

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL

General Purposes Committee

Tuesday 21st July 2026

in the Council Chamber, Moorlands House, SMDC, ST13 6HQ

MINUTES

Present:

Chair: Cllr. Keith Hoptroff	Vice-Chair: Cllr. Sue Webster	Mayor Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst
Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst	Cllr. Derek Hilyer	Cllr. Dee Young
Cllr. Paul Powner	Cllr. Mike Worthington	Cllr. Steve Ford
1 Member of the Public	Staff: Victoria Johnson	Minutes: Clerk Denise Wheat

1. **Welcome by Chairman:** Cllr. Hoptroff opened the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Stephen Wales, Cllr. Bill Cawley and Cllr. Kate Nicholls
3. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests,** other interests and consideration for the granting of dispensations.
Item 6b: Cllrs Lyn Swindlehurst and Hoptroff are members of the SMDC Panning Committee.
4. **Minutes of the General Purposes Meeting held 16th June 2026** were approved
Proposed Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst – Seconded Cllr. Paul Powner – All in favour
5. **Matters Arising from the minutes not on the agenda:**
 No matters were raised.
6. **Correspondence:**
 - a. **Volunteers:** Following the publication of a poster asking for volunteer helpers at Leek Town Council events, several people have come forward. The Clerk asked the Council to consider the volunteer roles they want to offer. The Council resolved to be welcoming and inclusive. Volunteers for the Neighbourhood Watch initiative will also be welcomed including litter picking.
 - b. **Planning:** Correspondence from Checkley Parish Council regarding the removal of local members call in rights at Staffordshire Moorlands Planning Committee was noted.
7. **Finance and Governance:**
In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 5 (150)
 - a) Payments were approved for June 2026
 - b) Bank Reconciliation for 30th June was approved– ***All in favour*** (see overleaf)

Large payments to be approved for June are:

	Net Cost
Allotments : Protection of Wall, Beggars Lane 51- LC Construction Ltd	£ 755.88
Green Spaces: Summer Flowers – Jacksons Nurseries Ltd.	£ 3,612.00
Internal Audit : JDH Business Services Ltd.	£ 792.00
Subscription NALC and SPCA	£ 1,785.72
Clear Insurance Management	£ 8,264.00
Citizens Advice Bureau	£11,000.00

