



Leek Town Council War Memorials Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3 February 2026

ROUTINE MATTERS

Present Cllrs Hilyer (Chair), Nicholls, M Swindlehurst, Webster, Young and Richard Benefer
Apologies Cllrs Hoptroff, Powner, L Swindlehurst
Present Denise Wheat (Town Clerk) and Victoria Johnson (Administrative Assistant)

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025 were approved.

2 FINANCE

It was reported that

- the centenary event (with donations and expenditure spread over two financial years) appeared to have broken even (pending final accounts for the financial year)
- significant expenditure on the centenary has a legacy benefit for the council including the silk picture, banners, display cabinet, television monitor etc
- the overall financial situation seemed satisfactory, pending final accounts
- the likely cost of the proposed transfer of ownership of the Monument land from the Leek Town Lands Trust to the Council were being established.
- the Town Council had approved a budget of £9,000 for the War Memorial Committee for 2026-27 (noting that this was the precept allocation for 2025-26 although actual expenditure had been considerably enlarged for the centenary, with ear-marked reserves, donations and special grants).

MEMORIALS

3 MEMORIAL WORKS

It was reported that

- contractors had been invited to report on and estimate cost of repair to steps at the NWM
- estimates were being sought for paving- and metalwork at the Leekbrook Memorial
- the NWM door can be painted in-house in the spring and the tendency to stick can be addressed
- the NWM gates were badly hung and difficult to open close – this would be investigated, particularly to prevent scraping of the paving stones
- the NWM clock was to be repaired in the coming week (one of the chimes wasn't chiming and the hands were slightly out of kilter) – it was noted that the public normally alerted the Council to these issues
- approaches had been received by alternative electricity suppliers (for the NWM).

It was agreed that

- the Town Clerk be authorised to change the NWM power contractor if appropriate
- work on Ball Haye Green and Leekbrook Memorials should be the committee's priority – expenditure was explicitly included in the precept for 2026-27.

4 BALL HAYE GREEN TOILET BLOCK

It was reported that there was continuing uncertainty over the ownership of the toilet block at (or adjacent to) the Ball Haye Green Memorial, that no progress over taking over the block for storage use can be made until the matter is resolved, and that Cllr M Swindlehurst would pursue enquiries with SMDC.

5 UTILISATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE MONUMENTS

It was agreed that

- the three council-owned war memorials were a major feature of the town and should be better known, within Leek and beyond
- thought should be given to advertising/presenting the Memorials
- the exhibition within the NWEM should be revised and to that end discussions are being held with SMDC to secure access to/right to copy the large photograph boards used in the centenary exhibition – the current display is outdated, dominated by a not-wholly relevant flag, and too concerned with the building of the Monument rather than remembrance
- local shops and cafés should be given advance knowledge of events the Monument, with background information, to be able to answer visitors' enquiries (this would be part of a larger project proposed by the Tourism, Events and Community Committee to involve local business more in council activities)

It was suggested that, once ownership of the land around the NWM had been settled, attention could be given to what is sometimes described as **the Sensory Garden** (between Market Cottage and the Premier Inn), in particular creating a visitor information kiosk/booth, possibly with seating, facing the Monument but eliminating spaces currently blighted by anti-social behaviour.

6 LIGHTING OF THE NWM

It was reported that the Monument's flexible floodlighting had been well received.

It was agreed that

- it was a priority to make the associated app (to change the colour and timing of displays) available to two or more council staff/members (currently, the supplier of the system had to be asked to re-programme the lights each time – he had not charged but this was clearly a long-term arrangement)
- the agreed programme of lighting should be adhered to unless a significant need arose – in particular, lighting to bring attention to all the different health conditions that asked for it could diminish the impact
- any use of colour (other than white) should be explained to the public by the usual notices and social media and perhaps informing neighbouring shops and cafés.

7 LAND AT THE NICHOLSON WAR MEMORIAL

It was reported that

- whilst the NWM is the property of Leek Town Council the land on which it is built is owned by the Leek Town Lands Trust
- Land Registry plans indicate that the LTLT property includes the gardens and, it would appear, the driveway at the front of the Cattle Market public house (though there is a right of way over the latter)
- it is clearly in the interests of both LTC and the LTLT to transfer, at minimal cost, the ownership of the land to the former (noting that this can be a laborious business, involving the Charity Commission and the Land Registry)
- LTLT is securing a valuation of the land (in the joint expectation that that would be £0).
- whilst much of the documentation around the issue was lost around transmission from Urban District Council to SMDC/LTC (1974) it is known that the land, owned by LTLT, had previously been used for the cattle market and for town fairs

It was agreed that the council should make soundings as to the likely legal cost to the Council of such a transfer and of any insurance implications (on the understanding that LTLT would be doing the same)

EVENTS

8 REMEMBRANCE DAY AND OTHER MEMORIAL EVENTS

It was reported Remembrance Day had been successfully marked at the memorials, that the only real problem was of the timing of the parade's setting off (which will be resolved for 2026) and that this required a specific risk assessment.

It was agreed that there should be further publicity for, and a permanent record of, the events of the Centenary Year including the parade, ceremony and exhibition, the echoes of that day at the Civic Service, and the Remembrance Day ceremony: to include a photographic record and a YouTube video.

9 TOURS OF THE NWM

It was noted that scheduled monthly NWM tours had been successful in 2025, along with some ad hoc events and the Advent and Mayor's fund-raising repeats of the 24-door video showing, as had the hastily arranged Heritage Open Day.

It was agreed that

- tours of the NWM should be mounted in 2026 on second Sunday of April to October, 11:00 to 1:30)
- the scheduled tours should be advertised on the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism website as well as on social media
- the poster (and the board put out on open days) should be redesigned
- additional guides should be recruited if possible
- ad hoc tours should be encouraged
- the Heritage Open Day should be repeated (free, in the period 11 to 20 September 2026)
- opportunities to capitalise on Volunteers Week (1 to 7 June 2026) should be explored
- the council should print copies of the guide to tour guides.

10 COMMUNICATION

It was noted that publicity needed to be given to

- NWM tour dates, the possibility of booking an ad hoc tour, and the Heritage Open Day
- Remembrance Day, Armistice Day and other remembrance days at NWM (and for Remembrance at BHF an Leekbrook)
- opportunities for those wishing to be guides
- the reason for events being marked by illuminating the Monument.

DONM

11 **It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 3 March 2026 at 6:00.**
