

Leek Town Council
Allotments Committee Minutes

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

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

Minutes: Victoria Johnson (Admin Assistant)

ALLOTMENTS

1. **Welcome:** Cllr. Dee Young welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Keith Hoptroff, Cllr Matt Swindlehurst, Denise Wheat (Clerk), John Hodgkinson
3. **The Minutes** of the meeting held on 23rd June 2026 were received as a correct record.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - Following a tenant's enquiry regarding fee increases following the Local Government Reorganisation into the new Unitary Authority, clarification was given that the allotments are a Town Council asset and there is no suggestion that fees will be realigned with those charged to allotment holders in Stoke-on-Trent.
5. **Tenancy Matters and Waiting List:**
 - There are 69 people on the Waiting List.
 - There are 6 vacant plots which are currently not suitable to rent out.
6. **Ongoing project reports:**
 - a) Lengthsman vacancy:
 - AES have been contracted to water the plants in the town centre and empty the bins emptied by the previous Lengthsman.
 - A new Lengthsman has been identified to carry out core duties carried out by the previous Lengthsman.
 - This is an opportunity to identify Lengthsman tasks and duties which have been carried out historically but are not the Town Council's responsibility.
 - It was noted that a number of paths on the allotment sites are overgrown with weeds which the Lengthsman will be addressing when he has been trained to use the industrial strimmer.
 - b) Asbestos removal:
 - Following identification of all asbestos on plots across the 7 sites, the asbestos has been removed from all plots where tenants requested its removal.
 - The Committee approved payment of the asbestos removal contactor's invoice in the sum of £2250.

c) Commercial Waste Removal:

- The Committee discussed issues which lead to a build-up of waste on plots, and the need for the Council to be more rigorous in enforcing the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.

It was agreed that the Tenancy Agreement is to include a paragraph stating that tenants should prevent waste from accumulating on their plot and that they have an obligation to remove all waste from their plot when vacating it. This paragraph should also be reflected in any Warning Notices issued.

It was agreed that the Committee, at its next meeting, should consider whether a deposit should be taken at the start of a tenancy, and if so, how much that should be and such a requirement would be reflected in the Tenancy Agreement.

It was agreed not to carry out further research into commercial waste removal as it is not a viable option on most of the sites.

(d) Hosepipe ban

- Although a hosepipe ban had not been declared by Severn Trent it was necessary to check whether such a ban, should it be imposed, would affect allotment holders.

7. Items on Notice:

a) Best Kept Allotment Certificates:

- Judging has taken place, the Town Council office has been provided with the list of winners, notification letters and Certificates have been prepared.

It was agreed that the winners should be announced and the Certificates handed out at the Pie & Pea/Q & A event on 18th September.

b) Pie and Pea/Q & A format:

- Doors open 6.15pm, food served 6.30pm, Q & A 7.15pm to 8.15pm.
- Vegetable competition and raffle.
- £5 per ticket to secure commitment to the food order, refundable on the night if already a member of the Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association or on paying £3.00 to become a member.

The Admin Assistant will email the Pie and Pea/Q & A poster to all tenants and those on the Waiting List. The poster will also be put on the allotment and town centre noticeboards.

c) Arboriculture report:

- An external Tree Arboriculture expert has examined the tree on The Crescent following a complaint by a resident and produced a report on his findings.
- The tree was found to be in generally good condition, with no evidence of decay or wound and the expert recommended that no action be taken.

It was agreed that a copy of the report is sent to the resident who made the formal complaint, and that no further action is required by the Town Council.

8. Finance:

- The total budget available for allotments in this financial year is £11,500.
- Following spend to date, including the approved payment of £2250 for the asbestos removal, the remaining balance is £6279.58

9. **Site Reports:**

Cheadle Road

- It was noted when judging took place for the Best Allotment competition that the overall condition of the Cheadle Road site had declined.
- Comment was made that whilst several new tenants are making good progress with their plots, many plots are neglected which emphasises the need for the Council to enforce the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.

Beggars Lane

- A formal complaint has been made by a resident to the Town Council and Environmental Health regarding fires being lit on the allotment site. The advice received from Environmental Health has been circulated to all tenants.

The Clerk is to write to the resident enclosing the advice received from Environmental Health.

Peggs Field

- Fly tipping is an ongoing problem at the top of the site.
It was agreed that the Clerk/Admin Assistant reports the problem online to SMDC.
- Several plots have been noted as being uncultivated/neglected.

Crescent 1 & 2

- Fly tipping has been noted on Crescent 1.
It was agreed that the Clerk/Admin Assistant reports the problem online to SMDC.
- A tenant has asked for a hedge bordering their plot is cut back.
The Clerk will establish ownership of the hedge before taking any action.

Badnall & Parrs

- Rethink and the John Hall community have expressed interest in otherwise un-lettable waste plots on Badnall Street.
The Clerk will liaise with the tenant adjoining the waste plots to negotiate an access point.
- Leek North Naturally is overseeing 6 projects in Leek North which includes the project on the waste plots on Badnall Street. The Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association may be asked for advice on some of the projects.

General

- The Chair, Vice Chair and Admin Assistant would, as soon as possible, check plots that were thought to be badly kept with a view to issuing formal warnings where appropriate: a report will be made to the next meeting.

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

- The Potato Day event will be taking place again in February 2027.
- A member of the Association had enquired about changing the date for annual fee payments to March. Clarification was given that Finance Committee had decided that this is not feasible due to the constraints of the Town Council's financial year and accounting requirements.

11. Cheadle Road Community Plot:

- Use of the plot is progressing well.

12. Items for the next Agenda:

- Wording for the Tenancy Agreement and Warning Notices regarding waste management on plots.
- Proposed deposits for tenancies and their management.
- Clarification on hosepipe ban restrictions.

14. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 22nd September 2026 at 10.30am in the Town Council office

Meeting ended 11.40am.

ACTIONS/TASKS TO BE DONE

ACTION/TASK	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/CLLR
Draft proposed wording for the Tenancy Agreement and Warning Notice regarding waste management on plots	Admin Assistant
Compile proposed deposit amount and its financial management	Clerk/Admin Assistant
Email Pie and Pea/Q & A poster to all tenants and people on the Waiting List	Admin Assistant
Send Arboriculture experts report to the resident who made a complaint to the Council and Environmental Health	Clerk
Report fly tipping to SMDC	Admin Assistant/Clerk
Establish ownership of the hedge on Crescent 1	Clerk
Liaise with the tenant on the plot adjoining the waste plots on Badnall Street to negotiate access	Clerk