

For Council: 26 January 2026 APPENDIX 8

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Harriet Chatwin, Civic Officer

The Mayor's Carols for Christmas Service took place in the Guildhall on Tuesday 2 December. The service was once again led by the Mayor's Chaplain and dual-hatted Sheriff, Reverend Ian Hayter, and this year, held as a joint service with Lichfield District Council. The story of the birth of Jesus Christ was recited by the Mayor and Chair's Consort, Gill Stockdale, alongside a poem written and read by the Mayor's daughter, Penny.

The service featured a selection of traditional carols, including *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Joy to the World* & *Silent Night*. We were delighted to welcome back the Tuneless Choir, who arrived in festive Santa hats and performed the French song *Vois Sur Ton Chemin* (*See Upon Your Path*). They were a joy to watch and greatly appreciated by the audience. Also taking part were Liberty Jamboree's Shine & Sign Choir, Music Share's Ukrainian Choir, Wade Street Church musicians, and the Three Spires Morris Dancers, all of whom contributed to a festive atmosphere to mark the start of the season.

Prayers were led at the close of the service by Reverend Hayter, and guests enjoyed mulled wine (or orange juice for drivers) and warm mince pies. Generous donations on the night raised just under £200 for the Mayor, Chair, and Sheriff's charities, which will be shared between Lichfield Arts, Pathway Project, and Liberty Jamboree.

At the time of preparing this report, we are pleased to share that the Mayor has attended and supported 32 engagements in the city, the Deputy Mayor has represented the Mayor at 21 events, and the Sheriff has attended over 40 events. Both the Mayor and Sheriff will continue fundraising for their chosen charities in the New Year.



As mentioned in December's report, the Mayor and Sheriff met with the winners of the Civic Christmas Card Competition in the Mayor's Parlour early December. Accompanied by their parents, Thea Hussain (Christ Church C of E Primary School) and Rosie Lloyd (King Edward VI High School) were presented with their framed Christmas cards and Waterstones gift vouchers.

Preparations are ongoing for upcoming events, including a charity Ceilidh Dance on Saturday 31 January, and the ever-popular annual Pancake Races on Bore Street on Tuesday 17 February.



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

Heather Gardens (Site 19B)

Redevelopment of the central beds has been completed with recent planting of heathers and seasonal plants designed to incorporate the existing rockery features. This concludes a series of works this year to improve the gardens which, along with various tree works, has included wall repairs, resurfacing of pathways, refurbishment of benches and railings and lighting improvements.





Beaconfields (Site 15)

Following consultation with LDC and the local residents' association, CIL funding was agreed via a Grants Committee recommendation to install wooden bollards on LCC land around Beaconfields/Swinfen Broun Road (Sites 15a and 15c). This follows issues experienced with parking on LCC land, particularly when there are events in the city centre and/or Beacon Park.



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

- **Woodfields Drive (25A)** – Snapped limb cut down following storm damage and surrounding trees deadwooded.
- **E.ON Footpath Lighting** – Replacement of damaged column required at Fecknam Way-Johnson Close footpath ongoing

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

December 2025 was a vibrant month at the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum, welcoming 1,391 visitors through its doors. Seasonal activities engaged audiences of all ages, while the Bookshop offered a delightful selection of gifts for the Christmas season. Behind the scenes, the team continued to develop their skills through specialist training for staff and volunteers, supporting the ongoing care and preservation of the Museum's collection.

Christmas at the Birthplace

The Museum welcomed 150 visitors on Sunday 7 December for the Christmas at the Birthplace event. The house was decorated for the festive season, with object handling and Georgian-themed activities taking place throughout the day. Families enjoyed lantern-making and a yuletide trail, while costumed characters helped bring a 1700s Christmas to life.

The Birthplace remained open throughout the festive period, closing only on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, as well as on 18 December, when it closed to allow conservation care training to be delivered to all Museum staff and volunteers.



Conservation Care Training

On 18 December, the Museum hosted the first of three conservation care training sessions, led by a conservator from Birmingham Museums Trust. The session focused on object handling and packing, covering how to safely move and pack items from the collection, including challenging and complex objects, for relocation, storage and transportation.

