

Leek Town Council
Allotments Committee Minutes

MINUTES of the meeting held Tuesday 23rd June 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, Denise Wheat (Clerk)

Minutes: Victoria Johnson (Admin Assistant)

ALLOTMENTS

1. **Welcome:** Cllr. Dee Young welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Announcements:

- Notice of retirement has been given by Ashley Lovatt as Leek Town Lengthsman and the vacancy has been advertised with a closing date of Friday 26th June.
- The Committee expressed their thanks for all the work done by the Lengthsman.
It was agreed that the Admin Assistant will notify all tenants that temporarily there will be no Lengthsman service so that they can make alternative arrangements for assistance normally provided by the Lengthsman.

2. **Apologies:** Cllr Matt Swindlehurst, John Hodgkinson

3. **The Report** of the meeting held on 26th May 2026 were received as a correct record (this meeting was held inquorate, so a report was produced as distinct from Minutes) The Committee commented that the meeting was useful and productive.

4. **Matters Arising:**

- *It was agreed that all Allotment Committee meetings will be held on the 4th Tuesday of each month.*

5. **Tenancy Matters and Waiting List:**

- There are 66 people on the Waiting List.
- There are 6 vacant plots in the process of being allocated.

6. **Ongoing project reports:**

- a) Asbestos: There has been a delay in delivery of the asbestos skip so the sheet of asbestos on Beggars Lane has not been removed yet.
It was agreed that the Clerk will liaise with the asbestos removal contractor to determine timescales for the removal of asbestos across all sites.
- b) Compost management: The Committee thanked Mavis Weaver for the comprehensive and informative advice given on compost management which has now been sent to all allotment tenants.

7. Items on Notice:

- a) Report of Tree Protection Order matters: The Clerk is meeting the SMDC Tree Officer on Thursday to inspect the dead tree on Beggars Lane allotment site and to identify ownership of the land it is on.

A resident in Novi Lane has reported a diseased sycamore tree by their property. The SMDC Tree Officer advised the Clerk to seek advice from an external Tree Arboricultural consultant and a quote of £250 for this inspection has been received.

The Committee approved payment of £250 and agreed that the Clerk should commission the external consultant report.

- b) Best Allotment Competition: The poster has been produced, and Dave Lownds will carry out the judging with a Councillor (when available).

The prizes will be as follows:

- 1st place - 50% discount on annual allotment fee
- 2nd place - 30% discount on annual allotment fee
- 3rd place - 15% discount on annual allotment fee
- Highly commended- Certificate

- c) Membership of National Allotment Society (NAS): Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association can join NAS with a minimum of 10 members with a £3.50 fee per person and a one off £1.00 share fee. The paperwork was passed to the Secretary of the Association for completion.

At the Allotment Association's monthly meeting the question was raised regarding NAS membership being included in the annual allotment fee.

It was agreed that the Committee makes a decision on the recommendation to be made to full Council in November 2026 regarding an annual fee increase in January 2028. The annual fee increase to include NAS membership is to be put on the October Agenda.

- d) Rethink: The Regional Manager of Rethink has asked if the Council has any neglected plots available so that they have an ongoing project to maintain the John Hall Gardens community and their wellbeing. The Clerk and the Chair of the Committee have visited several plots with him, and they are currently interested in the waste plots in Badnall Street.

The Committee agreed in principle to giving a 5 year lease with the first year free should this request progress.

8. Finance:

- The initial Allotment budget was set at £13k when the maximum rent increase was anticipated but as this did not happen the actual spend was £11.3k.
- The allotments are self-funding, no money is provided in the budget by the Council.
- Allotment maintenance increased last year due to several large jobs and tree surgeon invoices.
- Allotment water bills were higher last year as there were 2 significant water leaks.

9. Site Reports:

Cheadle Road

- Several plots are in a poor state of repair and there is an ongoing problem with rats.

- New tenant plots have made good progress.
- Comment was made on 3 specific plots which was noted for when the next inspection takes place.

Beggars Lane

- Potholes are appearing in the lane.

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.

Crescent 1 & 2

- No report

Badnall Street

- No report

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

- The members discussed the way forward for the Association. They agreed that a list of volunteers for events is needed so a request will be circulated via their Facebook page along with a list of tasks required to be done at these events.
- The Minutes of the monthly meeting will now be published on their Facebook page.
- The Secretary has researched what other Associations do and provide for their members and will forward a copy to the Town Council office.
- The Chair is attending a Haregate Community Centre project meeting on 24th June.
- A request was made for the annual fee payment date to be moved from January to March.
It was agreed that this request is referred to the Finance Committee.
- Details of the Scarecrow competition have been announced.
- Potato Day will take place on 31st January next year and a poster has been produced.
- *The Clerk was asked to write to Parish Clerks for local Allotment Association contact details.*
- *The Admin Assistant was asked to provide a list of local organisations that may be useful for the Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association.*

11. **Cheadle Road Community Plot:**

- Use of the plot is progressing well.
- A request was received to use the land behind the Community plot as a seating area, but this area currently has a tenant.

12. **Best Kept Village Community:**

- Perennials have been planted in the planters in Haregate.
- A particularly good response was received from one school which translates into a mini consultation with young people.

13. **Items for the next Agenda:**

- Warning Notices and Notices to Quit

14. **NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 28th July 2026 at 10.30am in the Town Council office**

Meeting ended 12 noon.

Members of the public left the meeting.

15. **Reserved Areas of Business:**

- As Chair of the Finance Committee, Cllr Hilyer authorised the Clerk to make any payment necessary for all Town Council plants to be watered.
- There is no update on the allotment boundary at Beggars Lane.

ACTIONS/TASKS TO BE DONE

ACTION/TASK	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/CLLR
Notify all tenants that temporarily there will be no Lengthsman service so that they can make alternative arrangements for assistance normally provided by the Lengthsman	Admin Assistant
Liaise with the asbestos removal contractor to determine timescales for the removal of asbestos across all sites	Clerk
Instruct external Tree Surgeon to inspect the tree at Novi Lane	Clerk
Make a decision on the recommendation to be made to full Council in January 2027 regarding an annual fee increase in January 2028. The annual fee increase to include NAS membership is to be put on the October Agenda.	The Committee
Report fly tipping on Peggs Field to SMDC	Admin Assistant/Clerk
Annual fee payment date to be moved from January to March.	Finance Committee
Write to Parish Clerks for local Allotment Association contact details	Clerk
Provide a list of local organisations that may be useful for the Leek Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association	Admin Assistant