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Payment Ref
65	01/06/2026	£ 47.92	£ 9.58	£ 57.50	Flags & Bunting	
66	01/06/2026	£ 2.92	£ 0.58	£ 3.50	Office Supplies	
67	01/06/2026	£ 419.45	£-	£ 419.45	Lengthsman Duties	Week 7
68	01/06/2026	£ 45.99	£-	£ 45.99	Civic Regalia	
69	02/06/2026	£ 31.67	£ 6.33	£ 38.00	Key Cutting	
75	02/06/2026	£ 755.88	£ 151.18	£ 907.06	Allotment Fencing	Fencing BL51
70	03/06/2026	£ 10.50	£-	£ 10.50	Road Closure Application	Mayors Civic Service
71	03/06/2026	£ 150.00	£-	£ 150.00	Road Closure Application	Country & Western
72	03/06/2026	£ 42.58	£ 8.52	£ 51.10	Stationary	
73	03/06/2026	£ 3,612.00	£ 722.40	£ 4,334.40	Planters & Hanging Baskets	Summer Flowers
74	03/06/2026	£ 70.00	£ 14.00	£ 84.00	Subscription Fee	
76	04/06/2026	£ 100.00	£-	£ 100.00	Event Advertising	
77	05/06/2026	£ 11.96	£-	£ 11.96	Stockwell Street Water	385087391
78	15/06/2026	£ 794.00	£ 158.80	£ 952.80	Internal Audit	
79	15/06/2026	£ 16.50	£-	£ 16.50	Leaflet Printing	
80	15/06/2026	£ 110.00	£-	£ 110.00	Plumbing	
81	15/06/2026	£ 569.49	£-	£ 569.49	Lengthsman Duties	Week 11
82	15/06/2026	£ 19.00	£-	£ 19.00	Window Cleaner	
83	15/06/2026	£ 137.00	£-	£ 137.00	Website & IT	
84	15/06/2026	£ 151.04	£ 30.21	£ 181.25	Subscription Fee	
85	15/06/2026	£ 1,785.72	£ 357.14	£ 2,142.86	Subscription Fee	
86	15/06/2026	£ 40.00	£ 8.00	£ 48.00	Training	
87	15/06/2026	£ 95.00	£ 19.00	£ 114.00	Banners	Cross St Banner
88	15/06/2026	£ 679.17	£ 135.83	£ 815.00	Lengthsman Duties	Week 10
89	15/06/2026	£ 47.08	£ 9.42	£ 56.50	Allotment Maintenance	Week 10
90	16/06/2026	£ 44.43	£ 2.22	£ 46.65	Electricity	
91	18/06/2026	£ 73.84	£-	£ 73.84	Nicholson Water	
92	18/06/2026	£ 373.84	£ 74.77	£ 448.61	Telephone & Broadband	
93	19/06/2026	£ 35.24	£ 7.05	£ 42.29	Stationary	
94	19/06/2026	£ 350.00	£-	£ 350.00	Lengthsman Duties	Week 12
95	19/06/2026	£ 9.13	£ 1.83	£ 10.96	Stationary	
98	25/06/2026	£ 8,264.00	£-	£ 8,264.00	Insurance	
99	25/06/2026	£ 600.00	£-	£ 600.00	Equipment Storage	
100	25/06/2026	£ 500.00	£-	£ 500.00	Community Grant	
101	25/06/2026	£ 500.00	£-	£ 500.00	Community Grant	
102	25/06/2026	£ 200.00	£-	£ 200.00	Community Grant	
103	25/06/2026	£ 500.00	£-	£ 500.00	Community Grant	
104	25/06/2026	£ 200.00	£-	£ 200.00	Community Grant	
105	25/06/2026	£11,000.00	£-	£11,000.00	Grant	
96/97/106	26/06/2026	£ 3,816.85	£-	£ 3,816.85	Salaries	Month 3
107	29/06/2026	£ 160.00	£-	£ 160.00	Gazebo general duties	
108	29/06/2026	£ 2.50	£ 0.50	£ 3.00	Stationary	
109	29/06/2026	£ 500.00	£-	£ 500.00	Community Grant	
110	29/06/2026	£ 80.00	£-	£ 80.00	Gazebo general duties	
111	29/06/2026	£ 80.00	£-	£ 80.00	Gazebo general duties	8690
112	29/06/2026	£ 200.00	£-	£ 200.00	Grant	8689
113	29/06/2026	£ 80.00	£ 16.00	£ 96.00	Flag Poles	
114	29/06/2026	£ 400.00	£-	£ 400.00	Community Grant	
115	29/06/2026	£ 595.55	£-	£ 595.55	Lengthsman Duties	Week 13
116	29/06/2026	£ 340.39	£-	£ 340.39	Pension	Month 3
117	30/06/2026	£ 10.85	£-	£ 10.85	Bank Charges	
118	30/06/2026	£ 13.38	£-	£ 13.38	Bank Charges	June Event Acc
	TOTAL	£38,674.87	£1,733.36	£40,408.23		

Bank Reconciliation at 30/06/2026

Cash in Hand	01/04/2026	42,160.41
ADD		
Receipts	01/04/2026 - 30/06/2026	169,043.48
211,203.89		
SUBTRACT		
Payments	01/04/2026 - 30/06/2026	71,088.59
A Cash in Hand (per Cash Book)	30/06/2026	140,115.30
Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
Petty Cash	30/06/2026	0.00
Current Account	30/06/2026	0.00
Business Reserve Account (Current 2)	30/06/2026	136,486.85
Leek Events (Mayors Charity Account)	30/06/2026	3,862.45
		140,349.30
B		
Less unpresented payments	(Gazebo labour/ Scout Band cheque)	280.00
		140,069.30
Plus unpresented receipts	(Allotment fee)	46.00
Adjusted Bank Balance		140,115.30

A = B Checks out OK

8. Town of Culture: A report was received from Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst – portfolio holder for Leisure and Tourism: The application from Leek was unsuccessful. It was noted that the other local applications (for example Longton and Crewe) were also unsuccessful.

It was proposed by Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst that the Town Council writes to Mr. Jon Phipps to thank him for all his work on the application submission. All in favour

9. Committee reports:**a. Allotments:**

Cllrs. Young and Hilyer had visited the Allotments with the Best Allotment judges. The Certificates for the winners are being prepared. The Allotment Committee will announce the winners shortly.

b. War Memorials (WMC)

There has been an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the Monument. A Request has been received for the Town Council to consider installing CCTV around the Monument/Sparrow Park. The District Council have CCTV, but their connection between the CCTV access and the Police needs to be improved. The Clerk read out the statement from the District Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Officer. Place based community working with the Neighbourhood Watch groups is to be encouraged. A representative of the Town Council was recommended to be on this group.

Cllr. Hilyer suggested more impetus is needed to the development of the Monument Sensory Garden area.

