

# Lichfield City Council

Donegal House, Bore Street, Lichfield, WS13 6LU



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## Annual Report 2022-23

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**Her Majesty  
Queen Elizabeth II**  
**1926 - 2022**



# INTRODUCTION

2022/23 has been another busy year for all LCC functions. The renovation of LCC owned bus shelters, new wilding areas, and the improvements at Festival Gardens are perhaps the most obvious in terms of the Open Spaces function, but there have been numerous improvements to LCC owned open spaces across the City, some of which are highlighted in this report.

The Markets remain popular, and with the input of the Council's Markets Working Group, the outlook is good. We were pleased to welcome the Vegan Market Company to the Market Square for three 'pilot' markets in 2022, and these have been extended for 2023, complimenting both the City Council's Markets and the successful Producers' Market. Civic events have been well attended and it is good to see the civic family coming together again.

There have also been a number of significant improvements to the City Council's property, notably at the Birthplace Museum, which is one of the most prized buildings in the City and fully deserving of its Grade 1 listed status. The discovery of a significant structural issue at the Museum while carrying out more routine repairs was a significant setback, but with that work now completed we can be assured of the building's stability for decades to come.

The Council has allocated Community Infrastructure Levy to a number of deserving projects across the City and we are pleased to see this funding making a real difference.

There is a lot of information in this report, and it can be easy to forget the City Council is the smallest of the three councils serving the City of Lichfield, with only 13 full time equivalent employees and a Band D council tax for 2023/24 of £68.76.

The 2023 local elections marked the end of the 2019-23 electoral cycle and saw Labour take overall control of the Council for the first time this century. As the 2023-27 cohort of councillors settle into their roles, we promise a renewed motivation to work on your behalf to improve this wonderful City, and we welcome your thoughts, suggestions and contributions.

Dates of meetings, contact details for City councillors and much more information about the Council and the City are available on our website at [www.lichfield.gov.uk](http://www.lichfield.gov.uk).



*Councillor Dave Robertson  
Council Leader*



*Councillor Ann Hughes  
Mayor*

# ANNUAL REPORT – 2022-2023

## OPEN SPACES

The year began with a large sycamore falling on the footpath and adjacent fences along the pathway towards the Borrowcop Gazebo during stormy weather. This site is particularly difficult to access with vehicles, making clearance a lengthy task. Following the removal of the tree, contractors were appointed to make good to the pathway and damaged fences.



Also at Borrowcop, a routine inspection identified a diseased sycamore. Further investigation and discussion with LDC's Arboricultural Officer and LCC's tree surgeons revealed that removal of the tree was necessary. The tree was felled to six feet in height, allowing a chainsaw carving of an owl to be made in the remaining section of trunk.

This new feature has attracted several favourable comments and is a positive addition alongside the Gazebo for all to enjoy.

A survey on the trees within the closed Churchyard at St Michaels was commissioned to ascertain their condition, work required in the short term and longer-term maintenance and monitoring. The Ash trees were of particular concern, and the resulting report identified four phases of work together with ongoing monitoring and further investigation.

The identified work has been completed and received considerable positive feedback.



The first year of the wildflower borders around Festival Gardens was very successful (pictured), and we look forward to a stronger showing of flowers as each year goes by as is evidenced by the bund at Nether Stowe. A number of other improvements were made to Festival Gardens during the year, including the repainting of the bridge over Trunkfield Brook and the installation of perimeter bollards, together with additional benches to guard against unauthorised vehicular access. Unfortunately, and despite being desilted on LCC land, Trunkfield Brook is often running very dry due to poor flow from the Brook in areas that are not managed by the City Council.



The wildflower border has been doubled in width for 2023, and a 'no mow' project is ongoing on part of the site to increase biodiversity.



LCC owned bus shelters within Lichfield City have been refurbished, entailing jetwashing, sanding and re-painting as a minimum, with replacement of polycarbonate and some aluminum necessary on several of the shelters. The work has been carefully considered and costed, the refurbishment being significantly cheaper than acquiring and installing new bus shelters. The artwork on the Eastern Avenue bus shelters was part of a school project several years ago; though much of the timber is now rotten, the artwork is being retained for a period of time in case any original contributors wish to claim the work.

Considerable tree work was carried out at Christchurch extension during late 2022 and early 2023. Split across three phases, the work comprised removal, crown lifting, dead wooding and pollarding of numerous trees following receipt of expert advice.

In addition to routine inspections, many other projects have been progressed during the year including:

- Several wooden slatted benches across Lichfield City have been rubbed down, re-stained and varnished as part of a regular maintenance programme.
- Tree/hedge reduction work to Open Space 17c (Ash Grove).
- Ash tree at Open Space 26b (adjacent to Gallows Wharf) found to be suffering from Ash Sawfly; removal of large deadwood, pruning back overbearing branches, also the branches in the upper canopy to reduce the likelihood of branch failure.
- Open Space 11d (Johnson Close/Fecknam Way) – removal of dead wood and overhanging branches.
- Further clearance at Curborough Brook in readiness for the 10 yearly inspection of the emergency valves at Stowe Pool.
- Removal from the Friary Remains site a failed cherry tree covered in ivy and presenting a danger to passers-by and the adjacent car park.
- Tree work completed at several sites on Boley Park, including Cappers Lane, Cornfield Drive, Haymoor, Ryknild St to Austincote Lane and Maple Grove.
- Improved display at Cappers Lane roundabout.
- Extensive tree work on the former canal land on Tamworth Rd (from London Rd bridge to Cricket Lane). The work undertaken followed site meetings with ward members, LHCRT and the District Council's Arboricultural Officer.
- Extensive tree work to Open Space 15d (Lillington Close/Swinfen Broun Rd), to include assessment of the scotch pine and thinning of the dense trees along Swinfen Broun Rd.
- Thinning and crown lifting to trees situated on Open Space 58 (Manor Rise).
- Significant repair to the footpath that runs through St Michael's Churchyard.
- Repairs to the play area adjacent to Curborough Community Centre and the hopscotch matting in front of the Centre, generating positive comments from users.
- Clearance work at Dovehouse Fields to assist the Community Association who manage this former allotment site.
- Shrubs cleared along the boundary of Friary Remains following the discovery of potential rough sleeping and/or drug dealing activity.
- Roadway repairs to the entrance to Christian Fields and The Moggs allotments.
- Significant tree work on highway verges along Eastern Avenue.
- Reduction in hedge height to the front of Curborough Community Centre following requests from the Management Committee.
- Removal of a failing cherry tree from Festival Gardens.
- Weed removal at the Pinfold and replacement of signage.
- Following resident request, the installation of a removable bollard at Haymoor to help guard against unauthorised access to the open space beyond.

