

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL
General Purposes Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17th February 2026

Chairman GP Cllr. Keith Hoptroff	Vice Chair GP Cllr. Sue Webster	Mayor Cllr. Derek Hilyer
Deputy Mayor Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst	Cllr. Paul Powner	Cllr. Stephen Wales
Cllr. Bill Cawley	Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst	Cllr. Kate Nicholls
Cllr. Dee Young	Cllr. Mike Worthington	
<i>Staff:</i>	<i>Admin Assistant V. Johnson</i>	<i>Minutes D. Wheat Clerk</i>

General Purposes Meeting followed the Town Council meeting

91. Welcome: Chairman of General Purposes Cllr. Keith Hoptroff welcomed all present.

92. Apologies: all present

93. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, other interests and consideration for the granting of dispensations.

Cllr. Powner declared a non-pecuniary interest in Bank House as a financial adviser

94. Minutes of the General Purposes Meeting held on 20th January 2025 were approved.

Proposed Cllr. L Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Powner – All in favour

95. Matters arising from the minutes: None

96. Finance & Governance:

a) In accordance with Local Government Act 1972 section 5 (150) the following payments were approved for January 2026: (see list overleaf)

Proposed – Cllr. Hilyer – Seconded – Cllr. Webster – All in favour

b) Bank Reconciliation 31/01/2026 – *Approved – All in favour*

Cash in Hand 01/04/2025	£ 35,274.16
ADD	
Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/01/2026	£ 291,503.02
	<u>£ 326,777.18</u>
SUBTRACT	
Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/01/2026	£ 270,452.55
A Cash in Hand 31/01/2026	£ 56,324.63
(per Cash Book)	
Cash in hand per Bank Statements	
Petty Cash 31/01/2026	£ 0.00
Current Account 31/01/2026	£ 0.00
Current Account 2 (Reserve) 31/01/2026	£ 55,129.67
Events Account 31/01/2026	£ 1,194.96
	£ 56,324.63
B	
Less unrepresented payments	£ 0.00
Plus unrepresented receipts	£ 0.00
Adjusted Bank Balance	£ 56,324.63

Voucher N	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Payment Ref
463	04/01/2026	£ 27.00	£-	£ 27.00	Mayors Allowance	8686
414	06/01/2026	£ 315.85	£-	£ 315.85	Lengthsman Duties	
418	06/01/2026	£ 12.08	£ 2.42	£ 14.50	Office Supplies	
438	06/01/2026	£ 32.52	£-	£ 32.52	Allotment Water	DD
439	08/01/2026	£ 9.06	£-	£ 9.06	Office Supplies	
440	08/01/2026	£ 307.35	£-	£ 307.35	Mayors Allowance	
441	08/01/2026	£ 10.31	£-	£ 10.31	Stockwell Street Water	DD
442	13/01/2026	£ 225.00	£-	£ 225.00	Lengthsman Duties	
443	13/01/2026	£ 92.42	£ 18.48	£ 110.90	Christmas Lights Maintenance	
444	14/01/2026	£ 6.83	£-	£ 6.83	Office Supplies	
445	14/01/2026	£ 176.00	£-	£ 176.00	Entertainer	
446	14/01/2026	£ 200.00	£-	£ 200.00	Catering Refreshments	
447	14/01/2026	£ 316.00	£-	£ 316.00	Subscription Fee	
448	14/01/2026	£ 210.83	£ 42.17	£ 253.00	Event Maintenance	
449	14/01/2026	£ 19.11	£ 3.82	£ 22.93	Office Equipment	
450	20/01/2026	£ 53.90	£ 2.70	£ 56.60	Nicholson Clock Electricity	DD
464	21/01/2026	£ 73.00	£-	£ 73.00	Leaflet Printing	
467	21/01/2026	£ 240.00	£-	£ 240.00	Website & IT	Month 10
468	21/01/2026	£ 45.00	£ 9.00	£ 54.00	Lengthsman Duties	
469	21/01/2026	£ 487.50	£-	£ 487.50	Lengthsman Duties	
470	21/01/2026	£ 1,343.96	£-	£ 1,343.96	PAYE	Month 10
451	26/01/2026	£ 331.24	£-	£ 331.24	Pension Contributions	
452	26/01/2026	£ 136.54	£-	£ 136.54	Allotment Water	DD
453	28/01/2026	£ 198.00	£-	£ 198.00	Leaflet Printing	
454	28/01/2026	£ 800.00	£ 160.00	£ 960.00	Stockwell St. Premises Lease	
455	28/01/2026	£ 3.15	£-	£ 3.15	Postage	
456	28/01/2026	£ 300.00	£-	£ 300.00	Lengthsman Duties	
457	28/01/2026	£ 35.00	£-	£ 35.00	Subscription Fee	
458/65/66	28/01/2026	£ 3,783.59	£-	£ 3,783.59	Staff Salaries	Month 10
459	28/01/2026	£ 9.00	£ 1.80	£ 10.80	Stationary	
460	28/01/2026	£ 8.03	£ 1.61	£ 9.64	Stationary	
461	28/01/2026	£ 300.00	£-	£ 300.00	Venue Hire	
462	30/01/2026	£ 27.00	£-	£ 27.00	Bank Charges	
		Net	VAT	Gross		
TOTAL		£10,135.27	£ 242.00	£10,377.27		