Following the meeting a response was received from an SMDC Licencing officer that a Public Space Protection Order is normally triggered from a request from the Police.

c. Tourism, Events and Community (TEC):

The Council considered splitting the Flags and Bunting Tender and the Christmas Lights tender into two contracts. Clerk to clarify the end date of the current contract and to prepare tender documents ready for the September meeting.

d. Environment and Green Spaces Committee:

- i. Leek North Naturally: Cllr Hilyer presented a paper bringing several projects all based around Leek North. The six elements are individual projects which can support each other: two sites on Haregate Road, the improvement of Prince Street green space, developing a community garden at

Haregate Community Centre, Nature in Your Neighbourhood at Ball Haye Green, a Woodland Trust Birch copse and a request from Rethink to rehome one of their community projects using an area of unlettable allotments at Brow Hill (Parrs Field/Badnall Street sites). Victoria will be the contact for this project moving forward.

- ii. **Meeting date change:** Cllr. Hoptroff announced a change to the dates of the Environment Committee to enable members to attend the Moorlands Green Network meetings arranged by Support Staffordshire.

The next meeting of Environment Committee will be Tuesday 25th August at 5.30pm at the Town Council office.

e. Finance Committee:

The Responsible Financial Officer explained financial position at the end of the first quarter (1st April to 30th June)

INCOME total of £146, 963.00

£136,975 – half of the precept plus £9,988 other income which includes allotment fees, Bank House rent, In Bloom grant from Alliance Environmental Services, Past Mayors fundraising and donation towards Christmas decorations.

EXPENDITURE total of £67,180

Including staff costs, grants to small community organisations and Citizens Advice Bureau, insurance fee, internal audit fee, summer flowers, grounds maintenance and other small administration costs.

A total Net Position of £80,883 on 30th June 2026

Earmarked Strategic Reserve £44,950.00

The table also includes a row for strategic earmarked reserves which were identified in the Budget set in January. These will be reported in more detail when there is any call on the fund (for example the invoice for the May by-election recharge).

Cost Centre	Receipts			Payments		Net Position	
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
Administration	268.37	268.37	(26837%)	12,000.00	4,112.54	7,887.46 (65%)	8,155.83
Allotments	11,500.00	163.00	-11,337.00 (-98%)	11,500.00	2,970.42	8,529.58 (74%)	2,807.4
Assets	0.00 (N/A)			10,000.00	2,755.58	7,244.42 (72%)	7,244.42
Bank House	9,600.00	2,400.00	-7,200.00 (-75%)	9,600.00		9,600.00 (100%)	2,400.00
Earmarked Reserve	0.00 (N/A)		44,950.00	44,950.00 (100%)		44,950.00	
Events	3,000.00		-3,000.00 (-100%)	5,000.00	720.00	4,280.00 (85%)	1,280.00
Governance	0.00 (N/A)		18,000.00	9,058.00		8,942.00 (49%)	8,942.00
Grants & Donations	0.00 (N/A)			14,500.00	14,000.00	500.00 (3%)	500.00
Green Spaces & Summer Flowers	5,900.00	5,500.00	-400.00 (-6%)	7,000.00	4,069.98	2,930.02 (41%)	2,530.02
Grounds Maintenance	0.00 (N/A)			25,000.00	6,633.86	18,366.14 (73%)	18,366.14
Markets	1,500.00		-1,500.00 (-100%)	1,500.00		1,500.00 (100%)	0.00
Mayoral Office	0.00 (N/A)			6,000.00	116.99	5,883.01 (98%)	5,883.01
Mayors Fundraising	1,407.00		1,407.00 (140700%)	1,465.42		-1,465.42 (-146542%)	58.42
Neighbourhood Plan	0.00 (N/A)			3,000.00	850.00	2,150.00 (71%)	2,150.00
Precept	273,950.00	136,975.00	-136,975.00 (-50%)	0.00 (N/A)			-136,975.00
Seasonal Street Decorations	500.00	250.00	-250.00 (-50%)	55,000.00	6,199.49	48,800.51 (88%)	48,550.51
Staff	0.00 (N/A)			75,000.00	13,983.95	61,016.05 (81%)	61,016.05
Team North Project	0.00 (N/A)			0.00 (N/A)		0.00	
War Memorials	0.00 (N/A)			9,000.00	244.17	8,755.83 (97%)	8,755.83
NET TOTAL	305,950.00	146,963.37	-158,986.63(-51%)	307,050.00	67,180.40	239,869.60 (78%)	80,882.97
Total for ALL Cost Centres	146,963.37				67,180.40		
V.A.T.	21,781.11				3,908.19		
GROSS TOTAL	168,744.48				71,088.59		

f. Human Resources:

- i. **Office Practice Protocol:** The Committee presented a draft protocol on best practice for office use and for management of officer time, to empower officers to work effectively and efficiently. Councillors were asked to review the paper and to forward any comments to the Clerk for the attention of the next HR Committee.

