

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Sarah Wallace, Civic Officer

On 5 February the Mayor and Sheriff welcomed 87 Guests to the Guildhall for a traditional Sunday Lunch. This was the first time an event of this kind had been held and many guests chose to accompany the Mayor to her Sunday service at Wade Street Church beforehand.

A three course lunch was served at 1.00pm after which members of the Walsall Operatic Society performed songs from Les Miserables and other West End musicals.



The afternoon was rounded off by drawing the raffle and there was also an opportunity to buy daffodils which had kindly been donated by Paul Smith, a Lichfield market trader. The event raised a total of **£800** for the Mayor and Sheriff's charities.

The Mayor and Sheriff invited two children from St Michael's school to the parlour on 14 February for afternoon tea.

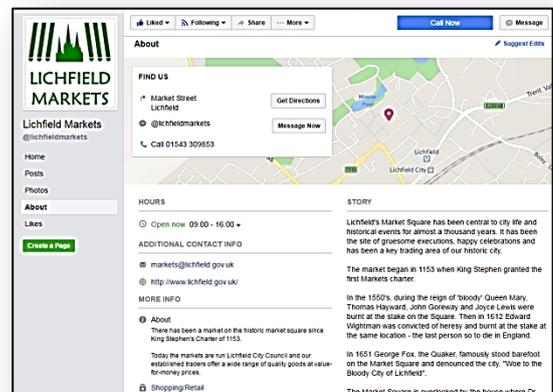


Layna Suzuki, age 11 and Isabelle Coleman, age 5 were the lucky winners of a poetry competition which was held in December. Their winning entries were printed in the Mayor and Sheriff's Christmas card. After signing the visitor's book the Mayor presented both girls with a set of audio books after which everyone enjoyed tea and cake.

Preparations are ongoing for the Mayor and Sheriff's remaining charity events which include the Fashion Show on 28 March and a Variety Show on 8 April. Civic events continue with the Schools Speaking Competition on 3 March, and Entertainment and Tea for the Over 70's on 11 April.

2. Markets: John Beard and Lisa Howard, Markets Officers

The dedicated Lichfield Markets Facebook page www.facebook.com/lichfieldmarkets has in the last week alone had almost 400 new visitors, so word is obviously spreading quickly.

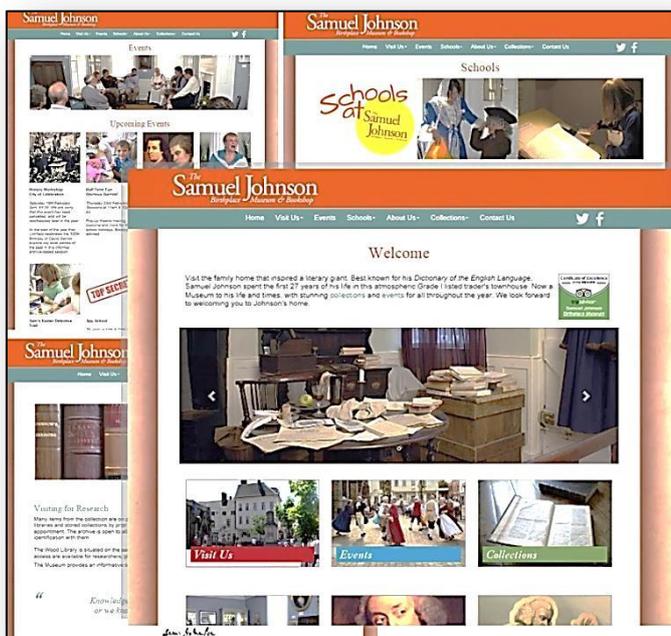


The Saturday market is once again at full capacity as one of the Tuesday traders has taken 3 stalls on a permanent basis as well as continuing with his Tuesday stall.

There is one new trader on a Tuesday with the prospect of another one starting in 2 weeks so Tuesday's look likely to be full again very soon.

Fridays are still not as busy as we would like but there are new applications pending.

3. Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum: Jo Wilson, Museums and Heritage Officer



The New Year has started with a new look for the Birthplace website. Following the re-launch of the LCC website in 2016, VisionICT have also updated the Museum site to be more eye-catching and image-led, with a colourful scheme inspired by old book bindings. The website is due to be launched imminently.

Decoration is now completed in the London Life and Introduction Rooms following last year's structural works. The exterior is awaiting a final repair to a small area of the timber frame on the first floor level, which is due to be completed by early March.



2017 marks the 300th Birthday of Johnson's close friend David Garrick, and events began in February with the launch of a new Garrick ale, in collaboration with Blythe Brewery, Lichfield Arts and Lichfield District Tourism Association, who held a well-attended event at the Birthplace with local partners and businesses represented, including an appearance from David Garrick himself.

