

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Sarah Wallace, Civic Officer

April was a busy month as the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Mrs Sheelagh James and Sheriff, Cllr Robert Yardley held the last of their charity events.

On 18 April charity nights were held at two different venues. Ladies were encouraged to visit Erasmus Darwin House for Bubbles, Brews & Bustles - an informal evening which included a mini wine tasting and a talk on Ladies 18th Century underpinnings.

On the same night, male guests attended the Beer, Bikes and Beards event at the Guildhall – an informative series of talks from guest's speakers which included Worth Brothers Wine merchants, Dr Hackett and Staffordshire Blood Bikes amongst others.

The final charity event, Full Moon Cheese and Wine was held in the Guildhall on 10 May. As part of the Erasmus Darwin House Lunar Legacy programme, guest speaker Wendy Moore gave an illustrated talk on her new book 'The Mesmerist'. Prior to this, guests enjoyed a glass of wine and selection of cheeses.

Final accounts are still awaited but indications are that Cllr Mrs James and Cllr Yardley will have made over £7,000 during their year in office for their chosen charities. It is hoped that cheques can be presented to representatives from the charities, Erasmus Darwin House and We Love Lichfield in July.

The annual St Georges Court was held in the Guildhall on Saturday 22 April. The 100 strong audience was called to attention as the guest Bailiff opened the court with a Brazilian vuvuzela! Tradition was upheld by the Ale Tasters who delivered their report with all their usual wit and humour. The Court was then closed and the proceedings brought to an end with the Toast to;

'The Immortal Memory of St George'.



On 15 May the Annual Council and Banquet was held. The new Civic team for 2017-2018 are; Mayor, Cllr Mrs Janice Greaves; Deputy Mayor, Cllr David Leytham and Sheriff, Cllr Andrew Smith.



During the Council meeting the Mayor named her chaplain as Reverend Nest Bateman and her cadet, Sergeant Isaac Mulvany from the 1206 (Mercian) Squadron Air Training Corps.

Following the meeting a banquet was held for 140 guests, some of whom had travelled all the way from Lichfield's twin town of Limburg, bringing with them a letter of congratulations from the Mayor of Limburg that was presented to the new Mayor during the banquet. In their speeches the Mayor and Sheriff announced the charities they would be supporting during their year in office; