

## For Council: 23 APRIL 2019 APPENDIX 4

### OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

#### 1. Civic Matters: Lucy Clarke, Civic Officer

Unfortunately, the Michael Fabricant and Arthur Price of England School Speaking Competition did not take place this year. The Chairman, Michael Fabricant MP made the decision to cancel this year's event due to a lack of schools wanting to participate. This has been very disappointing for all those involved who had worked extremely hard to prepare for this event, we very much hope this situation will not arise in the future. Next year's competition date has been scheduled for Friday 7 February 2020.



On Tuesday 5 March the traditional Pancake Races took place on Bore Street at 12 Noon. Over 30 people took part in the Ladies, Men's, Under 10's and Mascot's Races. Retaining her title for 2019 was Hannah Bull from Talent Match Staffordshire, winner of the Ladies Race. Glen Picknell from The George Hotel won the Men's Race, Alfie Coleman, aged 6 years won the Under 10's race and Richard Barber from Talent Match won the Mascot's Race.

City Jewellers are very proud to be the new sponsors of the Mascot Race, for many years Salloways kindly supported this race but have now sadly ceased trading. City Jewellers announced they will be re-locating to Salloways former shop in Bore Street later this year. The Entertainer toy shop once again kindly sponsored the Under 10's Race and The Mayor sponsored the Men's and Ladies races. After the races were completed and in keeping with tradition, the Civic party processed to the Market Square to officially open the Shrovetide Fair. Refreshments were then served in the Guildhall including the traditional Simnel Cake and Cllr Mrs Gail Johnson gave a toast to "The Old Fair and Pancake Races".

On Sunday 17 March a Civic Sunday Service was held at The Methodist Church, Tamworth Street. Revd Roger Baker lead the service. The Mayor, Sheriff and Deputy Mayor attended with support from fellow Councillors and Friends of Lichfield City Council.

On Friday 22 March, The Friary School held their Encore event, otherwise known as "The Sheriff's Show". The students gave a spectacular performance of music and dance which was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended. The Sheriff, Mr Mullarkey gave thanks to the Headteacher Mr Allman for The Friary's continued support of the Mayor & Sheriff's Charities. The raffle held during evening raised £335, this combined with ticket sales raised a grand total of £500 for the Mayor & Sheriff's Charities; St. Mary's on the Market Square and Lichfield Greenhill Bower Charitable Trust.



Preparations continue for the Sheriff's Darwin Walk on 7 April, Mayor & Sheriff's Entertainment & Tea on 8 April, Easter Sunday Service on 21 April, St. George's Court on 23 April and Annual Council & Mayors Banquet on 13 May.

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

2729 visitors came to the Museum in February and March. The 2018-19 financial year total visitor figure was 21,472 which represents a 17% increase on the previous year.

In February a half-term craft activity session themed on nature in Johnson's Dictionary was popular, and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust attended with an information stall.

Late February and March was a particularly busy period, as SJBM hosted two study weekends and a week of school sessions as the completion of a long-running project with Keele University. A full report of these events can be found in the Birthplace Advisory Committee minutes.



Alongside the Keele events, SJBM was also a partner in Lichfield Literature Festival, running an innovative outreach event at the Stowe Pool Boat House Artspace. At the invitation of the Sculpture and Art Foundation CIC, 'Willow Words' was an interactive installation created by Museum Attendant

Sarah Dale. Using poems from Lichfield Poets and Johnson's Willow on the banks of the pool, Lichfield Poets performed in the space on Saturday 9 March. On the same day, the Museum hosted the 'Word Café' in the Guildroom of the Guildhall, with writing, reading, poetry and storytelling groups from the Museum and across the city attending with stalls. There was also a display of bookbinding by local craftsman Roy Fell. On Sunday 10 March, the Birthplace hosted a writing workshop for young people with author Emma Pass. The events were very successful, with 549 people coming into contact with the Museum over the festival weekend.

School visits in March included Walsall Academy for an A-Level Dictionary Workshop, and a visit in partnership with Erasmus Darwin House for Fulfen Primary School. A student from Burton College's Travel and Tourism course completed a week of work experience, and the Museum attended a volunteering fair at King Edward's School.

'Art UK' spent a day photographing the Museum's sculpture collections in order to add them to a national online database. Other partnership included: hosting the Johnson Society's annual 'Chair Ceremony'; attending the BID Expo; meeting with the new education team from St Mary's; attending a conference on Interpreting Historic Interiors, the West Midlands Museums Development Conference, and a research visit to see the results of a recent development project at the Cowper-Newton Museum in Olney.



A watercolour of Lichfield Cathedral by Paul Braddon was bequeathed to the Museum and placed in a prominent position on the first floor of the Birthplace. The Birthplace has a number of pieces by Braddon, and the donor specified that they wished the view to join the collection.

Work on the redevelopment project also continues, with the National Heritage Lottery Fund 'Expression of Interest' form submitted, for which an outcome is expected in late April.

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



The work on the LCC Footpaths to remove potential trip hazards has now been completed. Seen here are the repairs either side of the red bridge in the festival gardens.

Another improvement in safety on footpaths has been made for those near a school or on a slope. The addition of signs saying "cyclists dismount" will act as a reminder that cyclists must not use these path



An inspection at Christchurch showed a number of tree issues that need rectifying. This follows a lot of work that was required at St. Michaels last year. A schedule of work has been agreed and will be done over the next few months. Some small trees leaning towards the A51 western by-pass will be removed and a large dead sycamore by the footpath next to the Scout hut will also need felling as it is dead.

An oak that is failing in the Christchurch Extension will be cut as a 7m monolith for wildlife. Where possible the logs and brash will be left near the site to create other natural habitats.

Another move in 2019 to help wildlife is a larger area of the Festival Garden will be left unmown. A meter strip by all footpaths will be cut short so the accesses aren't compromised. The meadow will be cut once in June and the grass will be cleared and mixed with free woodchip from tree surgeons to create compost. The City council has been contacted by sixth form students from King Edwards School to help with the project with tasks such as social media and signage to explain the reasons behind the project.



### 4. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

In 1990, the city of Lichfield gifted an original red telephone box to the City of Limburg as a present for the start of the twinning between the two cities. With the help of some soldiers from Whittington Barracks, the telephone booth was rescued from the North Staffordshire "BT telephone box graveyard", loaded on a large lorry and driven to Germany.



With the era of public telephone boxes at an end, Limburg refurbished the old telephone box und turned it into a public "bring and share" book box, complete with shelves and electricity and installed it in its new position outside their library.



The Limburg Mayor, Dr. Marius Hahn, officially opened the book box on 14 March and was very pleased about its renewed use as a visual sign of the friendship between Limburg and Lichfield.

Thomas Charrie from the volleyball club in Ste. Foy visited Lichfield from 8 - 11 March to form a new sporting link and investigate the possibility of an international tournament to be held in Ste. Foy in the summer. Thomas is the son of a founding member of the twinning between Lichfield and Ste. Foy, Gerard Charrie, who sadly passed away last year.

In preparation of the next official ring twinning celebrations taking place in Limburg from 25 - 28 September 2020, the City of Limburg has sent an invitation for a hockey team from Lichfield to take part in a twinning hockey tournament between all 3 countries during the celebration weekend. Contact has been made with the Lichfield hockey club in order to see whether they will be able to send a team.

The Twinning Officer is still looking for host families for 18 college students from Limburg, who will be visiting Lichfield for one week from 11 -18 May 2019. They will be taking part in lessons at the South Staffordshire College's Lichfield campus in the morning and excursions in the afternoon.

## **5. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary**

Since the last report to Council, regular bookings have included Slimming World, Band Practice, Heyday Friendship, National Trust, Bridge, Chess, Italian Class, Ladies Cameo, RSPB, U3A, U3A Gardening, and Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society. The Citizens Advice Bureau still meet in the Guildroom on a Tuesday morning whilst maintenance work is carried out at their current premises. On 1 April, Spanish Classes will start on Monday evenings.

Eighteen meetings have been held in the building, including the Johnson AGM and Twinning AGM. The National Citizenship Service have had two bookings, including a Quiz Night and have several more bookings in the forthcoming months. Lichfield District Council held a public event on Friarsgate which was attended by approximately 300 people over the day.