The additional publicity around 'Garrick300' has led to a busy start to the year, with 1400 visitors to the house in the first 6 weeks of 2017. An article in 'City Life' magazine also led to increased interest in the Birthplace Writer's Group, launched in 2016 for adult creative writers, with attendance more than doubling at the February meeting.

In partnership with the Garrick Theatre and Visit Lichfield, a full programme of the year's Garrick events will be appearing in March, and preparations for the Birthplace Garrick exhibition opening in June are underway. This has included arrangements for the conservation of two prints of Garrick, one by William Hogarth, which has been kindly funded by the Johnson Society following a fundraising campaign with their membership.

Outreach work in January included talks to over 100 people at Nuneaton and Great Wyrley History Societies by Sue Bray, with both groups intending to make follow-up group visits to Lichfield. The Birthplace Museum continues to engage with education projects across a range of ages, including: two groups from St Michael's School visiting in January, now a regular visit; a new GCSE-aged Duke of Edinburgh volunteer Gabrielle joining the 'Bookworms United' Saturday reading club team; and Megan Farrell, a University of Birmingham 'History in the Workplace' placement student creating a display of Johnson Halfpennies as part of her six month project.



The Birthplace also received the excellent news that a project in partnership with Keele University has received Arts and Humanities Research Council funding, meaning that Keele will be holding four fully-funded research seminars in Lichfield about 18th century printing, paper and book culture and based on the Birthplace collections, as well as programming a range of free school and public sessions at the end of their 2-year project in 2018-19. Other recent M&HO work has included research on collection items due to be loaned to Lichfield Cathedral in the Spring, and preparations for opening an additional cell in the Guildhall prison display area for the summer open season.

4. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

The Burton TV news report following their visit to the Cells last year is still on their website – www.burtontvnews.co.uk. The Cells are due to open in a few weeks and we have recently had two Cell tours.

Our regular bookings have been in: Archaeological and Historical Society, Ballroom Dancing, Concert Band Practice, Bridge, Chess, Darby and Joan, Heyday Friendship, Italian Class, Ladies Cameo Group, Lichfield Poets, Meditation, The National Trust, Needwood, RSPB, Slimming World, and the U3A. There have been four Market Research bookings and two Craft Fayres. The Guildhall has also been used for one Birthday Party, the Manor Park Sailing Club Lunch, a Naming Ceremony, Funeral Wake, Masquerade Ball and a Wedding Reception.

Lichfield Ladies Circle held an international meeting which included a Fish and Chip Supper. The Worshipful Company of Smiths held their annual Feast. A few weeks ago, Staffordshire County Council held a Careers Fair and the Mayor held her Mayoral Court and Sunday Lunch.

The Lichfield Arts have held two concerts, and last month they held their popular beer festival.



22 February was the Lichfield Arts Community Night which showcases the work they do in the community, with free admission.

During the last weekend of February we hosted another Craft Fayre, a Market Research booking and a Lichfield Arts Concert.

As part of a tour of some of Lichfield's historic buildings, a group of students from the University of York will be visiting the Guildhall to study the stained glass window in the main hall.



5. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

Lloyds Bank Work Experience

Klara Schreiber, the daughter of Limburg District Music School director Peter Schreiber, completed a 3 week work placement at Lloyds bank from 23 January to 10 February. She was welcomed by the Mayor, Cllr Sheelagh James and the Bank Manager of Lloyds Bank, Mr. Ben Rowell.

Klara had a very interesting and varied experience at the bank and went back to Germany to start her higher education programme with the German Bundesbank (Central Bank) in Frankfurt.

She very much enjoyed her time in Lichfield and was overwhelmed by the warm and inclusive welcome she received from everybody involved, the members of the Twinning Association and especially all the staff and management at Lloyds Bank.



Ring Twinning Anniversary

The 25th anniversary celebrations of the ring twinning between Ste. Foy, Limburg and Lichfield will be held in Ste. Foy during the weekend of 6th October to 9th October 2017.

Erasmus+ Programme

Two male students in their early twenties, Florian and Yannick, from Limburg's Adolf-Reichwein-Schule arrived in Lichfield on 26 February to start their month-long work experience, volunteering in organisations across Lichfield which help people with learning difficulties. They are studying social care at Limburg College and their volunteering work in Lichfield is being funded by the European Erasmus+ programme. The Erasmus+ scheme enables students to spend part of their required vocational work experience in another EU member state.

The students set up their main base at the Queen's Croft School and Head Teacher Peter Hawksworth was very happy to offer them placements at his school and is looking forward to a very positive Erasmus+ experience. The students will also take up placements at Cherry Orchard Gardening Services and Friends2Friends during their stay in Lichfield. At the end of March, during the last week of the programme, two Assessors from Limburg College have organised an Erasmus staff visit to Lichfield in order to establish personal contact with all contributing organisations.

