

For Council: 23 July 2025 APPENDIX 3

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Harriet Chatwin, Civic Officer

Following the investiture of the new Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Sheriff, the civic team's first official engagement was the Court of Arraye, held at the Guildhall on Monday 26 May. The 7th Lichfield Scout Group kindly supported the event once again by providing six Men at Arms, who were ceremonially 'inspected' by the Mayor, Cllr Claire Pinder-Smith, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Rosie Harvey-Coggins and Sheriff, Revd Ian Hayter.

This year's High Constables, Mark Jones and David Mills, called upon the Dozeners to deliver their reports to the Lord of the Manor—including Lichfield City Council's very own Sheriff, who continues to serve as a long-standing Dozener of Beacon Street.

The civic party then assembled on the dais for the traditional Lichfield Bower procession, which featured music, dancers and local community groups. In particular, the Bower Queen float, where the Mayor officially crowned Katie Adams. The celebrations later moved to Beacon Park, where a variety of rides and stalls were set up, offering an afternoon of fun for all.



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 18 June 2025.

With the sun shining and spirits high, the event proved to be an enjoyable evening for all involved. Despite a valiant effort from the City Council team, the Bowling Club once again emerged victorious, securing the trophy with a final score of 138 to 44.

Following the match, the Mayor presented the trophy to Club President Andy Hayes, who expressed his gratitude to all participants and supporters. The Mayor also shared a brief history of the long-standing tradition, noting that the challenge match has been played since 1924. The trophy itself was donated in 1926 by local benefactor Colonel Swinfen Broun and has been contested annually ever since.

After the presentation, players and guests gathered at the Hub for a light supper prepared by members of the Bowling Club. The evening concluded with the Mayor drawing the raffle, which raised over £150.00 in support of the Museum Bowling Club's upcoming charity fun day.

The City Council and Bowling Club look forward to continuing this tradition next year, with the next match scheduled for Wednesday 17 June 2026.



At the time of compiling this report, preparations are ongoing for the following quarter including the Back-to-School Uniform Bank in the Guildroom on Friday 29 August & the Sheriff's Ride starting from 9:30am, outside the Guildhall on Saturday 6 September.

2. Open Spaces: Nigel Boden, Open Spaces Officer and Jane Varley, Clerical Officer

Wildflower Areas

The past few weeks has seen the wildflower areas in the city bloom splendidly, with positive comments received notably from the flowers at Festival Gardens which were reseeded for 2025, and the adjacent rose gardens which enjoyed a delightful first flush.



Replacement Bins

The replacement of several LCC maintained bins has recently been completed. These are located at Kings Hill to Manor Rise (FP4), Kean Close to Terry Close (Site 5) and Gallows Wharf (Site 26B).



Bloomsbury Way (Site 49B)

Crown lift, cut back and deadwood various trees on this site, plus felling of two sycamore in close proximity to resident's wall.



Heather Gardens (Site 19B)

Works are currently in progress including refurbishment of benches, railings re-painted, repairs to various sections of stone walls and extensive pathway resurfacing. The site will be replanted shortly, completing the significant improvement to this much utilised and very prominent open space.



Other matters progressed/completed since the last report and in addition to routine inspections include:

- **E.ON** – Lighting column works scheduled on four LCC pathways. Works to leaning columns at Manor Rise/Hillside (FP7) and Wentworth Drive/Tamworth Road (FP3) are completed to date.
- **Festival Gardens, Friary Remains, Library Corner** – Various benches cleaned and revarnished/painted.
- **Curborough Community Centre (Site 9)** – reinstallation of missing section of railing and new joining section to barrier around car park.
- **Parchments Walk – Gaia Lane to Mill Croft (FP21)** – Deadwood pine tree
- **Frenchman's Walk (FP12)** – Lighting column access cover re-secured
- **Cornfield Drive (Site 44B)** – Crown lift and cut back trees/ shrubs from car parking area

3. Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum: Kimberley Biddle, Museums & Heritage Officer

Continuing the successful start to the spring/summer season, the Birthplace has welcomed 1,612 visitors in June, which is 7% more than in 2024, and 11% more than in 2023.

