Leek Town Council

Leek Town Mayor
Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst

Leek Town Council
15 Stockwell Street
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MINUTES - Tuesday 15th September 2026

7.00pm at Staffs Moorlands Council Chamber, Moorlands House, Leek, ST13 6DH

Present:

Mayor Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst	Deputy Mayor Cllr. Keith Hoptroff	Cllr. Sue Webster
Cllr. Matt Swindlehurst	Cllr. Derek Hilyer	Cllr. Stephen Wales
Cllr. Kate Nicholls	Cllr. Mike Worthington	
2 Members of the Public	Staff: Victoria Johnson	Town Clerk Denise Wheat

57. **Welcome** by the Mayor Cllr. Lyn Swindlehurst
The Mayor read out the ground rules of the meeting as follows:

As Chair of Leek Town Council, I have made the decision to begin each meeting with a set of ground rules for our public meetings.

- Please speak through the Chair and only when invited to do so.
- Please allow others to speak without interruption.
- Keep contributions relevant to the item being discussed and to within 5 minutes if possible.
- Differences of opinion are welcome, but please challenge the issue, not the individual.
- Please remain courteous and respectful to councillors, officers and members of the public.
- Any views expressed by any speaker in this meeting are the speaker's own and they do not necessarily reflect the views of Leek Town Council.
- The Chair may intervene where necessary to maintain the orderly conduct of the meeting viewed as non-compliant with the councils Standing Orders.
- Members of the Leek community have a right to address the Town Council having followed the procedure set out on our website and in Standing orders. Any further discussion and invitations to speak are at the Chairs discretion.

58. **A Minutes silence was held in memory of former Mayor 1999-2000, Town and District Councillor Mrs Margaret Lovatt.**

Margaret was a dear friend and true role model – not because of titles or positions, but because she lived those values every day.
She believed in fairness, equality, community and looking out for one another. For Margaret, politics was always about people, particularly those who needed someone prepared to stand alongside them and speak up for them.
She gave decades of service to Leek, but more importantly, she gave people her time, friendship, determination, and loyalty.
Those of us fortunate enough to know Margaret personally will remember the woman behind the politics too – a great character, a good friend and someone who certainly knew her own mind!

So rather than simply mourn Margaret tonight, let's celebrate a remarkable life, a woman who made a difference. On 19th October Margaret would have been 93.

To Margaret – She will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

Cllr. Wales commented that Margaret had supported the Leek Neighbourhood Plan and the funding for the founding of Foxlowe Arts Centre.
Cllr. Webster who served at SMDC during the same period as Margaret, commented that she had been Chair of Planning at SMDC and was a champion to many projects in Leek.
It was noted that Cheryl Smallwood a former councillor for the old Southwest Ward has also recently passed away. Condolences were expressed to her family also.

The council approved that the Nicholson War Memorial should be lit purple on the funeral day of a current serving councillor or a former Mayor of Leek.

59. **Apologies:** Cllr. Dee Young, Cllr. Paul Powner, Cllr. Bill Cawley and Cllr. Steve Ford

60. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** and other Interests and consideration for the granting of dispensations: ***None declared.***

61. **Mayors Announcements:**
The council received the news that Loval Government Reorganisation (LGR) had been paused: this will allow more time for planning and will mean the District Council elections will take place in 2027 instead of a shadow election for a new Unitary Authority. A press release from SMDC (available on their website) was circulated to the Council and members of the public present.

62. **County Councillor Reports:** *No reports were received*

63. **Minutes were approved as a correct record as follows:**

a. Town Council meeting held on 21st July 2026:
Proposed Cllr. Hoptroff, Seconded Cllr. M Swindlehurst– All in favour
b. Planning Committee 28th July 2026 Planning Committee:
Proposed Cllr. Webster, Seconded Cllr. Hilyer – All in favour

64. **Matters arising** from the Minutes not otherwise on the agenda: ***None***

65. **Governance:**

a. **External Audit Report:** Conclusion statement not received to date. Item to be adjourned to the October agenda.

b. **Internal Audit:** Continuity of the internal auditor was approved. The Chair of Finance, Cllr. Hilyer stated that it is valuable for an auditor to challenge the council on financial procedures. DH Business Services was appointed Internal Auditor for 2027-2028 subject to his availability to undertake the role.
Proposed Cllr. Hilyer – Seconded Cllr. M. Swindlehurst – All in favour

c. **Draft Policies:** Items were adjourned to the October agenda for approval.

