



Leek Town Council
War Memorials Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2026

ROUTINE MATTERS

1 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Cllrs Hilyer (Chair), Ford, Hoptroff, Nicholls, M Swindlehurst, Webster and Young, and Richard Benefer

Apologies: Cllrs Powner and L Swindlehurst

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

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2026 were approved (with the correction of the spelling of the late Michael Brough's name)

3 FINANCE

It was reported that

- expenditure on war memorials broke even in 2025-26 (the apparent deficit of approximately £6,000 being offset by the reserves transferred from the Friends of the Nicholson War Memorial);
- the budget (precept) for 2026-27 was £9,000 with little expenditure to date.

MEMORIALS

4 MEMORIAL WORKS

It was reported that

- **the Nicholson War Memorial:** the area is currently being transformed by the flower display, the return of the six banners, the new Welcome to Leek banner, and the programmable Monument illumination; some paving stones need attention;
- **the Leekbrook Memorial:** the memorial was looking much better than it had three years ago, particularly when the trees are in blossom, but the paving stones now urgently need grouting
- **Ball Hays Green:** Nature in Your Neighbourhood was making good use of the field, repairs to the playground equipment were in hand and the potential for tree planting was being explored; an application has been made to 'Repair Shop on the Road' for help with BHG ground painting.

It was agreed that

- the NWM flood lighting urgently needs to be programmable by council staff
- the Town Clerk should make enquiries of the insurers about the issue of slippery paving at NWM
- the idea of a commemorative copse of 15 trees at BHG should be pursued, within the Woodland Trust programme of 'Free Trees for Schools and Communities' ("any educational establishment and all kinds of local authorities and not-for-profit community groups based in England, Scotland and Wales, including ...local councils ... and many more"), using volunteers for the planting in the autumn, taking advice from local experts and in liaison as appropriate.
- The two priorities for maintenance are the paving stones at NWM and the grouting of paving at Leekbrook.

It should be noted that the NWM illumination schedule is currently

COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS from June 2026-to May 2027, with dates	COLOUR
*Falklands Day (14 June)	Dark Blue
King's official birthday (20 June)	Gold
Armed Forces Week (22 to 26 June)	Dark Blue
Pride (27-29 June)	Pink
*Battle of the Somme (1 July)	Dark Blue
Leek Town Mayor's Civic Service (11 to 13 July)	Gold
*Battle of Passchendaele (31 July)	Dark Blue
*Victory in Japan (VJ) Day (15 August)	Dark Blue
*Battle of Britain Day (15 September)	Dark Blue
Mental Health Awareness (10 October)	Green

*Battle of El Alamein (23 October)	Dark Blue
*Remembrance Sunday/Armistice Day (8 to 12 November)	Red
Christmas Lights Switch On (20 November)	Ice blue
The Longest Night – Samaritans (21 December)	Green
Twelve Days of Christmas (25 Dec – 6 Jan)	Ice blue
National Holocaust Memorial (27 January 2027)	Purple
Commonwealth Day (8 March 2027)	Gold
St George's Day (23 April 2027)	Gold
Staffordshire Day (1 May 2027)	Yellow
*Victory in Europe (VE) Day (8 May 2027)	Dark Blue
<i>*indicates Royal British Legion events at the Nicholson War Memorial</i>	

5 EXHIBITION WITHIN THE NWM

It was reported that discussions were continuing with SMDC about using their war exhibition material to refresh and make more appropriate the interior of the NWM.

6 INTERPRETATION PANELS AT THE SENSORY GARDENS

("Interpretation panels are designed to provide information and education to visitors in various settings, made from durable materials and featuring illustrations and text")

It was reported that

- The secluded sensory gardens behind the NWM had long been ill-maintained and a site of anti-social behaviour
- The idea of using the area to provide visitor information about the Monument and the town was being explored
- Trees at the back of the garden should be retained but the 'island' in front provided cover for unacceptable behaviour
- a high-quality set of interpretation panels would be a valuable addition to the town's tourism offer
- whether or not the area was to be developed effective CCTV coverage and perhaps warning notices were needed.

It was agreed that possibilities for installing interpretation panels should be explored as should potential sources of grant and sponsorship; neighbours (including the Premier Inn, Cattle Market Cottage and the Cattle Market public house) should be consulted as should the SMDC Tourism department,

7 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AT THE MONUMENT

It was reported that anti-social behaviour at the Sensory Garden/Monument had included drug taking, aggressive and offensive behaviour, graffiti and, more recently, indecent exposure. This was a concern for residents going about their normal business and for visitors to the town (including guests at the adjacent Premier Inn); the effect was exacerbated as such behaviour at a war memorial could be described as sacrilegious. The effectiveness or otherwise of CCTV in the Monument/Sparrow Park/bus station area was raised.

It was agreed that SMDC (the appropriate portfolio holder, copied to Chief Executive) should be invited to comment on CCTV provision and liaison with the police.

It should be noted that subsequent discussions indicate that whether or not there is CCTV coverage of the bus station/Sparrow Park area (probably not behind the Monument) it was not being monitored or used by the local police. Council in June 2025 was informed that "a new CCTV contract is being negotiated by the District Council, and a system will be operational later in 2025. Public convenience vandalism and general neglect was discussed. The Council agreed that coverage of main Leek Town Centre locations needs to be addressed. The Council asked for formal report to be requested from the District Council for the September meeting". General Purposes Committee in was informed in September 2025 that "a report was received from SMDC that a new company had been contracted to complete the installation of a CCTV system in the town centre (which) should be operative by October 2025".

8 LAND AT THE NICHOLSON WAR MEMORIAL

It was reported that the Council was waiting for advice from solicitors on issues with regard to the NWM.

EVENTS

9 REMEMBRANCE DAY AND OTHER MEMORIAL EVENTS

It was reported that

- The national RBL may insist that Leek RBL involvement in ceremonies at the NWM be restricted (especially in the use of standards) until a chairman has been appointed to replace the late Michael Brough.
- Town Council assistance has been requested for the booking of the NWM bugler.
- the NWM will be illuminated dark blue for RBL events and red for Leek Town Council events - Remembrance and Armistice Days (see schedule in minute 4)
- the three large poppy panels will be on the Monument for Armed Forces Week and afterwards to include commemoration of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July; the NWM will be illuminated dark blue

It was agreed that

- discussions should be held with Leek RBL about future arrangements on the understanding that the RBL is responsible for arranging and funding NWM events other than for Remembrance and Armistice Days;
- a formal memorandum of understanding should be drawn up to cover liaison between the Leek RBL and the Council
- confirmation is needed as to whether or not the next event, commemorating the Falklands War, will take place.
- There should be a clear understanding of the situation before the next meeting of the Committee.

10 TOURS OF THE NWM

It was agreed that tours of the NWM should restart on Sunday 5 July 2026, from 11:00 to 1:30, that NWM guides should be told of the situation, and that efforts should be made to recruit additional support.

PUBLICITY

11 CELEBRATING THE CELEBRATION

It was reported that progress would be made with making a permanent record of the events of the Centenary year including the parade, ceremony and exhibition, the echoes of that day at the Civic Service, and the Remembrance Day ceremony.

12 WEBSITE

It was reported that Rob Povey should be contacted with regard to updating the NWM website and its integration with that of the Town Council.

DNM

13 It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on 7 July 2026.