Collections care

Work to install new blinds throughout the museum is currently underway and approximately halfway complete. This will address long-standing issues with the previous blinds (pictured to the right) which have proven ineffective at reducing lux levels and obstruct exterior views. As a result, visitors frequently raise the blinds to see outside, sometimes damaging the mechanisms in the process, which exposes sensitive objects to harmful light levels.

Light, including lux and UV radiation, causes permanent damage to objects through fading, discoloration, and weakening of materials. The damage is cumulative and cannot be reversed.

The new perforated vision blinds are designed for heritage environments and are already in use at properties managed by the National Trust and Historic Royal Palaces. They are flame-retardant, wipeable, and provide effective light reduction while still allowing views to the outside, improving both collection care and the visitor experience.

The newly installed perforated vision blinds are shown fully lowered in the photograph below. Additional blackout blinds have also been installed (shown rolled up) for enhanced lux protection if needed. All blinds were supplied and installed by Sun-X.



The contractors are utilising the existing fittings and pre-existing holes from the old blinds. This approach ensures that no additional impact is made to the structure, aligning with best practices in heritage conservation and minimising any further intervention to the building.

Birmingham Museums Trust's Conservation Manager was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive conservation assessment at the Birthplace and Guildhall Cells. A detailed report is currently being prepared and will inform the development of a targeted collection care plan.

The assessment considers a wide range of factors affecting the condition and long-term preservation of the collection. The report will provide a strategic overview of its current state, highlight key conservation priorities, and offer practical recommendations for preventative care. It will serve as a vital resource in ensuring the continued conservation and sustainability of the collection.

A horologist recently checked the clocks at the Birthplace. During the assessment, they identified several maintenance tasks needed to keep the clocks in good working order. Following this, the horologist has been commissioned to carry out the necessary conservation and repair work. This will help safeguard their mechanical integrity and keep them ticking for years to come.

Improving accessibility

The Museums and Heritage Officer (MHO) and Museum Support Officer (MSO) attended an online training session organised by Heritage Open Days. The session, Creating Accessible Events (Vision Awareness), was delivered by VocalEyes, an organisation committed to ensuring that blind and visually impaired people have the best possible opportunities to experience and enjoy art and heritage.

The session offered valuable insights and practical guidance on how to make events and interpretation more accessible for visitors with visual impairments. It has sparked several ideas for how the Birthplace team can improve accessibility across the site.

Following the session, the MSO has already begun to apply the learning by incorporating alternative (alt) text into our schools' resources and monthly newsletter. Alt text provides descriptions of images for users who cannot see them. She is also working toward expanding this provision across additional platforms, including our website and social media channels. These steps form part of our ongoing commitment to making the site more inclusive and welcoming to all audiences.

Bookshop

One of the Bookshop's most popular stationery items has been given a fresh new look. The MSO and Museum Attendant, Laura Bell, updated the ink pot design which now features a bespoke logo in place of the previous generic label. This not only improves the product's visual appeal but also makes it a more distinctive and memorable souvenir for customers.

