

Leek Town Council
Green Spaces and Allotments Committee Minutes

MINUTES of the meeting held Tuesday 28th April 2026 at 10.30am in the Town Council Office

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

Minutes: Victoria Johnson (Admin Assistant)

ALLOTMENTS

1. **Welcome:** Cllr. Dee Young welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** John Hodgkinson
3. **The Minutes** of the meeting held on 23rd March 2026 were received as a correct record.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - Dave Lownds has not yet been contacted regarding competition judging as the Chair and Clerk are considering alternative potential judges.
5. **Tenancy Matters and Waiting List:**
 - There are 53 people on the Waiting List.
 - There are 3 vacant plots in the process of being allocated.
 - The Chair and Clerk recently inspected and photographed all plots so that issues can be identified before they escalate.
6. **Ongoing project reports:**
 - a) Pest control update: The Lengthsman continues with pest control measures giving consideration to the proximity of chickens.
 - b) Research on keeping poultry: The Allotment Act 1950 (Section 12) states that Tenancy Agreements can not ban the keeping of rabbits or hens and they must be kept for non-commercial personal use. Whilst it is assumed that it's bird food that attracts rats it was noted that poor compost management is also a significant contributing factor.
It was agreed that general guidelines are sent to all tenants regarding compost management along with a reminder that food caddies will be issued next month.
It was also agreed that the Tenancy Agreement is amended to state that 'food waste is not to be put on compost heaps'
 - c) Asbestos: During inspections and a list of plots containing asbestos was compiled. All tenants on this list have been given the option for the asbestos to be removed.
The Clerk will obtain a quote from the preferred contractor for the asbestos removal and bring it to the Committee. All costs incurred will be paid from the Allotment Maintenance Budget.

7. Items on Notice:

- a) Request to keep ducks: Tenants do not have a statutory right to keep ducks as they do with hens.

It was agreed that keeping ducks on allotments is not currently a consideration for the Council it is not the primary purpose of maintaining and cultivating an allotment.

- b) Requests for a skip: The current skip provider is no longer providing skips for general waste, they will provide skips for metal and glass only moving forward.

It was agreed that the Clerk speaks with Alliance Norse, the Recycling Centre and researches the possibility of having a commercial bin contract similar to cemeteries.

- c) Resident request to pollard a TPO tree: A tree on Cheadle Road allotment site is overhanging a resident's garden but they can not cut the overhanging branches as the tree has a TPO. The tree was only pollarded 2 years ago.

It was agreed not to pollard this tree and that a Policy requiring a minimum 5 year interval between pollarding trees is considered.

- d) Rotavator to aid clearance of plots: A rotavator to assist clearing very difficult plots will cost £500 plus the cost of the Lengthsman's time.

It was agreed not to purchase the rotavator, as there are very few plots that it would be used on it is not currently cost effective.

When PF 33 is treated for Mare's Tail it was requested that the surrounding path areas are also treated.

- e) Arial photography: A £350 quote has been received for arial photography of all allotment sites in an ongoing process to improve maps and identify the land owned by the Town Council.

It was agreed to look at Google Maps in the first instance.

8. Finance:

- The initial Allotment budget was set at £13k when the maximum rent increase was anticipated and there has been an overspend of £1k.
- £1k was budgeted for water but £2069 was actual spend. This is due to increased water rates, a significant leak on Badnall Street, people abusing use of hoses and taps being intentionally turned on and left running.

It was agreed that the Clerk researches the cost and use of timer taps.

9. Site Reports:

Cheadle Road

- It was noted that the new tenants are progressing well.
- The Community Allotment Open Day went well, good work is being done with local companies, and a variety of activities are being planned.

It was agreed that the tenant running the Community Plot should be invited to a Committee meeting and to the Town Assembly.

- The tenant due to receive a Notice to Quit has now paid and sent in their signed Tenancy Agreement. Their plots will be inspected in one month.

Beggars Lane

- A temporary safety barrier is being put in place around the damaged wall next week.
- The Clerk is to write to the company situated behind the damaged wall to request an update on their plans.
- The Clerk will verify ownership with the Land Registry.

Peggs Field

- The Lengthsman will treat the weeds on and around Plot 33
- Fly tipping has been reported at the top of the site. Installing a gate was suggested but this is not possible as it is a permissive right of way.

Crescent 1 & 2

- The abandoned car is to be investigated by the Clerk.
- The Clerk is meeting a tree surgeon to assess the condition of a tree with a TPO on the site but reported by a resident.

Badnall Street

- No report

10. **Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association:**

- The Annual Show was subject to debate, partly due to the lack of numbers available to organise and set up the event. If it does take place, it will be on Saturday 15th August (set up on 14th August and dismantle after the show on 15th August).
- Keeping hens on plots was discussed and it was agreed that there was no real benefit or purpose to keeping them.

11. **Cheadle Road Community Plot:**

- All matters were discussed under Site Reports.

GREEN SPACES

12. **Finance Report:**

- The Green Spaces budget overspent by £27.25.
- The Lengthsman cost code appears to be in **deficit** but the £400 Lengthsman Grant from SMDC is still due to be paid.
- Prince Street was a one-off expense aided by a successful grant application.
- The summer flowers have been ordered.
- Plans are being made to enter the Best Kept Village Competition again. There are no plans for the Hanging Basket Workshop this year as there are limited time and resources available plus it is not cost effective to hold it this time.

13. **Best Kept Village Community:**

- The application deadline is the end of April.
- Haregate Community Centre would like to design and plant a vegetable area and have asked for advice. The Manager of the Centre is to be signposted to the Allotment Association.

14. **Site Reports:**

a) Ball Haye Green

- Nature in Your Neighbourhood have completed their surveys so now qualify for a £6k grant which will be spent on biodiversity and improving the site.

b) Ball Haye Green Recreation Equipment

- The quotes are to be taken to the Finance Committee.

c) St Stephen's Square

- No report

d) Prince Street

- The Lengthsman is buying a specific screwdriver to screw the fixings for the bench to the ground.
- The half moon kerbed area used for parking needs to be filled with shrubs to create an edging/boundary.

It was agreed that the Clerk research available grants. It was also agreed that the Clerk investigates ownership of the bin.

e) Russell Street

- An increase in dog fouling and tired looking plants was noted.

It was agreed that the Lengthsman is asked to put new plants in.

f) Sparrow Park

- Alliance Environment are checking the condition of the reported dead tree. The WI will be informed of the outcome.

g) Cheadle Road: Avenue of trees

- The Highways Department has been contacted, and the Clerk is waiting for a response.

h) Brow Hill

- The collapsed dry-stone wall will incur a large expense to make it safe.

It was agreed that the Clerk looks for potential grants and also checks if there is any applicable insurance cover.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 26th May 2026 at 10.30am in the Town Council office

Meeting ended 12 noon.

Non-Council members of the Committee left the meeting.