The Old prison cells opened again on 6 April ,and will remain open until the end of October on a Saturday from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

There have been two Craft Fairs and a National Childbirth Trust sale in the Guildroom and Main Hall. Market Research have been in once to survey air freshners. Blue Bird Care held a drop in session in the Guildroom.



In March Finesse held a successful Wedding Fair at the Guildhall which generated a lot of interest. There has been three Lichfield Arts Concerts, and Lichfield Festival also held an event as part of their Literature Festival. The Worshipful Company of Smiths held their Annual Feast in February and the Boswell Society have also held their Annual Luncheon. The Lichfield Greenhill Bower's Prince and Princess Selection in preparation for the Greenhill Bower celebrations in May took place in the Guildhall. Manor

Park Sailing Club also returned again for their annual dinner. The Lichfield Society of Artists held a successful Spring Exhibition over two days in the Guildroom which was attended by over 600 people. Their Autumn Exhibition is booked for 2 & 3 November. Live painting demonstrations were given by some of the members which encouraged people to stay and £40 was raised for St Giles Hospice.

On 19 February the Guildhall and Twinning Officer attended an EXPO at St Mary's .



This provided the opportunity to liaise with other organisations and businesses in the City and promote City Council events and the Guildhall.

At Boley Hall as well as the regular hirers there have been six birthday parties including a 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Other bookings have included an Interfaith Forum Meeting, Horse Racing Night and a Quiz. The boiler was recently serviced and new chairs purchased to replace the damaged ones.

## 6. Markets Officer: Harriett Hastie & Chris Wilkes



The traditional Shrovetide Fair took up its annual place on the Market Square from Friday 1 to Tuesday 5 March. On this occasion there was no requirement to relocate the Saturday Market.

March was a particularly challenging month for Traders due to the persistent high winds, with gusts at times over 45mph. On two occasions the difficult decision was made to cancel the Market.

Officers worked closely with the stall contractor and liaised with Traders to ensure the safety of the general public. On each occasion posts were placed on the Markets Facebook page and the City Councils Twitter account to keep customers informed.

Stall occupancy on the Market Square is continuing to improve; Tuesdays Market only has two empty permanent stalls available, however there are casual traders currently trialling the space for their stall. The Saturday Market has 4 empty permanent stalls available which are being filled by casual traders, two of which are applying for a permanent Traders Licence. The Friday Market is continuing to improve as 3 casual traders have now become permanent. Due to weather forecasts and events this month, there was a slight decrease in overall stall occupancy as traders were unable to attend.; Tuesdays: 82%, Friday: 72% and Saturday: 89%. In an effort to improve stall occupancy on the Friday Market, from the 1 May the "Buddy Scheme" previously used on the Farmers Market will be introduced. The scheme works by encouraging a permanent trader to introduce a new stall holder, as an incentive both Traders receive discounted rent for a trial period. t

From April 1 2019 the new fees and charges have been applied with many Traders choosing to take advantage of the incentive of a £1 per stall discount if paid in advance of 4 weeks...



Market Officers are liaising closely with Licensing Officers from Lichfield District Council regarding Street Trading Regulations which will be enforced from 1 May and all relevant information regarding the application process is being passed to Market Traders.

Market traders helped launch a new marketing campaign on 1 April to promote Lichfield Markets. In an effort to spread the word about Lichfield's Historic Markets, the City Council has

commissioned a newly designed poster which will appear at 5 train stations around the region as well as on the rear of several local buses. The promotion, due to last for four months will then be followed by a National campaign to '**Love Your Local Market**' running from 17 -31 May, when Lichfield shoppers will be encouraged to try the diverse range of products on offer on the markets , take part in a treasure trail and win prizes.

In addition, the Market Facebook page is regularly updated with relevant information to the public with photographs of trader's stalls featured.

## **7. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas**

The Deputy Town Clerk continues to work with the Markets Officers on promotional ideas for the Markets as well as updating internal procedures. In addition, the Deputy is supporting the NPIWP and also the Market Traders Liaison Committee to action various points raised at their recent meetings.

All the Officer appraisals have now been completed with the feedback being that this was a positive exercise.

The Deputy is also assisting the Town Clerk in preparations for the Annual Council on 13 May and Annual Town meeting on 22 May.