

## For Council: 9 June 2025 APPENDIX 6

### OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

#### 1. Civic Matters: Harriet Chatwin, Civic Officer

The Mayor and Sheriff concluded their 2025 charity events with a traditional Sunday Lunch & Quiz on 6 April at the Guildhall, bringing together over 50 guests for an afternoon of superb food provided by Gourmet Chef to Go. Following the meal, guests enjoyed an engaging quiz session led by Tom Burns, who returned to host another entertaining Pineapple Quiz. Towards the end of the afternoon, the Mayor and Sheriff expressed their gratitude to everyone who participated and contributed throughout their fundraising efforts for the year.

On Thursday 10 April, The Friary School in Lichfield held its annual Encore event otherwise known as 'The Sheriff's Show'. This was another great performance from the talented youngsters & Friary School PTA kindly allowed the City Council to be sole raffle ticket vendors on the evening. As a result, a fantastic amount of £360 was raised for the charity account.



*Winning Team*

This year, Easter Sunday fell on Sunday, 20 April, when the Civic party made its way from the Guildhall to the Cathedral. Following the Eucharist service at Lichfield Cathedral, guests gathered at the Guildhall for refreshments, including the traditional Simnel cake. This event provided the final opportunity for the 2024/25 Mayor and Sheriff to express their gratitude to all who had supported them throughout their tenure. Councillors Ed Strain and Colin Ball offered toasts, commending them for a successful year in office.



*The Mayor & Catherine Brown*

The annual St. George's Court was held at the Guildhall on Wednesday, 23 April. This traditional manorial court was well received, with over 100 people in attendance. Ale Tasters Nick Sedgwick and Colin Ablitt once again delivered their witty reports and officially announced their retirement from their posts, which they have held for over 30 years. District Councillors Andy Smith and Doug Pullen have accepted the



role on probation, and we look forward to their induction at St. George's Court in 2026. Following the passing of Geoff Mumford from Burton Bridge Brewery, Titanic Brewery kindly donated a cask of ale from their latest pub, The Beacon on Tamworth St. The ale tasters also took the opportunity to present Geoff's daughter, Catherine Brown, with a silver salver dedicated to Geoff in recognition of his valuable service for over 25 years, on behalf of Lichfield City Council. The Court was then closed, and proceedings ended with the Toast to 'The Immortal Memory of St. George,' led by former Sheriff, Peter Hitchman.



*L to R: Andy Smith, Ale Taster Nick Sedgwick, Mayor, Cllr Sam Schafer, Ale Taster Colin Ablitt & Doug Pullen*

The annual Sheriff's Darwin Walk took place on Sunday, 27 April, with the Mayor & Sheriff cheering on participants as they set off from Bunkers Hill, Beacon Park. Following a well-established route along the city boundary, walkers enjoyed stunning views of the city. Encouraged by the good weather, over 50 people took part, many bringing their dogs along to join the approximately 5-mile walk!





Final accounts are still awaited but indications are that Cllr Sam Schafer & Cathy Wood will have raised just over £5,000 during their year 2024-25 for their chosen charities. It is hoped that cheques will be presented to representatives from the charities, Staffordshire Blood Bikers & Lichfield Foodbank in late June.

The investiture of the new Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Sheriff for Lichfield City Council took place in the Guildhall at the Annual Council meeting on Wednesday 14 May 2025. The new Mayor of the City is Councillor Claire Pinder-Smith, proposed by Councillor A Fox and seconded by Councillor A Hughes. In accepting the office of Mayor for the forthcoming year, Councillor Pinder-Smith thanked her fellow councillors for their support and stated that it was a great honour and privilege to be elected. She also paid tribute to the work of the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Sam Schafer and Sheriff, Cathy Wood, who had together raised just over £5,000 for their chosen charities; Staffordshire Blood Bikes & Lichfield Foodbank, by holding several events during their year in office.

The new Deputy Mayor is Councillor Rosie Harvey-Coggins whose appointment was proposed by Councillor J Marshall and seconded by Councillor B Watkins. The Deputy Mayor's consort for the ensuing year is Andy Harvey-Coggins.

Completing the new Civic Team is Revd Ian Hayter who was elected Sheriff of the City, following a proposal by Councillor A Hughes and seconded by Councillor B Watkins. The Sheriff's consort for the ensuing year is Sally Hayter

The Mayor proudly announced her appointment of her Cadet, Police Cadet Ella Hughes, and Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Ian Hayter for her forthcoming year in office.



