

Kilmarnock Neighbourhood Board

Note of meeting – 28 May 2025

Present

1. Fiona McKenzie (Chair)
2. Lillian Jones MP
3. Councillor Elaine Cowan
4. Councillor Graham Boyd
5. Colin Blair
6. Eddie Fraser
7. Graeme Gallie
8. Jennifer Anderson
9. Craig Hume
10. Lynne McNiven
11. Chris McMail

Apologies

1. Angela Cox
2. David Cameron
3. Councillor Douglas Reid
4. Councillor Barry Douglas

In attendance

1. Norman Gill
2. David McDowall
3. Pamela Clifford
4. Barbara McNaughton

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Fiona welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made. Fiona asked everyone to note the name change to Kilmarnock Neighbourhood Board.

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.

Actions Arising:

Not applicable.

3. Chair update

- 3.1 Fiona started by thanking everyone for their time, energy and advice since the last meeting. There has been a huge amount of activity taking place both visible and behind the scenes on limited resources but has been sustained thanks to extraordinary in-kind volunteer support.
- 3.2 Community Alliance Planning have all been progressing with colleagues at East Ayrshire Leisure Trust and are now in the final stages of drafting action plans with expectation of publishing in September.

- 3.3 Each alliance will receive an initial phase of Neighbourhood funding to deliver a shared priority, and it is hoped ambassadors across each community will be identified to shape and deliver work on the ground.
- 3.4 Conversations with grassroots business owners have taken place and whilst there is cynicism, we must harness their passion, insight and optimism.
- 3.5 The return required to UK Government was completed by 22 April 2025 and the content accepted, thanks to Karen and Norman for their outstanding work to ensure the submission to UK Government.
- 3.6 MP Alex Norris, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Building Safety, Fire and Local Growth which includes the Neighbourhood Board portfolio visited on 7 May 2025. Community representatives from Alliances presented to the Minister and the young people were particularly impressive. Thanks to John Donaldson for speaking about town centre businesses and offering practical solutions and John expressed his thanks to Pamela Clifford. Civil servants in attendance reinforced the message that Kilmarnock's approach is being seen as "gold standard".
- 3.7 The creative brief for the Marketing and Communications agency is now live with four strong applications received and Fiona extended her thanks to Lesley McLean and Jack Hunter from East Ayrshire Council to help move things quickly. The Fund Manager brief is expected to go live soon and in parallel, Fiona and Norman are looking to establish a community newspaper for the town and updates will be given at the next meeting.
- 3.8 The UK Government's summary of powers available to the Board has been received and David will update further under 'Any other competent business.' This allows for the original Long-Term Plan to be revisited which was submitted last August and hope to see movement on this very soon.
- 3.9 On 10 June 2025, Fiona will attend a meeting in Westminster for Neighbourhood Board Chairs. If you have any questions, you would like raised at that forum, please pass them to Fiona to take forward.
- 3.10 Kilmarnock Fair Festival is taking place at the Howard Park on Saturday 28 June 2025. Credit to Alan Foster for coordinating this family fun celebration. This will provide an opportunity to update on the progress of WMK, gather new volunteers and introduce the new communications partner to the town. The marketing campaign goes live on Monday 2 June 2025 and will be supported by Go Radio.
- 3.11 Fiona reiterated to the Minister that Kilmarnock had experienced many unfulfilled expectations and disappointments over the years. £200,000 is not a large sum in the scale of public and private sector investment but if used well, creatively, collaboratively and strategically, it can act as a powerful catalyst to connect organisations, reimagine public spaces, ignite new opportunities and fill the critical gaps in the system. The emerging model for WMK and the opportunities arising from it offers a real chance for community led regeneration where change is driven locally, supported by local government, and grounded in trust and accountability. Fiona stated she is grateful to everyone for their continued support, challenge and advice.

Actions Arising:

- All to consider any questions for Fiona to take to Westminster.

