

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Tourism, Events & Community Committee (TEC)

Tuesday 3rd March 2026

Present: Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst (Chair), Cllr. Keith Hoptroff (Vice Chair), Cllr. Derek Hilyer, Cllr. Sue Webster, Cllr. Dee Young, Brian Benjamin, Julie Pointon and Anthony Beetham.

Minutes recorded by Denise Wheat (Clerk)

Please note that items in Italic are not Leek Town Council organised events, but dates are noted to avoid duplication and to provide information.

1. **Welcome:** The Chair Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst opened the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Kate Nicholls, Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst, Mark Goulding (Moorlands Radio), Amanda Rowley (SCC Children's Centre) and Victoria Johnson (Admin Assistant)
3.
 - 3.1 **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February 2026 were approved.
 - 3.2 **Matters Arising:** It was clarified that the ***Winnie the Pooh 100*** celebration would be be a District Council event (*see item 9.4*)
4. **Tourism**
 - 4.1: **Nighttime Economy:** A working group has been formed who are preparing to visit sites in the town centre of Leek; pubs, restaurants, entertainment venues and takeaways to bring together data of what is on offer in the evening in the town. Data analysis has shown that early evening events which are non-alcohol based, for example a games night, gathering of musicians, book clubs etc. are appealing to families and young people creating community cohesion. It was hoped that the Trestle Market could open more often after the high street shops and cafes close, bridging the gap between daytime and the late night events.
 - 4.2 : **Flags for Town Centre summer decoration:**

The Committee agreed to purchase 10 hand stitched union flags to trial if they withstand the weather and could be used for a second year. The remaining 140 to be purchased and installed ready for Scooterfest. Polish flags to be included where possible. The proportion of the committee's budget spent on flags was noted.
 - 4.3: **Planters and Hanging Baskets:**

The Clerk is gathering 3 quotations. The planters need to be measured so that suppliers can give accurate pricing.
 - 4.4: **Cross street banner 'Welcome to Leek':**

A quotation was received for a double-sided mesh banner, in three different widths x 1 meter height. A measurement needs to be taken of the street width to confirm the size required. Quotation to be moved to the Finance Committee agenda.

4.5: Christmas Lights:

Additional icicles for Sparrow Park, item to be moved for approval at the Finance Committee. The Clerk to write to Smithfield Centre owners to see if they would be interested in funding icicles for the building.

5. Events

5.1 Financial Report: The financial report of the events held in 2025 is to be moved for review to the Finance Committee.

5.2 Pride of the Moorlands Committee (Outside Arts) have asked permission to hire all 20 gazebos on Sunday 28th June. Rates to be charged at the same rate as Sunday Supplement. ***All in favour***

5.3 Action West End have asked permission to borrow some gazebos for 5th September Family Fun Day. ***All in favour***

5.4 Staffordshire Moorlands Walking Festival: The festival launch event was well attended at Foxlowe Arts Centre. There are a number of walks in the program in the Leek area. Cllr. Barks is leading a historic tour of the Mills with support of the Town Council. Clerk to research the other walks and to publicise these. Disappointment was expressed that the towns of Cheadle and Biddulph have not got involved with any local walks in their area.

6. 2026 Events Planning:

6.1 Road Closures: The forms will be submitted in new financial year, after 1st April.

6.2 First Aid: Quotations are being gathered for medical cover for the events.

6.3 Security: Quotations are being gathered for staff for the events.

A discussion was had about the Anti-Terrorism legislation, Martyns Law. Training opportunities will be circulated from Action Counters Terrorism (ACT). This organisation, funded by the Government offer short courses to staff and volunteers who are organising events.

6.4 Risk Assessment: The Clerk will consider the risks and circulate to the Committee for additional suggestions before the event applications are submitted.

Safeguarding Training opportunities are being launched by Staffordshire Safeguarding Board (SSB) There is a charge for these courses of £30 per person.

6.5 Marketing: too early to discuss advertising the events.

7. Other Town Events: the following event dates were noted:

Leek Arts Festival last week of April to first week June. Tickets are selling well. Committee to promote where possible. Staff to share on the Town Council social media and website.

Leek Loves Books are not holding a large event this year but are holding some smaller events.

