

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held
Tuesday 16th February 2021

Chair: Cllr. L. Swindlehurst

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

Apologies: Cllr. Benefer

Three members of the public were in attendance.

57. Minutes of the General Purposes Meeting held 19th January were received for Chairman's signature.

58. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and consideration for the granting of Dispensations

59. Matter Arising – Cllr. Emery reported that the Chairman of Leek and District Sports Council has stated the annual grant from the town council is donated mainly to clubs in Leek.

60. Monthly reports/updates:

- i) Allotments – No report.
- ii) Events – The report was received.
- iii) Friends of the Nicholson War Memorial – It was resolved that a War Memorials Committee would be established and the responsibilities would include the management and maintenance of the Nicholson War Memorial, Ball Haye Green War Memorial and Leekbrook War Memorial.
The committee would also liaise with the Vicar of St Edward's parish church on the preservation of its war memorial.
- iv) Climate Change – A report will be made at the next meeting.
- v) Leek Health Campaign – The group's concerns regarding SMDC's Health Scrutiny Panel have been referred to the Chief Executive.
- vi) Leek Twinning – No report.
- vii) Russell Street – The design for Russell Street will need to be approved by SMDC and SCC, before it goes out to tender. Advice has been obtained regarding the planting.
- viii) Neighbourhood Plan – A comment was made from the public regarding the inclusion of climate change issues.

61. Finance/Audit

- a) **Payment of Accounts** In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 5 (150), the following were accepted for payment and the total is £22,992.55.
- b) **Financial Statement** The Financial Statement and Financial Report for the 10 months to 31st January 2021 were received.
- c) **Risk Assessment 2021/22** - The town council's financial risk assessment was reviewed. It was stated the main changes from 2020/21 related to Covid; contracts would also now include an end date as recommended by the internal auditor.
- d) **Internal Financial Controls** The Internal Financial Controls were reviewed and it was resolved no changes were necessary.

- e) **Water Plus** – It was resolved to set up a direct debit for Water Plus, regarding water usage on allotment sites and the office. The quarterly charge for the office is approximately £22.00 and £250.00 for the allotments.
- f) **Kissing Seat on Church Street** – It was resolved to paint the bench black and gold for £150.00. The 2 notice boards on Derby Street, which have now been designated as the responsibility of the town council, would also be painted black and gold. Councillors made the following comments:

The money for the bench had originally been raised by public subscription, to commemorate Colin Ralphs, who was a well known Leek character.

It has not been painted for years and the town council should adopt it.

We should be cautious, as it is public money and we need to obtain ownership.

Cllr. Emery is working with Dave Swarbrook to paint the nearby phone box and install a defibrillator.

Funds have been raised for an additional 4 defibrillators and more are needed at sports venues, for example, Birchall.

62. Friends of Brough Park – It was reported that it was unlikely summer concerts would take place this year. The group has made a donation to buy a piece of playground equipment for the new playground.

63. SMDC's Assets – Information from Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst was received regarding the condition of street furniture, railings and signage and it was resolved to write to the Chief Executive of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council with the following request:

This council calls on SMDC to work with town councillors in a collegiate and positive manner, in order to bring up to standard, and continue to maintain, the town centre assets such as benches, lamps, railings etc. Leek Town Council believes that this investment in the improvement and enhancement of Leek's town centre will be a key element in attracting visitors and residents into the centre, supporting local businesses, and the provision of associated employment opportunities, as we move forward from lockdown.

Councillors comments included:

Maintenance of benches, bollards, railings and the Market Place lighting column has been neglected and it would not cost a lot.

The assets in Market Place and Sparrow Park should be a priority.

Some of the maintenance has been contracted out to Derbyshire County Council.

Cllr. Worthington would ensure Staffordshire County Council is made aware of any neglected assets they have responsibility for.

64. Correspondence:

- i) **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council** – It was noted that Parking Matters are working on the district council's Car Parking Strategy. An online survey regarding improvements, tariffs and payment options, is available at: <https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/article/505/Parking>, which needs to be completed by 28th February 2021. Cllr. Wales and Cllr. Molson will attend a meeting with SMDC and other stakeholders. Councillors comments included:
The signs directing visitors to the car parks need to be improved.
Overnight parking for motor homes at California car park would be useful.
SMDC employees could use California car park and release a car park for public use.
- ii) **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council** – The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) regarding the proposed introduction of a new PSPO in Leek was received and accepted.

65. Public Participation Session – The guidelines regarding public participation in town council meetings were considered. It was resolved to accept them, but to delete: "Your request to speak must be in connection with a matter that Leek Town Council has responsibility for."

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

- i) **Office notice board** – It was resolved to purchase an exterior office notice board for £386.00.

67. 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”.

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

Chairman.....

Date.....