The training also included guidance on the specialist cleaning of museum objects, with practical demonstrations involving materials such as silver, brass, and paper. This helped staff and volunteers understand how different materials require different approaches, and why careful, informed cleaning plays an important role in preserving the collection for the future.

The session provided a valuable professional development opportunity for Museum Attendants and Collections Volunteers. Feedback was extremely positive, with attendees commenting on how much they had learned, how engaging the session was, and how it had increased their confidence in handling and caring for the Museum's collections. Having the training led by a professional conservator was particularly beneficial, offering expert insight and reassurance, and helping to embed best practice across the team.



What's Coming Up

Over the next month, the Museum team will be focused on volunteer recruitment, audience engagement, and exploring opportunities to enhance the visitor experience.

On 10 January, the Museums and Heritage Officer (MHO) and Museum Support Officer (MSO) will attend a volunteer recruitment fair to support the growth of the volunteer team at the Old Guildhall Prison Cells. The site is supported by a dedicated and knowledgeable group of existing volunteers and recruiting a small number of additional team members will help ensure there are sufficient volunteers to welcome visitors and provide a high-quality experience when the Cells reopen to the public from April to October.

At the Birthplace, a number of public events are planned in the coming weeks. On 28 January, the Museum will host A to Z of Words You Will Never Hear Again, a talk by guest speaker Anthony Poulton-Smith, offering visitors an engaging insight into forgotten language and social history. This

will be followed by a collage workshop with artist Hazel Pitt on 19 February, providing a hands-on creative activity inspired by the Birthplace and its collections.

The Birthplace will also host an invitation-only evening event in January as part of the Opening Chapters audience consultation project. This event will bring together local community groups and organisations, giving them the opportunity to visit the Museum, share feedback on what they would like to see and experience in the future, and explore ways we can work together. It will also provide valuable networking opportunities and help strengthen local partnerships.

In addition, the MHO and MSO will attend the Spring Fair at the NEC in Birmingham. Spring Fair is the UK's leading trade show for retail, connecting buyers with brands and suppliers. Attending the fair will allow the team to explore new stock options and suppliers for the Bookshop, helping to keep the retail offer fresh, relevant, and appealing to visitors.

From February, a programme of improvement works is planned for the Museum's staff kitchen and toilet facilities. While the detailed schedule is still being finalised, the project is focused on creating clean, modern and practical spaces that better support everyone who works or volunteers on site, including staff, researchers, contractors and student placements. The work has been carefully designed to respect the historic Grade I listed building, with specialist conservation advice informing each stage. Listed Building Consent was approved on 15 September 2025. Improvements will include upgraded kitchen facilities, a refurbished toilet, and enhanced heating and ventilation to improve comfort and help protect the building in the long term. Every effort will be made to minimise disruption, although short periods of closure to the Museum and Bookshop will be unavoidable while the refurbishment is carried out.

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

The Friday and Saturday markets are still fully occupied with four pitches available on the Tuesday Market. These will be covered by casual Traders where possible.

All electrical items used by Traders on the Market Square have now been PAT tested to ensure compliance with current legislation. All food stalls are still being monitored for standards of food hygiene and temperature of stock sold and stored on the market is recorded and held for future reference.

Tuesday Market Update

As reported, there are currently four available pitches on the Tuesday market, partly as a result of both Hartington Creamery & Los Dos Gringos leaving after Christmas Eve.

On Tuesday 12 December BBC Radio WM once again visited the market as part of its annual campaign focusing on local markets. This year the featured markets included Bilston, Blackheath, Brierley Hill, Cannock, Chelmsley Wood, Dudley, Lichfield, Penkridge, and Walsall.

On day two of the promotion the radio stations roving reporter, Josh Tranter interviewed several stall holders and even got some to accompany him in the '*Twelve Days of Christmas*' carol with a modern twist.

The Market on Tuesday 9 December was unfortunately cancelled due to high winds.



Friday and Saturday Market Update

The Friday and Saturday markets both remain fully occupied.