The Committee have also reviewed the following:

- Staff training: both staff are progressing through their Local Council Administration qualifications.
- Local Council Administration: It was agreed to purchase a new copy of the Yellow Book with up-to-date legislation for £149.00.
- Assertion 10 audit requirements are progressing and draft policies for IT. Data Protection and a Publication Scheme will be presented for approval in September.
- Health and Safety: Quotations have been received from various H&S companies all offering monthly subscriptions for advice. The Committee decided the Clerk should research the NALC website for H&S advice to explore all options.

- ii. **Meetings at the Town Council office by outside organisations:** Consideration was given to the use of office space by outside bodies. Problems were discussed including the use of staff time, resources, keyholders and confidentiality.

It was proposed that each meeting request should be considered for its own merit at the time of booking and that some flexibility should be allowed as long as one Council member or officer is present at each meeting. Item to be on the next HR Agenda.

- g. **Twinning:** Cllr. Webster asked for Twinning to be on the agenda monthly as she is attending these meetings regularly as the Council representative.
Fundraising has begun for a 25th Anniversary celebration event to be planned in 2027.
A quiz and a coffee morning have raised over £200. The Mayor and consort were thanked for attending.

10. Sub-committee and working group reports:

a. Devolution/ Local Government Reorganisation.

The Government has confirmed that there will be two new unitary councils – North Staffordshire (Staffs Moorlands, Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent) and South Staffordshire (Tamworth, Cannock, Lichfield, Stafford, South Staffordshire including Stone and south to Kinver and East Staffordshire, including Uttoxeter and Burton upon Trent).

The process will formally commence in May 2027 when an election for a new Shadow Unitary Council will be held. The new unitary body will then assume full responsibility in April 2028. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Staffordshire County Council will cease to exist at this point. Parish and Town Councils will continue.

It was proposed for the following LGR topics to be on the September Town Council agenda:

- i. SMDC legacy projects: the projects that SMDC will complete, leaving positive improvements behind in the Moorlands.
- ii. Large ongoing SMDC projects which will continue in their current format.
- iii. Cllr. Hilyer and Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst the LGR Champion for Staffordshire Moorlands North have written a paper about 'What Makes Leek Leek' as part of the Locality Action Plan consultation being conducted by Mutual Ventures for SMDC.

The public consultation is open to all sectors of the community, businesses and individuals.

<https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/article/8637/Locality-Action-Plans>

Some dates and facts were noted:

Parish and Town Council Elections are to be held in May 2027. Elected Councillors will be in their elected post for 5 years.

The next Unitary election will be in 2032 to correspond with Parish and Town elections.

There are currently 39 Parishes and 3 Towns in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

The Clerk will circulate the What makes Leek Leek paper to Councillors and contributions to enhance the content were invited so that the paper can be submitted for the consultation.

- b. Neighbourhood Plan:** Maps need to be adjusted and the Regulation 14 Consultation Statement amended and completed. The Neighbourhood Plan and Consultation Statement will then be presented to the Town Council in September for consideration.

11. Ward Reports:

a. Leekbrook:

Cllr. Hilyer reported that the listening group event was well attended with good open dialogue between residents. The RMG are now responding to the communities' complaints.

Cllr. Nicholls has prepared a report which will be circulated to councillors.

b. Birchall:

Cllr. Worthington reported that no issues were arising in Birchall.

c. Leek North:

Cllr. Steve Ford reported on his ongoing projects:

- i. Pothole and road surface issues in front of Queens Drive shops will be escalated to Your Housing Group.
- ii. Ball Haye Green: Blocked gullies have been reported to the County Council, some gullies are damaged and need more work than cleaning.
- iii. A meeting with a manager from Amey has been arranged to walk around the town to look at the traffic system.
- iv. The same day they will look at the potential of a pilot scheme to park cars on the verges in Haregate to ease congestion on the estate.
- v. Peak Cluster: Research is being done on this project.

Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst reported on her ongoing projects:

- vi. There have been improvements to pavements as a result of collaborative working with different authorities.
- vii. Team North Football Project. The Crime Commissioner attended the community overview and scrutiny meeting at SMDC. Young members of the Team North football team thanked Ben Adams for the grant which started the club by presenting him with a framed photograph of the Team. Thanks were given to the volunteer team coach Will Grindey.
- viii. Increasingly more parents are attending the football on a Sunday morning. Volunteers would pick up dog fouling before football could be played, but the situation has vastly improved.

