

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee Meeting held in Committee Room 1, Guildhall at 10.30 am on Thursday 23 March 2017

PRESENT:

Representing Lichfield City Council: Councillor R Awty, and Councillors Mrs G Boyle, C Spruce and R Yardley.

Representing Johnson Society: Mr D Arthur

In Attendance: Joanne Wilson (Museums & Heritage Officer)
Tony Briggs (Deputy Town Clerk)

Apologies: Councillor J Brooks

37 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 October 2016 be confirmed as a correct record. [Minutes adopted by Council on 24 October 2016.]

38 FORWARD PLAN

Members considered the updated Forward Plan 2017-2020 (**Agenda Appendix 1**). The Museums and Heritage Officer outlined work identified for the 2017/18 financial year, including; the establishment of an improved online shop area as part of the new website plans; non-user consultation; the development of group-specific literature advertising tours and talks. Many of the development items included and all elements under the heading of 'To assess and seek alternative solutions to the physical limitations of the building' will begin to be addressed by the incoming Consultant.

Councillor R Awty enquired as to the impacts and timings of the closure of St Mary's. Councillor R Yardley advised the Committee that St Mary's is due to close at the end of March 2017 and that the proposed conversion is forecast to be completed by April 2018.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan 2017-2020 be adopted.

39 MUSEUM ACCESS POLICY STATEMENT

The Museums and Heritage Officer provided an overview of the statement to the Committee. The Committee discussed the limitations of the Birthplace Museum in regard to disabled access and the possibility of a ground floor toilet and greater 'street level' presence. It was acknowledged that while appropriate options have been and will continue to be investigated and implemented (such as the virtual tour available on the Museum's website), the restrictions enforced by the coveted Grade I listing of the building, and the need to preserve the structure and layout of the Museum to preserve authenticity, severely limited the options available.

RESOLVED: That the Museum Access Policy Statement be adopted.

40 OPENING HOURS

The Committee discussed the recommendation of the Museums and Heritage Officer that consideration be given to extending the Museum opening hours to the standard 'Summer' hours of 10.30am – 4.30pm in October and March, thereby creating a shorter Winter opening hours season. Councillor C Spruce stated that the recommendation was based on experience and the need was clear. It was proposed by Councillor C Spruce, Seconded by Councillor A Thompson and

RESOLVED: That the Museum opening hours during October and March be henceforth extended to standard 'Summer' hours, beginning during October 2017; and that the Museums and Heritage Officer prepare a report on the impacts of this decision to be presented at a future meeting of the Committee.

41 REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Members considered the update provided by the Museums and Heritage Officer regarding the preparation of a brief to be sent to a selection of recommended museum consultants to tender. The brief focuses on Museum facilities, access (in the broadest sense) and the visitor experience (including displays); The report is scheduled to be completed over the Summer with its conclusions reported at the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

42 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday, 4 October 2017.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.53 AM**