The Markets Officer continues to maintain a list of casual traders from all the markets who are invited to stand when permanent traders are absent or take holidays. As a result, a full market is maintained which has provided positive feedback from both existing Traders and new Traders.

Vegan Market

The Vegan Market scheduled for December was unfortunately cancelled due to lack of traders. The Market is planned to return on Sunday 17 May, with only a further three dates booked for the remainder of 2026. The Markets Officer is investigating the possibility of combining the Vegan Market with other appropriate markets.

Producers' Market

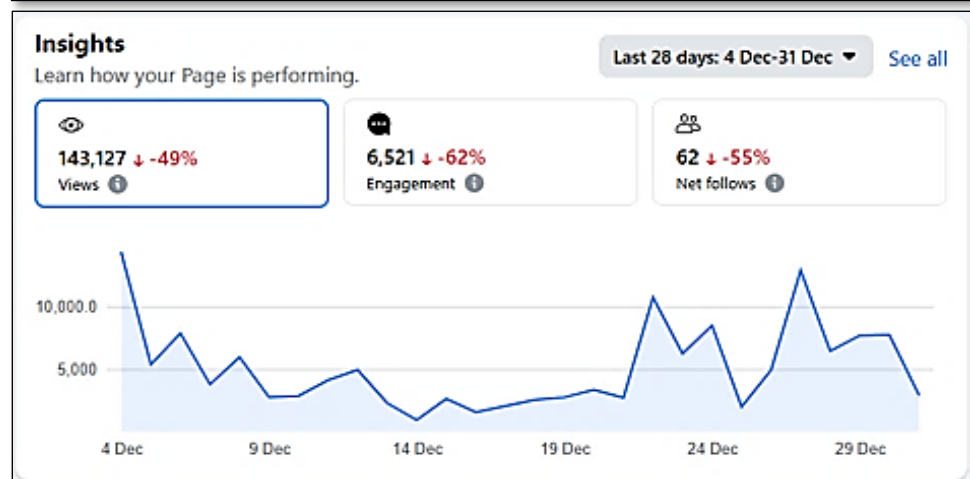
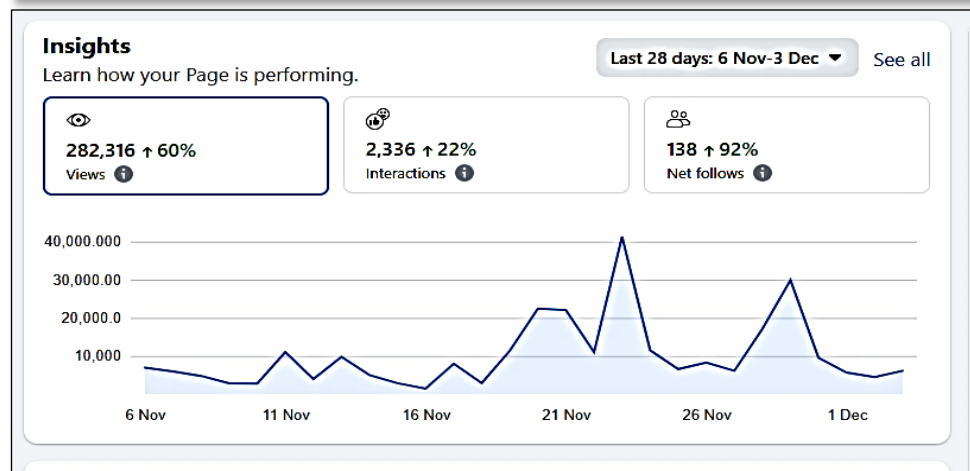
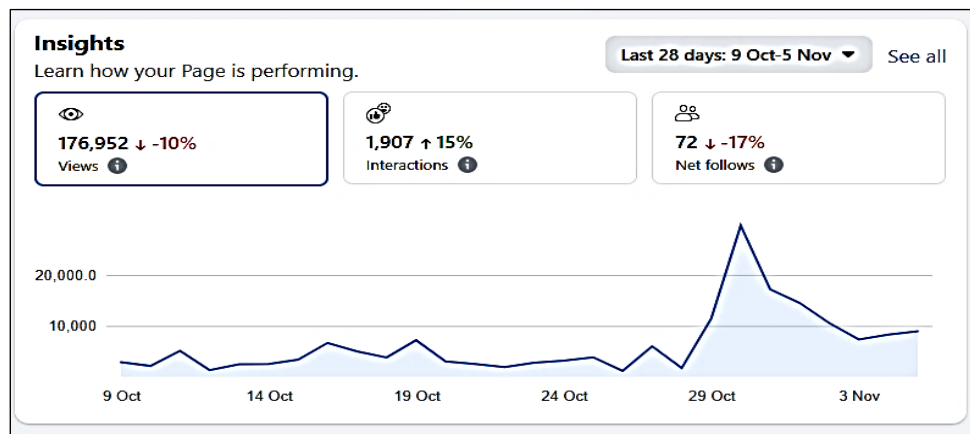
The Producers' market, operated by CJ Events is held on the first Sunday of the month. This market continues to be well supported with around thirty traders standing each time. Dates for 2026 have been confirmed as the market is immensely popular with customers, many revisiting every month – even in inclement weather.

