

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held
on Tuesday 15th September 2020

Chairman: Cllr. Cawley

Present: Cllrs: Benefer, Coleman, Emery, Johnson, Molson, Wales, Wood & Worthington

Apologies: Cllrs. Ottewell, L. Swindlehurst & M. Swindlehurst

Three members of the public were present.

21. Minutes of the General Purposes Meeting held 21st July were received for Chairman's signature.

No public participation session

22. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and consideration for the granting of Dispensations None.

23. Monthly reports/updates:

- i) Mayor's Report – Cllr. Wales reported that he had attended two 100th birthdays – Norman Corden, who has, unfortunately, recently passed away and Lily Birch.
Leek Town Crier, Bill Lomas has promoted two new shop openings: Dreamcatcher in Getliffe's Yard and Cuckoo in Sheep Market.
Cllr. Wales has discussed the barriers on Derby Street with Cllr. Ralphs and Cllr. Atkins. As the barriers are not linked, they are often not in the right position or on the floor.
Councillors comments included:
- The barriers should not be there, as we should be encouraging people to come into town and park. Staffordshire County Council is responsible for the barriers.
The barriers need to be linked and weighted down properly.
The plastic barriers look unsightly.
The government gave money for high street improvements that encourages social distancing.
The district council did not display the free parking in August notices correctly, which made them difficult for the public to see.
The new opening hours of 10.00am to 4.00pm for the toilets on the bus station are inadequate. Cllr. Johnson will look into this.
- ii) Allotments – Cllr. Coleman – The track repairs and replacement fencing on Beggars Lane have been completed. It was stated that some authorities near to Leek are charging £100.00 per annum for an allotment and this would perhaps lead to better maintained allotments.
Councillors made the following comments:
Leek Town Council's rent is reasonable and we do not live in an affluent area.
Other authorities charge more but provide additional services, for example, toilets.
The expenditure on allotments usually matches the income, so ratepayers are unaffected.
- iii) Events – Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst's report was received.
Remembrance - Cllr. Worthington reported that there will be no poppy sellers, school boxes or house to house collections this year.
Cllr. Molson and Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst have produced a risk assessment for Remembrance Sunday and they are regularly reviewing government guidelines. A church service is being planned, but it is not certain that a parade will take place. An application for road closures has also been submitted.
- iv) Friends of the Nicholson War Memorial – Cllr. Benefer.
It was noted that the repointing of the paving stones has been completed.
Cllr. Benefer was thanked for laying a wreath, on behalf of the Mayor, at a short service led by Leek RBL to commemorate Battle of Britain Day.
- v) Climate Change – Cllr. Cawley – A few councillors had held a site visit at Brough Park with SMDC to discuss potential rewilding areas. It was stated that the path at Brough Park Fields needs renewing and benches are needed. The signage in Brough Park also needs to be improved.

24. **Finance/Audit**

- a) **Payment of Accounts** In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 5 (150), the following were accepted for payment. The total on the schedule of payments is £15,852.71.
It was stated that the payment to Nixon and Reeves for repairs to Bank House was made from a lottery grant.
There has been a lot of positive feedback regarding the repainting of the cockerel benches.
The use of pesticides for controlling weeds needs to be discussed.
- b) **Financial Statement** The financial statement for the 4 months to 31st July 2020 was received.
- c) **Internal Audit Recommendation**—It was noted that the fidelity insurance cover has been increased to £135,000, at no additional cost.

25. **Office Renovation** – It was noted that the office has now been decorated, the carpets will be cleaned for £122.00 and old office furniture will be removed.
Opaque film has been fitted on the lower half of the windows, which will improve privacy and reduce glare.
A strike lock needs to be fitted to complete the intercom system.

26. **SMDC – Dog Control Orders** – The correspondence regarding the replacement of Dog Control Orders with Public Spaces Protection Orders was received. It is hoped that the new orders will be as effective.

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

- i) It was stated that, in the near future, Leek Town Council would like to return to holding meetings in the council chamber. The district council is currently looking at holding Scrutiny meetings in the council chamber.
- ii) Cllr. Wood reported that the Save Leek Hospital group has relaunched as Leek Health Campaign Group and their current focus is to reinstate the minor injuries unit at Leek Moorlands Hospital. The group is also lobbying to save the mental health services at Kniveden, which provide art and woodwork sessions run by occupational therapists. The service is under threat as Staffordshire County Council wants to sell the land.
This will be included as a regular agenda item.
- iii) Leek Twinning – It will probably be impractical for the American Veterans Association (Italy) to take part in this year’s Remembrance Sunday commemoration, but they will hopefully participate next year.

28. **Exclusion of the Public** - The Chairman moved: “That in accordance with section 19 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business next to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the Meeting”.

29. **Confidential**
Bank House was discussed.

Chairman..... Date.....