4. Initiative update

- 4.1 NG introduced the Initiative Update and noted a query from ARA on the repainting of lampposts and street furniture. A tender process is still to be done, and ARA will be informed of any future decisions.
- 4.2 Town Centre - PC showed images of the Foregate and St Marnock Square businesses and the potential to do a shop front regeneration scheme. So far, uncosted and further thought to be given to budgets and a procurement model will need to be considered. CB is concerned about filling empty units and PC agreed that a database of derelict and vacant buildings is required. All agreed it is a balancing act of incentives and income generation to attract new business to the town. Aberdeen Inspired was mentioned as having a successful model and FMcK offered to invite them to come to a future meeting to set out their project proposals.
- 4.3 Discussion around parking took place and it was noted that Ayr is trialling two hours free parking, also Foregate traders have asked for quick turnaround spaces after MSCP demolition. LJ suggested a comprehensive car parking strategy is required that will work for residents and businesses. EF confirmed that a Strategic Review is currently being undertaken by ARA.
- 4.4 PC confirmed that the Kilmarnock Task Force will look at workstreams and main actions. Town centre living requires further investigation and Blair Millar, Head of Housing is keen to support and present to the group.
- 4.5 Discussion around Japanese Knotweed and Buddleia. GB keen for the riverbed to be tackled and has had discussions with Ayrshire Rivers Trust who are a charity and quoted £30,714 to carry out removal over three years. A City and Guilds three-day training course is available for anyone who would like to train on correct removal treatments. All agreed to use the month of June to source possible other funding and look at overall spend and bring back to the group in July for a decision. Noted that Japanese Knotweed requires to be tackled by late July/early August and annually.
- 4.3 PR Agency - Four strong applications received but due to strict procurement guidelines NG unable to give further information at this point. A meeting will take place a week today with an appointment made shortly after.
- 4.4 Fund Manager - Invitation to tender for Fund Management Services will be made within the next few days. NG stated that this is an organisation and not a post that will be used to bring in money and manage funds.
- 4.5 Fair Festival - Organisation is going well with safety paramount due to recent global hostile vehicle tragedies at events. CMcM asked if there was a charity partner and NG confirmed that there isn't at this time, but all agreed that would be a good idea. Confirmed this is an alcohol-free event. CB suggested that a debrief should be done after the event and NG agreed.
- 4.6 Town Radios - NG confirmed radios are ready to go and an additional 20/25 radios are available on top of current units. Board agreed to spend on radios. Queries around Police attendance and NG confirmed that the Police control room has a radio, but attendance would depend on The THRIVE assessment (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, and Engagement) and the resources available at that time. GG also confirmed that the radios are more about prevention and building confidence with smaller retailers so they know they are

not alone and can radio for assistance. LJ asked if more promotion could be done at stores for example stickers?

Actions Arising:

Fiona McKenzie will speak with Aberdeen Inspired and ask if they can attend a future meeting.

5. Meeting dates

Every six weeks on Tuesdays from 3pm to 5pm on:

- 15 July 2025
- 2 September 2025
- 21 October 2025
- 9 December 2025

Actions Arising:

Not applicable

6. Any other competent business

- 6.1 DMcD confirmed the UK Government's summary of Scottish powers is now available as guidance for the Board while noting that these powers are already being used: [UK Government: Plan for Neighbourhoods: List of powers – Scotland](#).
- 6.2 CB raised the issue of car parking, and a discussion took place around possible solutions. CB advocated for the two hours free parking that is currently being piloted in Ayr. GB has a request from Foregate traders to have quick turnaround spaces at Foregate Square and that traffic modelling is currently taking place to look at making part of the one-way system into two-way as part of Cultural Kilmarnock. EC asked for more consideration for pedestrians than vehicular traffic. A review of parking is currently underway and DMcD will ask Barrie McDonnell from ARA to link with the Kilmarnock Business Association at the Kilmarnock Strategic Group meeting.
- 6.3 LJ wanted to note that the Minister appreciated the visit to Kilmarnock and was impressed.
- 6.4 NG has a request from Paul Mathieson at East Ayrshire Leisure Trust for funding for the Christmas Lights Switch On as they are £20,000 short of funds. To be discussed at the events workstream along with Killiween and other town centre events to provide a full picture of partnership funding and events.

Actions Arising:

NG to circulate summary of powers link with notes of meeting
DMcD will ask Barrie McDonnell to link with KBA

7. Date of next meeting

- 7.1 Tuesday 15 July 2025, from 3pm to 5pm at Centrestage.

Further information

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