

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL Finance Committee

Tuesday 8th September 2026,

5:30pm in Town Council Office

MINUTES

D. Wheat Town Clerk

1. **Welcome:** Chair: Cllr. Derek Hilyer, Mayor Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst, Deputy Mayor Cllr. Keith Hoptroff, Cllr. Paul Powner, Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst, Cllr. Sue Webster.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Bill Cawley, Cllr. Dee Young, Cllr Kate Nicholls and Cllr. Mike Worthington
3. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests,** other interests and consideration for the granting of dispensations: None declared
4. **Minutes of 14th July 2026 Finance Committee were approved** as a correct record.
5. **Matters arising** from the minutes not on the agenda:
 - a. **Leek Town Council assets list** was received and Russell Street Garden has been added.
 - b. **Office Door:** SMDC assets department have agreed to paint the door before Autumn. Clerk to liaise on the date so that the brasses can be removed and polished.
6. **Financial Report up to 28th August 2026** was presented by the Clerk who is the Responsible Financial Officer (see below) plus the Bank Reconciliation. Cllr. Powner requested committees to estimate a forecast for year end for their cost centre (Committees will also suggest exceptional items to be considered – see minute 8). A full report will then be prepared for the October meeting.

Leek Town Council Summary of Receipts and Payments Summary - Cost Centres Only

Cost Centre	Receipts			Payments			Net Position	
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend	
Administration		440.67	440.67 (44067%)		12,000.00	5,425.25	6,574.75 (54%)	7,015.42
Allotments	11,500.00	712.00	-10,788.00 (-93%)		11,500.00	6,718.91	4,781.09 (41%)	-6,006.91
Assets			0.00 (N/A)		10,000.00	3,437.79	6,562.21 (65%)	6,562.21
Bank House	9,600.00	3,200.00	-6,400.00 (-66%)		9,600.00	9,600.00 (100%)	3,200.00	
Earmarked Reserve			0.00 (N/A)		44,950.00	44,950.00 (100%)	44,950.00	
Events	3,000.00	410.00	-2,590.00 (-86%)		5,000.00	1,700.00	3,300.00 (66%)	710.00
Governance			0.00 (N/A)		18,000.00	9,058.00	8,942.00 (49%)	8,942.00
Grants & S137 Donations			0.00 (N/A)		14,500.00	14,500.00	0.00 (N/A)	0.00
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	8,091.40	16,908.60 (67%)	16,908.60
Markets	1,500.00	440.00	-1,060.00 (-70%)		1,500.00	1,500.00 (100%)	440.00	
Mayoral Office			0.00 (N/A)		6,000.00	2,059.75	3,940.25 (65%)	3,940.25
Mayors Fundraising		1,765.00	1,765.00 (176500%)		1,465.42	-1,465.42 (-146542%)	299.58	
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	6,731.16	48,268.84 (87%)	48,018.84
Staff			0.00 (N/A)		75,000.00	26,562.02	48,437.98 (64%)	48,437.98
Team North Project			0.00 (N/A)			0.00 (N/A)	0.00	
War Memorials			0.00 (N/A)		9,000.00	323.02	8,676.98 (96%)	8,676.98
NET TOTAL	305,950.00	149,692.67	-156,257.33 (-51%)	307,050.00	90,992.70	216,057.30 (70%)	59,799.97	
Total for ALL Cost Centres		149,692.67			90,992.70			
V.A.T.		21,781.11			4,976.99			
GROSS TOTAL		171,473.78			95,969.69			

Leek Town Council

Prepared by: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Date: _____

A	Bank Reconciliation at 28/08/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026		42,160.41
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2026 - 28/08/2026		171,473.78
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2026 - 28/08/2026		213,634.19
			95,969.69
	Cash in Hand 28/08/2026 (per Cash Book)		117,664.50
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 28/08/2026	0.00	
	Current Account 28/08/2026	0.00	
	Business Reserve Account 28/08/2026	113,124.14	
	Leek Events (Mayors Charity 28/08/2026	4,494.36	
			117,618.50
	Less unrepresented payments		
			117,618.50
	Plus unrepresented receipts		46.00
	Adjusted Bank Balance		117,664.50
	A = B Checks out OK		

