

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Sarah Wallace, Civic Officer

On Friday 3 March the Michael Fabricant MP and Arthur Price of England Schools Speaking Competition was held in the Guildhall. The Speaking Competition is run on Parliamentary lines and the audience are encouraged to wave their order papers as if in the House of Commons. All four teams opposed the Motion: *'That this House believes that those taken to hospital by ambulance due to drunkenness shall be required to pay ambulance costs incurred'*.

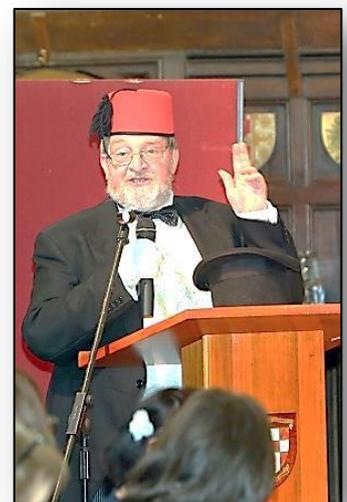


The Friary School Team of James Wilson, Jack Askew, and Pamela Nyambayo won the best overall school team award and Nathan de Giorgi of John Taylor High won the best overall Speaker in what was a very close run competition.

The event has been sponsored for a number of years by Arthur Price of England who kindly donate all the silver cups for the winners. The Rotary club of Lichfield St Chad also have a long association with the competition providing a time keeper and Judge. Sadly this was the last competition for Robin Jones of the Rotary, after 14 Years as a time keeper he has stepped down as he will be relocating out of the area.

The Mayor and Sheriff's Charity Fashion show, held at the Guildhall on Tuesday 28 March raised over £1900.00 for charity, the highest amount raised in the history of the event.

The Mayor and Sheriff welcomed a sell-out crowd of over 130 people to the event which was presented by the House of Fraser Sutton Coldfield. Guests were treated to a first glimpse of the Spring/Summer collection which included casual and occasion wear for both ladies and gentlemen.



All of the 33 models who took part were volunteers, drawn from a variety of sources including Lichfield Round Table, Lichfield City Council staff as well as friends and relatives of those involved. They were all given five star treatment at Francesco's hair salon prior to the show who closed the salon for the afternoon and provided their stylists services free of charge. Angela Toon a professional makeup artist applied the models makeup to ensure everyone looked their best.

Deanne Russell and the team at the House of Fraser worked tirelessly to put the collection together and the store generously

supplied 'goody bags' and raffle prizes. The result was a professional and enjoyable show.

One of the models commented; *'I can honestly speak for us all, to say that we all had great fun and enjoyed every minute of it. The fellowship back stage {men included} was fantastic and I hope it came over on the catwalk. The audience was electric. I have been to all the fashion shows at the Guildhall and can say they were the most welcoming and enjoyable ever. Of course that was helped by our wonderful compere Ken.'*



The Mayor and Sheriff hosted another of their charity events on Saturday 8 April in the form of a Variety Show, presented by 'Just Us' at Whittington Village Hall. Permission was granted by Whittington Parish Council for the event to be held here as this is the only venue that the company perform in. The City Council's own Ken Knowles, a founder member, re-joined 'Just Us' for this one off occasion to support the Mayor and Sheriff's charities. The 120 guests began the evening with a Fish and Chip Supper before sitting back to enjoy a fun packed night of entertainment. The event raised a total of approximately £1700.00.

A warm welcome awaited guests at the Mayor and Sheriff's Afternoon Tea Party on Tuesday 11 April. Guests arrived at Curborough Community Centre at 2.00pm for afternoon tea and were then entertained by Lichfield Singers whose popular, foot tapping repertoire included many good old sing-a-long songs. The afternoon came to a close with a raffle and the Mayor wished everyone a safe journey home.



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

Tuesday and Saturday

Markets are running consistently with stall occupancy near capacity.

Friday Markets

Stall occupancy rates have improved over the last month, increasing from an average of 64% In January/February to 84% in March/April.