*L to R: Sheriff, Revd Ian Hayter, Mayor, Cllr Claire Pinder-Smith & Deputy Mayor, Cllr Rosie Harvey-Coggins*

Following the investiture of the new Civic Team, the retiring Mayor & Sheriff were presented with replica badges of office.

During their year in office, the Mayor and Sheriff will jointly host four events to raise money for their nominated charities: Lichfield Arts & Pathway Project.

Further information regarding these events will be published over the course of the year on the City Council website [www.lichfield.gov.uk](http://www.lichfield.gov.uk)

Following Council, the Mayor's Banquet was held in the Guildhall. Reports on this, the traditional Court of Arraye on Spring Bank Holiday Monday, and the Swinfen Broun Bowls Match will follow in the next officers' report.

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

### **Friary Remains (Site 19A)**

Restoration of gateway and surrounding brickwork in rear boundary wall is completed and handover from architect / contractor has recently been made.

The restoration has been carried out in consultation with Heritage England, the City Council's architects are preparing the necessary documentation to ensure compliance with the requirements and conditions attached to the Historic England consent currently.

Additional clearance and shrub planting to the bordering length of wall is planned to complete the renovation of this area.



### **Hanging Baskets**

Hanging baskets are due to be provided at the time of preparing this report. As in previous years, the City Council will fund the cost of watering.



### Heather Gardens (Site 19B)

Work is progressing towards redevelopment of beds. Juniper bushes and stumps have now been removed to reveal the existing rockery features. It is planned to expand the year-round heather display and add a seasonal planting display to the larger central bed. Maintenance to benches and railings is also scheduled.



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

- **Nether Stowe / Stowe Croft (Site 10)** – Following recent unauthorised access of this site by travellers, a review of site security is being undertaken. In the interim measures have been taken to ensure the previously lockable bollard – that was removed to allow access - is no longer removable solely through unlocking.
- **Maple Grove (Site 46A)** – Reduction of silver birch alongside property.
- **North & South Oakhurst to Hillside (FP7)** – Cut back trees overhanging light and garden near Bramble Close.
- **Curborough Community Centre (Site 9)** – Reduction of boundary conifers by 3 metres.
- **Frenchman's Walk (FP12)** – New lantern installed on one lighting column.
- **Woods Croft to Swallow Croft (FP27)** – General cut back of foliage, specifically around lighting.
- **Borrowcop Lane to Tamworth Road (FP2)** – Cut back foliage around light column.

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

The new financial year has begun on an extremely positive note, with the highest number of visitors recorded for this period compared to any previous year. To date, Museum Attendants have welcomed 2,900 visitors, including a group from *Australians Studying Abroad Cultural Tours*. The Easter holiday period also saw a notable increase in family attendance, contributing to a strong and promising start to the financial year.

Recent events and activities have included volunteer-led craft sessions, the popular Spy School Family Workshop delivered by Museum Attendant Kevin Lynch, as well as the ongoing Latin classes, Birthplace Book Club, and Writer's Group.

The Museums and Heritage Officer (MHO) has been working with Raphael Design/Nettl to design a new leaflet to promote the Birthplace (pictured opposite). The content provides a broader picture of what the museum offers, highlighting not only the displays and collections but also events, school and group visits, and the Bookshop. This comprehensive approach will help engage a wider audience and ensures that both first-time visitors and returning guests are aware of the full range of experiences available at the site. Designed with a contemporary look and feel, the leaflet aligns with the Birthplace's updated branding and new logo.



As part of the Birthplace's commitment to offering more environmentally sustainable giftware, the Bookshop now stocks a new range of recycled leather keyrings. These items are an eco-conscious choice that supports waste reduction and promotes the reuse of materials. Also, because the leather is recycled, it doesn't contribute to the demand for new animal products. However, the team recognise the importance of catering to a variety of customer preferences and are currently exploring alternative options for those who prefer not to purchase leather goods. The keyring features a contemporary illustration of the Birthplace designed by local artist Lisa Hand.





In addition to the keyrings, a new selection of books has been added to the Bookshop, highlighting more diverse historical narratives, works by authors associated with Samuel Johnson's circle, as well as titles exploring etymology and traditional sayings. The giftware range has also been expanded, with a particular focus on items appealing to booklovers.