- ix. There has also been less litter in the area. Tackling anti-social behaviour is about educating and informing the community about Pride of Place, looking after assets and respecting facilities.
- x. Brough Park Leisure Centre, officially renamed 'My Active Leek' will open on 18th August 2026 following extensive refurbishment from the Leveling Up Fund.

d. Leek South:

Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst reported:

- i. St Edward Street has closed from 21st July for three weeks, to be resurfaced and a pedestrian crossing installed from Sheep Market to High Street.
- ii. Birchall Pavillion fitness classes will move back to My Active Leek from 18th. The Pavilion will then be refurbished with community meeting rooms as well as traditional changing facilities for sports.
- iii. Ornuo on Barnfields are extending their factory. It was noted that Ornuo made the carrier base for the covid vaccine.

Cllr. Keith Hoptroff reported:

- iv. Fly tipping on Glebeville has been reported to SMDC.
- v. While the crossing is being created on St Edward Street there is access from Strangman Street to shops and limited street parking. Thanks were expressed to former County Councillor Charlotte Atkins for her work on the project which took 5 years to get to the point of installation.
It was then discussed that Ball Haye Street/Buxton Road/Stockwell Street junction also needs a pedestrian crossing as it is extremely busy with traffic volume.

A debate then ensued about the reporting of County Council issues using their app. It was suggested that when complaints are logged on the County app, written responses should follow with actions taken from County Council Cabinet members. Residents find the County app a barrier, as it is difficult to use. If issues are not reported on the app County Council will not respond.

A letter to the Mayor from the County Council is to be listed on the September agenda.

More presence from Cllr. Sonny Edwards and Cllr. Bob Egginton is required. Clerk to invite them to the September meeting.

Cllr Worthington left the meeting 20.30

e. Leek East:

Cllr. Paul Powner reported:

Southbank street will be closed for Severn Trent repairs at the end of the month.

f. Leek West:

Cllr. Sue Webster reported:

- i. Action West End event organisation is progressing.
- ii. Belle View is being resurfaced.

12. Items for Information:

Cllr. Hilyer reported that the application to Moorlands Partnership Board to have the exterior of 15 Stockwell Street woodwork refurbished and painted had been declined due to SMDC owning the property. The Town Council now need to apply to SMDC to ask either for permission to paint the exterior or for SMDC to undertake the work.

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:

- a. 15 Stockwell Street:** No further progress was reported on this matter.
- b. Bank House:** The lease has been signed and the solicitor is finalising documents with the Tenant.
- c. Allotment Boundary:** The legal process is progressing and practical site issues are being solved.
- d. War Memorial:** No further developments.
It was decided that on 2nd August the monument will be open for tours.
- e. Lengthsman Contract:** The Council decided to ask for quotations for a service level agreement for the maintenance of the Planters and Hanging Baskets separate to Lengthsman duties.
The Lengthsman has accepted the contract at a reduced rate on a part-time basis for specific duties as requested by the Clerk.

Meeting ended 20.45

General Purposes Meeting: 21st July 2026

Action	Description	Person Responsible
Formulate a recruitment process and communication network for volunteers	To welcome volunteers to help at Town Council events	Staff and Councillors
Write to Mr. Jon Phipps at Foxlowe Arts Centre	Letter of thanks for his work on the Town of Culture bid	Mayor
Announce Allotment Competition Winners	Send letters and inform the Allotment Committee in preparation for the presentation on 18 th September at the Pie & Pea Allotment Association event	Admin
Councillor/s to attend community Neighbourhood Watch group	To contribute to improving Pride of Place in Leek	Councillors
To improve the Sensory Garden area adjacent to the Monument	To identify funding and prepare a draft plan of action	War Memorial Committee and staff.
Flags and Bunting Tender	To prepare the document	Clerk & TEC Committee
Christmas Lights Tender	To prepare the document	Clerk & TEC Committee
Leek North Naturally	To progress each area of the project before the next Environment meeting	Admin/ Allotment Committee
Office Practice Protocol	Councillors to contribute to the document	All Councillors
Health and Safety	More research to be done	Clerk
Locality Planning What Makes Leek Leek?	Councillors to contribute to the paper	All Councillors
Neighbourhood Plan	Finalise the consultation statement	Clerk & Neighbourhood Plan Committee
County Councillor presence at meetings	To invite all County Councillors to attend September meeting	Clerk
Painting of Exterior Office	Apply to SMDC Assets	Clerk
Confidential Items	To monitor progress	Clerk and Committees