Farmer's Market

The Farmer's Market year to date has struggled with stall occupancy rates averaging 42% Feb – April 2017 compared to 52% Feb – April 2016. Stall holders also complain that footfall has reduced.

We are currently creating a plan to rejuvenate the Farmer's Market and have already agreed to;

- Supply traders with leaflets showing dates for the year at each market. These will be put in the bag along with every customer's purchase.
- Create a dedicated Farmer's Market Facebook Page and ask all traders to "check-in" so that all of their followers are made aware of the market.

Wednesday Stalls

Plans have advanced to run a Wednesday trading trial over the summer. This will allow a small number of traders to stand using their own stalls, on the understanding that there will be no skip facilities and they remove their own rubbish (similar to the current Tuesday trading regulations).

The advantages to the Council are;

- Guaranteed weekly income equivalent to hiring half the square
- No extra running costs
- Half of the square will still be made available for ad hoc hire, e.g. by coach companies

The trial is due to start after Easter.

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

A number of events took place at Johnson's Birthplace in March, many as part of the Lichfield Literature Festival as an official partner. These included Intimate Theatre performing 'The Golden Moment' as part of the Garrick 300 celebrations, written by David Tittley, to two sold-out audiences; a Birthplace stall at the Library 'Paper Fair'; a poetry reading event and the Johnson Society lecture, with actor Ian Kelly enjoying a tour of the Museum. The literary theme to the month continued with 'Love and Duty: the Lives of Georgian Women', by professional storyteller Cath Edwards, a popular event which was the first time that the Museum has worked with the Lichfield Storytellers group. The Lichfield Poets also visited the Birthplace for an evening of inspiration, writing on the theme 'Echoes of the Past'.



Young visitors enjoying the Museum in March included groups from Woodlands School in Tamworth, and A Level groups from Belper and Lichfield Cathedral School for Dictionary Workshop Language sessions. Working in partnership with LDC, over 100 children in district schools took part in printmaking sessions inspired by images of David Garrick from the Museum's collection, to be displayed at the forthcoming Staffordshire Day event in May.

Also out of the Museum, a talk was held at a local interest group in Tamworth, and the Birthplace attended the 'Swap Shop' district tourism event.

Developments in the Museum displays included the hanging of the painting of Lord Chesterfield, newly framed following its return last year following 40 years in storage. Much work is underway on the summer Garrick exhibition including taking items to the conservation studio and securing the loan of ceramics, paintings, prints and personal items to display from the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, and the Garrick Club in London. Birmingham University student Megan Farrell completed her work placement and the Museum is now a regular member of the placement scheme, with a new student arriving in September.

Other work behind the scenes included the electrical inspection of the building, and preparations and volunteer recruitment for the Guildhall Prison Cells, with an additional cell opening for the summer season.

4. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

The old Prison Cells are now open to the public on a Saturday from 10.00am to 4.00pm, with a volunteer on hand to offer information about their past. This year we have opened up a third Cell for members of the public to view. In addition, we have had five other Cell tours, including one for Age Concern.

The LDTA have held a meeting at the Guildhall, in which Ken Knowles gave an interesting talk to the members and included a tour of the building, old Prison Cells and Mayor's Parlour.

The Main Hall has been hired for The League of Friends of Samuel Johnson Hospital's Supper, a birthday party, the Lichfield Festival AGM, the City of Lichfield Concert Band Spring Concert, the Johnson Society AGM and a Cavalry Banquet.



We have our first Wedding Ceremony (and their Reception) this year on 15 April, which will be followed by another three Wedding Receptions in the next few weeks.

We continue to attract our weekday regular bookings including our relatively new regulars, the National Trust and RSPB which give very interesting talks to their members.



There have been three Market Research bookings and now the Spring has arrived, four Craft Fayres and a Table Top Sale to raise funds for the Cats Protection Society. We have also had a picture display in the Corridor Gallery.