Birthplace volunteer Georgie has started a project to update the museum's large-print guides to ensure they remain accurate and accessible. This work is an important part of the Birthplace's ongoing commitment to inclusivity, helping to provide a welcoming and informative experience for visitors with visual impairments or reading difficulties.

Two paintings have been rehung using a secure and discreet locking system. The portrait of Elizabeth Hunter (pictured) has been relocated to a more prominent position within the Birth Room, following its removal from the Hay Hunter Library due to plaster movement and cracks on the wall.

The portrait of Johnson has been rehung in the Parlour, having been temporarily removed from display last year to protect it during building works. Both paintings now feature invisible hanging systems, offering a more visually appealing and unobtrusive presentation that enhances the overall display. The issues with the plasterwork in the Hay Hunter Library will be investigated to assess the extent of the damage and determine any necessary repairs.

Annual building maintenance is currently underway, including Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), CCTV system maintenance, and the annual flushing, cleaning, inspection, and servicing of the non-return valve to prevent flooding.

The MHO has been reviewing and renewing existing loans, including the annual renewal of the Reverend Dr John Taylor portrait, as well as continuing work on the Accreditation Return, developing interpretation for the Workroom tools, and collating information for the Francis Barber interpretation panels.



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

A full market is still being maintained on Fridays, and Saturdays. Unfortunately three traders have left the Tuesday market due to lack of sales.

A new trader, "*Cams Doughnuts*" now stands on Wednesdays & Thursday and has also taken a regular pitch on the Tuesday General Market. The fruit and veg stall continue to stand on Wednesdays and the additional day has proved popular with shoppers.

The Markets Officer continues to deal with enquiries from potential new traders, one of which being *Bowes Pizza* who are looking for a regular pitch.

All food stalls are currently being monitored to ensure compliance with food hygiene standards and proper temperature maintenance for both sold and stored stock. These observations will be documented in a due diligence record for future reference. The Curry Man has been requested to provide additional guards or clear covers for certain items on display. Additionally, an inspection at his premises has been scheduled to update his food hygiene standards, facilitating the transfer of the business to his son's name.

LDC Environmental Health Officers are being kept apprised of any issues and informed about any new food traders joining the market.

#### Tuesday Market Update

As previously mentioned three traders have left the Tuesday market. One of the vacated pitches has been filled with *Cams Donuts*, leaving only two available pitches.

The turnover of traders on the Tuesday market can be quite high however, the waiting list maintained by Officers is a valuable database and will be used to try and fill the vacant pitches.

One of the traders "*BS Bahia Fashions*" has now become permanent, covering two pitches and "*HomeFixology*" stand biweekly opposite "*Atterbury's*."





On Tuesday 15 April thirteen young performers from the Garrick theatre entertained shoppers on the market square with extracts from their latest show, an in house production of *A Pocket full of Dreams*.



### Friday Market Update



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

New traders are still making enquiries. The Markets Officer is asking if they can provide holiday and absence cover for permanent traders. They are also added to the LCC database for future permanent pitch availability.



## Saturday Market Update

The Saturday market also remains full.

The Markets Officer maintains a list of casual traders from all the markets that are invited to stand when permanent traders are absent or take holidays which maintains a full market.

On Saturday 19 April the market supported *The Little Baker* in fundraising on behalf of Parkinson's UK. Each stall had a collection box for customers to donate any change. An amazing £125.18p was collected.



## Charity Event

On Wednesday 7 May, the fundraiser team for Children with Cancer UK returned. This event is now held annually, and this year they experienced favourable weather to support their fundraising efforts. Participants rode bikes and received medals for their involvement.





## VE DAY Celebration – Craft Market

In conjunction with the celebrations that took place on the Market Square, a Craft Market was organised and held on Minster Pool Walk with We traders offering a wide variety of handcrafted gifts, home baked goods and Italian food.

There was a good footfall throughout the day, and officers have received many positive comments and compliments. It was definitely a day for reflection, celebration, and retail therapy too!