66. Local Government Reorganisation

a. **SMDC Legacy Projects** are embedded in a medium term financial plan which would have been concluded at the end of SMDC in May 2028. The Alliance leadership teams are revisiting the financial plan.

b. **Large scale capital projects Cheadle Market and Cheadle Leisure Centre** restoration and regeneration will be completed as planned. Finance and operations are being coordinated to action these two projects imminently.

c. **Mutual Ventures LGR Consultation for SMDC** will continue. Towns and Parish Councils can develop ideas and profiles of their towns and villages through Parish clusters. The Parish Assembly is developing an assets register of all the Staffs Moorlands parishes and towns. Cllr Hilyer spoke on the paper that he has compiled from input from Councillors on What Makes Leek Leek. The paper is a summary of strengths and opportunities in Leek. It is a working document which can be added to and improved.

67. Correspondence Received:

a. **Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Partial Review consultation.** The Clerk has circulated the links and asked all Councillors to complete the survey.

b. **Leek Fair Trade** have been awarded a certificate for achieving Fair Trade Town status for a further three years. Leek has signage at the entry points of the town. To maintain the status the Chairman asked the council to promote their activities and to log in to the website and register as a supporter.

Cllr Worthington arrived 19.17

68. <u>Mayor's Report for July/ August and September:</u>

Attended by the Mayor Cllr Lyn Swindlehurst

- 25 July — Opening of Little Luxuries, Country & Western Day, Leek & District Agricultural Show
- 1 August — Meet the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- 9 August — Cheadle Party in the Park
- 19 August — Hen Cloud House resident's 100th birthday celebration
- 28 August — .Co Leek Open Evening
- 5 September — Action West End Family Fun Day
- 7 September — Mayor of Tamworth's 'Curryoke' Night
- 13 September — Battle of Britain Service & Congleton Mayor's Civic Service
- 15 September — MyActive Leek Official Opening

Attended by the Deputy Mayor Cllr Keith Hoptroff

- 26 June — Band of the West Midlands Fire Service Concert
- 1 August — Meet the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- 3 September — Merchant Navy Day
- 13 September — Battle of Britain Service

The Mayor is also deputy Chair of SMDC and in this role was a storyteller at a Winnie the Pooh 100th birthday event organised by the Staffordshire Library Service at Combes Valley RSPB reserve.

Congratulations were expressed to success of the Action West End event. Clerk to write a letter of thanks to the organisers. Thanks were minuted to the Councillors who got involved to help.

69. Items for information:

Women's Safety Event – Coffee and Conversations at Trinity Church Lower Hall on Wednesday 23rd September from 9.30am to 1pm, self-defense demonstrations and support from various organisations with free personal safety items.

70. The meeting was adjourned for Public Participation. No members of the public asked to speak.

Meeting ended 7.21pm

71. <u>Dates of forthcoming Meetings and Events:</u>

Tue 29th Sept	***Twinning Committee:*** *7pm, Town Council Office*
Tue 6th Oct	**War Memorial Committee**: 6pm, Town Council Office **Tourism, Events and Community**: 7pm, as above
Tue 13th Oct	**Finance Committee:** 5:30pm, Town Council Office
Tue 20th Oct	**Leek Town Council:** 7pm, SMDC Council Chamber **General Purposes Committee:** as above
Tue 27th Oct	**Planning Committee:** 9.45am, Town Council Office **Allotments Committee:** 10:30am **Environment Committee,** 5:30pm as above