

# Leek Town Council



## Annual Report 2019-20

*Leek Town Mayor, Cllr. Sue Coleman*

It has been a privilege to serve as Leek Town Mayor and my term of office has given me a great insight into Leek and the surrounding towns. There have been many highlights, including my Civic Service at St Edward's Church, the trip to the beautiful town of Este for Eurofest, the Christmas Lights event, the wonderful concerts and the opening of businesses, such as Mo's Barbers and Polka Dot Travel. Although the Mayoral year has been curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, I believe that the people of Leek's resilience and strong sense of community will help us to get through this difficult time.

I would especially like to thank Cllr. Stephen Wales, who has been a very supportive Deputy Mayor and will thrive as Mayor over the coming year and Leek Town Crier, Bill Lomas, who is a great asset to the town.



### EVENTS COMMITTEE

In May 2019 the committee, made up of councillors and volunteers, staged a Country and Western event with live music and line dancing in Sparrow Park. Party in the Park last year, unfortunately, had to be cancelled due to bad weather and this year it was cancelled due to coronavirus. The Events committee may stage one later in the year, but this will depend on government regulations. Sadly, the event planned for 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020 to celebrate VE Day 75 also had to be cancelled due to coronavirus.

Last year's Christmas lights switch on event was again a great success and attended by many thousands. The event started with a parade through the town centre led by the Mayor and Santa and other attractions included the popular Totally Locally market, John Collins' funfair and community groups fundraising. On stage entertainment was provided by Moorlands Radio and fantastic local band Sound Party.

## **ALLOTMENTS**

Leek Town Council is responsible for 235 full plots and 50 half-plots spread over seven sites. There is still a growing demand for allotments with 60 people on the waiting list. The allotments have proved especially popular during lockdown as government restrictions allowed allotment sites to remain open.

In August, the annual allotment competition organised by Leek Allotment Holders & Gardeners' Association took place at St Paul's Community Centre, Novi Lane.

Winners each received certificates and a discount on their annual rent.

The Association was also successful in obtaining a grant of £1,650.75 from the People Power Fund and this will be used to improve security measures including CCTV and fencing.

The rent this year increased to £35.00 for a full plot and £17.50 for a half plot, which was the first rental increase in 6 years.

## **FRIENDS OF THE NICHOLSON WAR MEMORIAL**

In November repairs were carried out to the four interior clock faces to stop the water ingress. The repointing of the flagstones around the war memorial will be carried out in 2020 and a condition survey has recently been undertaken for the Monument and Ball Haye Green war memorial. This will establish if any structural repairs will be needed.

From April to September in 2019, the free guided tours took place on the first Sunday from 1.00pm to 3.00pm and third Saturday from 11.00am to 1.00pm. Between twenty to forty visitors attend each tour and additional tours were arranged for community groups. The tours for 2020 have had to be cancelled due to coronavirus.

On 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020, to commemorate VE Day 75 Leek Town Mayor, Cllr. Sue Coleman and Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Stephen Wales laid wreaths at the Monument, Ball Haye Green, St Edward's Church and Leekbrook war memorials. The flag flying services at the Monument this year are currently suspended.

Further information about the Nicholson War Memorial and the Friends group may be found at: [www.nicholsonmemorial.org.uk](http://www.nicholsonmemorial.org.uk)

## **LEEK TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE**

For a new council set on the principles of openness and interaction with the community, an immediate task was to revamp the council's website. Ideas were collated and a young student Tilly Griffiths, was invited to assist in drawing up a specification for a more interactive website to support the new council's objectives.

Since going live in January, there has been a steady increase in residents using the website, ranging from the availability of allotments and how to apply for community grants. We are also seeing a growing number of applications for the monthly Town Council Newsletter by email. To register go to: Leek Update Newsletter under the 'YOUR LEEK' tab at [www.leektowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.leektowncouncil.gov.uk)

## **GRANTS**

£18,400 was donated to the following organisations: Leek Citizens Advice Bureau, Support Staffordshire, Leek Sports Council. Leek Arts Festival, Leek Blues & Americana, Home-Start, Brough Park Running Club, Douglas Macmillan Hospice, Moorlands Voluntary & Community Transport, Leek Allotment & Gardeners, Leek Twinning and Be You Crew.

## **FINANCE**

Leek Town Council's element of the Council Tax in 2019/20 was £150,550 representing £23.24 per annum for a Band D property. The Council Tax in 2020/21 has increased to £181,284, which represents £27.92 or 9 pence per week (20.14%). This will enable the town council to employ a part-time administrative assistant, stage additional community events and establish an Initiative Fund.

## **COUNCILLORS**

Leek Town Council has twelve councillors, who were elected in May 2019 to represent one of the six wards in the town and they have a four-year term of office.

### **Leek North**

Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst  
Cllr. Ben Benefer

### **Leek South**

Cllr. Sue Coleman  
Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst

### **Leek East**

Cllr. Brian Johnson  
Cllr. Pamela Wood

### **Leek West**

Cllr. Ben Emery  
Cllr. Bill Cawley

### **Leekbrook**

Cllr. Mike Ottewell  
Cllr. Roy Molson

### **Birchall**

Cllr. Mike Worthington  
Cllr. Stephen Wales

The Town Council usually meets in the Council Chamber at Moorlands House, Stockwell Street, Leek at 7.00pm. Currently, due to coronavirus, face to face meetings are suspended and the Council is meeting remotely.

The next remote meeting will be on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 7.00pm and residents of Leek are welcome to attend and raise questions relevant to Leek Town Council.

**Leek Town Council  
Financial Statement for 12 months to 31 March 2020**

	Income £		Expenditure £
Balance b/fwd	46,061	Staff/Office/Admin/Storage	72,718
Allotment rent	9,030	Allotments	6,287
Precept/grant	150,550	Grants	15,400
Vat	11,776	Vat	14,168
Events/Christmas Monument	4,065	Events	3,050
SMDC	5,000	Christmas	36,309
Gazebo hire	2,573	Bank House	4,214
Sundry	1,575	War Memorials	2,870
Bank House	8,312	Neighbourhood Plan	4,860
Civic Service	1,799	Mayor/Deputy Allowance	2,900
		Street lights	2,137
		Ball Haye Green	617
		Summer flowers	2,669
		Gazebos	3,492
		Insurance	3,255
		Elections recharge	4,936
		Audit	950
		Flags and bunting	3,796
		Civic Service	1,799
		Sundry	3,127
<b>Total</b>	<b>240,741</b>		<b>189,554</b>
<b>Cheques unpresented</b>	<b>5,821</b>	<b>Bank accounts</b>	<b>57,008</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>246,562</b>		<b>246,562</b>