

For Council: 30 September 2025 APPENDIX 4

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Harriet Chatwin, Civic Officer

Lichfield City Council's 'Back to School' event returned on Friday 29 August and was once again well attended, with families braving the rain to take part. The event was created to help ease the financial burden of preparing for the new school year by providing free school uniforms, refreshments and free face painting for all children — adding a fun atmosphere to the afternoon for both children and adults! Lichfield's Town Crier, Adrian Holmes was also present to give a 'shout' about the afternoon.



The event was made possible thanks to the support of Lichfield City Council Officers, Councillors, volunteers and local businesses including Tesco Extra. Generous donations from residents included stationery and brand-new uniforms, purchased especially for the cause.

Cllr Ann Hughes, Deputy Leader of the Council, expressed her gratitude to everyone involved — from those who helped advertise in local shops, to residents who donated their pre-loved uniforms, and the officers who organised and distributed the donations on the day.

On Saturday 6 September, the Sheriff of Lichfield, Revd Ian Hayter, took part in the annual tradition that is the Sheriff's Ride. Led by the Clerk of the Course, Nick Sedgwick, the Sheriff, Revd Ian Hayter was applauded as he left the Guildhall on horseback.

The remainder of the event (organised by the Lichfield Shrievalty Association), went on to complete a full ride, starting at Freeford Manor, via Maple Hayes and back into the city accompanied by several horse riders & cyclists. They were later led by the Sword and Mace Bearers back into the city via The Close, where they were welcomed at the Cathedral, to toast the ride with a glass of sherry. The ride then continued via Dam Street and Market Street to the Guildhall.

The Sheriff's Ride is a tradition dating from 1553 when Queen Mary's Charter separated Lichfield from Staffordshire, making Lichfield 'a City and a County' with the right to appoint its own Sheriff. The Charter commanded the Sheriff to make a perambulation to inspect and enforce the city boundary each year. This year marks the 472nd Sheriff's Ride.

Pictured below, the Sheriff outside the Guildhall, preparing for the start of the Ride and, with the Dean of Lichfield, the Rt Revd Jan McFarlane and Revd Canon Andrew Stead at The Close later in the day.



The Sheriff said, "I am honoured to have taken part in the historic tradition that is the Sheriff's Ride. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day that I will never forget. I would particularly like to thank the Clerk of the Course and Lichfield Shrievalty Association together with the landowners, along with officers of Lichfield City Council and many, many others who made this day so very special. The Sheriff's Ride is one of the most historic events in Lichfield, long may it continue!".

Pictured below, The Sheriff, together with the Sheriff's Lady, Sally Hayter, and the City's sword and mace bearers, outside Donegal House.



The Mayor & Sheriff's first charity event of their civic year, a charity Quiz & Music evening takes place shortly after the deadline for this report. Preparations also continue for the Samuel Johnson Birthday Celebrations on Saturday 20 September. Both these events will be covered in the next officers' report to council.

Arrangements are also continuing for the Remembrance Sunday Service on Sunday 9 November and the Mayor & Sheriff's Charity Black & White Ball on Friday 21 November.

On Friday 12 September, the Mayor and Sheriff hosted the inaugural charity event of their civic year at the Guildhall. The Quiz & Music Evening was a great success, with over 100 attendees taking part. The quiz featured a variety of challenging rounds—including general knowledge, music, and local history—which kept everyone entertained throughout the night.

Special thanks go to Tom Burns of Pineapple Quizzes for hosting the quiz and to Farfeld, who joined us during the break for an hour of folk music, adding a wonderful atmosphere to an already fantastic evening.

The event raised over £1,600, with all proceeds going to the Mayor and Sheriff's nominated charities. Photographs follow overleaf.



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

Spring Road (Site 8)

Reduction to large beech tree including crown lift and dead wood removal. Branches also lifted on adjacent birch.



Additional Signage – Various locations

Extra LCC 'no parking' signage has recently been added at several locations to deter parking on grass; Eastern Avenue (near Sports Club), St Chads, Beaconfields, Stafford Road and Furnival Crescent



St Michael's Churchyard (Site 60)

Various tree works to include:

- Around parking area - reduction of lime and Robinia trees found to be in decline, plus deadwooding of oaks and lime hanging over car park.
- Pollarding of oak tree to bring back into boundary line of pathway
- Cut down and eco-plug lime growing against house
- Crown lift of large lime over garden
- Ash tree in centre - all lower deadwood removed
- Mixed hawthorn and holly hedge running to rear of Southern Cross reduced in height, cut back both sides

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

- **Beaconfields (15D)** – Tree works completed at Swinfen Broun Road / Lillington Close, Yew trees - height reduction, crown lift and pruning back over pavement / road and garden. Lime and Robinia have been deadwooded
- **Heather Gardens (19B)** – Cherry Tree near roundabout reduced back from road to maintain clear view and clear lamp column. Replanting of heather beds scheduled this Autumn
- **Market Square** – Reduce and reshape lime trees, clear view for CCTV cameras
- **E.ON** – Recommended lighting column works are now complete along 4 LCC pathways. New Column placed at Masefield Close to Ivanhoe Rd (FP9) and Reeves Lane to St Chads Rd (FP22)
- **Playgrounds** – ROSPA annual playground inspections at Curborough, Lincoln Close and Stowe Croft
- **Festival Gardens (19C)** – Reduction of overgrown reeds along the watercourse and additional pest control measures introduced. Removal of saplings / foliage overgrowth around Franciscan View apartments.
- **Sheriff's Bridleway** - Clearance of Bridleway connecting Stafford Road to Cross in Hand Lane in preparation for Sherrif's Ride route.
- **Pool Walk (29)** - Epicormic growth removed from row of limes and cut back trees from property/ balcony. Two benches repainted at Speakers' Corner
- **Samuel Close (30)** – branches cut back to clear pathway

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

It has been a busy and successful summer at the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum, with attendants welcoming 2,056 visitors in August. This represents a 5% increase compared to the same period last year. The rise in visitor numbers reflects the continued appeal of the museum and the team's ongoing efforts to deliver engaging events, and high-quality visitor experiences.

Museum Attendants Sarah Dale and Kevin Lynch represented the Birthplace at a stall during Community Day on the Market Square (pictured), helping to raise awareness of the museum and its activities. Alongside public-facing work, the team is continuing to progress the museum's Accreditation Return.



Audience Consultation Project

The Birthplace has successfully secured funding for a new audience consultation project. The Opening Chapters project will run from September 2025 to March 2026. It will involve a series of workshops, focus groups, and in-gallery consultation designed to help staff better understand the needs, expectations, and barriers experienced by both existing and under-represented audiences. The findings will inform the development of future exhibitions, displays, and programming.

This project is supported using public funding from Museum Development Midlands (MDM) and Arts Council England.



Supported using public funding by
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Accessibility Audit

Museum Development Midlands (MDM) has confirmed that the Birthplace's expression of interest in the Open to All Accessibility Audit Programme has been successful. As part of the programme, MDM will generously provide an accessibility audit and training.

The audit will be carried out by Direct Access, recognised accessibility experts. It will include a site visit and a detailed report outlining clear, practical, and actionable recommendations. The accompanying training will equip Birthplace staff with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and implement the audit's findings effectively.

The team believes this expert-led audit will play a vital role in guiding the development of a meaningful and achievable access plan. It will help:

- Improve access to both the physical site and its interpretation
- Deepen engagement with existing audiences and local stakeholders
- Broaden our reach to underrepresented and new audiences

The team is committed to placing access at the heart of future planning and sees this audit as a crucial first step toward creating a more inclusive future for the museum.

Events at the Birthplace

Over the summer, volunteers Margery and Mandy, assisted by summer volunteer Trish, led a series of family craft sessions every Thursday, titled Summer Fun at Sam's House. These volunteer-led activities proved popular with families, attracting both new and repeat visitors. Their creativity and enthusiasm played a key role in enriching the visitor experience during the school holidays.

This September, the Birthplace will participate in Heritage Open Days, a nationwide celebration of history and culture. As part of the programme, Museum Attendants Christine Genders and Sarah Dale will lead free guided tours of the museum, and Christine will also host a special storytelling event. All events are free and bookable via the Birthplace website.

The storytelling event, Princes, Pagans, Saints and a Hidden Hoard, draws inspiration from the writings of the Anglo-Saxon scholar, the Venerable Bede. Focusing on local history, the stories explore the founding of Mercia, the tale of a hidden hoard, and the arrival of St Chad in Lichfield.