Additional Christmas Trading Days

At the request of Traders, additional trading days were arranged on the run up to Christmas. These were all well attended by traders who reported a good footfall. The additional three days trading resulted in an additional income of a £1,257.00.

Social Media

All social media platforms maintain a good following. The statistics below show the number of followers and interaction for a 28-day comparison from October to November on Facebook. 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 showcase on social media to help promote their arrival on the Market and to help increase footfall and their sales.



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

The Guildhall has been busy in the run up to Christmas. As well as bookings, two civic events were held – The Mayor & Sheriffs Charity Dinner Dance and the Civic Carol Service.

Charity/Voluntary Rate

Bookings in this category include our regular hirers – Lichfield Friendship Centre, Bridge, Chess, U3A, and RSPB.

Other charity bookings included 4 meetings, a Charity Disco, Lichfield Sinfonia's Christmas Concert, a voluntary conference, 2 Christmas Concerts performed by Lichfield Musical Youth Theatre and 3 Concerts organised by Lichfield Arts.

Unfortunately, Lichfield Friendship Centre held their last meeting (a Christmas Party - pictured) in December before they closed the group. They have been meeting at the Guildhall for many years.

Private Bookings

Private bookings included an art display in the Guildroom by Bramshall Art, an AGM, a meeting and a Pre-wedding get together (before heading off to the Registry Office to get married).



Commercial Bookings

Slimming World use the Main Hall each Thursday. They also met for 2 hours in the Ashmole Room for 2 weeks in the Christmas period. Market Research have also been very busy with 4 bookings.

Our regular Craft Fair organiser ended the year with 3 bookings in the Main Hall up to Christmas, including a booking on the weekend of the Victorian Market, which was their busiest on record with an attendance of over 2,000 people. There were also 2 meetings held in the building.

Whole Building Bookings

There have been 2 bookings; a Wedding Reception in November and a Wedding ceremony/reception over the Christmas period (pictured overleaf).



Boley Park Community Hall

Since the end of November, there has been an Animal Volunteers Craft Fair and Stamp Fair. Other occasional bookings include 2 children's parties and a family get-together before Christmas.

The holiday play scheme held 4 sessions over the Christmas holidays.

The accounts have been received from the auditors and a Management Committee meeting will take place in February.

6. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

Following the successful Christmas Lights Switch-On, the Deputy Town Clerk conducted a post-event debrief with the Event Management Team and the contracted Security Company. This was the City Council's first engagement with this provider and proved to be very effective. The review confirmed no serious issues, with only minor improvements identified for 2026.

This was reiterated by the Lichfield Local Neighbourhood Police Sergeant who was on duty at the event, commenting:

"It was a good event for us and nice to do something where people are pleased to see us for a change. Having the Event Management Team there, who are well versed in crowd dynamics to support the security team was good. Had we [the police] not been able to commit as many resources as we did, I am happy to say that they were pro-active in dealing with any issues."

Feedback from participants indicated that this was the most successful switch-on event to date. Preparations for the 2026 event are already underway, with all key contractors confirmed for Sunday, 22 November 2026.

