

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held Tuesday 16th July 2019

Chairman: Cllr. L Swindlehurst

Present: Cllrs: Benefer, Cawley, Coleman, Emery, Johnson, Molson, Ottewell, M.Swindlehurst, Wales & Wood

Apologies: Cllr. Worthington

4 members of the public were present

18. **Minutes of the Meeting** held 18th June were received for Chairman's signature.

19. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and consideration for the granting of Dispensations** Cllr. Johnson declared an interest in 21(a).

20. **Monthly reports/updates:**

- i) Allotments – The recommendations from the police report had been discussed at the Allotments meeting, which included planting prickly shrubs in the gaps around the site perimeters. It was resolved to donate £110.00 to Leek and District Show.
- ii) Events – A meeting will be held tomorrow evening for town event organisers. New bunting has been ordered and will be erected next week. A comment was made regarding climate change and the use of plastic bunting. It was stated that it will be stored correctly and used for several years. Unfortunately, Films in the Park will not take place as the main sponsor has had to withdraw financial support.
- iii) Friends of the Nicholson War Memorial – The report from Cllr. Benefer was received. The next meeting will take place on 30th July at 6.30pm and the next flag flying service will be held on 31st July. Cllr. Benefer will meet with Leek Royal British Legion to discuss Remembrance Sunday. The dates and times of the Remembrance services and flag flying days will be circulated to councillors and included on the website. A request for a guided tour has been received from Mayfield Heritage Group.
- iv) Neighbourhood Plan – It was reported that three bids have been received to produce the neighbourhood plan, which will be funded from the Locality grant. Details will be sent to councillors in the next few weeks.
- v) Leek Moorlands Hospital – It was reported that North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has been found to be inadequate and the town council should consider a motion of No Confidence in the organisation. Councillors comments included:

If the CCG was a school or care home they would be put into special measures.
The town council's Health Committee should be reconvened.
If they are inadequate their consultation is unjustified.
The consultation was biased and included leading questions.
There are 195 CCGs nationwide and 11 have been assessed as inadequate.
They are an unelected body.

It was resolved to reconvene the town council's health committee and a vote of no confidence was given in North Staffordshire CCG. The council would write to NHS England, the CCG and the MP.
- vi) Twinning – Around 14 people will travel from Leek to Este for Eurofest on 26th September. The twinning meetings will be held in the Dove Room on the second Wednesday in the month. The district council will also allow the council chamber to be used for visitors from Este.
- vii) Russell Street land– A request for a written agreement regarding landscaping, has been made to Staffordshire County Council detailing what is allowed and not allowed.

- viii) Climate Change – Pete Callahan who works in a local café in Leek, spoke about the need for people to change their takeaway coffee drinking habits and move towards reusable cups. 16 cafes in Leek offer takeaway drinks. Good example of schemes nationally include Shrewsbury and York University. The branding for reusable cups needs to be established and the project may require some funding.

Cllr. Cawley's Climate Change report was received, which proposed the town council declare a climate emergency. Councillors comments included:

The council has had insufficient time to consider the report.

418 local authorities have passed resolutions, of which 133 are parish and town councils.

We should take the lead from SMDC who have set up a Climate Change working group.

The ideas are for a higher authority and would be a burden on the town council.

We should declare a climate emergency and discuss Cllr. Cawley's report at a later meeting.

We are in a climate emergency.

We have the opportunity to lead, educate and inspire.

It was resolved that the town council supports Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in declaring a climate emergency. Cllr. Cawley's report will be discussed in September.

21. **Finance/Audit**

- a) **Payment of Accounts** In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 5 (150), the following were accepted for payment.
- b) **Financial Statement** The Income and Expenditure Statement for three months to 30th June 2019 was received.
- c) **Grant Application Policy** The draft terms of reference were approved. The groups who had recently applied for a grant would be notified and the policy would be added to the website.

22. **Town Council website** – Tilly Griffiths will be helping to update and refresh the town council website. The district council's Visit Leek website could also be used. Cllr Ottewell is looking at all the Leek websites and at new government compliance for local authority websites, which needs to be implemented by the autumn.

23. **Leek bus station toilets** It was stated that the toilets at Leek bus station are in an appalling condition. The district council has plans to refurbish them in the autumn.

24. **Correspondence**

- i) **Leek and District Civic Society** – The correspondence from Leek and District Civic Society was received, regarding improving the appearance of the roundabout by the entrance to Churnet Park, Macclesfield Road. Councillors made the following comments:

The roundabout is the responsibility of Staffordshire County Council

Sainsbury's should pay for any improvements.

We should not accept responsibility to maintain it.

Clarification would be sought from Leek and District Civic Society.

- ii) **Staffordshire County Council (SCC) - Draft Statement of Community Involvement**
The link to the document would be circulated. Any comments to be made by 24th July 2019.

25. **To receive items for information** To report matters for information not on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas.

- i) **Benches** It was reported that 2 concrete benches in Market Street and benches opposite the Retreat have been vandalised.
The town council owns around 40 benches and the district council 30 benches.
A couple of years ago, the district council asked the town council to take over the maintenance of their benches, but progress stopped when the town council requested additional funding for maintenance. Cllr. Johnson will pursue this with the district council.

ii) **Market stalls** The storage area for the gazebos is unsuitable due to the damp conditions. The district council did offer the town council the Country Stores near to Fowlchurch depot but there were maintenance issues. Comments made included:

One priority of the town council is to improve the look of the town.

The district council need to pass on their maintenance budgets.

The precept is low compared to Biddulph and Cheadle town councils– although they provide additional services.

iii) **Flags** A few of the Union flags in St Edward Street are upside down.

Chairman.....

Date.....