

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL
General Purposes Committee
MINUTES
Tuesday 17th March 2026

Chairman GP Cllr. Keith Hoptroff	Vice Chair GP Cllr. Sue Webster	Mayor Cllr. Derek Hilyer
Deputy Mayor Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst	Cllr. Kate Nicholls	Cllr. Mike Worthington
Cllr. Dee Young	Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst	
<i>No members of the public present</i>	<i>Staff: V. Johnson</i>	<i>Minutes D. Wheat Clerk</i>

General Purposes Meeting followed the Town Council meeting

- 104. Welcome:** Chairman of General Purposes Cllr. Keith Hoptroff welcomed all present.
- 105. Apologies:** Cllr. Paul Powner, Cllr Stephen Wales and Cllr. Bill Cawley
- 106. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests,** other interests and consideration for the granting of dispensations. None declared
- 107. Minutes of the General Purposes Meeting held on 17th February 2026 were approved.**
Proposed Cllr. L Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Worthington – All in favour
- 108. Matters arising from the minutes:**
- Back Thomas Street lamp** has been replaced by Eon at a cost of £1,523.91 net
 - Untidy advertising on Newcastle Road**, opposite to Morrisons has been removed.
- 109. Finance & Governance:**
- In accordance with Local Government Act 1972 section5 (150) the following payments were approved for February 2026: (see list overleaf)**
Proposed – Cllr. Hilyer– Seconded – Cllr. Webster – All in favour
 - Bank Reconciliation 28/02/2026 – Approved – All in favour**
- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Cash in Hand 01/04/2025 | £ 35,274.16 |
| ADD | |
| Receipts 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026 | £ 297,725.59 |
| | <u>£ 332,999.75</u> |
| SUBTRACT | |
| Payments 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026 | £ 282,522.06 |
| A Cash in Hand 28/02/2026 | £ 50,477.69 |
| (per Cash Book) | |
| Cash in hand per Bank Statements | |
| Petty Cash 28/02/2026 | £ 0.00 |
| Current Account 28/02/2026 | £ 0.00 |
| Current Account 2 (Reserve) 28/02/2026 | £ 48,883.21 |
| Events Account 31/01/2026 | £ 1,572.48 |
| | £ 50,455.69 |
| B | |
| Less unrepresented payments | £ 0.00 |
| Plus unrepresented receipts | £ 22.00 |
| Adjusted Bank Balance | £ 50,477.69 |
| A=B | |

Voucher N	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Payment Ref
471	02/02/2026	£ 32.84	£-	£ 32.84	Allotment Water	DD
472	05/02/2026	£ 91.32	£ 18.26	£ 109.58	Printer Fee	
473	05/02/2026	£ 12.00	£-	£ 12.00	Window Cleaner	
474	05/02/2026	£ 103.97	£-	£ 103.97	Stationary	
477	05/02/2026	£ 343.60	£-	£ 343.60	Lengthsman Duties	
478	05/02/2026	£ 10.65	£-	£ 10.65	Stockwell Street Water	DD
479	10/02/2026	£ 287.50	£-	£ 287.50	Lengthsman Duties	
480	11/02/2026	£ 94.90	£-	£ 94.90	Deputy Mayors Allowance	
481	11/02/2026	£ 91.67	£ 18.33	£ 110.00	Civic Event	
482	12/02/2026	£ 120.00	£-	£ 120.00	Civic Event	
483	12/02/2026	£ 250.00	£-	£ 250.00	Donation	
484	16/02/2026	£ 395.00	£-	£ 395.00	Gazebo Storage	
485	16/02/2026	£ 450.00	£-	£ 450.00	Christmas Trees (Large)	
486	16/02/2026	£ 1,200.00	£-	£ 1,200.00	Tree Surgery	
487	16/02/2026	£ 287.50	£-	£ 287.50	Lengthsman Duties	
488	16/02/2026	£ 1,343.76	£-	£ 1,343.76	PAYE	Month 10
489	16/02/2026	£ 25.00	£-	£ 25.00	Subscription Support Staffs	
490	17/02/2026	£ 53.96	£ 2.70	£ 56.66	Nicholson Clock Electricity	
491	20/02/2026	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00	Mayoral Chain repair	
492	20/02/2026	£ 187.00	£ 37.40	£ 224.40	Fire Extinguishers	
493	20/02/2026	£ 219.00	£-	£ 219.00	Civic Event	
494	20/02/2026	£ 268.00	£-	£ 268.00	Subscription Fee SLCC	
495	23/02/2026	£ 670.00	£ 134.00	£ 804.00	External Audit Fee	
496	23/02/2026	£ 500.00	£-	£ 500.00	Lengthsman Duties	
497/98/99	26/02/2026	£ 3,783.79	£-	£ 3,783.79	Staff Salaries	Month 11
500	26/02/2026	£ 136.54	£-	£ 136.54	Allotment Water	
501	26/02/2026	£ 109.00	£-	£ 109.00	Allotment & Gardeners Associ	8687
502	03/03/2026	£ 3.00	£-	£ 3.00	Allotment Fee	refund overpayment
503	03/03/2026	£ 20.00	£-	£ 20.00	Allotment Fee	refund double payment
504	26/02/2026	£ 40.00	£-	£ 40.00	Allotment Fee	refund double payment
505	27/02/2026	£ 3.48	£-	£ 3.48	Bank Charges	
506	26/02/2026	£ 3.00	£-	£ 3.00	Allotment Refund	refund overpayment
509	27/02/2026	£ 89.34	£-	£ 89.34	Bank Charges	
510	27/02/2026	£ 16.67	£ 3.33	£ 20.00	Key Cutting	
511	27/02/2026	£ 600.00	£-	£ 600.00	Equipment Storage	
TOTAL		£11,872.49	£ 220.02	£12,092.51		

c. Town Council Community Grants:

The application process has been updated on the Town Council website with an application window open from 1st to 30th April 2026.

<https://leektowncouncil.gov.uk/community-grants/>

110. Items on Notice:

- a. Town Of Culture:** Mr. John Phipps, trustee of Foxlowe Arts Centre is leading the application bid for Leek. A stakeholder meeting was held on 11th April at Foxlowe Arts Centre, followed with a public consultation day at Leek Butter Market on Wednesday 18th April. Eleven towns have submitted expressions of interest from the West Midlands. The deadline for bids is 28th March 2026.

The council agreed that the application process should be seen as the foundation for development process for the town. Information gathered should not go to waste if the bid is unsuccessful.

- b. Nighttime Economy:** A working group made up of district officers, councillors and police officers have completed an audit of the town at night to look at street lighting, signage, safety, neglected areas, retail outlets, bars and other entertainment venues that open in the evenings.

Information will be gathered and processed by the District Council and then a report will be given to the Town Council.

111. Committee Reports:

- b) G.S.A - Green Spaces & Allotments:** Minutes were received with no questions raised.
- c) W.M.C - War Memorials:** No meeting had been held in March.
- d) T.E.C - Tourism, Events & Community:** There are quotations to be discussed under the confidential item for Christmas Lights.

e) N.P. - Neighbourhood Plan:

The Regulation 14 public consultation has now ended. The consultation responses from the public locations are to be gathered and a report collated from the information received. A meeting is to be arranged between Leek Town Council and Staffordshire Moorlands planning officers to discuss progression to the next stage.

TPO registration at Knivden Hall: Cllr. Worthington reported an application which has been submitted to the District Council to register a number of trees for Tree Protection Orders at Knivden Hall. Knivden Hall is County Council owned property and land.

Research to gather information on this matter is required.

- f) H.R. - Human Resources:** No report

g) Finance:

- i. Flags for summer street decorations have been ordered.
- ii. A quote of £1060 for a cross-street banner has been received (£560 for the banner and £500 to erect) If a sponsors logo goes onto the banner Planning permission would be required. The banner would be in place from May to September at the bottom of Bath Street across the junction with Derby Street and would have a positive impact in promoting Leek. It will be erected at the same time as the flags, banners and summer flowers.

A vote was held. The Council agreed to order a banner.

Proposed Cllr. M Swindlehurst – Seconder Cllr. Hilyer – 7 in favour 1 abstain

112. Sub Committee/ working group reports:

- a) Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:** Report received, no comments as it was covered in the Town Council meeting. Cllr L Swindlehurst as a Community Champion, informed the Committee that the first ‘cluster meeting’ will be on Monday 23rd March in Brown Edge.
- b) Environmental:** The March meeting was deferred to Tuesday 28th April at 5.30pm. A National Grid Webinar is available for Councillors to attend on Tuesday 21st April at 10am.
- c) Twinning:** Next meeting on Wednesday 31st March at 7pm in the Town Council office.

113. Ward Reports:

a) Leekbrook:

i. **Residential Management Group (RMG) are relinquishing their management of the maintenance of the Wardle Estate.** The Resident Group may take over this responsibility. A resident meeting will take place at Westwood Golf club on 24th March 6.15pm – 7.30pm. Cllr. Hilyer, Cllr. Nicholls and Cllr. Hoptroff will attend.

ii. **Community BKVC:** Cllr. Nicholls will be submitting an entry for Leekbrook this year under some but not all categories encompassing the number of businesses in the area with a large workforce and the residents. Preparation of this bid will be a valuable exercise for future bids.

b) Birchall: No report

c) **Leek North:** Team North Ball Haye football team now has approximately 28 children playing football on Ball Haye Green every Sunday. A large amount of dog poo has to be collected prior to the children playing so in conjunction with the District Council Environmental Health officers, signage has been put up and leaflets have been distributed to local residents. An open event is being planned to raise awareness of the impact that not cleaning up after your dog can have.

d) **Leek South:** The bollards for Britannia Street are in the depot awaiting installation.

e) **Leek East:** No report

f) **Leek West:** Cllr Cawley provided a written report in his absence:

Big Mill

At last, and I admit it is a faint stirring of positive news there appears to be some news about Big Mill and involvement of English Heritage. The mill is a listed building; it dates from 1858 and is in the Italianate style. At a committee meeting last week some news of a potential development on the site was reported. It is now only a glimmer, and we should hear something more substantial later in the spring

Street Preachers

I attended a meeting with Keith Hoptroff a week ago and again due to the steadfast work of community activists a development about use of a newish measure to deal with the regular nuisance in the town centre using Community Protection Orders. I received a very comprehensive report on a way forward.

Neighbourhood Plan

The final date for public consultation is reached next Tuesday at 12 noon. It is a process began in April 2018. I became involved in September 2024 and was determined to see a conclusion and the document out for consultation by the summer of 2025. I failed in that regard but under the leadership of Lesley Roberts and the work also of John Emery and Stephen Wales, we got it over the wire by the autumn of 2025 and out to consultation on 1st February. A favourite

comment concerned opening the old railway tunnel in North St as suggested by Matthew Adams.

Casework

Overgrown vegetation is becoming an issue and no doubt will pick up as a concern as the summer progress

Dog Fouling

Having had to remove some canine by product outside the house yesterday the rapid increase in dog fouling incidents is annoying. For ASB week in early July I have suggested a campaign “Doggone it” to concentrate on irresponsible dog owners

Potholes

The situation appears to be worsening. The failure of any sort of involvement or contact by the County Councillors is concerning

Fly tipping

On the increase especially in outlying areas. I was contacted by someone from a rural area about an incident at Luzlow which I passed on to the local Councillor who unfortunately did not respond, so I reported it myself

Cllr. Webster gave a report on the Action West End Family fun day. The February meeting was attended by Cllr. Webster, Cllr. Hoptroff and Cllr. Cawley. .Volunteers are planning to plant spring pompom flowers in the recreation area.

114. To receive items for information:

Vacancy for the role of a Councillor for Leek North ward:

It will be announced on Wednesday 25th March if an election has been called for the Leek North vacancy. If called an official notice will be released on Monday 30th March by the Elections Office at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

115.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”.

There were no members of the public present at 20.04.

116.Confidential Items:

a) Lengthsman’s Contract Tender:

*The Council opened tenders. A vote was held: 7 in favour, 1 against – motion carried
It was agreed that the current Lengthsman, Mr. Ashley Lovatt, contract be renewed for two years ending on 31st March 2028.*

b) Christmas Lights:

i. The Council considered advertising a tender for the Christmas Lights contract 2027-29
It was agreed that a tender needs to be advertised and a new contract in place before the next Council is elected in May 2027.

ii. The Council considered expanding icicles to Sparrow Park for Christmas 2026.

There is one year remaining of the current Christmas lights contract therefore the

Council decided to decline the expansion. However, the lights in the Monument trees will be in place in 2026.

c) Summer flowers and hanging basket displays: Three nurseries have been asked to provide a quote, but none have been received to date.

The Council delegated the Tourism Events and Community Chair Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst to make the decision once the quotations are received.

d) 15 Stockwell Street office lease and service charge: Legal advice has not yet been received following the Council's request.

Further advice is to be sought from NALC (National Association of Local Councils).

e) Bank House lease negotiation:

A legal letter was authorised by the Council to clarify access.

f) Allotment Boundary:

The Clerk was instructed to make enquiries for a commercial services company to handling the removal of asbestos.

g) War Memorial land: Awaiting more information. No decisions were made.

Meeting Ended at 20.35

ACTIONS

Person responsible	Action	Description	Action
Clerk/ Councillors	research	Knivden Hall	Tree Protection Orders
Clerk	process order		flags
Clerk/ TEC committee	request a design	Choose design	cross street banner
LGR Councillors	attend cluster	to be advised	
BKVC Staff/ Councillors	fill in application	meet community	gather evidence
Cllr. L. Swindlehurst	plan event	dog & litter	
Clerk	inform council	of an election	publish to press
Clerk	Prepare contract	inform contractor	publish contract
Clerk	Prepare tender	Christmas lights	and flags contract
WMC	tree lights	electrician	
Cllr. M. Swindlehurst	action the order	summer flowers	
Lengthsman	move planters	to the nursery	
Clerk	legal negotiations	progress	