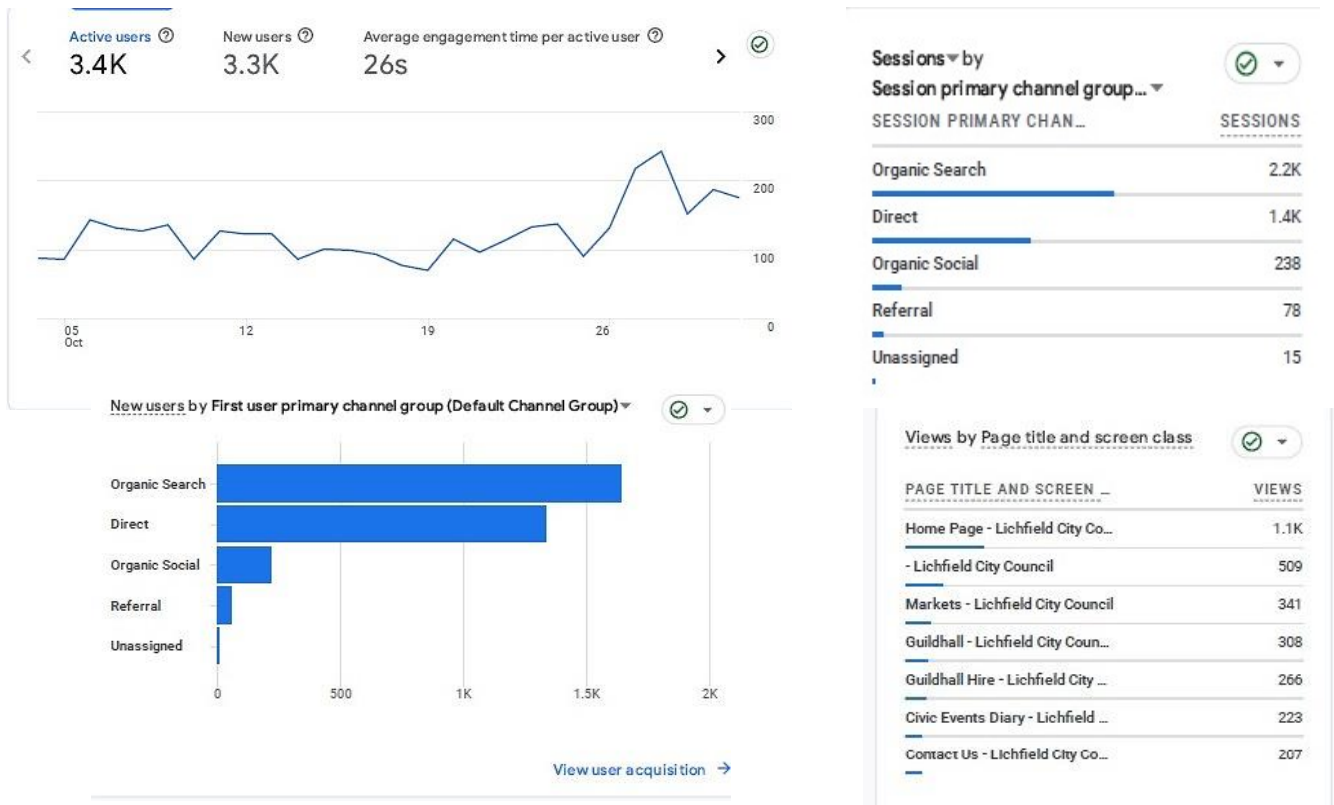
In addition, the Deputy Town Clerk Clerked the Commercial Services Committee meeting on 13 January and the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee meeting on 14 January 2026 as well as providing secretariat support at full Council on 26 January 2026.

Preparations continue for further Community Days in 2026, along with the Council's Health and Safety annual review and updating staff training.

The Deputy Town Clerk will also assisted the Town Clerk with the interviewing for the post of Responsible Financial Officer.

7. LCC Website Statistics

Previous reporting period (reported to members December 2025)



Current Reporting Period

