



Leek Town Council War Memorials Committee Minutes

ROUTINE MATTERS

1 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Cllrs Hilyer (Chair), Hoptroff, Nichols, M Swindlehurst, Webster

Apologies: Cllrs Powner, L Swindlehurst, Young, and Richard Benefer and Colin Agar

In attendance: Denise Wheat (Town Clerk), Victoria Johnson (Administrative Assistant)

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2026 were approved.

2 ACCESSIBILITY

It was reported that, as part of the Council's commitment to accessibility, the committee would now adopt the Aptos (*sans serif*) font to make it easier for those with visual and other disabilities to read its documents.

3 RETIREMENT

It was reported that Martin Dickinson, who had maintained the NWM's historical clock mechanism for many years, had retired.

It was agreed that Mr Dickinson should be thanked for his years of valuable service, and that John White of the Leek and District Historical Society should be asked for advice on his replacement.

4 FINANCE

It was reported that

- expenditure in the past year had been exceptional because of the events surrounding the centenary of the NWM (and preparing the Monument for the event), but that this had been covered by the precept budget plus the reserves built up by the Friends of the Nicholson Memorial and over £9,000 secured from grants and donations.
- the allocation for the financial year 2026-27 is £9,000, but that there are many uncertainties (including local government reorganisation) that require caution in council expenditure.
- significant expenditure was anticipated to cover the repair to the zip-wire at Ball Haye Green but that, although BHG is a memorial ground such expenditure is the responsibility of the Green Spaces and Allotments Committee.

MEMORIALS

5 MEMORIAL WORKS

It was reported that

Nicholson War Memorial

- estimates were being sought for work to repair the steps at the NWM
- painting and easing of the NWM door would be done in-house
- the electricity contract for the building had 12 months to run but contractors would be changed if that was seen to be advantageous

Ball Haye Green

- discussions about acquiring the toilet block at BHG were on-going
- the metalwork would be re-painted in-house

Leekbrook

- an estimate for work on the paving was still outstanding
- compliments had been received about the improvement, over three years, to the Leekbrook memorial.

6 DISPLAY IN AND ABOUT NWM

It was reported that

- approaches had been made to SMDC to secure use of photograph boards for use in a revised internal display
- curatorship of the Friends of Nichols War Memorial website (nicholsonmemorial.org.uk) should be established to enable updating and possible redesign
- consideration should be given to using the Sensory Garden area (between Market Cottage and the Premier Inn) to perhaps create a visitor information structure, possibly with seating, facing the Monument but eliminating spaces currently blighted by anti-social behaviour: this could celebrate the Monument and its creation; its Sparrow Park location and past; service, sacrifice and remembrance in Leek; the development and strengths of Leek and its heritage buildings and structures (to be integrated with the newly revised information plinth located between the gardens and the Monument)
- the film of the NWM centenary should be uploaded to YouTube, with links from the website (complementing film of the 1925 inauguration)
- a permanent record of the events of the Centenary Year was being created including the parade, ceremony and exhibition, the echoes of that day at the Civic Service, and the Remembrance Day ceremony.

7 LAND AT THE NICHOLSON WAR MEMORIAL

It was reported that discussions were continuing with Leek Town Lands about their involvement in the Nicholson War Memorial .

8 LEEK HERITAGE UNDER THREAT

It was agreed that, in the light of the loss of Big Mill, the war memorials should be taken into account in any concerted attempt to combat the threats to Leek's built heritage.

EVENTS

9 REMEMBRANCE DAY AND OTHER MEMORIAL EVENTS

It was reported that Leek would observe the following commemoration dates in 2026 (at the NWM unless otherwise stated)

Victory in Europe (VE)	8 May
Falklands `	14 June
Armed Forces Day	22 June (at SMDC offices, different from national day on 27 June)
Somme	1 July
Passchendael	31 July
Victory in Japan (VJ)	15 August
Merchant Navy Day	3 September (SMDC)
Battle of Britain	15 September
El Alamein	23 October
Remembrance	8 November (also at BHG and Leekbrook)
Armistice Day	11 November (St Edward's Church)

It was agreed that

- councillor involvement was voluntary but that it was hoped that there would be at least one member at each event, with significant presence at Remembrance and Armistice Days.
- the three large poppy panels should be erected on the NWM for the week around Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Days but should otherwise only be used in exceptional circumstances (both to retain their special nature and their condition).

10 TOURS OF THE NWM

It was agreed that tours of the Monument should be suspended pending discussions with Leek Town Lands.

DNM

- 11 It was agreed** that the next meeting should be held on 5 May 2026.