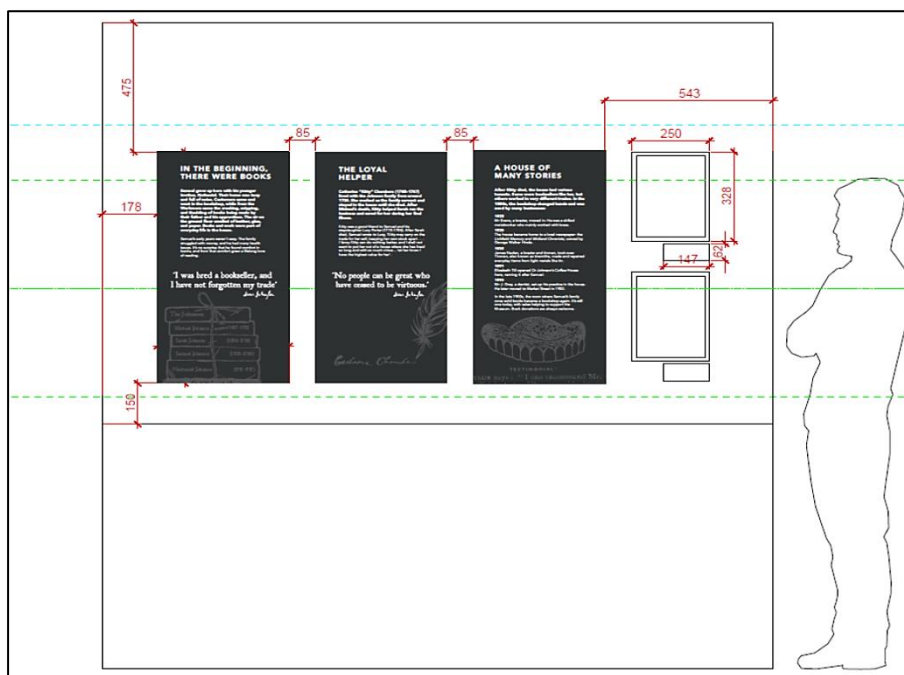


New interpretation

The MHO has been developing content for new interpretation panels for the Workroom and London Life displays. The Workroom panels explore the history of the bookshop in greater depth, as well as focusing on one of the family's servants, offering a wider perspective of life in the household.

Meanwhile, the London Life panels will address a current gap in interpretation by introducing visitors to Francis Barber, an important figure in Johnson's life who is currently only briefly mentioned on site.

This work represents an important step in improving interpretation across the site and ensuring that underrepresented figures and themes are more effectively incorporated into the visitor experience.



Events at the Birthplace

Birthplace volunteers continue to play a vital role in enriching the site's offer through a variety of regular and seasonal events. Craft volunteer, Margery, has once again taken the lead in planning this year's family crafts programme. The theme for summer 2025 is Those Clever Georgians, which promises to offer a fun and educational look at Georgian-era innovations through hands-on, family-friendly activities. These sessions are an important part of family engagement and continue to draw new and returning visitors.

As part of the Defoe Society Conference, which took place in Lichfield this year, the Birthplace was delighted to host two special events that showcased the depth of local knowledge and creative talent within our team. The first was Tea with Mrs Thrale, an original performance written and performed by Museum Attendant, Christine Genders.

The second event was a walking tour researched and delivered by Museum Attendant, Sarah Dale. The tour provided conference attendees with an informative exploration of Johnson's connections to the city, bringing historical locations and stories to life.

4. Markets: Jeremy Williams, Markets Officer/Michelle Read, Office Administrator

A full market is being maintained on Fridays and Saturdays. The Fruit and Vegetable stall continues to also stand on Wednesdays. A new trader, *Bowes Pizza* will be starting a trial period on Pool Walk on 19 July and on non-market days will be trading on the Market Square.

There are two more community days being planned for later in the summer, on 7 August and 4 September.

Officers continue to work closely with LDC Environmental Health and continue to check all food stalls for standards of food hygiene. During the recent hot weather, Officers carried out temperature and storage checks for all food traders; all have been asked to incorporate fly fans on their stalls. Environmental Health Officers are being kept informed of any issues and concerns as well as being kept up to date regarding new food traders who join the market.

Tuesday Market Update

There are only two pitches available on the Tuesday Market having recently lost a total of three traders (*All Kinds of Everything*, *Gift Fairy*, and *Bubbles in Bloom*). One of the pitches has been filled and it is hoped the remaining two will be occupied shortly.



On Tuesdays, *M & S Renewables Ltd*, *Yamuna Rambling Cart*, and *Bloom & Bliss* will stand biweekly opposite *Atterbury*.

The Officer-maintained waiting lists will be reviewed to offer opportunities to new traders on Tuesday. In addition *Bahia Fashions* has now signed as a permanent trader covering two pitches

Friday Market Update

The two pitches that had been vacated have now been filled on the Friday market, both *Della Marie Board Game Art* and *All Kinds of Everything* now becoming permanent traders.

Applications are still being invited from individuals interested in trading at Lichfield Market. These traders are being asked if they are willing to provide holiday and absence cover and are being placed on a list to replace any vacancies in the future.

