

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL Minutes of the Annual Meeting held Tuesday 16th May 2023

Chair: Cllr. Bill Cawley

Present: Cllrs: Lyn Swindlehurst, Matt Swindlehurst, Derek Hilyer, Dee Young, Susan Webster, Stephen Wales, Keith Hoptroff, Paul Powner, Kate Nicholls & Barry Birch

Apologies: Cllr. Mike Worthington – conflicting meeting at Cheddleton Parish Council

13 members of the public were in attendance. Minutes taken by Town Clerk Mrs. Denise Wheat

1. Election of Mayor

Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst was nominated and duly elected as Mayor until the next AGM in May 2024. The Mayor received the Chain of Office and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Proposed Cllr. Cawley – Seconded Cllr. Birch - Motion Carried

2. Appointment of Deputy Mayor

Cllr. Barry Birch was nominated and duly elected as Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor received the Chain of Office and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Proposed Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Bill Cawley – Motion Carried

3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2022 were approved as a correct record, and the Financial Statement for the 12 months ending 31st March 2023 were received.

Proposed Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst – Cllr. Bill Cawley – Motion Carried

4. Mayor returned thanks for his election: Cllr. Swindlehurst thanked the councillors for his election and welcomed the new council to the Chamber:

Leek is a small council, but makes a big impact, He mentioned all the effort that councillors had put in to make all the events and festivals happen in the town as we have recovered from the effects of Covid. Looking forward, the UK Shared Prosperity Funding is now being rolled out and there will be opportunities coming through which need careful planning to make the best use of the grants available. Leek is very fortunate because of the hard work of businesses, community groups and volunteers. The mayor also thanked the support of the Town Clerk, Denise Wheat, Assistant, Victoria Johnson and Town Lengthsman, Ash Lovatt who all give their best efforts to support the council to make their projects successful.

The Mayor will be fundraising for three charities in the coming year: Approach Dementia Support and also the Leek Girlguiding and Leek Scouting organisations.

To conclude the Mayor quoted former Town Councillor and past Mayor, Brian Johnson “If you want to do politics, go next door”. The new Mayor aims as a Town Council to work together as a team and leave politics to the District Council.

5. Deputy Mayor returned thanks for his appointment: Cllr. Barry Birch gave the following speech:

Good evening, ladies, gentlemen and distinguished guests. Today I stand before you with a grateful heart and a deep sense of appreciation, as I express my sincere thanks for the honour and privilege of serving as deputy mayor of this wonderful town. It is with great excitement that I address you on this remarkable occasion.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the people of Leek, who have placed their trust in me. I am truly humbled by the faith you have bestowed upon myself to represent your interests. I promise to work tirelessly towards the betterment of our community and to devote my upmost efforts to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to me. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the mayor, esteemed councillors, and my fellow colleagues in public service. Their guidance, wisdom and collaboration will be invaluable, as we work together to shape the future of our town. It is through our collective efforts and shared visions that we can overcome all challenges, making a meaningful progress for the benefit of our residents.

Furthermore, I must acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our Town employees, whose tireless work often goes unnoticed. They are the backbone of our community, the police, fire, health and care workers, teachers who shape our future generations, refuse collectors, the list is endless, they all work tirelessly towards the unwavering service to our community and deserve our highest gratitude.

I am immensely grateful to my wife Teena and my family and friends, who have been pillars of strength throughout my journey. Their love, encouragement and understanding has fuelled my passion for public service. They have been instrumental in helping me navigate the challenges that come with this position. I am forever indebted to you all for standing by my side.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to the residents of Leek, for their active participation in the democratic process. Your ideas and feedback are vital in shaping policies, initiatives that truly reflect the needs of our community. I am honoured and humbled to stand before you as Deputy Mayor of this remarkable town, where I was born and raised. I am grateful for the opportunity this position gives me to make a positive impact, serving the people who have placed their trust in me. Together let us embrace the future with optimism, unity and determination, working hand in hand to build a stronger, more prosperous community for all.

6. Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor: The new Mayor Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst thanked the retiring Mayor:

Cllr. Bill Cawley has completed an extraordinary year as Mayor of Leek. He has worked extremely hard in his public engagement at both public and civic events and his theme throughout the year has been inclusivity. He also represented the town twice on visits to our Twinned town, Este in Italy, for Remembrance weekend and the Flower Festival. A significant amount of funds for charity have been raised with a total of over £4000.00 for his nominated charities The Beatrice Narrow Boat and Jessies Fund.