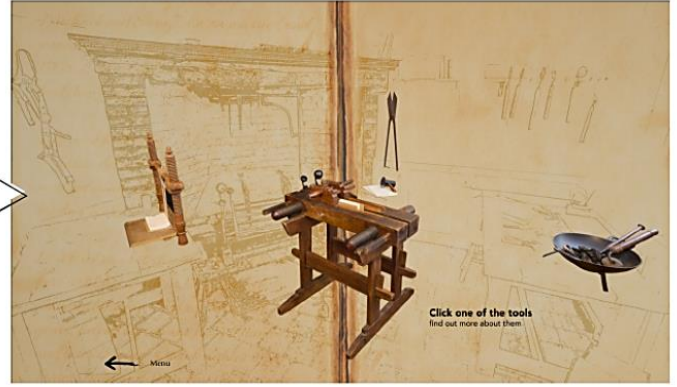
At the time of writing, the Birthplace team is preparing for the annual Samuel Johnson Birthday Celebrations. This year's programme includes an exciting new addition: living history in the Birthplace kitchen, presented by Historical Echoes. Visitors will have the opportunity to meet a historical interpreter who will share insights into 18th-century food and domestic life. As part of the experience, he will recreate and discuss recipes from *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* by Hannah Glasse (1708–1770), a best-selling cookbook first published in 1747.

Workroom Display – Tools of the trade

Designs are progressing well for a new touchscreen interactive called Tools of the trade, which will be part of the Workroom display.

The interactive focuses on the tools currently on display in the room. These are the types of tools that would have been used by Samuel Johnson's father in the early 1700s, when he worked as a bookseller.

When visitors reach this screen, an animation will play automatically. It changes the room image into an illustration and highlights the tools to show that they can be tapped. Tapping on a tool will take visitors to a new page with detailed images and information about how each one was used. The layout will follow the same structure as the rest of the touchscreen, helping to keep the experience clear and consistent. Design proofs are shown overleaf.



Improving Interpretation: Samuel Johnson and 18th-Century Lichfield

We have drafted a small set of temporary interpretation panels that place Samuel Johnson within the wider context of Lichfield in the 1700s.

There will be three panels in total. These are intended as a starting point, offering a brief introduction to life in the city during Johnson's lifetime and helping to broaden the story beyond his individual experience.

The aim is to use this content to encourage visitor feedback and spark ideas about what people would like to know more about, both in relation to Johnson and to 18th-century Lichfield more generally.

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

On Sunday 27 July the Market Square was used by Lichfield Pride who had activities and a small market.



Tuesday Market Update

There are currently three pitches available.



Of these three, M & S Renewables are covering two and Jeffs Football Memorabilia covering the other. Each trader will be asked to go permanent after a period of twelve weeks. The turnover of traders on the Tuesday market can be quite high, however the waiting list maintained by Officers is being used to fill gaps as they occur.



One of the casual traders, C&T Vinyl Records has decided to become a permanent trader on Tuesdays. In addition, Bloom & Bliss will be asked to become permanent next month to fill the bimonthly gap.

Unfortunately, on Tuesday 5 August a restricted market was held with due to the predicted high winds.

Friday Market Update



The Friday market remains full. Funky Foods has unfortunately left the Friday market but has been replaced with 3D Designs who have been waiting for a pitch to become available.

Applications are still being received from traders wanting to stand, in the meantime are being asked if they are willing to provide holiday and absence cover.

Saturday Market Update

The Saturday market also remains full.

Tipsy Treats has decided to stop trading due to other commitments but has expressed an interest in providing causal cover. The pitch has been replaced with a causal trader from the waiting list - Toiletries2U.

Vegan Market

The Vegan market usually operates on the third Sunday of the month. The dates below have now been confirmed for the remainder of 2025 and 2026

2025 - 19 January, 16 March, 18 May, 20 July, 14 September, 19 October and 14 December.

2026 - 18 January, 15 March, 17 May, 19 July, 13 September, 18 October and 13 December.

Producers' Market

The Producers Market, operated by CJ Events, held on the first Sunday of the month continues to be a popular market with customers. August saw a total of thirty traders standing with a variety of produce and gifts.



Food Festival, August 23- 25

The August Food Festival was taken under the control of LDC along with other city stakeholders, including LCC. The market team were heavily involved with the planning and preparation of the event and supported LDC Officers who had just six weeks to make the event happen. LCC officers were happy to pass on the benefit of their experience of planning large events and markets and attended all pre planning meetings. In addition, they produced a detailed stall plan for use on the day.