Saturday Market Update

The Saturday market also remains full. As previously mentioned, the Markets Officer maintains a list of casual traders from all three markets that are invited to stand when permanent traders are absent or take holidays which helps to maintain a full market.

On 14 June Aston Villa legend, Dennis Mortimer visited the long-standing trader '*Framed*' and brought along the European Cup, kindly posing for photographs with members of the public.

Vegan Market

The Vegan market runs on the third Sunday of the month. This is becoming increasingly popular with an average of 26 traders helping to bring something different on to the Market Square with a range of diverse stalls.

Producers Market

The Producers Market, run by CJ Events, takes place on the first Sunday of each month. It features 30 traders and is extremely popular with customers who return regularly. The market offers a variety of goods from traders each month.

Bower Fair

Lichfield Bower hired the Square for the Bower Fair from Saturday 24 - Monday 26 May, excluding the usual Tuesday. Officers notified Pat Collins Fair of this at the time of booking. Consequently, Tuesday market traders were told the market would operate as usual. However, fair operators believed they could stay until Tuesday night. When it was too late to reorganise the market, the fair was asked to vacate the square. Additionally, a fairground ride blocked the exit for St Mary's and the Hub. Organisers have been contacted to prevent these issues reoccurring next year. Lichfield Bower Committee also hired Pool Walk on Bank Holiday Monday for a small craft market and have expressed an interest in doing the same next year.

Victorian Market

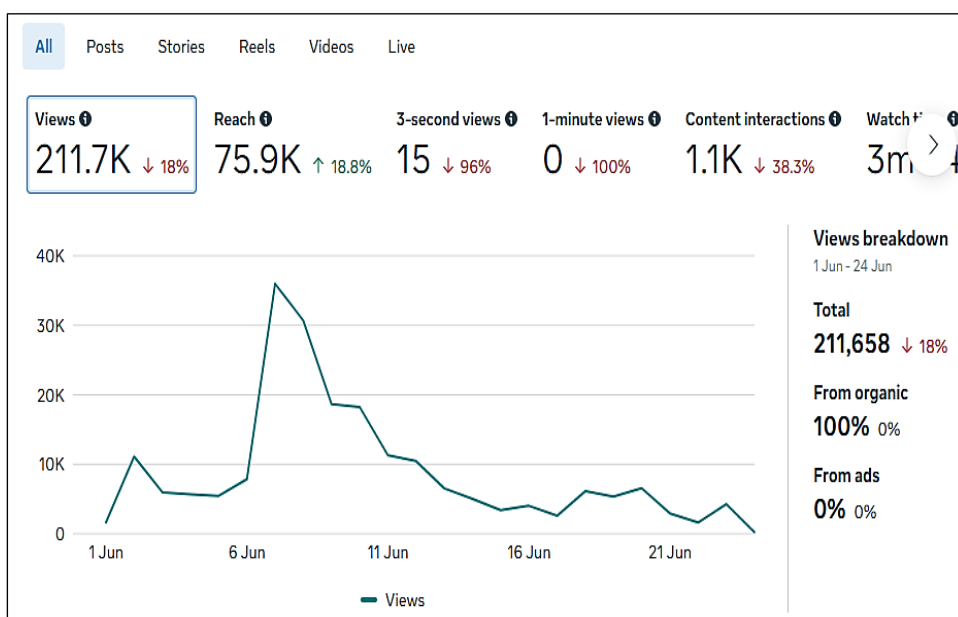
LDC will be hosting a Victorian Market around the City from Thursday 4 -Sunday 7 December). The markets team were originally included in a walk around with LDC and the event supplier, LSD Promotions in order to offer guidance and support.

LCC market traders have raised concerns that this could potentially take trade away from them and the Square, particularly as LSD Promotions will be allowing duplication of lines. Officers at LCC have made representations to LDC regarding this matter and members of the MWG have suggested a Community Day be held during this period, too.

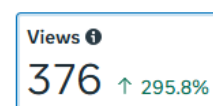
Social Media

The statistics below show the number of followers on Facebook and Instagram. Officers are focusing on existing traders by giving them a spotlight and promoting their stall on a regular basis. Any new traders that come onto the market are given an in depth highlight on social media to help promote their arrival on the Market and to help increase footfall and their sales.

