

- 3.1 Fiona attended the Plan for Neighbourhoods event in Westminster on 10th June. The message was clear from the day that this funding is intended to drive ambition. Everyone was reminded that it is here to “explore new ways of procuring services” and is to be delivered “in partnership with local authorities, not to replicate what is already in the pipeline”. It is intended to “cut through bureaucracy” and in the words of one senior civil servant, “this is not the kind of project usually associated with central government. Friction is expected”.
- 3.2 Since then, the updated prospectus was published on 16th June and the list of pre-approved interventions is extensive. We have now been advised that this year’s £200k capacity funding cannot be used for intervention projects. Next year’s allocation is reduced to £592k—split
-

between £232k in revenue and £360k in capital—with a further £150k for capacity funding. The first major tranche of funding, the £2 million, will not be released until April 2027.

- 3.3 The revised plan will be submitted by September before the deadline of November, but we face a further 8 week wait for feedback and sign-off.
- 3.4 This means that any funded intervention projects cannot go ahead - without council support – until April 2026. The fire on King Street the previous night shows how urgently the town needs energy, hope and most of all, action.
- 3.5 Our existing strategy is viewed as gold standard and this was openly acknowledged in Westminster last month but we are in danger of being held back by process. Fiona looked forward to discussing; What more can We Make Kilmaronock deliver using the resources already allocated to the town? How as a board can we create conditions and processes which enable action? How can we respond to emerging opportunities and prove that this way of working creates visible and positive change and at pace? What more can we do together; what do we need to make it happen and how quickly can we do it.

Actions Arising:

Not applicable.

4. Update to UK Government PFN Prospectus

- 4.1 NG gave the following update:-

Two actions under Capacity Creation have been approved:-

- I. £20k towards the Christmas Lights Switch On and Paul Mathieson from EALT has been notified.
- II. £10k towards Killieween has been approved but awaiting confirmation of the event from Paul at EALT.

- 4.2 One action under Programme would be Japanese Knotweed although the approval process needs to be considered first so it would be April 2026 before any work could start. This raised a discussion around the river and the important aspects that need to be looked at such as flooding. FMcK asked the Board if they would be happy to attend Columba 1400 Leadership Programme to help create a leadership package going forward and whole Board agreed. FMcK to take forward.
- 4.3 NG ran through the key impacts, timeline and initiatives as shown in the paper. Confirmed CCTV is the only change and that all initiatives came from public consultations and are the top priorities.
- 4.4 NG outlined the three stages for each initiative to move towards implementation and this was agreed by the Board. EF asked for the stages to be appropriate to project size and to scope what had already being done. FMcK stated she is doing a mapping exercise to avoid duplication. It was noted the importance of collaboration to avoid duplication therefore it is vital to keep engaging with Pamela. The Summary will note what partnerships are involved and it is everyone's responsibility to feed in what is already being done.

Actions Arising:

Fiona will speak with Columba 1400 re leadership package.
All to make sure they are collaborating to avoid duplication.

5. Town Centre

- 5.1 The Board welcomed Jane Corrie – Head of ARA and Barrie McDonnell – Strategic Manager Roads, Network and Maintenance.
- 5.2 JC stated that Cabinet had agreed for a parking strategy to be completed. Kilmaronock has a lot of different parking zones and BMcD is developing a brief to look at future demand.
- 5.3 BMcD confirmed that resident parking is a priority and the consultant would look at everything from connectivity to the one-way system and a brief has been prepared for the consultant. As there was no existing procurement framework, a competitive tendering process will be completed shortly.
- 5.4 FMcK asked for the timeline and BMcD answered that it will be 2 – 3 months for the tender return and then a timeline would be developed with the consultant. They would consult with numerous users including businesses.
- 5.5 CH asked if there is a gold standard of parking i.e. is there a town who does parking well? What do we hope to get from the consultant, and could AI be used?
- 5.6 JC and BMcD are not convinced AI could create a suitable document and pull all the different streams together. JC is currently gathering hard data but CH is afraid the time and money spent on the consultant will still end up not being able to please everyone. BMcD also stated the importance of future proofing any strategy.
- 5.7 BD said that benchmarking is important and CMcK suggested contacting Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP) and BMcN will make the introduction to BMcD.
- 5.8 It was also noted that Angela Cox from the Ayrshire College is currently investigating parking and should be linked with BMcD.
- 5.9 EF asked for the whole of East Ayrshire to be considered within the consultant report as he is aware Kilmaronock is the only town being charged for parking.

Actions Arising:

BMcN to introduce BMcD to STP.
BMcD to link with Ayrshire College regarding parking investigations.

6. Initiative Update

- 6.1 PR Agency – Frame PR confirmed as the PR agency. They are currently talking to the Alliances and will create a plan that will be shared with the Board.
- 6.2 Fund Manager – this is paused while approval is sought from MHCLG (UK Gov).
- 6.3 Fair Festival – NG ran through the points provided on the Board paper. Lessons have been learnt from this year especially around vetting of stall holders and praise was given to the security team and Keith Stewart from EAC. Alan Foster also received recognition for his event management and the business relationships he has been building. CH had a business stall at the event and said they received positive feedback and would look to do something bigger next

year if possible. FMcK met people that have previously used Centrestage and could see that family memories were being made. She would like to change next year's event slightly to help families create even more special memories and EF/CH would like to see events happening throughout the year and referred to past events they have attended such as a colour run. Board agreed that events throughout the year would be good to have.

- 6.4 Town Centre radios – number of users is increasing. EF invited the Board to visit the Risk Management Centre based at EAC HQ and the Board were delighted to accept.
- 6.5 Town Centre – CH referred to numerous consultations found by Councillor Graham Boyd that were never used and feels positive being part of the Board where everyone is starting to come together strategically. BD warned of consultation fatigue, the advantage of doing consultations differently and really listening to people. Discussion around the Howard Park and what could be done there as it is such a big space with empty buildings. CMcK is looking at possible funding opportunities but it would need to be a general main fund as there is nothing bespoke but would suggest maximising what is already there. Board agreed that people want a space they can utilise such as a bandstand type structure and could be something quirky as demonstrated by The Corner in Darvel.

Actions Arising:

EF will arrange with the RMC for a Board visit.

7. Values Based Leadership (Columba 1400)

- 7.1 Board agreed FMcK to take forward as noted above in point 4.

Actions Arising:

Fiona to take forward.

8. Decisions Required

Actions Arising:

Not applicable.

9. Any other competent business

- 9.1 The next Kilmarnock Business Association meeting will be on Tuesday, 22 July at 5.30pm at Centrestage and all are welcome to attend.

Actions Arising:

Not applicable.

10. Date of next meeting

- 10.1 Tuesday 2 September at 3pm – 5pm at Centrestage.

Further information

Visit the [East Ayrshire Council: Kilmarnock Neighbourhood Board](#) webpages.