

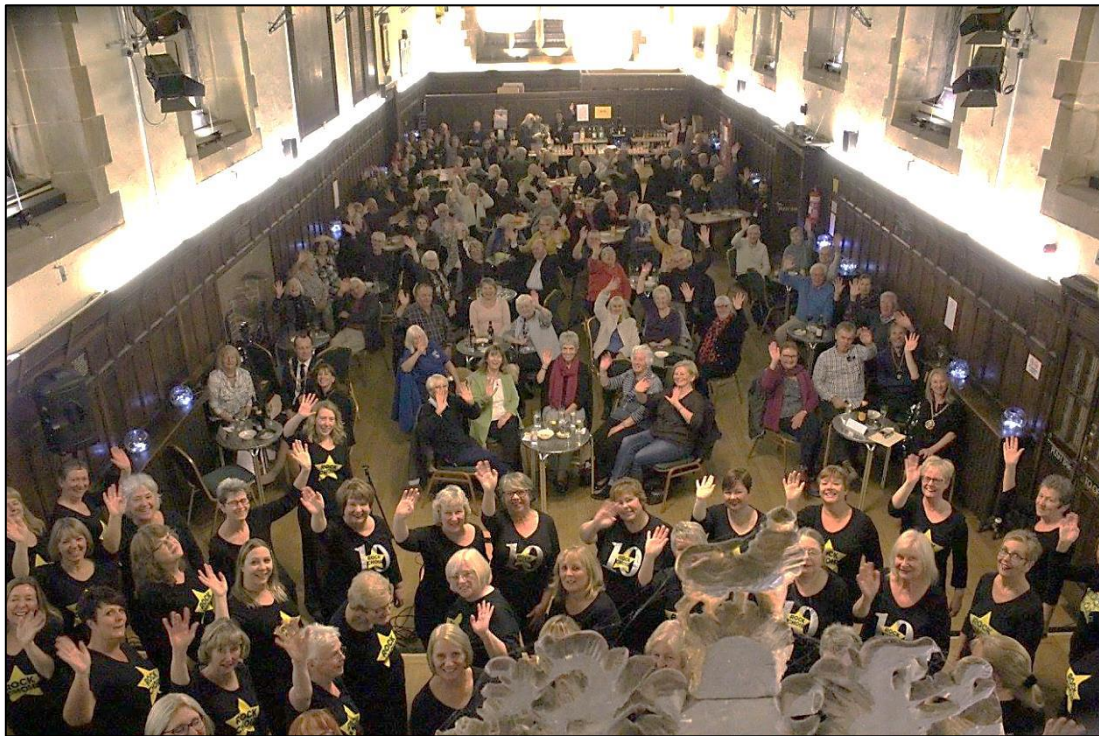
OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Sarah Wallace, Civic Officer

On Tuesday 31 October the Mayor and Sheriff held a concert in the Guildhall to raise funds for their chosen charities.

Fifty members of Lichfield Rock choir performed an uplifting and up-tempo selection of songs including 80's favourites 'A little Respect' and 'Uptown Girl'.

Representatives from Guide Dogs for the Blind and Staffordshire Blood Bikes also attended and gave the audience a moving account of the work they do to support the charities. The 96 guests then tucked into bacon sandwiches before enjoying the second half of the concert. The evening raised a total of £725.00.



The annual Remembrance service was held in the Cathedral on Sunday 5 November. Following the service the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr Ian Dudson accompanied by the Mayor led the civic party into the Remembrance Gardens at 10.55am for the wreath laying ceremony and to observe the national 2 minutes silence. A professional public address system was used this year to ensure the large crowds that gathered could hear what was happening and feel part of the ceremony.



At the time of writing this report, preparations are continuing for the Mayor and Sheriff's next charity event, a Masquerade Ball to be held on 25 November.

This will be followed by the last civic event of the year, the Mayor's Carols for Christmas on Tuesday December 5.

2. Markets: John Beard and Lisa Howard, Markets Officer

Traders Liaison Meeting

The traders' liaison meeting covered a range of topics including market occupancy, advertising & promotions. These meetings provide a constructive dialogue between the City Council and Market Traders and have proven extremely useful. The next meeting is scheduled for May 2018.

Christmas Lights Switch-On

A great deal of time over the past few weeks has been dedicated to the organisation of the Christmas Market which takes place alongside the 'Switch on' event. At the time of writing this report final preparations are nearly complete. The Market has proven to be extremely popular this year and is fully booked with an array of food, drink and gift stalls.