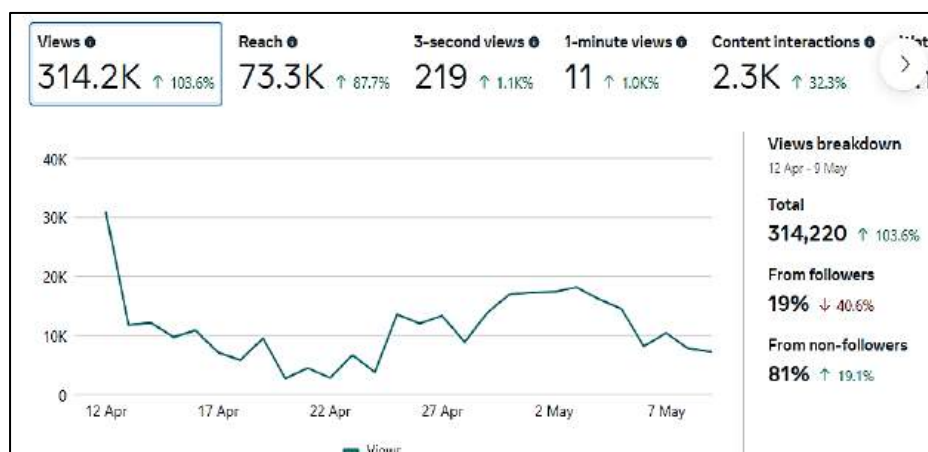


## Social Media

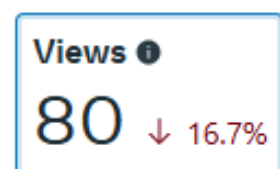
All social media platforms have maintained a steady following, with an increase in reach due to new posts. However, Instagram requires more attention as there has been a decline in its performance.

The statistics below indicate the number of followers on Facebook and Instagram. Officers are now posting content that focuses on specific traders and the new traders entering the market, providing customers with deeper insights into these traders. This approach is expected to help increase both following and reach.

### Facebook



### Instagram



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

Since my last report, the following regular hirers have met at the Guildhall – Band Practice, Bridge, Chess, Lichfield Friendship Centre, RSPB, Slimming World, Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society and U3A.

Lichfield Arts have held 2 events – an Emerging Talent evening and Foo Fighters Concert:



The City of Lichfield Concert Band also held their Spring Concert at the end of March.

Our regular Craft Fair (pictured) returned during the Easter weekend and May Bank Holiday weekend. The Bower Model Fair was also in the Guildroom on 24 May.

Commercial bookings included a housing drop-in session, market research and several meetings.

A primary school used the Guildroom as a base whilst they toured around various locations in the City Centre.

Charity bookings include the annual Scouts St Georges Day Parade outside the Guildhall, with refreshments served after inside the Guildroom, and a charity conference also returned.





21 meetings have been held in various rooms in the building, usually the Ashmole Room or Whytmore Room. LDC also hired the Guildroom for the Election on 1 May.

The Old Prison Cells are now open every Saturday between March and September (except whole building bookings)

Private bookings include 2 birthday parties (40<sup>th</sup> + 50<sup>th</sup>) which both held mock Casino Nights as part of their entertainment.

We have also had a whole building booking for a Wedding Reception who opted for the 'Harry Potter Style' layout.



## **BOLEY PARK COMMUNITY HALL**

The hall was closed for a week during the Easter holidays for maintenance to be carried out on the floor:



The Fire alarm, CCTV and Fire Extinguishers have also been serviced.

Since my last report, Lichfield Friendship Centre held their Birthday Party in the hall. We have also had the regular Stamp Fair, Craft Fair, Pre-School Spring Fair, an 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party, 6 children's birthday parties and a training session for assistance dogs.

## 6. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

On Thursday 8 May, Lichfield City Council invited residents and visitors to join them in VE Day celebrations held on the historic Market Square. Music from the era was played as attendees sang along, danced, and waved their flags. A pop-up café and traditional fish and chips provided refreshments. A craft fair on Minster Pool Walk showcased a range of handcrafted items and unique gifts for shoppers to peruse.



Earlier in the day, Lichfield's Town Crier, Adrian Holmes, promoted the event on Radio WM. Town Criers nationwide performed a special cry, including here in Lichfield. We were pleased to welcome Rugby's Town Crier, Adrian Basford, who joined the day's events.

