

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL

General Purposes Committee

Tuesday 19 May 2026

Council Chamber, Moorlands House, SMDC, ST13 6HQ

MINUTES

1. **Welcome by Chairman:** Cllr. Keith Hoptroff opened the meeting
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Young, Cllr. Cawley and Cllr. Worthington
3. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests,** other interests and consideration for the granting of dispensations. **None declared**
4. **Minutes of the General Purposes Meeting held 21st April 2026** were received and approved for the Chairman's signature.
Proposed Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Webster – All in favour
5. **Matters Arising from the minutes not on the agenda:**
 - a. Response from SMDC Director of Resources regarding the Challinor Fountain repair identifying that there are many problems to solve and noting that these will be expensive.
 - b. Cllr. Worthington to be asked for a report on Ashbourne public toilet management.
 - c. Software is available to log issues with Town Council assets which could also be used to log complaints about heritage assets under threat. Reports could be produced when required. Quotation to be requested for the Civic.ly software.
6. **Finance and Governance:**

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 5 (150)

 - a) Payments for April 2026 were authorised.

Voucher	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Payment Ref
1	30/04/2026	£ 7.78	£ -	£ 7.78	Bank Charges	Admin
2	09/04/2026	£ 9.63	£ -	£ 9.63	Water Supply - 15 Stockwell St	385087391
3	10/04/2026	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 600.00	Equipment Storage	Assets
4	10/04/2026	£ 70.00	£ 14.00	£ 84.00	Civic Event	Stone Civic Ball
5	10/04/2026	£ 1,200.00	£ -	£ 1,200.00	Tree Surgery	Allot
6	10/04/2026	£ 14.00	£ -	£ 14.00	Window Cleaner	Admin
7	10/04/2026	£ 556.80	£ -	£ 556.80	Lengthsman Duties	Week 1
8	10/04/2026	£ 48.99	£ -	£ 48.99	B&M compost & plants	Prince St
9	10/04/2026	£ 64.00	£ -	£ 64.00	Deputy Mayors Allowance	Mayor
10	13/04/2026	£ 1,523.91	£ 304.78	£ 1,828.69	Highway Lighting	Thom St Lamp
11	13/04/2026	£ 587.50	£ -	£ 587.50	Lengthsman Duties	Week 2
12	13/04/2026	£ 10.00	£ 2.00	£ 12.00	Stationary	Admin
13	14/04/2026	£ 380.00	£ -	£ 380.00	Plumber	Allot
14	14/04/2026	£ 622.92	£ 124.58	£ 747.50	Union Flags	Flags
15	14/04/2026	£ 140.00	£ 28.00	£ 168.00	Skip Hire	Allot
16	16/04/2026	£ 51.18	£ 2.56	£ 53.74	Nicholson Clock Electricity	WMC
17	20/04/2026	£ 575.00	£ -	£ 575.00	Lengthsman Duties	Week 3
18	21/04/2026	£ 15.00	£ -	£ 15.00	First Aid Kit	Allot
19	23/04/2026	£ 800.00	£ 160.00	£ 960.00	Stockwell St. Premises Lease	Admin
20/25	23/04/2026	£ 3,873.65	£ -	£ 3,873.65	Salaries	Month 1
21	23/04/2026	£ 1,050.00	£ -	£ 1,050.00	Venue Hire	Mayor
22	23/04/2026	£ 850.00	£ 170.00	£ 1,020.00	Neighbourhood Plan consultant	Reg 14
23	23/04/2026	£ 101.00	£ 20.20	£ 121.20	Lightening Protection Inspection	WMC
24	27/04/2026	£ 725.00	£ -	£ 725.00	Lengthsman Duties	Week 4
26	28/04/2026	£ 340.39	£ -	£ 340.39	Pension	Month 1
27	29/04/2026	£ 106.36	£ 21.27	£ 127.63	Printing costs	Admin
28	29/04/2026	£ 240.00	£ 48.00	£ 288.00	Flagpole Brackets	Flags
29	30/04/2026	£ 20.67	£ -	£ 20.67	Bank Charges	Admin
30	30/04/2026	£ 35.00	£ -	£ 35.00	BKVC entry fee	GSA
TOTAL		£ 14,618.78	£ 895.39	£ 15,514.17		

- b) Flags and Bunting installation invoice was received for authorisation £3975.18 (inc Vat). The seasonal street decoration installation, storage and bracket testing is part of the budget allocated to this cost code. This is the first instalment of the total contract agreement for 2026-2027. The payment was approved.

Proposed Cllr. M Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Webster – All in favour

c) **Bank Reconciliation 30th April 2026**

Cash in Hand	01/04/2026	£42,413.41
ADD		
Receipts	01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026	£138,187.34
180,600.75		
SUBTRACT		
Payments	01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026	£15,514.17
A Cash in Hand	30/04/2026	£165,086.58
(per Cash Book)		

Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
Petty Cash	30/04/2026	£0.00
Current Account	30/04/2026	£0.00
Business Reserve Account (Current 2)	30/04/2026	£162,411.35
Leek Events (Mayors Charity Account)	30/04/2026	£2,675.23
		£165,086.58

B
Less unrepresented payments
Plus unrepresented receipts
Adjusted Bank Balance **£165,086.58**
A = B Checks out OK

7. Reports received: Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst who is the SMDC Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism.

- a) **School of Art spaces at the Nicholson Institute.** The ground floor art room renovations are almost complete; the museum area and the library are well in progress. Tenders will be invited for the occupation of the art room spaces. A formal opening will be in the Autumn.
- b) **Town of Culture:** No news of any decisions has been released to date.
- c) **Nighttime Economy working group report:** Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) A report will be circulated by the end of June.

8. Item on Notice:

- a) **Campaign for Rural England (CPRE) On the Edge campaign** “that every town and city should be surrounded by thriving and protected countryside – for nature, climate and wellbeing” **The Council agreed to sign the campaign pledge.**

9. Committee reports:

- a) **Green Spaces & Allotments (GSA)**
- i. A change of title to the Allotment Committee was proposed by Cllr. Hilyer with terms of reference, to be presented to the June Meeting. It has become apparent that the Committee is split into two separate areas of responsibility. It is logical to move the management of the Town Council green spaces into the Environment Committee.

Proposed Cllr. Hilyer – Seconded Cllr Webster -Vote, all in favour

ii. Protected Trees – Arboriculture Reports required for Crescent 1/Novi Lane and a quotation for pollarding at Cheadle Road allotment site to inform a Tree Management policy.

Cllr. L. Swindlehurst and Cllr. Hoptroff are on the District Planning Committee. The protected trees should have checks annually by the Arboriculture Officer.

If a tree is diseased, it can be removed and the Tree Protection Order would cease. The orders do have safety aspects built in for when problems arise. Residents can ask the tree officer for a report directly themselves.

The decision on a tree's health should be given by the qualified officer from SMDC. More correspondence from the Clerk is required to residents and tree officers.

Cllr. Hilyer proposed, in the interest of the protecting officers, a policy is created to preserve trees. Only in extreme circumstances should the Council cut or remove trees.

It was noted that council staff had been aggressively spoken to about this matter and Cllr. M. Swindlehurst responded that any issues of disrespect should be noted and reported to the Chair of the Council.

iii. Cherry Trees on Cheadle Road: the County Council Highways Officer replied that they are looking at the cherry tree situation. It was confirmed that the County Council planted these trees originally, so they should be the authority to replace them. The Town needs to be looking its best in the Springtime.

Clerk to request that the trees are replaced by the County Council.

Clerk to liaise with Leek WI and Alliance Environmental Services Ltd. to ask if a commemorative tree can be planted in Sparrow Park.

b) War Memorials (WMC): No matters were raised.

c) Tourism, Events & Community (TEC)

Community Grant Applications received will be circulated for consideration at the June TEC meeting. It was reported by Cllr. Wales that Leek Lands Trust have supported Blues & Americana with a grant.

d) Finance:

A change to the Terms of Reference for Finance was considered with regard to 'Standing membership of all Councillors'. The previous Committee terms of reference stated that the Mayor would automatically be the Chair. The change will allow council to approve officers at the start of each year.

10. Sub-committee/ working group reports:

a) Devolution/ Local Government Re-organisation:

The Government have accepted the changes proposed by the NALC paper about working together. This should give Town and Parish Councils a clearer remit following the Local Government Re-organisation.

b) Environment

Changes were approved to the Environment terms of reference. Environment should be a full committee and will encompass the built environment and climate, nature and green space items. Meetings will now move to a monthly frequency if required

c) Neighbourhood Plan (NP): Planning Consultant work will start on 1st June to process the consultation responses and create a Consultation Statement.

11. Ward Reports:

a) Leekbrook: Cllr. Nicholls and Cllr. Hilyer gave the following report;

- i. Wardle Estate has unadopted roads and the developers are responsible for streetlighting.
- ii. The Community are getting together to have a say on the Residential Management Group (RMG) and the adoption of the estate by the County Council.
- iii. Inclement weather the A520 has caused flooding due to a silt build up on the road, blocking the gullies. Cllr Nicholls reported the matter on 7.8.25 and Cllr Edwards responded on 13/5/2026. "The cause could be the building of properties on The Travellers Rest site. Highways officers have discussed and will sort something out and fix issues."
- iv. Pedestrian crossing: A new assessment is required to find out the viability and which crossing is appropriate to that location.
- v. The paving at the side of the War Memorial and railings is still to be pursued. From the newsagent all the way along to the Wardle Estate the pavement is unsatisfactory. Pedestrians and particularly children going to and from school, have to walk on long grass and mud to access bus stops.