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

The Birthplace Museum trialled extending summer opening hours up to the end of October this year, with 18% of visitors attending in the additional hours, and a 7% overall increase on the total number of October visitors in 2016. The Museum has had a busy autumn, with work including the following events, activities, projects:

- The Birthplace exhibition 'Johnson & Garrick: a Friendship in Constant Repair' travelled to Dr Johnson's House in London, where it will be on display until January 31 2018. Advisory Committee members, staff and volunteers travelled to see the London house and display on 20 November and had a guided tour with curator Celine Lupp McDaid.
- Items from the Birthplace collection and City Council silver were displayed at Lichfield Cathedral as part of their 'Discovering Elias Ashmole' Exhibition.
- A busy programme of half term activities in October included a hands-on art and craft session, an interactive show 'History is magic!' developed by Kevin Lynch and the Birthplace was a partner site in the 'Big Draw', working with the LDC Arts Officer.
- The year of events to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the birth of David Garrick came to a close with the performance of a new play written by David Tittley, 'Peg and Davey', looking at his early stage career and relationship with actress Peg Woffington. The play starred Lichfield actors Robin Hewitt and Hannah Davies.
- Birthplace staff took part in the L2F folk festival procession (see photograph below), and hosted acclaimed songwriter John Tams for a songwriting workshop at the Museum.



- School visits included 140 pupils from Erasmus Darwin Academy and Dictionary Workshops for Pingle School, Derbyshire. Storywood Primary from Erdington visited the Guildhall Prison Cells. Students from Birmingham Ormiston Academy in Birmingham produced an excellent video piece on the Museum as part of their media coursework.
- 50 members of the Cheadle and District Historical Society attended an Outreach talk given by Sue Bray.
- David Garbutt started as this year's Birmingham University 'History in the Workplace' placement student, working on inscribed and association books in the Museum. New marketing volunteer Sam Hodgson also joined the team to write content for social media feeds.
- Conservation work is underway on Boswell's Bureau Bookcase and an 18th century Staffordshire 'grand-daughter' clock.

The Guildhall Prison Cells closed for the summer season at the end of October. 5,670 visitors enjoyed the displays over the Saturday openings, made possible by the team of cells volunteers, photographed below, who had a feedback session in November with the M&HO.



4. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

Ring Twinning Anniversary

Over the weekend of 6 to 9 October, Lichfield celebrated its 25th Twinning Anniversary with Sainte Foy-les-Lyon and Limburg a. d. Lahn. Nearly 80 guests from both Lichfield and Limburg travelled to Ste. Foy to take part in the celebrations, which were partly funded by the EU. In total, 63 French host families accommodated the English and German guests.

The Ring Twinning Celebrations in Ste. Foy were a chance for old friends to meet up and for new links and friendships to be established. There were social events and excursions, but above all the chance to meet French people and experience a slice of the French way of life. Language was not a problem and everyone enjoyed seeing the wide range of sporting and cultural activities which Ste. Foy has to offer. Lichfield's Table Tennis and Friary Tennis Clubs took part in competitions between the three Cities and Lichfield's very own town crier, Ken Knowles, opened the weekend ceremony to resounding applause from the audience.

The highlight of the weekend was the friendship evening, where approximately 300 guests joined the three City Mayors in the anniversary celebrations. The French host families together with their guests from Lichfield and Limburg enjoyed the occasion to get to know one another over a nice meal in a relaxed atmosphere with lovely musical interludes. The three Mayors spoke about their cities' benefits and experiences from Twinning and exchanged gifts to commemorate 25 years of collaboration.

During the weekend, there was a very informative business meeting to discuss past exchange experiences and ideas for future cooperation. All three Mayors expressed a firm commitment to Twinning and the Limburg Mayor, Dr. Marius Hahn, issued an invitation for the next official meeting in Limburg, to be held in September 2020.

Especially impressive was the church service on Sunday morning, which was held in 3 languages and thus contributed to a very special atmosphere in a full church. The Reverend Ian Hayter from Wade Street Church in Lichfield led the English part of the service.

On Saturday morning, the French MEP Francoise Grossetete, spoke about 30 years of the EU's Erasmus programme and how to access it.

Overall, the weekend was a great success and underlined the cultural opportunities and importance of Twinning. A selection of photographs from the weekend is contained on the following pages.



