

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held
on Tuesday 19th January 2021

Chair: Cllr. L. Swindlehurst

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

Apologies: Cllr. Worthington

Two members of the public in attendance.

49. **Minutes of the General Purposes Meeting** held 17th November were received for Chairman's signature.
50. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and consideration for the granting of Dispensations** Cllr. Benefer declared an interest in 51(i) and Cllr. Johnson an interest in 52(a).
51. **Monthly reports/updates:**
- i) Allotments – The vacant allotments are now being offered to people on the waiting list. To improve security, the tenants on Cheadle Road have requested a gate at the top of the site. This will be discussed at next week's allotments meeting.
 - ii) Events – The benefit and costs would be obtained regarding additional Christmas lights and bunting. Due to Covid and the vaccine rollout, Party in the Park (Sunday 27th June 2021) may have to be modified or postponed.
Platinum Jubilee event (2-5th June 2022) – a working group would be set up to plan the event and it will involve a range of community groups.
 - iii) Friends of the Nicholson War Memorial – It was agreed in principle that this committee should incorporate all of Leek's war memorials and be renamed the War Memorials Committee. Terms of Reference would be submitted to Council for approval.
The centenary dates of the war memorials are: St Edward's - 6th March 2022, Ball Haye Green – 5th November 2022, the Nicholson War Memorial – 20th August 2025.
Leekbrook War Memorial will be tidied up.
 - iv) Climate Change – Thirty- five pieces of land in Leek have been identified as potential rewilding sites. Cllr. Joe Porter (*SMDC Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity*) will give a progress report at the Council's February meeting.
 - v) Leek Health Campaign – The group had written to SMDC's Health Scrutiny Panel regarding the re-opening of the Minor Injuries Unit and were disappointed that their concerns had not been raised. Kniveden is due to re-open after the current lockdown.
Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst would be attending a meeting regarding the progress of the local vaccine rollout and would provide an update to councillors.
 - vi) Russell Street – Design advice and quotes are being obtained, which will be presented to Council. The original specification may be changed due to the noise level in the area.
 - vii) Neighbourhood Plan – The Planning Support Proposal from the consultants was approved, on the condition that this would take the Plan to the Referendum stage. This would cost £9,450, which would be offset by a Locality grant, so that Leek Town Council's contribution would be £2,300.
52. **Finance/Audit**
- a) **Payment of Accounts** In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 5 (150), the following were accepted for payment – total £47,086.35
 - b) **Financial Statement** The Financial Statement and Financial Report for the 9 months to 31st December 2020 were received.

c) Grant Applications:

- i) It was resolved to make a donation to Leek and District Sports Council for £1,000. The 2020/21 grant had not been paid due to Covid. Information and accounts to 31st March 2020 were received. Councillors comments included the following:

Sporting groups continue to have outgoings such as rent and maintenance.

A protocol is needed for grants.

The organisation donates to groups in Leek and some villages in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

- ii) It was resolved to make a donation of £200 to Moorlands Voluntary and Community Transport. The application and accounts to 31st March 2020 were received.

- 53. **Voluntary Social Media Editor**– It was agreed to appoint Cllr. Ottewell as the voluntary Social Media Editor. Councillors comments included the following:

Thanks were given to Cllr. Ottewell and Cllr. Wales for the parameters of the role.

The Council’s Facebook page is now very active.

If a councillor is unable to fulfil the role, it would form part of the administrative assistant’s role.

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

- i) Some of the assets in the town centre belonging to Staffordshire County Council (SCC) and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) are not being maintained, e.g. signage, lampposts, the planting and seating area in Sparrow Park, faded banners on lampposts, the back of the Trestle market.

Councillors comments included the following:

We need to engage with SMDC and SCC to determine who is responsible for the assets.

The town needs to be bright and welcoming.

There is no evidence of a maintenance programme.

Part of it results from austerity.

- 55. **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”.

- 56. **Confidential** - Bank House was discussed.

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