- 7. External Audit:** The external audit is in progress with Forvis/Mazars and the conclusion statement is expected shortly. Problems identified are being addressed. The Clerk will list the item on the September Town Council agenda.
- 8. Budget and Precept setting 2027-2028:**
- a. The Chair of Finance, Cllr. Hilyer has written to the Chairs of committees to ask them to suggest any items of significant expenditure for consideration for inclusion in the 2027-2028 budget.
 - b. The Chair asked the committee to consider increasing the reserves to correct any deficit if identified by the auditors. The RFO was asked to define the fixed costs for each committee for each of their next meetings.
 - c. Budget setting will commence in October with the following meeting dates:
 - Finance Committee – 13th Oct** - to consider committee requests
 - Finance Committee – 10th Nov** – to receive a draft of the budget
 - Finance Committee – 8th Dec** - to finalise the budget proposal
 - Full Council (Budget Setting)** – 15th December 2026 (Dove Room, SMDC) to debate and agree the budget
 - Full Council – 19th Jan** – to consider the Precept calculation and to approve the final budget for 2027-2028
 - Full Council – 16th Feb** – to request a Precept from SMDC.
- 9. Maintenance of Assets:**
- a. Lengthsman progress report: The council are pleased with the new lengthsman's work so far.
 - b. Two quotations were received for the service level agreement for;
 - i. The bin emptying and litter clearance on Ball Haye Green Rec.
 - ii. The watering of the summer flowers

The committee recommended approval of both of these contracts for 2027-2028
 - c. A quotation was received for the replacement of a Highways lighting lamp and post at 1 Northcliffe, Leek. Cllr. Webster was asked to inspect the site in Leek West before a decision is made at the September town council meeting.
- 10. Staff Salaries:** NALC have released their annual recommended pay increase for Council staff, which is set at 3.3% backdated to 1/4/2026. The committee proposed approval of this increase to stay in line with national sector guidance. The total increase to the Staff Salary cost centre with a small amount for Employer's National Insurance Contribution is estimated to bring the total to approximately £2000. This increase was anticipated in the 2026-27 budget.
- 11. Mayors Fundraising:**
- a. Previous Mayor Cllr. Hilyer raised a total of £2,200 through a series of events held throughout his Mayoral year 2025-2026. He will split this amount equally between his two appointed Charities; Leek Theatre Company and Headway (North Staffordshire) each receiving £1,100.
 - b. The funds raised by past Mayor Cllr. Barry Birch are to be split equally between his Mayoral Charities;
 - Moorlands Voluntary Community Transport £1488 (MVCT had already had a £1000 presented by Cllr Birch before he passed away)
 - Ball Haye Green Children's Football Team (Team North) £2488.

12. Items for Publicity: A full report is being prepared for publicity about the successful grant applications in 2026.

a. Community Grants: The Navel of the Moon director had decided that the Day of the Dead event will not happen in November 2026. The Clerk will check the application content and speak to the applicant before the grant is returned. Cllr. Hoptroff suggested asking if they would like to be involved with Christmas lights event instead. A small parade was discussed. It was noted that any new features to the event would need to be risk assessed. If the grant is returned it was resolved that it should go back into the earmarked grant reserve

b. Woodland Trust tree application: Victoria Johnson was congratulated on being successful with her application for the copse of trees for Ball Haye Green and for other elements in the Leek North Naturally project.

13. Draft contract tenders were circulated for the Christmas Lights and the Flags and Bunting contracts. The committee decided that a separate task and finish working group should meet to concentrate on the tender process. Clerk to ask the Council for members to support this task.

14. Items recommended for approval at the 15th September Town Council Meeting:

- a) Service Level Agreement for Ball Haye Green maintenance (bins and litter)
- b) Service Level Agreement for the Towns Summer Flowers maintenance & watering
- c) Invoice for the Reg 14 stage of the Neighbourhood Plan
- d) Invoice for the towns Christmas Tree and 25 mini trees (Smithfield Centre and office)
- e) Replacement of Highways lighting lamp and post 1 Northcliffe (Leek West)
- f) Staff Salary – National backdate increase 3.3% (see minute 10)

15. Items for the October Finance Committee agenda:

- a. A breakdown of the total cost to the council of creating the Leek Neighbourhood Plan plus the amount of Government grants received for the project.
- b. Quotations to be received for a replacement Laptop
- c. To note that the Finance Committee resolve to scrap the Tourist information device following a quotation of over £1000 to bring it back into repair. The technology is obsolete.

16. Exclusion of the Public:

The Chairman to 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".

No members of the public were present

17. Bank House: The lease is due to be completed on Thursday 10th September. The situation is to be monitored.

18. Report of correspondence: The council await a response from Leek Town Lands.

19. Meeting Ended 6.55pm

Next Meeting:

Finance Committee: Tuesday 13th October 2026 – 5.30pm Town Council Office