Our Town Crier opens proceedings



National Anthems at opening ceremony



A friendly game of tennis



Table tennis team in action



More than 300 attendees



Sightseeing in Lyon



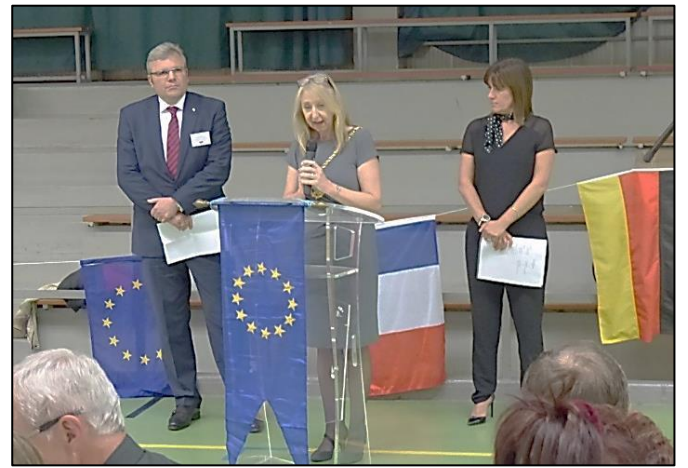
Gifts from Ste. Foy



Gifts from Limburg



Lichfield's gifts gratefully received



The Mayor's speech



Hard at work



A fitting close to an excellent weekend

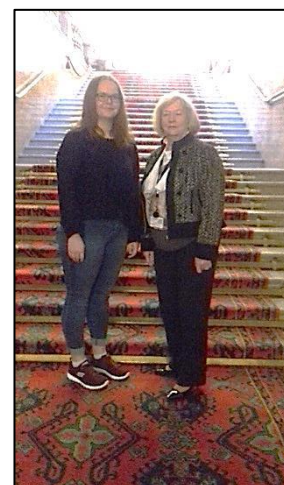
Limburg City Council Apprentice



Elena Stolz, a public office trainee with Limburg City Council, has spent a week on placement in Lichfield. Her aim has been to gain experience and obtain an insight into English council administration as well as to improve her language skills.

Elena visited the District Council offices, City Council Offices, learning about the roles of the Town Clerk, Twinning Officer, Open Spaces Officer, Civic Officer, Markets Officer and the Mayor and Staffordshire County Council with County Councillor Janet Eagland. Elena also spent time at the Library, the Samuel Johnson Birthplace (Museum), Erasmus Darwin House (Museum) and Friends2Friends, a voluntary organisation that helps people with learning difficulties.

Elena has successfully completed her placement and learnt much about the services which these councils and departments provide for our citizens and how these services are delivered. By staying with a host family, Elena also gained a better understanding of English life and culture. In her final report to Limburg Council, she stressed again how informative her week in Lichfield was and urged everyone to take this great chance of working in one of our twin towns for a truly interesting way of learning about traditions and cultures in these countries.



Limburg Cathedral Light Festival



Limburg City Council has commissioned Lichfield artist Peter Walker to transform their Cathedral with a lightshow for the opening of their Christmas Market. The project, which is sponsored by various Limburg private companies and put together with the help of Lichfield and Limburg schools, will be shown over the weekend of 1 and 2 December. This event will be a fantastic promotion of the excellent twinning relationship between our two Cities.

Twinning Events

Limburg's Twinning Association will be celebrating their 30th anniversary on 10 December and are incorporating the theme of Lichfield's Garrick 300 into their programme. They have invited David Tittley from the Birthplace to perform and talk about Garrick at this event. A number of members from the Lichfield Twinning Association are taking part in this celebration evening.

The Lichfield Cathedral Boys' Choir will be holding a concert at Limburg Cathedral on 12 December. This is all part of Limburg's pre-Christmas season which will add to Peter Walker's illuminations and the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Limburg Twinning Association. As in previous years, the Limburg Twinning Association will have a stand, selling Gluehwein, at Limburg's Christmas market.

The Lichfield Twinning Association organised a murder mystery evening on 16 November in the Martin Heath Hall in Christchurch Lane, in order to promote Twinning. This event was open to everyone, included a Fish and Chip supper and was great fun. The event was extremely popular and all 67 tickets were sold, raising much needed funds for future exchanges.



During the evening the Chairman of the Twinning Association Peter Barrett presented Gabi with a card and a large bouquet of flowers. The card read: "Thank you for all you did to make Ste. Foy such a success." And he added "and also for raising the profile of twinning over the last 18 months or so."



A college in Limburg is sending three female educator students for four weeks work experience from mid-January to mid-February to a nursery in Lichfield. Many thanks to Springfields Pre-School and Day Nursery in Beacon Street, who are happy to take all 3 students for their international work experience. International DBS checks have been organised to make this placement possible. The students are already qualified and have practical experience in the area of early childcare. The placements are being financed through the European Erasmus exchange programme.

Exchange Enquiries

Members of the Limburg Twinning Association would like to visit Lichfield in early May 2018 and the Lichfield Twinning Association is looking for host families to accommodate 1 or perhaps 2 people over a long weekend from Friday 4 May until Tuesday 8 May. Please contact the Twinning Officer for further information.

5. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

Although the Old Prison Cells closed to the public at the end of October, there were still nine organised tours, including a party of school children who visited the Guildhall building as part of a trip around the sights of Lichfield.

We continue to attract our regular bookings such as the Archaeological and Historical Society, Band Practice, Bridge, Chess, Darby & Joan, Heyday Friendship, Italian Class, Ladies Cameo Group, Meditation, RSPB, Slimming World, U3A and U3A Gardening and the National Trust.

Since the last report, there has been one Wedding Ceremony and Reception, a 50th Birthday Party and a 25th Anniversary Party with a Hog Roast as well as a Teddy Bears picnic. Other bookings include Lichfield Round Table's Murder Mystery Evening.

Lichfield Arts have held six concerts, their L2F and a Winter Beer Festival.



We continue to attract commercial and private bookings. There have been two Craft Fairs and a charity Christmas Fair. Market Research have held three separate events and HS2 held a drop in surgery.

Bramshall Art held an exhibition during November and have had five other meetings in the building in the last few weeks.

In the run up to Christmas, there will be a Fabric Sale, Lichfield Leather Sale, three Craft Fairs, a table top sale, Lichfield Camera Club Winter Exhibition, City of Lichfield Christmas Concerts, an Acoustic Concert to raise funds for Lichfield Garrick Youth Theatre, and several private bookings for Christmas dinners, parties and annual lunches. There is also a Bible Exhibition, Corridor Gallery display, three Lichfield Arts concerts and a child's birthday party. At the end of December we will hold our last Wedding Ceremony and Reception of the year.

During the year there have been eleven Wedding Ceremonies, sixteen Wedding Receptions, ten birthday parties and three children's parties (with Harry Potter themes being particularly popular), five anniversary parties and eight other private parties including Christening celebrations. There have also been ten lunches, dinners and suppers and five other concerts (excluding those organised by Lichfield Arts).

The damp proof maintenance work has also been completed in the Guildroom and caused minimal disruption to bookings.

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

Remembrance Sunday

The Remembrance Gardens are a very important part of Lichfield City's open space, but the laying of the wreaths on remembrance Sunday is the time at which the Gardens must look their best.

Following a meeting with Lichfield District Council's Arboricultural Officer, tree work was completed to reshape the Verdun Oak, to remove any low branches hanging over the paths and to remove the self-sown alder saplings spoiling the view of Minster Pool.

The ivy from the monument was also removed as advised by the Civic Society, and the LDC maintenance team tidied the beds and spray washed the path to improve the surface.

As a result of this work, and aided by the good weather on the day, the Gardens looked splendid for what is a very important event in the City Council's calendar.



Lichfield in Bloom

The first meeting of Blooming Lichfield was well attended and reviewed the 2017 feedback from the judges and discussed what improvements can be made. Consideration was given to new projects for 2018 such as engaging public houses and schools in Bloom and developing new areas for planting.

Also discussed were possible projects for 2019 such as St. Michael's Churchyard where a recent survey made several suggestions to encourage wildlife.

Boley Park Community Hall

The pre-school who use the Hall would like to extend the space they use as well as having room for growing plants with the children. Following a site meeting a potential way forward was found that would increase the space, but not result in too many changes and would also leave the car park users with some green hedging. Representatives from the pre-school have been advised to consider and finalise their proposals and make a formal submission for consideration by the City Council as and when appropriate.

General Maintenance

Autumn is a busy time with tree and hedge work in many areas during the dormant growing period, and a new oak gate has been ordered for the Pinfold.