A discussion was had about the patchy roads, especially on the corner of East Drive and whether a top surface road dressing is due to be laid. It was hoped that the generation of a Leekbrook community group will create pressure on the County Council and the RMG.

b) Birchall: No issues were reported about the area, but the £45 brown bin charge is concerning residents. Questions were raised about what is to happen to the old bins? The District Council own the bins unless additional bins have been purchased. SMDC are one of the last councils to introduce green waste charges. It was suggested that bins could be shared between several houses where there is not a lot of green waste. The problem of potential fly tipping was then discussed.

A food waste system (caddy collection) is being introduced to encourage composting and to reduce food waste. There is a full report on the introduction of the brown bin charge on the SMDC website. <https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/article/793/Brown-bin>

c) Leek North: Cllr. Ford reported on his first week in office:

- Shop Frontage on Queens Drive, Haregate - the driveway is in a very bad state. It is a non-County Council adopted road. More research on the ownership and responsibility is to be done. The shops are paying rates and rent. The flats are owned by Your Housing Group.

- **Public transport** – Route 165 and 166 have only a limited service of three buses per day. It is causing an issue with people trying to get to work. Frequent buses will help people get back to work. A survey is to be done by Cllr. Ford. The Council advised that it is the County Traffic Commissioners at Stafford that decide on bus route procurement.

d) Leek South: No report

e) Leek East: Fly Tipping has been reported behind the Black Lion pub on Sheep Market and nearby flats are being cleared. Both locations are associated with takeaways and there are issues about how they dispose of their trade waste. The Secret Garden developed by the community (actually a private back garden) behind Derby Street, has been vandalised. The matter has been reported to officers at Environmental Health. A discussion was had about how flats acquire adequate waste removal.

f) Leek West: Cllr. Webster reported that the next Action West End meeting will be held on 18th June at 6pm at Leek Bowling Club.

Cllr. Cawley's written paper was circulated covering the following topics:

- Hedgehogs - A welfare project working with Westwood First School
- Councillor Initiative Fund - £100 has been donated to Action West End
- Brindley Mill – an application for a Heritage Mill competition has been submitted to a charity set up by William Morris in 1877 organised by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings- emphasising the importance of the canal pioneer James Brindley.
- The development of a new trail called Newcomer's supporting the Leek Town of Culture bid.
- Inappropriate shop fronts
- Prostate Cancer Support Group

12. To receive items for information:

a) Twinning Committee:

Cllr. Webster asked to add an item from the Twinning Committee which she is now representing:

- 2027 marks the 25th Anniversary of Leek being twinned with Este.
- Promotion of Twinning Opportunities: Friday 15th May, Outside Arts stall, Butter Market.
- Quiz fundraiser at The Cock on Monday 22nd June. £3 per person and teams of up to 6.
- Coffee Morning fundraiser at Trinity Church 11th July. The aim of the fundraising is to put on an event to celebrate the 25th Anniversary in 2027. Cllr Wales reinforced that this Town Council signed the agreement 24 years ago. It was hoped that the council can draw together the twinning friendship in the coming year. Cllr. M. Swindlehurst has asked the Chair of Twinning Sue McKee to bring ideas for an event to the TEC meeting.
- 11th June is the next Twinning Committee meeting at 5pm at The Town Council office.

b) Funeral of a Market Holder: The Mayor and Consort are attending Geoff the Trestle Market Sock Stall Holder's funeral. He has been a market holder for 40 years (he was fondly remembered for measuring stall widths in banana boxes because that was how he said the stalls should be set out). Geoff helped to keep the market going. It was

suggested to have a plaque mounted in the market in his memory. Cllr. M. Swindlehurst will take the idea to the next Market meeting.

- c) **Flags and Banners:** The new banner has been well received. New flags and bunting have been purchased. Cllr. Wales asked for a quotation to be sought for the weather resistant flags like those on the Mosaic shop. These would not then get wrapped around the poles by the wind.

13. **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".

14. **Confidential Items:**

Reports were received but no decisions were made.

Meeting Ended 20.53

Description	Action	Person Responsible
Challinor Fountain	look for a grant	Clerk/Councillors/ Civic Society
Ashbourne Public Toilets	ask for advice from Ash. T.C.	Cllr. Worthington/ Clerk
Asset monitoring software	get a quote	Clerk
CPRE	sign pledge	Clerk/Chair
Allotments Committee	terms of reference	Cllrs. Young/Hilyer
Novi Lane/ Crescent1 tree	advice from tree officer	Clerk
Tree Policy	draft	Cllrs. Young/Hilyer
Finance Chair	amend terms of reference	Cllr. Hilyer
Environment Committee	amend terms of reference	Cllr. Hoptroff
Neighbourhood Plan	prepare document for consultants	Clerk/Admin
Leek North	bring back reports	Cllr. Ford
Union Flags	Get quote for different style	Clerk