Facebook



Instagram



5. Guildhall & Boley Park Community Hall: Helen Winter, Bookings Officer

Since my last report, regular hirers have used the Guildhall, including Slimming World, Bridge, Band Practice, Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society, U3A, Lichfield Friendship and Chess.

We continue to attract small meetings with 10 being held recently plus two open public consultations (health) and three days of university conferences. We also hosted a local charity conference.

The Old Prison Cells are open most Saturdays (except when whole building bookings are in progress).

Market Research, a commercial booking, have been busy surveying chocolate and crisps with 6 bookings, and have more bookings planned in the next few weeks.

A craft fair (pictured), held on one of the hottest days of the year, had a lower turnout than usual, but still had 750 people attending.

Lichfield society of Artists also held a 3-day Art Exhibition in the Guildroom. As usual, this was well attended.

A whole building Book Extravaganza was also held in June. This proved successful and is due to return later in the year.

Lichfield Festival held an event in June and are due to return in July for: 13 July – Steve Knightley, 14 July – Lichfield Concert Band in conjunction with Lichfield Festival, and on 19 July – Lesley Smith as Anne Boleyn.

Lichfield Arts have also been busy with their Blues and Jazz weekend in June (pictured below)



A local college returned for their annual Fashion Show of students work. We have also had a whole building booking for a Private Banquet hosting more than 110 guests.

Boley Park Community Hall

Boley Park has been busy. Apart from the regular hirers, we have held 2 x Craft De-stash events, a Stamp Fayre and 4 children's parties. There is also a playscheme returning in the school holidays.

6. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

On the 14th June, Lichfield's German twin town Limburg held a special day introducing Lichfield to their citizens. Under the motto "Limburg meets Lichfield", a lively and varied programme consisted of music contributions from various local schools, trialling various sports and games like hockey, table tennis, horse races and darts. Organisations, like the local Scouts group, Photography Club and the Limburg Cathedral Choir were also involved in the day's entertainment. And of course, teatime in the English café was a must.

To introduce the English school day, they invited guest speaker, assistant headteacher Mr. Matthew Amison from the Lichfield Cathedral School (pictured) to hold various talks over the weekend. Mr. Amison stayed on to visit another High School in Limburg to meet with students and teachers to gain insights into the German school system and its differences as well as similarities. Over the two days, he was actively participating in various lessons and both schools want to work on possible international cooperation and finding ways to set up exchanges for staff and students.



7. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

Community Engagement

Following the success of the VE day celebrations further community days and events are being organised.

On **Thursday 7 August** the Market Square will host a variety of charities and organisations focusing on adult mental health and children's services. Groups such as *Talking Newspapers*, *Guide Dogs For The Blind*, *Memory Café* and *Andy's Man Club* will stand alongside 'Reggie' the adoption bus, *Liberty Jamboree*, and local playgroups. In addition the Hub will provide a 'pop up' café with free gifts and face painting for the children. *Everyone Health* will be on site to offer free health checks and City Councillors will be available to answer residents' questions and promote the *Back To School Uniform Bank*.

VJ Day on **Friday 15 August** will be commemorated with a free photographic exhibition and display in the Guildroom which will run from **Thursday 14 – Saturday 16 August**. The prison cells

will also be open to the public. The Deputy Town Clerk would like to thank Clive Read for collating the exhibition.

The second Community day will take place on **Thursday 4 September**. 'The Big Lunch' will once again encourage local residents and visitors to enjoy the surroundings of the Market Square whilst listening to free entertainment and eating their lunch.

Following the recent successful open day at the Guildhall, a Wedding Fair will be held on **Sunday 31 August**. The venue will once again feature elegantly decorated rooms and a wide array of wedding suppliers will be exhibiting to offer inspiration to attendees.

Plans are also underway for a Christmas Community day and events in 2026. A full report of the summer's events will be provided to Council in September.

The Deputy Town Clerk continues to provide secretariat support and the relevant reports to the Markets Working Group, Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee and full Council

8. LCC Website Statistics

Reports snapshot