97. Items on Notice:

New grant policy: The Finance Committee presented a new policy with procedures to be followed for the consideration and allocation of community project grants. It was noted that Councillors should continue to signpost applicants to other funding sources. The Tourism, Events and Community Committee will consider applications at its May and October meetings and make recommendations to the General Purposes Committee.

Leek Town Council grant policy was approved: *All in Favour*

The community grant application form will be redesigned, with instructions on how to apply and the deadline date.

98. Committee Reports:

- b) **G.S.A - Green Spaces & Allotments:** Minutes were received with no questions raised.
- c) **W.M.C - War Memorials:** Minutes were received with no questions raised.
- d) **T.E.C - Tourism, Events & Community:** Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst reported that the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) has commissioned a Nighttime Economy audit report and has formed a working group to improve tourism. In Staffordshire 10% of tourism visitors stay overnight but contribute 30% of the sector's economy. The SMDC licencing officer will be involved. Pilot strategies are being introduced to monitor trends in the region.
- e) **N.P. - Neighbourhood Plan:**
The Regulation 14 public consultation is now live until 12 noon on 17th March. The documents are available on the Leek Town Council website and at 6 locations in the town, or residents can request information from the Clerk.
Response forms and digital questionnaire responses are being collected plus email responses from statutory consultees. The consultation has been advertised in Our Leek and the Post and Times gave the NP front page coverage in its 11th February edition.

A resident asked if it was possible to participate anonymously.

The Clerk will check the law on the data collection.

- f) **H.R. - Human Resources:**
Official .gov email addresses have now been set up for all Councillors. The links need activation.
Council communication was discussed including business cards, ID cards, published councillor contact information and ward information plus photographs of all councillors to be uploaded to the Town Council website. Clerk to address these issues.
- g) **Finance: Bank House:**
 - i. Electrical lighting work has been completed.
 - ii. Plumbers have temporarily fixed the radiators. The system is drawing in air causing some radiators to lose water pressure and fill with air. Cllr. Powner stressed the importance of the building being warm for children's services.
The Council approved thermostatic controls to be fitted onto the new radiators when fitted in the new financial year.

99. Sub Committee/ working group reports:

- a) **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:** Report received, no comments.
- b) **Environment:** The first meeting of the sub-committee was well attended including members of Moorlands Climate Action and two County Councillors; Cllr Egginton and Cllr. Broom. The Peak Cluster consultation was considered and a response made. A report on Nature in Your Neighbourhood was also received from District Cllr. Mark Johnson. Leek Town Council need to recruit more volunteers to complete the Ball Haye Green project.
Next Nature in Your Neighbourhood event to be publicised effectively.

