

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the War Memorial Committee held on
Monday 13th February 2023

Present: Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Ottewell, Cllr. Benefer, Cllr M Swindlehurst, Lengthsman A. Lovatt,
And Mr D Oldham – resident
Wheat

Minutes recorded by Town Clerk Denise

1. Apologies: Cllr. Johnson

2. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2022 were approved.

3. Matters Arising:

- a) **Financial Report:** The Friends of the Nicholson War Memorial account has a balance of £7.365.85. It was resolved to contact Mr Fisher to ask if he would visit the Bank to transfer the fund to the Leek Town Council account where it can be kept earmarked for the Memorial projects so the fund can be accessible. £6000.00 has been allocated towards War Memorial Maintenance in the 2023/24 budget.
- b) **Tours of the Nicholson Memorial:** School visits were mentioned to raise the profile of the historical monument. The Clerk has contacted the previous members of the Friends of the Nicholson War Memorial Committee, but they have declined to attend the War Memorials Committee at this time. The volunteers have offered to recommence as tour guides. It was resolved to suspend tours until Spring 2024 ready to relaunch in preparation for the 2025 Centenary.
- c) **Risk Assessment:** It was resolved to leave the Covid guidance in the risk assessment as it does reappear in waves. The space inside the Memorial is restricted. Ventilation was discussed, opening windows and supplying masks and hand sanitiser. AL has checked all the window mechanisms, and everything is operative. Risk assessment to be revisited.

4. Review of the Remembrance Events in November 2022.

The events were a great success with excellent attendance and the parades and services went well. There were some issues with order of groups in the Parade and lack of hymn sheets at the Nicholson. Correspondence from Mr and Mrs Potts concerning the Scout Band and Schools participation was circulated with positive suggestions. The comments will be shared with the events planning committee and the Royal British Legion when they meet to prepare for November 2023 events.

5. St Edwards Church War Memorial

The Clerk has included this memorial as it is mentioned in the War Memorial Committee terms of reference. Although not directly responsible for its upkeep as it is on St Edwards Church grounds, the Town Council do remove wreaths each year. .

6. Leekbrook War Memorial

The Leekbrook Memorial is well looked after by the local businesses in the area. It is the responsibility of Leek Town Council War Memorial committee to maintain the space. The Committee should form a maintenance programme with a criterion for assessing the standard of the War Memorials. A recommendation to the new councillors of Leekbrook Ward following the Election to get involved with this committee.

7. Ball Haye Green Memorial

CTD Architects have now completed a work specification report for all the repairs and maintenance needed to renovate the Ball Haye Green Memorial. The playing field and recreational area are part of that Memorial ground, and this is registered as a Charity. The Clerk will investigate the potential of applying to the War Memorial Trust for a potential grant to help with the cost of the work required.

8. The Nicholson War Memorial

- a) **Repairs:** There is a 27-month journey to August 2025 to make sure the Memorial will be ready for the Centenary.
- b) **Cleaning:** The argument is that Portland Stone when you pressure wash the water penetrates the stone. AL said if the weather was warm it would dry out. A Patio cleaner, or a steam cleaner was suggested to clean the paving. AL to get quotations for equipment. The Leek Town Lands Trustees need to be consulted on this.
- c) **Winter Weather:** Wet weather pedestrian safety was discussed. The moss and ice which gathers underneath the trees is dangerous. One Tree is getting large and there is one big branch which needs to be removed. The Clerk will organise this as part of the Allotment tree surgery jobs which are in progress.
- d) **Parking Issues:** A resident in the vicinity of the Monument told the Committee of the problems they experience with people parking and blocking their access. No parking signage was discussed. The Clerk will write to SMDC, Cllr. James Abberley who is responsible for Car Parks.
- e) **Anti-social behaviour:** The Nicholson Garden is being abused. People are drinking alcohol, taking drugs, committing sexual acts and using it as a toilet. From a tourism point of view this is very bad for Leek. It goes on day and night and the police have been informed. The Premier Inn staff are probably not aware of the activity as it is sparsely staffed and not in their remit to manage the garden area. There was a discussion about signage to warn people about unsociable behaviour, but it was decided this would not make a difference. CCTV would be a better deterrent. The Town Council are negotiating with the District Council to take over the maintenance of the garden. It was suggested to approach the District Council through the Town Mayor that the War Memorial Committee want to put CCTV to cover the Nicholson Memorial. Cllr. Wales has had a site visit with Cabinet members and is working on this project. The garden has been cut down and this has reduced the anti-social behaviour.
The Cattle Market pub have put up signage to discourage drinking on the Monument.
- f) **Electricity Smart Meter:** This now needs to be installed to upgrade the electricity meter. The Clerk will organise this work to be done.
- g) **Front spotlights** need repairing as two bulbs are out. The twinkly lights around the trees need replacing as complaints were received at Christmas when these were not illuminated.
Clerk to organise electrical work.
- h) **Efficient Energy Lighting:** A quotation has been received from EON to replace all Town Council units with efficient lighting. This is still under consideration by the Town Council as there is a high cost to the replacement initially.
- i) **Lightening Testing:** A quotation has been received for a one year or 5 year contract. As the price is fixed for 5 years the Committee resolved to accept the 5 year plan.
- j) **War Memorial Grant:** A grant could be applied for the Monument for work required for the 2025 Centenary. Clerk to research this.
- k) **Tours:** Already discussed. Clerk to contact the volunteers to keep them informed.
- l) **Risk Assessment:** To be checked and amended as required.

9. Any Other Business:

The Mayor, Cllr. Bill Cawley is holding a memorial event for the Chocolate Soldier on Wednesday 15th February at 11am at Leek Cemetery. Meeting near to the lodge. All welcome.

10. Date of the next Meeting: to be confirmed