Councillor Cawley was presented with a past Mayors Lapel Badge.

Former Mayor Cllr. Margaret Lovatt present in the public gallery, was also presented with a past Mayor Badge as she had previously not received one when she retired.

Response from the Retiring Mayor: Cllr. Bill Cawley gave a speech about his year as Leek Town Mayor:

As I come to the end of my year as Mayor, it goes without saying that the time has flown, the year is up and what a year it has been!

No previous Mayor of Leek in the 50-year existence of the role in its present form, has had to experience so many major events in so short a time, particularly royal events over the past 12 months. If not exactly 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' it seems to be edging into that territory; with the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, followed by the death of our Queen and the Coronation of His Royal Highness King Charles III.

One of the most rewarding events in a year so packed was the National Holocaust Memorial event in January. Those present will have heard the vivid testimony of holocaust survivor Leonard Kaufman whose family were wiped out by the Nazis in 1942. Leonard was fortunate as a 5-year-old, an unaccompanied 5-year-old it is worth saying in the present climate, to escape tyranny in Germany and find safety in Britain.

Afterwards, I received a message saying that I was a "Mensch". A Mensch in Yiddish is a person of integrity, unfailing courteous with a robust sense of right and wrong, who can be trusted to support the vulnerable with an unvarying sense of service. I am in some difficulty here as a true mensch would be too modest to apply praise to themselves. Nevertheless, it is nice to know that I am thought of as trustworthy and genuine. I will continue to strive to be thought of as such and always to act decently and in the right way.

The Mayoress Mrs. Cathy Cawley and daughter Phoebe were presented with bouquets.

7. Appointment of Committees

It was resolved that chairs and vice chairs of the committees would be as follows:

a) General Purposes Committee: **Chair:** Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst **Vice Chair:** Cllr. Derek Hilyer

Proposed: Cllr. Cawley – Seconded: Cllr Webster – Motion Carried

b) Planning Committee: **Chair:** Cllr. Susan Webster **Vice Chair:** Cllr. Paul Powner

Proposed Cllr. Hilyer – Seconded: Cllr. Young - Motion Carried

c) Allotments Committee: **Chair:** Cllr. Barry Birch **Vice Chair:** Cllr. Dee Young

Proposed Cllr. M. Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Webster – Motion Carried

d) Events Committee: **Chair:** Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst **Vice Chair:** Cllr. Keith Hoptroff

Proposed Cllr. Young – Seconded Cllr. Nicholls – Motion Carried

e) War Memorials Committee: **Chair:** Cllr. Derek Hilyer **Vice Chair:** Cllr. Kate Nicholls

Proposed: Cllr. L Swindlehurst - Seconded: Cllr. Dee Young – Motion Carried

f) Human Resources Committee: Item to be moved to the next General Purposes Meeting

g) Climate Change Sub-Committee: **Chair:** Cllr. Bill Cawley **Vice Chair:** Mark Johnson

Proposed Cllr M. Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Keith Hoptroff – Motion Carried

h) Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee was a legacy of the former Urban Council. The time is right is to reform this committee to support our officers and to support councillors in financial matters. Grant applications can be quite complex. Terms of reference and constitution of the Committee needs to be drafted. Item to be moved to the next General Purposes Meeting.

Proposed – Cllr L Swindlehurst – Seconded - Cllr. Powner – Motion Carried

i) Twinning Representative: Cllr. Bill Cawley

Proposed – Cllr. M Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr Hoptroff – Motion Carried

8. Town Council Meetings:

It was resolved to continue with ten Town Council and General Purposes' meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. No meetings will be held in August and December.

9. Bank Signatories:

- a) Cheque signatories on the Town Council Bank Account were approved as follows:

The Town Clerk: Denise Wheat,

The Chairman of Allotments: Cllr. Barry Birch

The Chairman of the War Memorials Committee: Cllr. Derek Hilyer

Cllr. Wales requested to be removed as a signatory.

Retiring Councillors Coleman, Benefer and Johnson will also be removed.

Proposed Cllr M Swindlehurst - Seconded Cllr. Cawley - Motion Carried to add and remove signatories.

10. To receive items for information:

The Risk Register 2023-24 was noted. (Document attached)

Chair.....

Date.....