Leek Club Day This is a 100-year-old event but the local involvement appears to have dwindled.

Leek Open Studios: Artists and Designers, meet the maker day Saturday 26th September.

Leek Blues and Americana: October 2026 no information to date

8. Community

8.1 LEEK TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION SYSTEM 2026

Community Grants are subject to the Application Policy adopted by Council on 17th February 2026. Applicants are required to submit the appropriate form to the Council by the end of April (or

September if funds permit), to be considered by the Tourism, Events and Community Committee at its May meeting and to be decided at the following meeting of the Council.

The rubric to the form directs applicants to the policy and states that:

Leek Town Council invites applications from voluntary organisations for grants to support projects and initiatives that enhance the well-being of our community. Grants are funded from the precept charged to residents of Leek and must be used wisely for the benefit of local residents.

Applications must show how the grant will benefit the local community, the town or its environment and grants will be awarded based on need, merit, and contribution to the local community.

Grants will not be awarded to individuals; organisations involved in political activities; profit making companies; statutory bodies; projects that only benefit adherents to a particular religious belief.

(Applications are welcomed from religious or faith groups for projects that benefit the wider community)

Applicants which are not registered charities or social enterprises will be asked to provide the name of a Leek Town Councillor who is willing to recommend the application.

Successful applicants will need to provide feedback on how funds have been expended and how successful the project has been.

8.2 A £3500.00 grant fund is available. Small or new groups which are not constituted, could be backed by a Town Councillor, for approval at the discretion of the committee.

8.3 If funds are unallocated in the first round second application window (September) will be launched.

8.4 The grant opportunity will be advertised as soon as the application form and website are updated.

9. Any other business and items for the April agenda:

9.1 *Totally Locally:* *It was noted that the organiser of the Totally Locally, Easter egg hunt and the bat hunt has ceased running these initiatives. Lyn Nancarrow was thanked for organising these trails in the town for many years. Jon Green of the Sunday Supplement Market is trying to get interest generated from local shops. A volunteer is needed to operate the Totally Locally website. It was suggested to ask the Market Manager, Dave Jackson if the Market team could help to drive this. Julie Pointon was thanked for collecting business details from shops in the town so that the Town Council can form a list of shops to send out notifications of town events. It was suggested the list could also include regular Butter and Trestle Market stall holders and Sunday Supplement stall holders.*

Another previous initiative Festive Fandango was mentioned - a points collecting card and a prize draw to encourage shopping locally.

9.2 *Happy Birthday England:* *event suggested to celebrate 1100 years of England. If this happens it will be a District Council event involving different sporting clubs and smaller sporting events. Towns and Parishes can get involved. Ashbourne was mentioned for the niche sport of toe wrestling.*

9.3 *Winnie the Pooh 100 event* will be a district council organised event. Ideas of a woozel trail were suggested.

9.4 Levelling Up Funded projects: *The design for the outdoor space at Brough Park Leisure Centre is very imaginative and also the outside space in the square paved area of the Nicholson Institute. These new designs will start to materialise over the summer.*

9.5 Silk Trail: *A question was asked if anyone is continuing with the Silk Trail walks and talks which Cath Walton used to run. The new group the Friends of the Nicholson Institute may have information about this.*

9.6 Volunteer strategy: *Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst proposed an item for April agenda. To create a Leek Town Council operational handbook for Volunteers to prepare for Local Government Reorganisation. Cllr Nicholls has offered to help. Support Staffordshire can help to recruit volunteers. Vast run a similar service for Stoke-on-Trent.*

Initiatives to encourage volunteers were discussed. My Active who run the leisure centres offered free swimming vouchers for volunteers who organised an official litter pick.

10. Communication from the meeting:

Staff, Councillors and Committee to share events in the town to increase awareness of 'What's On' in Leek.

The Chair thanked non council attendees and asked them to leave the meeting so that a confidential item about Leek's application for Town of Culture could be considered.

Public left the meeting at 19.59

11. Information was received about the expressions of interest that groups have put forward for the Town of Culture.

The Tourism, Events and Community Committee agreed to fully support the project.

Item to be on the April agenda.

Meeting ended 20:15

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 3rd April 2026 at 7pm in the Leek Town Council office.