On Saturday, the event ran smoothly with both the Food Festival and General Market stalls reporting a good day of trading. On Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday the Market Square was used as a seating area, which proved popular with members of the public. Minster Pool Walk was also utilised for stalls on all three days without any issues.

Community Day



On Thursday 7 August the second Community Day of the year was held on the Market Square; the theme of this event was Mental Health and Well-being.

Several charities were invited to stand and talk about their work with each being interviewed by the Town Crier. A total of twenty-four charities took part including Andy's Man Club, Talking Newspapers and Dementia Care.

For the first time, members of the public were invited to 'Meet Your Local Councillor' which proved popular throughout the day.

For the younger visitors there was free face painting and colouring, plus a chance to have a go at being a Town Crier. Boswell Bear and the Bower Queen added to the fun and the Mayor, Cllr Claire Pinder Smith, met the stall holders and chatted to visitors. Morrisons and The Works kindly sponsored free gifts, whilst the LCC team gave away community day pens, Mayor Bears, and prizes for the Town Crier participants.

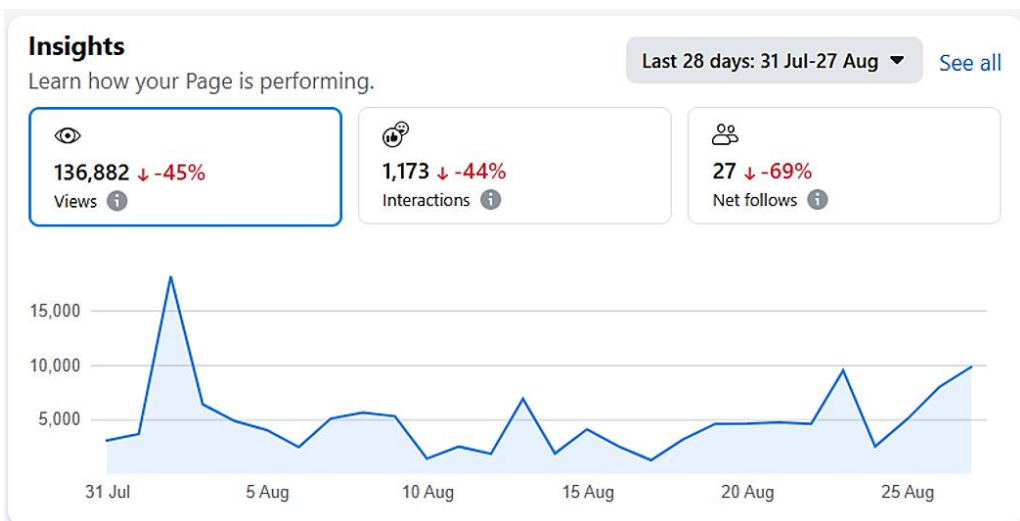
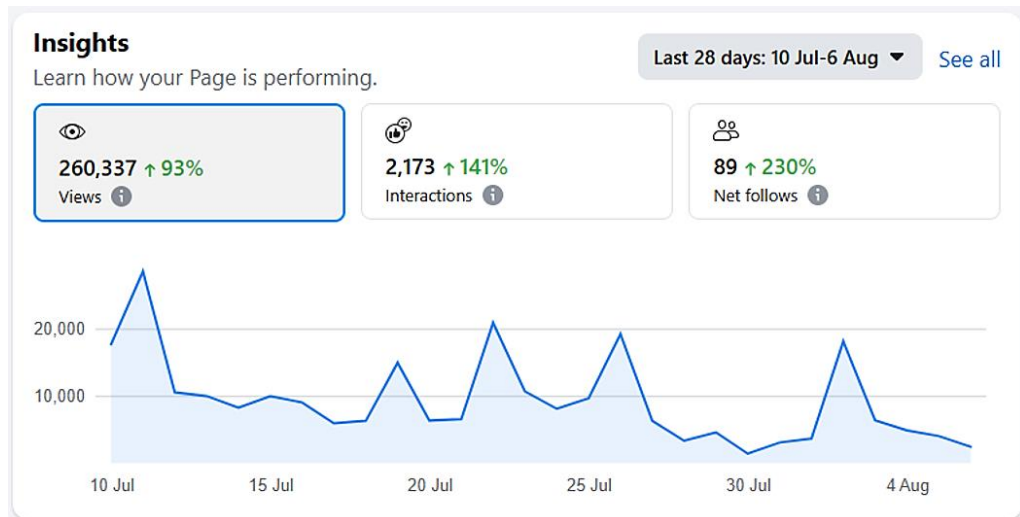
The background music, Pop Up Café by the Hub and sunny weather also ensured that the day was successful, attracting several positive comments.