## GUILDHALL & COMMUNITY HALLS

The Council owns Darwin Hall, Cruck House, Curborough Community Centre and Boley Park Community Hall.

Darwin Hall, Curborough Community Centre and Cruck House are operated by management committees under licence from the Council. The Committees manage the buildings, paying the running costs and receiving income from lettings, but with the Council being responsible for maintaining the fabric of the buildings and larger projects as necessary. All three facilities are extremely popular and well run, and the City Council would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the management committees, staff and volunteers.

The City Council assumed control of Boley Park Community Hall in 2016 after key members of the management committee stepped down after many years' service. A new constitution was devised to allow Council officers to act as volunteers in the capacity of Treasurer and Secretary, with City Council appointed Trustees.

2022/23 saw the replacement of the external doors and surrounding screens at Boley Park Community Hall. The previous provision was nearing the end of its life, poorly insulated and reflected standards that were appropriate when the hall was constructed but are significantly below those applied today.

The repair and refurbishment of the floor in the main hall was also completed, together with a number of minor electrical and plumbing repairs and upgrades. During the Easter holidays, new CCTV and a fire alarm system were installed.



Significant work is scheduled to take place at Darwin Hall during 2023/24, with the zinc roof to be removed and an updated structure put in place to halt the current condensation issues that will cause long term damage to the hall's structural timbers if not addressed. There has also been a significant leak around one of the hall rooflights, with a temporary repair put in place in late 2022 to resolve the matter until the wider roof project is completed over the summer.

2022/23 saw the removal and rebuilding of the subframes that form the protruding side windows at Darwin Hall, then being clad with zinc to replace the previous brick slips which were failing and allowing water ingress.

The Council also owns and manages the Guildhall, which is let for private and commercial events and for use by local organisations. It serves as a venue for concerts organised by Lichfield Arts and is a popular venue for wedding receptions, civil wedding ceremonies and other life events.

The magnificent main hall is 87' (26 m) long and 25' (7.5 m) wide. It is oak panelled, with a beamed high roof, giving a fine medieval backdrop. At the north end is a large stone tracery-stained glass window that was originally placed in the north transept of Lichfield Cathedral in 1811 and depicts principal founders and patrons of the Cathedral. The Minstrels Gallery on the second floor overlooks the main hall and provides an excellent view of proceedings that is often used for photographs. Supported by a number of smaller meeting rooms, two kitchens (including a catering kitchen) and stair and lift access, the Guildhall is a jewel in the crown of the City of Lichfield.



The Guildhall has seen considerable improvement over the past few years, notably the renovation of the main hall to include new flooring, floor to ceiling redecoration, and improved lighting that was undertaken during 2020/21, and the redecoration of the main corridor together with replacement of ageing light fittings with LED's that was undertaken early in 2022. During 2022/23 there has been a focus on ongoing maintenance with a number of minor repairs completed, together with a relatively significant repair to an element of the stonework at the front of the building that had become worn and damaged.

## **SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM**

2022-2023 was the first full reporting period in which the Museum and Bookshop were open to the public since 2019, following periods of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. 14,750 visitors were welcomed in 2022-23, representing a 39% increase on visitors in 2021-2022.

Although 30% lower than visitor numbers achieved prior to the pandemic, January to March 2023 was the busiest quarter on record and indicates that visitor numbers will be restored to pre-pandemic levels in the coming year. An online audience continued to thrive through the Museum's social media accounts, website, newsletter and monthly blog.





Significant repairs were undertaken on the Grade I listed building when routine repair and redecoration work revealed unforeseen structural decay. As a result, the Museum was covered in scaffolding from June to October 2022 for the replacement of timbers, lime plaster and redecoration. The Museum stayed open throughout much of the work, and the exterior now adds greatly to the appearance of the city.



The extent of the repair work caused rescheduling of the installation of new displays on the ground floor which form part of the Birthplace Development Project. New bookbinding workroom displays and the visitor toilet are now scheduled for 2023-24. Other development project work has continued throughout the past year, particularly discussions towards creating a wheelchair accessible entrance to the Museum.

Special events returned this year. May 2022 saw the launch of a new format and creation of new volunteering opportunities for children's reading group 'Birthplace Bookworms'. Other family activities included 'Summer Fun at Sam's House' on Thursdays throughout August, a 'Winter Warmer' activity inspired by Georgian textile techniques in the October half-term, and 'Dragons and Daffodils' linking to St David's Day and Johnson's time in Wales for the late February school holiday. The Jubilee was marked with a special bookshop window display and self-guided creative activities.