The Lichfield Arts have held six concerts (Fret and Fiddle, Orange Circus Band, Craobh Rue, The Stumble, Martin Taylor and Gigspanner), while recent Civic Events held include the very successful Fashion Show and the School Speaking Competition.

The Cloakroom has been redecorated ready for use during the upcoming Wedding Receptions and other events. Maintenance work has also been completed to the lights in the Main Hall.

5. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

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 6 October to 9 October 2017. 80 guests from each twin City have been invited to join the Ste. Foy Council and Twinning Association for the celebrations. Ste. Foy Council is putting together a varied programme, with international table tennis and tennis tournaments being played between the 3 City clubs. The full festivity programme will be published at a later date.





Lichfield guests wishing to take part in the weekend celebrations should register their interest with the Lichfield City Council Twinning Officer by the end of April. Accommodation will be either with host families or hotels if preferred. Transport to Ste. Foy is organised individually by each traveling guest. There are direct flights from Birmingham to Lyon with Flybe or by Eurostar from London, which would involve an overnight stay in London both ways due to the early departure and late arrival.

Erasmus+ Programme

Two male social care students, Florian and Yannick, from Limburg's Adolf-Reichwein-Schule completed their work experience, volunteering in organisations across Lichfield which help people with learning difficulties. Their volunteering work was funded by the European Erasmus+ programme, which 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 also spent time with "Liberty" at Minster Hall. During the last week of the programme, two staff from the Limburg College visited Lichfield to reflect on their experience.

Exchange Enquiries

16 Lichfield Cathedral Girl Choristers (11 – 15 years of age) are planning to travel to Ste. Foy on 10 July until 14 July. 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's Cathedral, which could 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 Ste Foy for possible exchanges and penfriends. Contact has now been established with a French private college and a German secondary school.

Laura Peluso, an 18year 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 college 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

twinning with Limburg, namely France, England, Belgium and Germany. This tournament will form part of the celebrations for the 800th anniversary of Limburg-Offheim.

A theatre group from the Limburg Adolf Reichwein Schule is interested in performing in Lichfield during a City celebration such as Staffordshire Day or Heritage Weekend. Whilst this year's Staffordshire Day would be ideal, due to the Garrick300 events it seems too short notice for the school and Heritage Weekend is now being considered.

The Twinning Officer attended the AGM of the Lichfield Twinning Association on 13 March and delivered the annual report on all twinning exchanges.

The British-German Association in cooperation with Bristol-Hannover Twinning Council, in their 70th anniversary year, are organising a national conference "Challenges and Opportunities" in Bristol in May, where topics such as new initiatives in youth exchanges will be discussed. The Twinning Officer will be taking part in this conference.

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

The view from Minster Pool Walk is much improved with the removal of the tree by Saville, also the non-working lightbulbs have been replaced so the pool has returned to the spectacle it is in the evenings.

The Friary Remains wall repair has been completed utilising S106 money; Some of the stone work has been repointed with Lime, and stones replaced as agreed by English Heritage. Stone flags have also been repaired to remove the previous trip hazard.





Also in the Friary Gardens an ivy covered Hawthorn tree fallen due to storm Doris has been removed. Storm Doris caused a huge amount of damage across Staffordshire; locally over 40 trees have fallen in the LCC plantation north of Eastern Avenue alone. However the damage during the weekend itself is just the beginning as the cost of the damage and the implications for other trees are still being calculated.

The tree leaning over the A51 had to be felled causing a short road closure which was dealt with by the County Council. Unfortunately the other 5 now need to be felled to remove any future potential hazard. While still being calculated, the extra cost to the City Council attributable to Doris could total over £20,000.

The Regional Seminar for Cities in Bloom provided useful tips on improving grades; these were reported to the Blooming Lichfield Committee. The competition remains a useful incentive to begin new projects and make improvements to the City.

Following the success of the meadow strip by Tamworth Road last year small strips of turf have been removed in other areas to be seeded with native bee friendly plants in 2017.