Social Media

All social media platforms maintain a good following; however, Instagram requires more focus.

The statistics below show the number of followers and interaction for a 28-day comparison from July against August on Facebook.



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

During the summer months, some of our regular groups continued to meet, with Slimming World, U3A, Bridge, Lichfield Friendship Centre, Band Practice and Chess returning after their break.

Lichfield Arts started their autumn/winter session of concerts in September.

The Guildhall (Main Hall) diary is almost fully booked until the new year, with even a wedding ceremony/reception during the Christmas holidays. LDC/DWP are returning for a Jobs Fair, and a 'Wellbeing Festival' is booked; both events take place shortly after the deadline for this report.

During October, the Lichfield Society of Artists return with a 5-day exhibition in the Guildroom, U3A also have a special 'Showcase Day' and a Bible Exhibition is returning. There is also another art display in the Guildroom in November.

The Lichfield Chamber of Trade and Commerce have their Christmas Fayre booked in the Main Hall and Guildroom on 16 November – this is extremely well attended with people queuing to get in the building and a one-way system inside to manage the public.

All rooms have been used to hold various meetings, with 20 booked since my last report. In addition we have had bookings for 5 educational conferences and a public consultation.

The Old Prison Cells are due to close at the end of September and will be re-opened next spring.

Market Research have generated 5 bookings, mostly in the Guildroom. They have more bookings planned in the next few weeks.



Lichfield Festival used the Guildhall to hold some of their events during their recent Festival. This included Lesley Smith as Ann Boleyn (pictured), and the City of Lichfield Concert Band holding a concert.

Lesley's husband, Dr Gareth Williams, is booked in the Guildhall on 4 November as *The Witchfinder General*.

We have several Craft Fairs booked up to Christmas.

Recent private bookings include the Sheriff's Ride Banquet, an 80th Birthday Party, Golden Wedding Celebration, the back-to-school uniform event, and some exhibitions in the Guildroom – a VJ display over 3 days in August and another local display during Community Day, both organised by Clive Read. A Valuation Roadshow was also held in the Main Hall recently.

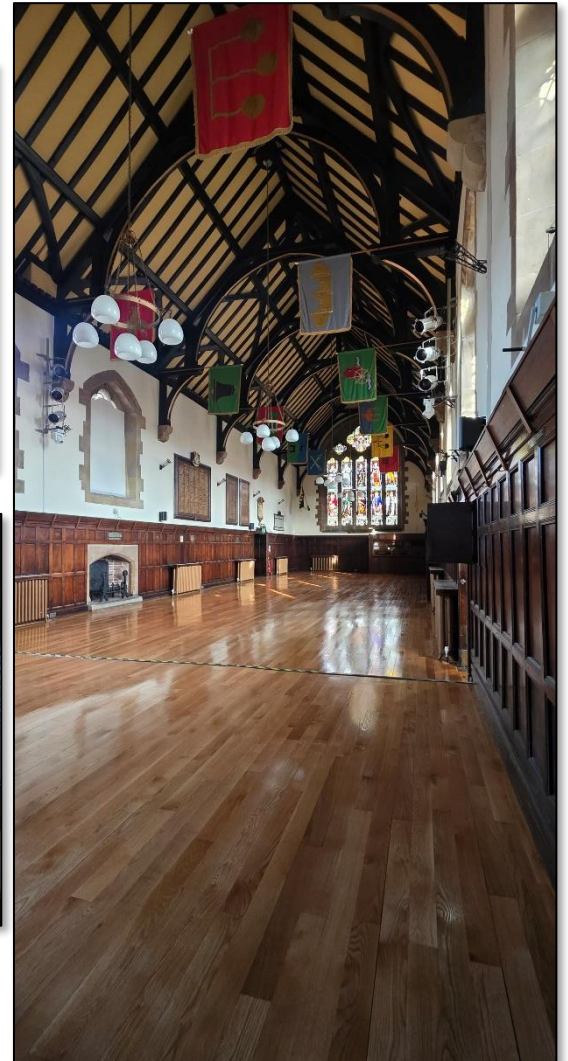
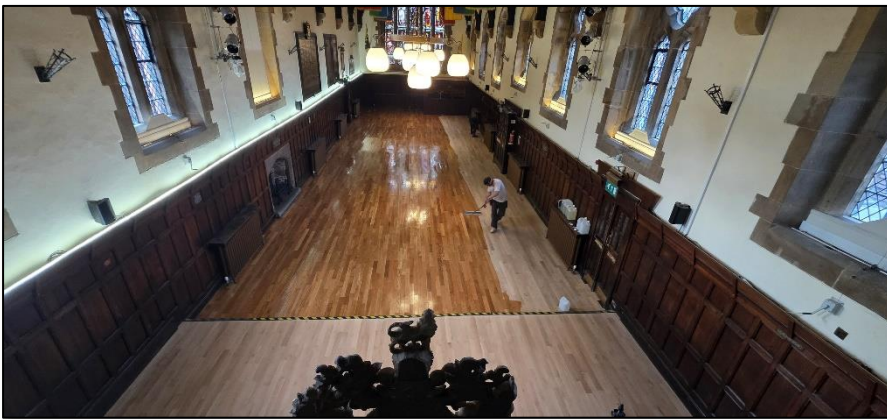
Future bookings up to Christmas include 4 Special Event Packages, another Book Extravaganza, the Johnson Supper and the Shrievalty Weekend.