Alongside the family programme, other events included writer Tom Nancollas talking on seafaring in Johnson's Dictionary and a performance of sea shanties by Lichfield Lighthouse Company as part of the author's walk from the Welsh coast to the Midlands to raise funds for the RNLI. The annual commemorations of Samuel Johnson's Birthday Celebrations were cancelled, respecting the period of mourning following the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth. The Museum was once again host to the L2F Festival of Folk's Art Competition finalists, with an exhibition and presentation event for winners in October. In November, a stall as part of the Chamber of Commerce Christmas Fayre led to 250 visitors attending the Museum on the day. Other Christmas events were a popular late-night opening for the Christmas Lights Switch On event, and the annual 'Johnson Family Christmas' event with carol singing from Lichfield Singers, poetry readings by the Lichfield Poets and traditional tales.

A successful evening of drama took place on Saturday 11 March, written and performed by Museum Attendant Christine Genders. 'Tea with Mrs Thrale?' was a monologue based on the writings of Hester Thrale Piozzi, and was performed to a full house at the museum. To make the event accessible, a pre-recorded version was also available via 'Zoom', and tickets were purchased for online viewing from around the world. The event formed part of celebrations around International Women's Day, also including a Women's History Walk.

Throughout the year, the Birthplace team travelled to give talks to Eccleshall Historical Society, Burntwood Chase Heritage Group, Staffordshire History Network, Cheslyn Hay Academy, Lichfield Civic Society, the Stafford Walton Phoenix Activities Club, the Wesleyan Society, Stanton Women's Institute, Keele University English Undergraduates, the Black History Month events at HMP Stafford and with the One Lichfield Group.

School visit bookings were popular once again, with primary-age pupils from Lichfield schools and academies St Michaels, Charnwood, Willows, Rocklands, Chadsmead, and Howard Primary School in Elford, all enjoying a visit with costumed guides. A new 'Lichfield Heritage Safari' primary visit in collaboration with Lichfield Cathedral and Erasmus Darwin House was devised and successfully trialled to offer a whole day visit for schools to the city. The Museum's classroom activity 'prints and books' box was used by Greybrooke Primary School. A-Level students from Bilton School (near Rugby) and Stafford School travelled to Lichfield to attend Dictionary Workshop sessions. In December, Lichfield Cathedral Junior School sang carols outside the Museum as part of a tour around the city. The Museum also welcomed a new regular work experience student from Cannock Chase High School.

Alongside events and activities, the Museum cares for over 8,000 collection items as well as the Grade I listed building. Work taking place behind the scenes this year included replacement of UV filtering film on all windows and blinds in two areas to reduce light levels, partly funded by a collection care grant from West Midlands Museum Development. Several researchers used the Museum collections, including an academic from the University of Birmingham using the letter collection, an independent researcher writing on Lichfield for a Chinese audience, an Australian collector, and local history research. A partnership with the Staffordshire County Council Archives & Heritage Service will see facsimiles of Birthplace collection material in a handling collection at the History Access Point in the Hub at St Mary's. The Museum's AHRC-funded collaboration with Keele and Liverpool University continues, with a PhD researcher continuing their project on Life Writing in 18th Century Lichfield.

Birthplace Museum Officer staff also support other LCC heritage matters, which this year included restoration of historic city information plaques, involvement in a project to reinstate a bust of Johnson on Bird Street, and the production of a new plaque to honour Francis Barber. Unveiled in March by Cedric Barber, a direct descendant, the Museum worked with representatives of the Johnson Society, Lichfield City of Sanctuary and One Lichfield, to bring the plaque to fruition. The plaque is to be installed on Cruck House, as Barber resided on Stowe Street during his time in Lichfield and was elected Dozener by his neighbours.



The annual opening of the Guildhall Prison Cells is also organised by the Museum team and attracted 1700 visitors on Saturdays over Summer 2022.

**MARKETS AND MARKET SQUARE**

Lichfield has held a Market Charter for nearly 1,000 years, and regular General Markets continue on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday of each week.





The trial pedestrianisation of the City Centre as progressed by Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council resulted in a need for Traders to be issued with permits. The close working relationship between LCC and LDC has allowed the City Council to administer the scheme for Traders, which makes the process far easier for the District Council and LCC's Traders.

### **Jubilee Market 2022**

The Jubilee event was very successful and enjoyed by Traders and the general public over the holiday period.

The event was at full capacity across its four days, beginning with the specially created Market on Thursday and concluding with the Producers' Market on Sunday. The Friday and Saturday Markets were relocated from the Square as a result of the traditional Bower Fair on the Square.



The event was supported by CJ's Events Warwickshire who allowed the City Council to use their stalls for the Markets. The stalls were delivered on Wednesday evening in readiness for the early start on Thursday.

This event proved to be popular with the Traders, and though they were all aware this was a special event across a historic weekend with footfall higher as a result, the location beside Pool Walk and the ambience created has led to further interest from Traders wishing to stand in this location in the future.



## Christmas Market

The Market along Pool Walk on the day of the Christmas Lights switch-on was a great success. This was the first time that Pool Walk has been utilised in this manner for a 'Switch-on' Market and it served to bring additionality to the switch-on event and also to spread visitors across the City somewhat, rather than having a sole focus on the Square.

A total of 22 stalls were present, selling a range of Christmas gifts and refreshments including Hot Chocolate, Donuts and jacket potatoes. Traders reported a good footfall throughout the day with some selling out completely. There was also considerable interest in a repeat of the event in 2023.

## Producers' Market

The Producers' Market, which takes place on the first Sunday of every month (except January), is now an established and extremely popular local event amongst traders and residents alike. The Producers' Market is managed on behalf of the City Council by CJ's Events Warwickshire and usually consists of between 27 and 30 stalls on the Square.