Augmented reality tours which will not require signage and will allow any landmark to inform and educate are currently being investigated, with the OSO completing a trial recording at the statue of Captain Smith in Beacon Park. A short tour is planned for the Home & Gardens Festival on May 30 and 31.



7. Deputy Town Clerk: Tony Briggs

The conversion of part of the basement of Donegal House into kitchenette and toilet facilities is now complete. The project has been completed within budget and is extremely timely; the only other kitchen/toilet facilities being on the top floor of the building and now in greater demand due to the letting of rooms in Donegal House to private businesses.



Repairs to the 'stairwell' area of the Guildhall roof are also now complete with the exception of some minor snagging. This much needed repair has involved the replacement of a considerable number of rotted timbers, altering the levels of the roof area to avoid 'ponding' of rainwater, the installation of a new waterproof membrane to replace the aged and poorly repaired lead that previously covered the roof, and a complete overhaul of the large lantern light to include replacement glazing where necessary. The leaking centre pivot Velux window in the Whytmore room has also been replaced with a top hung model to allow ease of access to the roof area for future maintenance as necessary. Additional repairs have also been undertaken to the adjacent pitched sections of the roof to remedy minor leaks in the same area and to replace loose/missing tiles, and the replacement of the small window to the landing above the door to the Whytmore Room which was badly rotted externally. A selection of 'before and after' photographs of the main repair area are below;





Following intermittent issues with the main light fittings in the Guildhall, the lamp holders were found to be nearing the end of their useful lives and required replacement. This was completed by the City Council's electricians on 21 and 22 March.

Improvements to the Minstrels' Gallery to allow it to be used as a robing room, including new screens, storage, carpet and curtains has also been completed.

Progress continues to be made on the 2017/18 Repair and Renewals schedule with an application lodged for listed building consent for the installation of the replacement glazed door to the lobby of Donegal House. Tenders have also been issued for the minor repairs to the roof of Donegal House with submissions now received and the contract due to be awarded. Repairs to the chimneys at the Birthplace Museum, also included in the 2017/18 Repair and Renewals schedule, are due to take place on 24 and 25 April.

As part of a service and maintenance programme to the Guildhall/Donegal House heating system, several faulty radiator valves have now been replaced. As this required the system to be drained down it was considered impractical to carry out the work earlier in the year. The drain down took much longer than anticipated as the sump pump was found to be inoperative. Replacement of the pump is currently being arranged. The system is scheduled to receive a comprehensive service in September 2017 in preparation for the winter months.

A professional fire safety risk assessment was carried out at Donegal House on 3 April 2017. The recommendations of the inspector will be incorporated into the proposed replacement of the ageing Donegal House fire alarm as highlighted in the separate Repair and Renewal Report to Council, and a general update of the fire provision in the building.

Following the replacement of the light fittings to the top floor of the Guildhall earlier in the year, the whole area has now been redecorated. The Whytmore room has also received a much needed facelift following the damage caused by water ingress to the now repaired roof. The updated décor now provides a far more pleasant atmosphere for meetings. The Guildhall cloakroom and glossed areas of the Guildroom have also been redecorated.

In an effort to reduce incidences of members of the public entering the Guildhall when they are neither hirers nor guests/delegates, a poster has been designed to inform passers-by that the building is not open for casual visitors. Mounted inside a forecourt sign, it can be removed for events such as corridor gallery sales, prison cell open days etc.

Informal comments have been received from Lichfield District Council following the submission of the latest draft of the Lichfield City Neighbourhood Plan and associated documentation. A meeting was held with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the City Council's Neighbourhood Plan Committee on 7 April to consider the comments with some minor changes being made to the Neighbourhood Plan as a result. Discussion is ongoing with the City Council's Neighbourhood Plan consultants in regard to some of the other informal comments received and it is hoped that a final version of the Neighbourhood Plan will be ready for submission to the District Council in May.