On 31 August the Guildhall held its first **Wedding Fair**, which over 200 people attended. The first run of the new Guildhall brochure was provided at the event. The rooms were set up for Weddings and with stall holders displaying their items/businesses. Stephen Stack provided canapes and Lichfield Arts served drinks. Design-Elegance dressed the Guildroom and Main Hal.

Wedding music was supplied by Pioneer Roadshows, who will be returning to the Guildhall soon for a Wedding Reception. Other stall holders included a celebrant, bridal gowns, a photographer, cakes, a jeweller, skincare, flowers, hair and gifts. Atterburys (who trade on Lichfield market) decorated the Whytmore Room for us. Over 20 stalls attended or supplied services on the day



During August, the Guildhall Mian Hall floor was stripped, sanded and polished, which ensured it looked wonderful for the Wedding Fair. The photographs below show the floor during sanding, during the polishing process and when the work was completed.



Boley Park Community Hall

The bookings for Boley Park Community hall are increasing again after the summer holidays. A play scheme returned for 4 weeks during August and are booked back again in December. Lots of children's parties are being booked and other bookings include Craft Fairs and Stamp Fairs.

The accounts are now being prepared for the auditors following the end of the hall's financial year on 31 August.

6. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

The Deputy Town Clerk will be providing secretariat support at the meetings of the Commercial Services Committee (formerly the Markets Working Group) and the Climate Change and Bio Diversity Committee. Aside from preparing the Agenda each of these committees necessitates some stand alone project work for Members consideration. For example the Deputy Town Clerk is working with Vision ICT to create a new micro website for the Guildhall to be considered by the CS committee. Alongside this a new Guildhall brochure has been produced which it is hoped will provide some brand identity for the Council's commercial operations.

In addition the Deputy Town Clerk worked closely with the Guildhall's Booking Officer and Office Administrator to facilitate the Wedding Fair at the Guildhall on Sunday 31 August. The day was extremely successful and received several positive comments. The Deputy would like to commend all staff who worked so hard in the background to ensure the day was a success, particularly the Guildhall Premises Attendants, many of whom worked long shifts to move furniture and ensure the newly varnished floor in the main hall was dry in time.

Community Engagement

Aside from the aforementioned Wedding Fair a Community Day was held on the Market Square on Thursday 7 August, as highlighted in the Markets Officer's report.

On VJ Day, 15 August, Clive Read curated an exhibition in the Guildroom with pictures and memorabilia, much of it his own. The Town Crier promoted the exhibition around the City which attracted a good number of visitors. The Deputy Town Clerk would like to commend Clive Read for his hard work and diligence in putting together such an informative and comprehensive exhibition.



A further Community Day was scheduled for 4 September, however due to a Met Office forecast of thunderstorms, this was postponed until the October half term. However, an exhibition did take place in the Guildroom by *Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Trust*, *Sandfields Pumping Station* and pictures of Lichfield in years gone by provided by *Your Probably From Lichfield If*, again under the watchful eye of Clive Read. Unfortunately, footfall was quite poor due to the intermittent heavy rain.