The local business, Vintique of Lichfield, contributed to the event's atmosphere by inviting students from Lichfield College to wear period costumes, as did several LCC Officers. For the younger generation, the Works on Bore Street provided crayons and colouring sheets at no cost, and LCC Officers gave away flags, commemorative pens, and poppy seeds.



In the Guildroom there was a fascinating exhibition of photographs from the period, including the history of the Lichfield Spitfire, pictures of service men and women, and letters sent home to loved ones. The Deputy Town Clerk would like to commend Clive Read for collating all the information, photographs and memorabilia included in the exhibition.

In addition, Lichfield Kindness Rocks, who meet every Monday at Curborough Community Centre, were asked to decorate rocks specifically for the day. The brightly coloured rocks were placed on tables for visitors to enjoy, keep, or take away and hide for others to find. The remaining rocks were incorporated into the display in the Remembrance Gardens.



The afternoon concluded with a poignant reading of poems and letters. Representatives from the Royal British Legion, along with a Standard Bearer and the City's Sword and Mace Bearers, then led a moment of reflection while the Last Post was played in an act of Remembrance.

The market square was bustling throughout the day with visitors (some from as far afield as Canada), veterans and current serving military personnel.





The event was a great success, blending remembrance with community celebration as attendees honoured the past and enjoyed the present.

A further selection of pictures appears on the following pages providing a flavour of the day.

The Deputy Town Clerk will be providing secretariat support at the Annual Council meeting and Annual Town meeting and is currently preparing Agendas for the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee meeting on 26 June.

Members will be interested to note that the CCBBD Committee has initiated a competition for local schools and community organisations to design a *Bug Hotel*. The competition will run throughout the summer term, with judging scheduled for the end of July. Sponsorship has been secured from the Lichfield Co-Op store, which has provided several prizes, and from LCC's seed suppliers, who have donated a kilogram of poppy seeds.

Reports are being prepared in readiness for the next Markets Working Group, a date for which has yet to be scheduled but will include terms of reference for their new remit regarding the Guildhall.





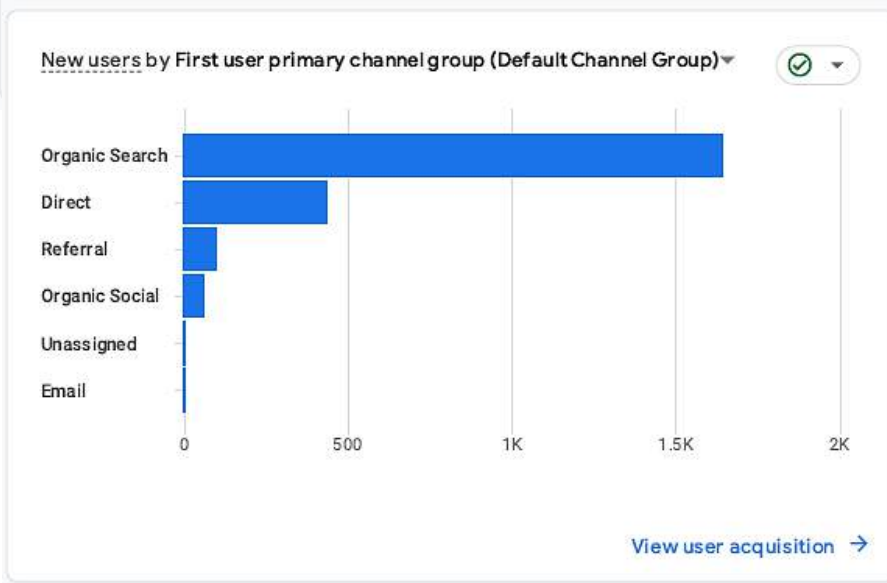






7. LCC Website Statistics

Reports snapshot



Views by Page title and screen class

PAGE TITLE AND SCREEN ...	VIEWS
Home Page - Lichfield City Co...	1.1K
Councillors - Lichfield City Co...	276
Guildhall Hire - Lichfield City ...	254
- Lichfield City Council	231
Contact Us - Lichfield City Co...	206
Markets - Lichfield City Council	185
The Mayor - Lichfield City Co...	185

Sessions by Session primary channel group

SESSION PRIMARY CHAN...	SESSIONS
Organic Search	2.2K
Direct	550
Referral	137
Organic Social	62
Unassigned	6
Email	1

[View traffic acquisition](#)