## Vegan Market

In partnership with the Vegan Market Company, three Vegan Market events were held on the Market Square as 'pilots'. These were in October, November, and December, and all were a resounding success. As a result, an expanded programme of six Vegan Markets is in place for 2023. The Market has a number of stalls which showcase their independent, ethical and sustainable producers. They offer a wide and varied range of products including baked goods, cosmetics, street food and jewellery.

## Food Festival & Grub Club

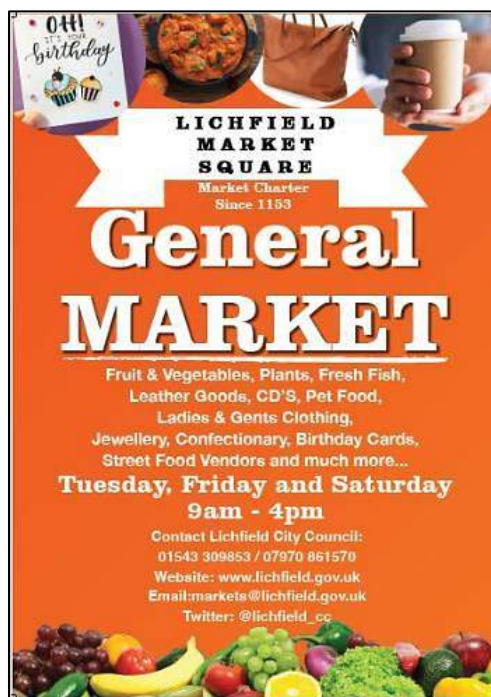
Council officers are working with Cocker Hoop Creative who have previously held Food Festivals and Grub Club events on the Square. At the Food Festival in August the Market Square was at almost full capacity with an array of stalls from home furnishings to Fruit and Vegetables, while the Food Festival event in December was also supported by Radio WM and proved a very popular draw for both residents and visitors.

The return of the Grub Club to the Square on 30 March 2023 was welcomed, and the event was a success.

## Advertising

The design of a revised General Market poster was agreed by the Markets Working Group in January 2023, with posters now on display on the Square together with similar posters for the Vegan Market and Producers' Market.

In addition, vinyl wraps of the new General Market posters have been installed on some City Council bus shelters. It is hoped the bright, eye-catching design will attract members of the public's attention, with accessibility in mind.



## Social Media

The Markets Officer continues to promote and update social media with events held on the Market Square, Minster Pool Walk and showcase the current General Market Traders. The aim is to give all traders exposure on Facebook and Twitter, as well as an overview of other events taking place.

On 21 September a 'Community Day' was held on the Market Square, allowing representatives from charities and community groups to showcase their work and publicise their activities at no charge.

There has also been considerable interest in the Market Square for "Community" led events, including Dementia Support and other charities. The Police Community Event on 8 December was a particular success and the feedback from the organisers was very positive. We are hoping the event will be repeated in the near future.

Fire and Rescue Services recreated a Road Traffic Collision on the Square and demonstrated how they would cut a casualty from a vehicle. This, like the Police event, was a great success and helped to promote the Drink Drive and Drug Drive Campaign.

The Facebook page can be viewed at [www.facebook.com/lichfieldmarkets](http://www.facebook.com/lichfieldmarkets) and includes general market information, historical information and photographs of current stalls. Visitors to the page also have the option to immediately call or message the markets team. The Markets Twitter page is @LichfieldMarket.

## CIVIC EVENTS

The Annual Council Meeting took place on Monday May 16 2022 in the Guildhall where the new civic team were invested for the ensuing year.

Councillor Jamie Checkland was appointed Mayor, supported by the Mayoress, Stephanie Checkland. Councillor Paul Jones was elected as Deputy Mayor with Laura Wilkes as the Deputy Mayoress. Joining them as Sheriff was Cllr Janice Greaves and the Sheriff's consort was Keith Greaves.

During the meeting, the Mayor announced the appointment of Police Cadet Thomas Dodds and Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Ian Hayter for his forthcoming year in office. The retiring Mayor, Mayoress, Sheriff and Sheriff's Lady were presented with replica badges of office.



Following the Council meeting a banquet was held for 95 guests during which the Mayor announced that his charity for the ensuing year would be the Sebbie Hall Kindness Foundation. The Sheriff's charity was the Pathway project.

The Mayor & Sheriff had the pleasure of attending the Staffordshire Lieutenancy Platinum Jubilee Garden Party at the Stafford County Showground on Wednesday 1 June – the day

before the 4-day Jubilee weekend celebrating Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's 70-year reign. The 500 nominees enjoyed a parade from the marquee to the main arena before being presented with a certificate, photographs and afternoon tea following on shortly afterwards.

The annual Court of Arraye took place at the Guildhall on Saturday 4 June to coincide with the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend following a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. Those present included The Lord of the Manor - Mayor of Lichfield Cllr Jamie Checkland, Deputy Mayor Cllr Paul Jones, The Sheriff Cllr Janice Greaves, High Constables Jane Dayus-Hinch and Denise Gwilt, plus the Dozeners and Men at Arms.



The seven Dozeners entertained the audience with their comical and topical comments in their annual report of their area of responsibility within the City.

With help from the 7th Lichfield Scout Group, the Men at Arms undertook the duty of delivering the Dozeners reports with help from the High Constables.

Once the Court was adjourned, Councillor David Salter gave a Toast to the Success of the Bower before those present assembled outside the Guildhall in readiness for the Bower procession to arrive.

The Bower Queen, Judy Hammersley, and her ambassadors were then crowned by the Mayor before the procession continued along the traditional route around the City.



The Mayor led the Lichfield City Council team in the annual Swinfen Broun Challenge Trophy bowls match against the Lichfield Museum Bowling Club on Wednesday 22 June. Despite the best efforts of the City Council team, the Bowling Club took the trophy once again with a score of 98 to 48.

The Mayor handed the trophy to the Club President, Mr Fred Perry, and thanked everyone for taking part and supporting the event.



The Mayoress, Stephanie Checkland, was delighted to welcome over 70 guests to the Guildhall on Saturday 23 July for the 'Mayoress at Home'.

After a reception drink, High Tea was served at 2:30pm with Pianist Eric Lunt contributing delightful musical entertainment. CL Catering supplied the cakes, scones and sandwiches, with Jan Leytham-Gain from 'The Pretty Little Parlour' providing beautiful Jam Jar Posies for the table.

The afternoon concluded with the Mayor and Sheriff drawing the raffle which raised a fantastic £370.00 for their chosen charities.



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The announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II came at approximately 6.30pm on Thursday 8 September 2022, following several hours of increasing concern as members of the Royal Family made their way to Balmoral.

The Proclamation of the King took place firstly at St James Palace and then extended to County and then District levels. The City Council, notably via the Deputy Town Clerk, provided significant assistance to the District Council across the weekend in the organisation of their proclamation event outside Lichfield Cathedral at 2.30pm on Sunday 11 September.

At 2.10pm on Sunday 11 September, the procession including the Chair, Leader and Chief Executive of the District Council and the Mayor of Lichfield and Town Clerk, was led from Guildhall to The Deanery by the City Council's Mace Bearer and Town Crier.

At the Deanery, District and City Council representatives were met by HM Deputy Lieutenant, Commander Charles James Baggott Jewitt RN (Rtd), the Bishop of Lichfield, The Rt Reverend Dr Michael Ipgrave, and the Dean of Lichfield, The Very Reverend Adrian Dorber.

On processing to the Cathedral, the Deputy Lieutenant began proceedings, with the LDC Chair explaining the significance of the day's events to the gathered crowd. The City Council's Town Crier Adrian Holmes then read the proclamation. The event ended with a call for three cheers to the new King, and the gathered dignitaries were then invited to sign the Book of Condolence inside the Cathedral. Photographs follow overleaf.

In remembrance of Her Late Majesty, it was arranged that the Friary Clock Tower be lit in purple during the period of mourning. The Union Flag at Donegal House was lowered to half-mast shortly after the announcement from Buckingham Palace, raised again on Saturday 10 September in honour of the new King and lowered to half-mast on Sunday 11 September in accordance with national protocols.





On instruction from the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, the Sheriff's Ride Banquet scheduled for Saturday 10 September, and the Samuel Johnson Birthday Celebrations scheduled for Saturday 17 September, were cancelled. The Johnson Society also cancelled their annual supper in the Guildhall. The Sheriff requested the cancellation of the carriage that had been scheduled to take her out of the City on the day of the Ride, but maintained the tradition by visiting landowners, being escorted around the City by the Clerk of the Course, Mr Nick Sedgwick.

The Sheriff, Councillor Janice Greaves and Consort Mr Keith Greaves are pictured with Dr Neville Brown and Dr Daryl Brown of Maple Hayes, both former Sheriffs and the first Father and Son to hold the office. Cllr Greaves is the first daughter of a Sheriff (Doris English, who was Sheriff in the year 2000), to also hold the office.



The annual Remembrance Service was held in the Cathedral on Sunday 13 November. Following the Cathedral service, the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr James Leavesley DL, accompanied by the Mayor Cllr Jamie Checkland, led the civic party into the Remembrance Gardens to observe the national two-minute silence and then perform the wreath laying ceremony. Following this, the Dean of Lichfield, The Very Reverend Adrian Dorber, gave the blessing.



After the wreath laying ceremony in the Remembrance Gardens, around 80 guests returned to the Guildhall for light refreshments. The Mayor gave thanks on behalf of Lichfield City Council to all those involved on the day and Mrs Christine Ayling gave thanks on behalf of the Royal British Legion.

On Saturday 19 November, the Mayor and Sheriff welcomed a total of 81 guests to the Guildhall for their annual Charity Ball, which this year had a 'Shimmer & Sparkle' theme.

All raffle prizes were kindly donated by local shops and businesses including a 32" flat screen TV donated by friends of the Sebbie Hall Kindness Foundation and a pre-match meal for 2 in the Albion Suite – kindly provided by the High Sheriff of Staffordshire – Ben Robinson MB DL. Many other wonderful prizes were provided, which were greatly appreciated. The evening was enjoyed by all and made a profit of over £1,300 for the Mayor and Sheriff's chosen Charities.



The Carols for Christmas Service was held in the Guildhall on Tuesday 6 December and at the request of the Mayor of Lichfield this year saw a new format of a joint service with the Chair of Lichfield District Council, Cllr Colin Greatorex.

The annual Pancake Races and opening of the Shrovetide Fair took place on Tuesday 21 February. Watched from the dais by the Civic party, competitors raced along Bore Street pausing to flip their pancakes before crossing the finishing line in front of the Guildhall. A total of 54 competitors took part on the day with the winner of the coveted ladies' trophy being Hollie Nelson, who works for Connells Estate Agents. She will have her name etched upon the special Golden Pancake Day trophy.



The winner of the Gents race was Issa Husain from EPO Solicitors, who won a cash prize of £30.

Winning the Under 10's Races was Rosie Colley, aged 6. Rosie was presented with a certificate, medal and a £25 Entertainer voucher. A big well done to Rosie & all the children who took part, who each received a special 'Mayor Bear' pin to remember the occasion.



Victorious in the Mascots Race was Austin Brauser who scooped a £30 prize.

During their year in office, the Mayor and Sheriff jointly hosted seven events to raise money for their nominated charities raising approximately £9,000.

## GRANTS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

The City Council's Grants Committee meets each February to consider applications from local groups. At its meeting of February 2023, the Committee recommended grants totalling £23,242 to the organisations as indicated below. Applications for grants from 2024/25 funds will open later in the year. Any group wishing for further information can either visit the City Council's website or email [enquiries@lichfield.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@lichfield.gov.uk).

No	Organisation	Amount
1	South East Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau	£5,500
2	Lichfield District Arts Association	£4,500
3	Lichfield Greenhill Bower	£3,000
4	Lichfield Waterworks Trust	£0
5	Curborough Community Association	£950
6	Lichfield District Council – Proms in the Park	£2,000
7	Erasmus Darwin Foundation	£1,500
8	Lichfield Festival	£516
9	Voluntary Transport for the Disabled	£1,000
10	Lichfield Hockey Club	£200
11	Lichfield Litter Legends	£800
12	Lichfield Talking News (and Community care)	£0
13	Lichfield Bowling Club	£0
14	One Lichfield	£500
15	The City of Lichfield Concert Band	£500
16	The Hub at St Mary's	£0
17	Open Door of Hope	£200
18	Men's Shed Lichfield	£451
19	Dovehouse Community Gardens	£300
20	Lichfield Re:Cycle	£350
21	Lichfield Repair & Share Cafe	£300
22	Forest Harvest	£150
23	Kendall & Wall Charitable Trust	£0
24	Lichfield Festival of Music	£0
25	5 <sup>th</sup> Lichfield Scout Group (Beavers Section)	£0
26	Lichfield Winter League	£300
27	Wayward Women	£0
28	Lichfield U3A Croquet Club	£0
29	Gamers' Wellbeing	£150
30	Lichfield Rail Promotion Group	£75
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£23,242</b>

The City Council also awarded a total of £5,000 to facilitate warm spaces for residents at Curborough Community Centre, Cruck House and the Garrick Theatre during the winter of 2022.

## TWINNING

26 September 2022 marked 30 years since the official signing of the ring twinning agreement between Lichfield, Limburg and Ste. Foy, by the then Mayor Ann Johnson on 26th September 1992. To mark the occasion, the thrice cancelled international Twinning celebrations in Limburg are now scheduled to take place from 9 to 12 June 2023. Up to 100 people from each of Limburg's twin cities (Lichfield, UK; St. Foy, France; Oudenburg, Belgium) are invited to take part in the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend. It is open to all Lichfield residents. The programme consists of performances from dance, theatre and orchestra groups, tournaments with table tennis, hockey and tennis teams, various guided tours and a celebration evening meal for everyone with entertainment.



The Mayor of Limburg, Dr. Marius Hahn, helped to install the first of many new Twinning signs around their city (pictured).

The yearly one-week internship of a Limburg Council public office apprentice was due to restart after a 2-year break due to the pandemic but was put on hold, due to the cost and extensive administration involved in securing a visa. The various pathways to secure officially registered sponsorships in Lichfield are still being investigated.

A two-week work experience in October for an economics A-level student from the PPC High School in Limburg had been arranged to take place at the George Hotel in Lichfield. Although funded by the European Erasmus+ scheme, it still proved too difficult for the Limburg school to obtain a visa, due to no officially registered sponsor in the Lichfield area; until January 2021 the British Council provided a sponsorship service. Unfortunately, the Limburg school has now withdrawn from this work placement scheme.

Following the announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September, messages of condolence were received from the City Council's twin towns.

The Lichfield based Nick Dewhurst Band contacted the Twinning Officer to investigate whether it was possible to arrange a concert in Limburg as part of their weeklong European tour. In addition, the band were keen to organise a small jazz masterclass workshop with a Limburg music school. This is now scheduled to take place on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2023 and will include a music workshop with a Limburg school.

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Christmas lights Switch On event took place on Sunday 27 November. The usual road closures were in place and all businesses and residents were contacted well in advance of the day to ensure their inconvenience was kept to a minimum.

Prior to the event the City Council ran a competition for two local primary school children to help the Mayor switch on the lights. The two competition winners, Orla Browne and Olivia Miller, were invited to the Mayor's parlour on 23 November for tea and cake where the Mayor presented them both with additional prizes of



a Cadbury's chocolate hamper (donated by Tesco Extra, Lichfield) and a family ticket to see the pantomime *'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'* (donated by Lichfield Garrick Theatre).

On the day of the Switch On a festive market was held on Minster Pool walk with 22 stalls selling a range of Christmas gifts and refreshments including hot chocolate, donuts and jacket potatoes. Alongside this a 'mini' tabletop football tournament was held.

Live entertainment began on the Switch on Stage at 1.00pm with local performers Liberty Jamboree Shine and Sign Choir. This was followed by the Aspire community band, young performers from Stagecoach, Britpop Reunion, and finally Lichfield Rock Choir.



The afternoon concluded with traditional carols sung by Christchurch school choir.

The City's Town Crier then led the Countdown as the Mayor, helped by Olivia and Orla, officially switched the lights on at 5.00pm. A final visit from Father Christmas to wish everyone a Happy Christmas sent everyone home feeling festive.

The City Council's professional security company were on duty throughout the day and estimated that a crowd of between 4,500 and 5,000 people was present.



## **PLANNING**

The District Council is the Planning Authority, but the City Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted for the city area.

The City Council's Planning Committee consists of all its Councillors. For many years the Committee met at regular intervals to make recommendations to Lichfield District Council regarding Planning applications that had been recently submitted.

COVID-19 restrictions from March 2020 meant the Committee could no longer meet in person. In consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair it was agreed that authority from Council would be sought to allow ward members representing the area in which any planning application originated, to discuss those applications between themselves and make recommendations to the Chair of the Committee that would then be submitted by officers under delegated authority.

This system worked extremely well and saw a streamlining of LCC's planning related processes that was perhaps unexpected. There were many favourable comments regarding those arrangements and while only intended to be temporary, the benefits were such that the Chair, Deputy Chair and Town Clerk jointly presented draft revised Planning Committee terms of reference for the consideration of the Council in 2021.

The revised terms of reference provide a good system of delegation with comments being endorsed at a subsequent Council meeting. The ability to hold a full meeting for any major plans that affect the whole city, where there is no agreement at Ward level, or upon request from the public, remains.

## **LICHFIELD CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (LCNP) AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by government as part of the Localism agenda and is a way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work in conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan (as developed and adopted by Lichfield District Council).

The Lichfield City Neighbourhood Plan referendum was held in February 2018 and become part of the Planning framework for the City.

The LCNP focuses on economic and employment issues rather than housing. The City is well positioned to increase its economic base, with a highly skilled workforce and excellent road and rail links. The City also boasts numerous attributes and attractions that encourage tourism.

Where a Parish Council has a neighbourhood plan in place, it receives 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions from a developer as opposed to 15% without a Neighbourhood Plan. The existence of an adopted Neighbourhood Plan ensures as much CIL money as possible is retained by the Parish in which the development is taking place, to be spent in consultation with residents and in accordance with the priorities laid out in the Neighbourhood Plan.

There are many competing demands for this funding and a small cross-party working party of City Councillors has been established to consider how this money is allocated.



Some of the projects where CIL has been allocated are:

- Provision of new City Centre signage.
- Improvements to Curborough Community Centre, including the installation of new CCTV, a contribution to replacement external doors and the improvements to the outdoor space to make it more accessible as developed by Curborough Community Association.
- Contribution to the cost of replacing City Council owned footway lighting with LED alternatives.
- Support the aims of the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust through infrastructure support.
- Assist in facilitating the occupation of Sandfields Pumping station by Lichfield Waterworks Trust via funding support in partnership with Lichfield District Council, and the subsequent provision of a new cycle shelter.
- Improvements to Boley Park Community Hall, notably the installation of new front and rear doors and surrounding screens.
- Refurbishment/replacement of selected City centre plaques.
- New displays within the Michael Johnson Workroom at the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum.
- Replacement front and rear doors and surrounding glazing at Boley Park Community Hall.
- Infrastructure improvements for the Hub at St Mary's.
- Provision of a tarmac pathway to provide improved access to the hockey pitch, notably to facilitate 'Flyerz Hockey' in Staffordshire which enables disabled and non-disabled players to play together.
- Additional 20mph Repeater Signs in Curborough.
- Festival Gardens boundary protection.

Residents are strongly encouraged to have their say on CIL allocations and are invited to make written submissions to the Town Clerk at the City Council Offices, Donegal House, Bore St, Lichfield WS13 6LU or by email to [enquiries@lichfield.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@lichfield.gov.uk) to assist in informing this process.

The Lichfield City Neighbourhood Plan can be downloaded from the City Council's website at: [https://www.lichfield.gov.uk/Neighbourhood\\_Plan\\_1085.aspx](https://www.lichfield.gov.uk/Neighbourhood_Plan_1085.aspx).

## **ELECTORAL MATTERS**

During 2022, Lichfield District Council carried out a Community Governance Review, with the City Council contributing its response and recommendations in July. The main request of the City Council was that coterminous parish and district ward boundaries be restored, following the changes brought about by a national review in 2015 that were opposed by the City Council.

The final recommendations of the District Council were published late in 2022 and are consistent with the City Council's consultation response. As a result of these changes, the number of LCC members increased from a maximum of 28 to 29 for the 2023 elections. The full list of outcomes is provided below:

- Garrick Road Ward incorporated into Chadsmead Ward. Chadsmead Ward to comprise 4 Councillors.
- Burton Old Road Ward be incorporated into Stowe Ward. Stowe Ward to comprise 5 Councillors.
- Pentire Road Ward be incorporated into Boley Park Ward. Boley Park Ward to comprise 4 Councillors.
- Curborough Ward be increased to 4 councillors.
- St Johns Ward to remain at 6 councillors.
- Leomansley Ward be increased to 6 councillors.

### **2023 Local Elections**

Local elections were held on 4 May 2023, at which time all seats on the City Council were contested. Retiring Councillors included Christopher Spruce, David Dundas, Ian Jackson, Miles Trent, Janice Greaves, Christine Rapley, Jayne Marks and Andrew Smith.

The results saw control of the council shift from Conservative to Labour for the first time since the millennium. The overall make up of the Council is currently 16 Labour, 7 Liberal Democrat and 6 Conservative.

## **FINANCE**

The budget set by the Council in January for the 2023/24 financial year was for a council tax of £68.76 for a Band D property, a 0% increase from 2022/23 levels.

The comparison between 2022/23 and 2023/24 budgets is detailed overleaf.

<u>Net Expenditure</u>	BUDGET	BUDGET
SERVICE AREAS	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
Parks and Footpaths	243,202	272,029
Guildhall	131,416	142,609
Community Centres	19,038	14,105
Markets	6,833	10,167
Civic	98,003	94,353
Grant Aid/Partnerships	51,926	53,042
Arts/Tourism/Twinning	74,825	82,937
Johnson Birthplace Museum	123,773	136,847
Democratic Services	101,962	166,066
Investment Interest	-2,050	-38,440
Loan Charges	0	0
Agency	-13,478	-18,045
<b>Total Service Cost</b>	<b>£835,450</b>	<b>£915,670</b>
Repairs and Renewals	192,508	362,580
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	-93,030	17,305
<b>SUB TOTALS</b>	<b>£934,928</b>	<b>£1,295,555</b>
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>£835,450</b>	<b>£860,670</b>
<b>To/(From) Balances</b>	<b>(£99,478)</b>	<b>(£434,885)</b>

<u>Balances and Reserves</u>	BUDGET 2022/23	BUDGET 2023/24
	£	£
Opening Balance (1 April)	2,439,407	2,331,683
To/(From) balances	(99,478)	(434,885)
Closing Balance	£2,339,929	£1,896,798
<u>Closing balance held as:</u>		
Capital Reserve -Repairs/Renewals	1,358,195	1,014,362
Grant Aid Reserve	11,570	6,570
Parish Election Reserve	55,000	-
SJBM Development Grant Reserve	-	-
CIL Reserve	196,111	171,154
General Revenue Reserves	719,053	704,712
<b>TOTAL BALANCES AND RESERVES</b>	<b>£2,339,929</b>	<b>£1,896,798</b>

<u>Council Tax Analysis</u>	BUDGET 2022/23	BUDGET 2023/24
Precept	£835,450	£860,670
Apportioned Tax Base	£12,150.2	£12,516.9
<b>RESULTANT BAND D TAX</b>	<b>£68.76</b>	<b>£68.76</b>

## **CITY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT:**

**‘To improve the quality of life of residents of Lichfield City’**

### **TO BE ACHIEVED BY:**

- Making best use of the resources and powers available to us to provide high-quality cost-effective services to help meet the needs and wishes of the residents
- Assisting and encouraging other bodies to provide such services

### **KEY OBJECTIVES:**

- 1 To help residents enjoy high-quality social, recreational, and cultural facilities, and to maintain or improve the standard of these facilities
- 2 To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the city
- 3 To protect and improve the high-quality environment of the city and promote sustainable development to meet the needs of present and future generations
- 4 To preserve the ancient traditions and unique identity of the city
- 5 To represent the views and wishes of the citizens of Lichfield and to promote the interests of the city for the betterment of the local community
- 6 To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, gender, culture, income, race or religion, and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding, and mutual co-operation.

Together with these broad objectives the City Council has several specific objectives for the forthcoming financial year, a number of which are detailed below.

## SPECIFIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES 2023/24

AIM	RESPONSIBILITY	OBJECTIVES	TARGET DATE	ACTIONS
Resident Satisfaction/Facilities	Museums and Heritage Officer	Implement next phase of the redevelopment project at <b>Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum</b>	March 2024	To provide toilets on site, basement renovations, modernise and improve the displays and setting offered to visitors while preserving the nature of the Grade I listed building.
Improve Community Centre Facilities	Town Clerk	<b>Significant roof overhaul to Darwin Hall Community Hall</b>	Autumn 2023	Removal of existing zinc roof and replacement of existing components with current industry standards. To include replacement skylights and modifications to rainwater goods.
Resident Satisfaction/Increase Tourism	Deputy Town Clerk/Markets Officer	Review <b>Markets</b> operation	Ongoing	Expand Market/event provision through utilising Pool Walk and/or Market Square. Further promotion of the Markets function.
Improve City Council owned Facilities	Museums and Heritage Officer/Town Clerk	Professional Inspection of <b>Johnson Birthplace Museum</b>	Summer 2023	Commission report, action repairs and renovations arising.
Comply with Legislation/Guidelines (Health & Safety)	Deputy Town Clerk	Provide an updated employee <b>Health &amp; Safety handbook</b>	Ongoing	Work in partnership with H&S consultants to update documentation as necessary; new policies to be put to Council for adoption in a timely manner.
Comply with Legislation/Guidelines (Transparency)	Town Clerk	Ensure <b>transparency</b> information is up to date, compliant and proportionate	Ongoing	Existing transparency information to be reviewed, newly available relevant information to be uploaded to the LCC website in a timely manner.

Open Spaces	Open Spaces Officer	<b>Wilding</b> areas at Nether Stowe, St Chad's and Festival Gardens, explore further opportunities for increased biodiversity across LCC open spaces	Summer 2023 and ongoing	Progress pilot sites and identify further sites for potential inclusion in 2024 if successful.
Resident Satisfaction/Increase Tourism	Museums and Heritage Officer/Town Clerk	Completion of ongoing <b>plaque refurbishment</b> project	Autumn 2023	Continuation of city centre plaque refurbishment project, together with Barber and Seward plaques.
Resident Satisfaction/Facilities	Deputy Town Clerk/Town Clerk	Completion of ongoing <b>CIL</b> funded projects/invitation for, and consideration of, further CIL bids	March 2024	Progressing CIL projects to completion.

### Officer Contacts

Responsibility	Name	Tel:
Town Clerk	Tony Briggs	01543 250011
Deputy Town Clerk	Sarah Thomas	01543 309854
Finance	Alison James	01543 309855
Admin/Planning	Janet Taylor	01543 309858
Civic Matters	Harriet Chatwin	01543 309852
Open Spaces	Nigel Boden	01543 309851
Internal Audit	Graham Keatley	01543 250011

Responsibility	Name	Tel:
Twinning	Gabriele Lasch-Burden	01543 309857
Markets	Jeremy Williams	01543 309853
Johnson Birthplace	Joanne Wilson Lisa Hand	01543 264972
Guildhall Room Hire	Helen Winter	01543 309850
Reception	Michelle Read	01543 250011

### City Council Members

Councillor	Party	Ward	Email Address	Telephone
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\* = also member of Lichfield District Council

\* = also member of Staffordshire County Council