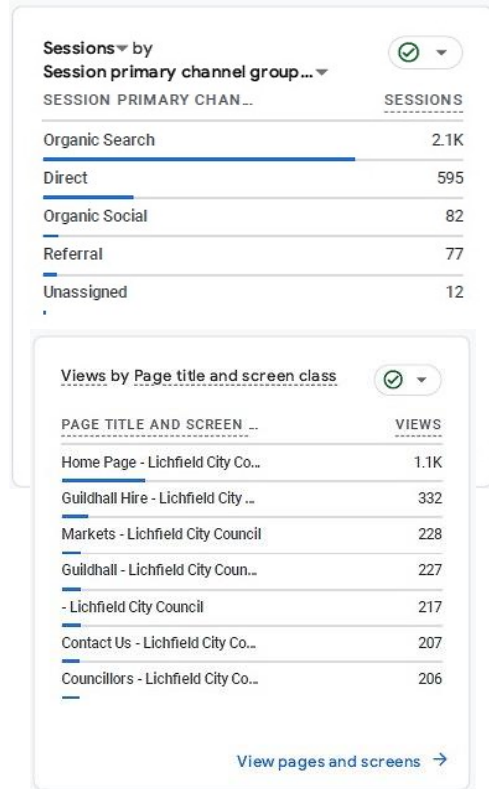
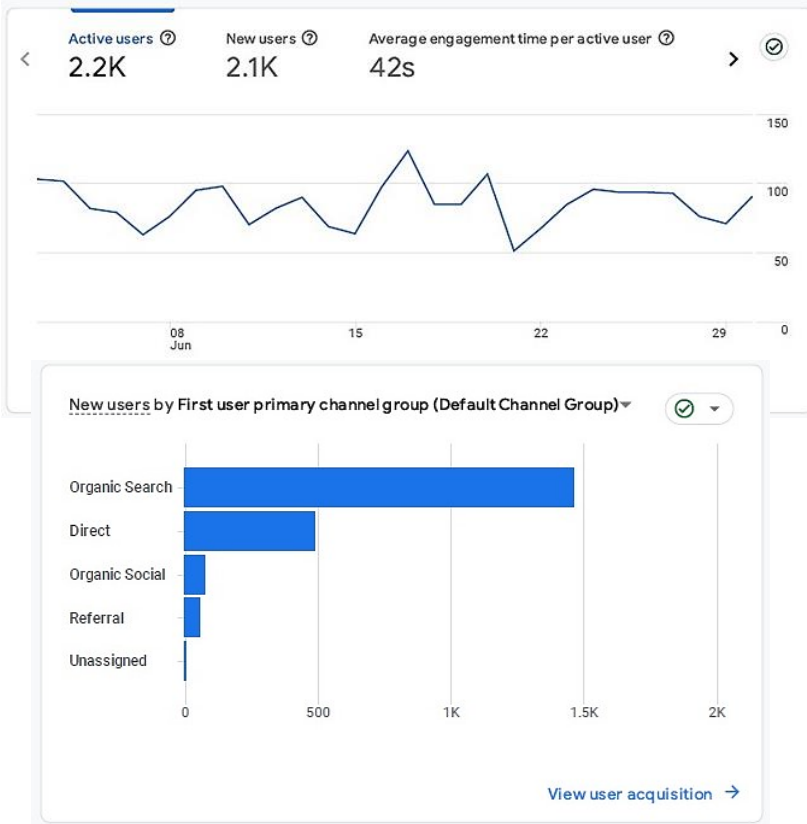
At all of the community events and the Wedding Fair, the Town Crier and Mace Bearer have been present in their regalia. Their presence provides a real spectacle and encourages members of the public to engage and discover more about the City Council. It is also an excellent opportunity to promote any forthcoming events. Many visitors ask for photographs and are thrilled when given the chance to ring the Town Crier's bell.

Preparations also continue for the Christmas Lights Switch On event on Sunday 23 November. Members will recall that the large screen and stage will once again be present and the Deputy Town Clerk has begun approaching businesses for sponsorship.

7. LCC Website Statistics

Previous reporting period (reported to members July 2025):

Reports snapshot



Current Reporting Period – to 31 August 2025:

