

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Lucy Clarke, Civic Officer

On Wednesday 31 the Mayor and Sheriff held a Charity Barn Dance in the Guildhall to raise funds for their chosen charities with more than 70 guests attending. The Mucky Duck Ceilidh Band was very well received, encouraging everyone to participate. All guests tucked in to half time hot dogs before enjoying some more dancing. The evening raised an amazing £985.49.

The annual Remembrance service was held in the Cathedral on Sunday 11 November. Following the church service, the Deputy Lieutenant, The Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot, accompanied by the Mayor led the civic party into the Remembrance Gardens at 10.55am for the national two minutes silence and wreath laying ceremony. The City Council proudly played a part in the historic international event to commemorate the centenary of the end of the Great War.



To recognise the contribution and sacrifice made by the men and women from our own community, the names of the fallen soldiers listed on the Cenotaph were read out by Town Crier Ken Knowles, as the 1206 Lichfield Squadron Air Cadets sprinkled poppy petals onto Minster Pool. This was a moving tribute to honour the fallen soldiers. A professional public address system was used once again this year to ensure the large crowds could all hear the service. Security Company 'Oakwood' helped with crowd control and road closures on the day working alongside the Police to ensure the safety of all.

As part of the national commemorations to signify the light of peace that emerged from the darkness after four years of war, a Beacon was lit outside the West Gate at Lichfield Cathedral. At 7:00pm as the last post was played, the Mayor, Cllr David Leytham ascended the steps to light the Beacon, watched by the Deputy Mayor Cllr Peter Hitchman, Sheriff Mr Michael Mullarkey and Chairman of Lichfield District Council, Cllr Bob Awty. At 7:35pm the Town Crier joined more than 140 Town Criers around the world to perform a specially written "Cry for Peace around the World". The Beacon then faded during the Reveille before being extinguished at 8:00pm.



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

During October Johnson's Birthplace welcomes 1700 visitors. Special events in the past month included 'Silver Sunday' on October 7, the first time that the Museum has taken part in this national initiative to engage with an elderly audience. Museum Attendant Sarah Dale and Volunteer Nicola Young hosted a morning session with tea, card-making and the chance to handle items from the collection, with excellent feedback from attendees.

On October 14 Sue Bray delivered a popular History Workshop with a talk on Johnson's heir 'The Extraordinary Journey of Francis Barber' scheduled as part of Black History Month. Lichfield Storytellers returned to the Museum with two events for Halloween; an evening of traditional tales for adults complete with a mulled cider, and an afternoon of storytelling for families during half term, when the Birth Room was transformed into an atmospheric den. Half term activities continued with a craft session on November 1, themed on the circus in honour of the 250th anniversary of the foundation by Staffordshire man Philip Astley. October also marks 'Bookshop Day', which we took part in with some online engagement.



The Birthplace Museum partnership with Lichfield Art's L2F festival is growing, and this month the house provided a venue for the 'studio' with a programme of events throughout Saturday 20 October. The Museum team also took part in the annual L2F Arts & Heritage parade.

Penny Taylor attended a Volunteering Fair at the Lichfield Campus of South Staffordshire College with excellent results, making connections with a number of students who will be carrying out work placements at the Museum over the coming months. One student has already attended to advise on improvements that we can make to our provision for people with visual impairment, and another is currently working on our social media.

Partnership with the University of Birmingham continues, with this year's 'History in the Workplace' student Emma Bown working at the Museum one day a week. Other events and special visitors this month included a local Beaver group, a school visit from De Ferrers sixth form in Burton, Limburg council apprentices, and researchers using the Museum library on the subjects of Gregory King (Lichfield economist) and 18th century sales catalogues.

Work on the Museum Development project continues, including meetings with the District Conservation Officer, seeking quotes from interactive display companies, and attending a workshop on Museum Access issues during the past month. The Guildhall Prison Cell season also came to an end in October, with a total of 4867 visitors on Saturdays from April to October. A small programme of works is planned for the winter to improve displays in the newly opened and cleared cells, making all four accessible to the public from 2019.

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



The winter planting has been completed by LDC in the Remembrance Garden, Library Corner and the Clock Tower beds. The new path at the Clock Tower will contrast well with the polyanthus when they flower.

The Friary and Capper's Lane roundabouts have also been prepared for some colourful planting before more perennial planting can be achieved in the spring.

A longer-term project during the winter is for Minster Pool Walk to be planted with plants used in wreaths and flower arranging such as bay and holly for Christmas, different hydrangeas for their winter colour when dried. The benefit of this planting will be appreciated as the shrubs mature.

The new LCC ownership signs with the current Bore Street address have now replaced the old Wade Street signs in the majority of the LCC owned Open Spaces. Only the few needing replacement stands are left to do. The new signs also have the addition of the wording 'No Parking' as requested by a number of residents.



The Open Spaces Officer was privileged to assist with the Beacon lighting ceremony in front of the Cathedral as part of the Armistice centenary and ensure the safe use of the Rose Beacon, which was originally bought for the Queens 90th birthday in 2016.

4. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

A student from Lichfield's twin town of Limburg is spending part of his gap year in Lichfield, playing hockey with the Lichfield Hockey Club's 1st team, being their designated goal keeper. Nils Jonas from Limburg arrived in October and will be staying in Lichfield until Christmas. A Lichfield host family was found through the Wade Street Church community. He is also looking for casual work to subsidise his living costs in Lichfield.



A drama class from the Limburg Adolf-Reichweinschule is taking part in next year's Lichfield Mysteries, performing "Exodus from Egypt". The event will be on Saturday 9 February 2019 at the Friary School theatre from 2:00pm until 6:00pm. Wade Street Church is continuing to support Twinning projects, in this instance with their provision of an additional venue for the Limburg school's production of "Exodus" on Sunday 10 February 2019, which coincides with the Civic Church Service. Affordable accommodation for all 28 Limburg students and their teachers has been negotiated with the Days Inn Hotel near Hednesford.

5. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

October has been another busy month at the Guildhall. Although Darby & Joan no longer meet, we have had other regular hirers in as usual and 9 private meetings were held in the smaller rooms.

In the last few weeks we have had 4 Wedding Receptions and our last Wedding Ceremony of the year. Although the Cells are now closed until next April, there have been several tours organised by the Tourist Information Centre.

Staffordshire W.I. held a Craft Fair and the Cats Protection Society have also had a table top sale. We have several Craft Fairs booked in during the run up to Christmas.

Both Lichfield Society of Artists and Tamworth Society of Artists have held exhibitions of their work. The NSPCC held a charity Concert, and the Pauline Quirke Academy held their Annual Awards Ceremony again in the Guildhall. Lichfield Arts held 2 concerts and their annual L2F weekend.

The 2020 diary will be available in January 2019 and enquiries have already been received for Wedding Receptions in 2020. As we approach the Festive season there are several private bookings, craft fairs, and Lichfield Leather are back on 1 & 2 December. The last booking of 2018 will be a Wedding Reception on 29 December.

Repairs have been carried out to the Guildhall heating system, a leak in the stairwell and the blinds in the main hall. Refurbishment work started in the Guildroom Kitchen on 5 November and is expected to be completed by the end of the month. Some bookings have been moved to other rooms whilst this work is undertaken.

Boley Park continues to attract bookings for children's parties. Repairs have been carried out to lights in the toilet area and there are already several bookings for 2019.

6. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

The Deputy Town Clerk worked closely with the Civic Officer in the preparation and execution of the Remembrance Sunday Service on 11 November. The Deputy was also instrumental in the organisation of the additional activities to commemorate the WW1 centenary.

In the absence of the Administration Officer the Deputy Town Clerk has also been covering Planning duties.

Final preparations for the Christmas Lights Switch On continue, the Deputy Town Clerk is liaising with all those involved and has held meetings with the security providers, Fire Service and Licensing Officers. In addition the Deputy is working with the Markets Officers on the site plan for market stalls at this event.

In addition the Deputy Town Clerk also attended the Market Traders Liaison meeting on 5 November, continuing to foster a good relationship between the City Council and its traders.