

Leek Town Council
Green Spaces and Allotments Committee Minutes

MINUTES of the meeting held Tuesday 24th March 2026 at 10.30am in the Town Council Office

Present: Cllr Dee Young (Chair), Cllr Derek Hilyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Keith Hoptroff, Cllr. Sue Webster, Ben Benefer, Mavis Weaver, Gaynor Tatton, John Hodgkinson, Denise Wheat (Clerk)

Minutes: Victoria Johnson (Admin Assistant)

ALLOTMENTS

1. **Welcome:** Cllr. Dee Young welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** None received
3. **The Minutes** of the meeting held on 24th February 2026 were received as a correct record.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - a) Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association membership £3.00: The Town Council have collected a significant number of membership fees from tenants on behalf of the Association.
 - b) National Allotment Society Membership and Rules: The Clerk attended a National Allotment Society meeting and found that some Councils manage their allotments without input from an Association, some Associations manage allotments without input from their Council, and some have a mix of responsibilities between the Council and the Association. Therefore, whether the Council can make it compulsory for all tenants to become members of the Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association was inconclusive as it is up to each individual Council to decide on their policy. A minimum of 10 members of the Association may join the National Allotment Society with a membership fee of £3.50 per person and they would benefit from Public Liability Insurance cover. Should an incident take place where a tenant does not have Public Liability Insurance then the Council could be liable. Loss or breakage of personal property is not covered by this. *It was agreed that the Chair of the Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association feeds this back to their members before the Council make all tenants aware of these details.*
 - c) Refundable deposits for new tenants: The staff and legal costs involved in billing vacated tenants for waste removal was deemed disproportionate. Leicester City Council was cited as having a system where new tenants are charged a £50 deposit, and a photograph is taken of the plot condition at the start of the tenancy which the tenant signs. *The Committee agreed that if this system is adopted a special non-interest earning holding account would be needed for deposits and that the only the deposit given for a plot could be spent on that plot. This would need to be written into the Council policy.*
 - d) Discontinuation of poultry on plots: Under the Allotments Act 1950, you have a statutory right to keep hens (chickens) on allotments in the UK, provided they are for personal, non-commercial use, not for business or profit. It costs the Council £500 -

£1000 per annum for pest control materials excluding the Lengthsman's time. The following suggestions were made (to be considered at a future meeting):

- The Allotment Association could be given a fund to manage pest control requirements with tenants contributing to the costs should the fund run out;
- The Council could give 2 years Notice (January 2029) stating that poultry/chickens will no longer be allowed on site;
- The lifespan of chickens is to be researched;
- Any additional benefits of having chickens other than egg production is to be researched.

5. Tenancy Matters and Waiting List:

- There are 71 people on the Waiting List.
- 21 new tenants have been allocated plots since the start of the year and there are 7 vacant plots in the process of being allocated.

6. Finance Report:

- a) A full financial report was deferred to the next meeting.
- b) The new Town Council Community Grant application window will run from 1st April to 30th April. Applications will be put before the Tourism, Events and Community Committee for consideration and approved by full Council. Should there be any remaining funds another window will open again from 1st September to 30th September and will follow the same process.

7. Allotment Reports:

Cheadle Road

- There is an ongoing issue with rats on site.
- The Clerk showed pictures taken of each plot on recent inspection highlighting issues such as asbestos, sludgy paths with boards, carpet or woodchip put down, accumulated rubbish and tyres on plots. The Clerk was asked to provide photographs in this manner for all sites over time.
- *It was agreed that a skip is provided for the large amount of waste cleared from plot 12.*
- *It was agreed that the tenant on 2 identified plots is served with a Notice to Quit following non-payment of fees, structures built without permission and failure to provide a signed Tenancy Agreement.*
- *The Committee agreed for the tree on plot 01 is felled.*

Beggars Lane

- A resident's conifer is overhanging the lane entry into the site which is causing access issues. The resident is to be asked to trim the conifer back.

Peggs Field

- There is an ongoing issue with rats.
- Compliments were given to the Lengthsman for the strimming done on site.

Crescent 1 & 2

- An abandoned car has been reported and ownership is being pursued.
- A resident has requested that a tree on allotment land by their house is diseased and would like it to be cut down. As the tree has a TPO the Clerk will signpost the resident to the SMDC Arboricultural Officer to seek permission for the tree to be felled.

Badnall Street and Parrs Field

- No report.

8. **Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association Report:**

- The recent coffee morning at Trinity Church was successful.
- Enquiry was made whether the Q&A session would be taking place. It was agreed that this is postponed until September/October to ensure that it is well organised, a new venue can be found, and a suitable speaker is sourced. The Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk and Admin Assistant will discuss and bring a proposal to the next meeting.
- If the Best Kept Allotment Competition is continuing it was suggested that the Council contact Dave Lownds asking him if he will judge this or recommend an alternative judge.
- Potato Day will be taking place again next year.
- Formal thanks were given to the Clerk and Admin Assistant for inviting new and existing tenants to become members of the Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association.
- Monies raised for schools will be made up to £500 by the Association.
- Discussions were held on potential outings to shows, plant fayres etc.
- Discussions were held on fencing to protect badgers.
- Discussions were held on the logistics of having sharing benches on suitable allotment sites.
- The next meeting will be held at The Fountain Inn on Tuesday 21st April at 7pm.

9. **Cheadle Road Community Plot Report:**

- 2 current tenants who are members of staff at St Edward's Academy have expressed interest in the Academy using the plot.

GREEN SPACES

10. **Finance Report:**

A full financial report was deferred to the next meeting.

11. **Best Kept Village Community:**

- No response has been received from Team North or the Haregate Community.
- Leekbrook are going to make a basic entry this year to build on in the future.

12. **Site Reports:**

a) Ball Haye Green

- Nature in Your Neighbourhood will be taking place on Thursday 9th April. Posters will be put in Allotment Noticeboards and more volunteers are needed.

b) Ball Haye Green Recreation Equipment

- Quotes have been obtained but spend needs to be in the new financial year. Quotes are to be provided at the next Town Council meeting.

c) Prince Street

- The bench and planter have arrived and will be placed at the site.
- There are 2 old bins there, ownership is to be investigated.

d) Russell Street No report

e) Sparrow Park

- A dead tree had been reported but there was no dead tree on inspection.

f) St Stephen's Square

- Ownership and responsibility for maintenance is an ongoing issue.

g) Cheadle Road: Avenue of trees

- The Clerk is researching whether removed trees can be replaced.

h) Brow Hill

- The Clerk will enquire with Moorlands Partnership Board regarding funding for the collapsed dry stone wall.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 28th April 2026 at 10.30am in the Town Council office

13. Items for the next Agenda

- Banning chickens from being kept on allotments and reflecting this in the Tenancy Agreement.
- Q&A Evening including venue.

Reserved Areas of Business

14. Beggars Lane Allotment Boundary

- The Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, Admin Assistant and 2 Committee members will carry out a site visit on a date to be decided.

Meeting ended 12.25 pm.