100. Ward Reports:

- a) **Leekbrook:** Nothing to report.
- b) **Birchall:** Two cherry blossom trees below All Saints' Academy have been removed on Cheadle Road. These need replacing as it forms an avenue of trees into the Town. Cllr. Wales had raised this with County Highways and received a response that the matter is closed. A request would be made to the District Councillors for Leek South to source new trees. A discussion was then had about other tree locations. Woodcroft WI. have asked at the office if they could replace a dead tree in Derby Street. St. Stephens Square planters are in need of repair and replanting as volunteers no longer maintain the space. Dog fouling and litter is prevalent in the area. The SMDC interactive map shows that SMDC currently are responsible to maintain the area but ownership of the structures is not clear.
Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst suggested asking SMDC Assets if the Town Council could request, as part of LGR, to take responsibility for the care of the town centre trees and planters. Cllr. Worthington seconded this idea. Item to be researched in more detail.
- c) **Leek North:** Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst reported that highlighted of the success of Team North football project but noting that there is a major issue with dog fouling at Ball Haye Green. Mess has to be picked up before the children can play football which is not acceptable. SMDC are running a campaign to raise awareness of dog owner's responsibilities with signage and posters to deter offenders. Residents are urged to report sightings and problem areas on the environmental health portal of the SMDC website and to keep records of sites and times as evidence for enforcement teams.
- d) **Leek South:** Cllr. Hoptroff reported unofficial advertising, opposite Morrisons on Newcastle Road, which is a safety issue, and potential distraction to drivers. The problem has been logged with County Highways who have been asked to inspect the site.
- e) **Leek East:** A resident brought to attention the planning development application at Well St Mill and Cllr. Powner has agreed to speak at the SMDC Planning Committee on the resident's behalf about parking issues on adjoining streets.
- f) **Leek West:** Cllr Webster reported Action West End Family fun day will be held on 5th Sept. 2026.
Cllr. Cawley reported on the Big Mill deterioration and safety issues, break-ins, climbing on unsafe structures, fires attended by the fire service. The powers which Staffordshire Moorlands District Council can action, are to force the developer to act on the safety matters. Compulsory purchase is not an economic option. A North Staffs unitary council with stronger powers of planning might be able to get large brown field sites developed. A discussion was had about District Council powers compared with a Unitary Authority.
The Chair stopped the discussion on LGR

101. Other items to be noted for next Agenda:

- a) **Leek Town Council highways lighting asset:**
Back Thomas Street lamp is due to be repaired on 12th March by EON. A road closure will be in place and letters to inform residents will be issued by the Clerk.
- b) **Staffordshire Moorlands Walking Festival:** Cllr. Phil Barks has designed a walk of the Historic Mills of Leek with Town Council support with Risk assessment, insurance and nominated first aider, on Thursday 30th April starting at 10am from the Nicholson War

Memorial Monument. Cllr. Cawley is looking at getting Brindley Mill opened for the day so the walk can visit on route.

Cllr. Worthington left meeting 20.08

102. 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”.

Members of the public left the public gallery.

103. Confidential Items:

a) Stockwell Street lease:

The Council resolved to wait for legal advice before a meeting is arranged with the Landlord.

Cllr. Wales left the meeting 20:20

b) Bank House:

Commercial lease in final stages. Clerk to report to March meeting.

c) Allotment Boundary matter:

No further progress to date.

d) Town Council asset Nicholson War Memorial:

Legal advice is being sought regarding possible costs of asset transfer.

Meeting Ended at 20.35

ACTIONS		
Clerk	Publish Grant Policy	TEC Committee to check
Clerk	Check rules on anonymous comments	Neighbourhood Plan
All Councillors	.gov emails	HR: Set up new .gov emails
Clerk	Add councillor contact information and photos	HR: Website
Clerk	monitor plumbing	Bank House
All Councillors and Staff	recruit volunteers	Nature in Your Neighbourhood
Clerk	Cherry Trees	To report matter to appropriate council
Clerk	Legal advice	Stockwell St
Clerk	Finalise Lease	Bank House
Clerk	Legal Advice	Allotment Boundary
Clerk	Legal Advice	Land title transfer