Exchange Enquiries

16 Lichfield Cathedral Girl Choristers (11 – 15 years) are planning to travel to Sainte Foy on 10 July until 14 July 2017. Plans are in place for a civic reception, followed by a concert in the church and joint musical activities with the girls' choir from Lyon Cathedral, which might lead to a concert in the Cathedral, if the venue is available. Both countries have expressed their commitment to make this the start of more regular contacts in order to make music together and a return visit to Lichfield has already been discussed.

Limburg City Council have enquired if, like in previous years, Lichfield City Council is able to offer a one week work experience for their apprentice Elena Stolz in October of this year.

A German and French teacher at Lichfield's King Edward VI School is enquiring about partner schools in Limburg and Sainte Foy for possible exchanges and penfriends. Enquiries have been sent to both Councils in Germany and France. Contact has been established with a French private college so far.

A 20 year old student from Sainte Foy is looking for a 6 week work experience placement, possibly in HR, in Lichfield during May or June of this year. The Twinning Officer is looking for interested companies and would appreciate any suggestions.

Laura Peluso, an 18 year old Limburg student, will be completing a 3 week internship at Thomson Travel Agency in Bore Street from 12 to 30 June, as part of her course at the Peter Paul Cahensly College. She will be staying with a Lichfield family from the Twinning Association.

On 16 to 18 June, six Lichfield Table Tennis players will travel to Limburg to take part in an international Twinning Table Tennis Tournament, which includes players from all 4 countries twinned with Limburg, namely France, England, Belgium and Germany. This tournament will form part of the celebrations for the 800th anniversary of Limburg-Offheim.

A 21 year Lichfield student, studying French at Leeds University, is looking for a summer placement in France. A request has been sent to the Sainte Foy City Council.

6. Open Spaces and Tree Management: Nick Burton, Open Spaces Officer



The hedge work has started in earnest in particular on paths that caused concern last year. There are also a number of maintenance issues that need attention.

A car ran into the Heather Garden wall from the Walsall Road. The Police have spoken to the owner of the car and we are awaiting a conclusion from their enquiries. Surveyors Hancock, Wheeldon and Ascough are conducting a survey on the damage to the wall so a quotation can be provided for repair work.

Hancock, Wheeldon and Ascough will also surveying the wall in the Remembrance Garden next to Langton House which has started to crack, and the balustrade next to Bird Street which now has some movement.



The Pinfold Gate will also need to be replaced in the near future with something in keeping.



There are an excess of moles in turf areas at the moment which is a challenge during grass cutting, the City Council will be doing some mole control but this will be kept to a minimum.

7. Deputy Town Clerk: Tony Briggs

Repairs to the 'stairwell' area of the Guildhall roof began in late January. At an early stage it was revealed, as feared, that some of the supporting timbers to the lantern light were in very poor repair and that much of their structural integrity had been lost. Further inspection also revealed water ingress and rotted timbers to other areas of the lantern light supporting structure that had not shown any external signs of disrepair. Replacement of the rotted timber is underway at the time of compiling this report.



The conversion of an area of the Donegal House basement into toilet and kitchenette facilities continues to progress well. The Saniflo system has been installed and tested and the sanitary fittings and kitchen cupboards are in place.

Initial discussions have taken place with the City Council's architects following the approval of the 2017/18 R&R budget by Council at its meeting of 31 January. Some elements of the 2017/18 programme have been carried over from 2016/17, allowing a positive early start to be made on several items, including the replacement door to the reception area of Donegal House and the minor roof repairs, also to Donegal House.

In addition to progress on major renovation items there has also been progress on relatively minor, but necessary improvements. The cloakroom, which has for many years been used for storage as well as for its designated purpose, has been cleared and cleaned in readiness for redecorating. Debris and accumulations have also been cleared from the stairwell to generate extra storage space, now utilised by the Museums and Heritage Officer to enable a further prison cell to be opened for the 2017 season.

A comprehensive service of the Guildhall and Donegal House central heating system has been completed. Several radiator valves in both the Guildhall and Donegal House have been found to be faulty and scheduled for replacement as necessary. As this requires the system to be drained down, the repairs have been scheduled for early April.

The draft Lichfield City Neighbourhood Plan together with its supporting documents (the Consultation Statement, Evidence List and Basic Conditions Statement) have been

submitted to Lichfield District Council for informal comment prior to formal submission. Informal comments are expected to be returned by LDC in mid-March.

Youths gained access to Boley Park Community Hall on Monday 20 February during the Zumba class. While it was a very intimidating experience for the hirers, thankfully nobody was hurt and no damage was done to the Hall. The Police attended but were unable to catch the perpetrators. Of great concern however is that access was gained through the front door, despite it being locked from the inside. The key safe on the side of the building was found to be undamaged but empty, suggesting the combination had been acquired and the key used by the youths to gain entry.

On receiving the report of the incident on Tuesday morning the locks and code to the key safe were changed on the same day. Regular hirers have been informed of the changes and new keys have been issued to them. Additional security measures are being actively pursued, including the installation of a remote access CCTV system.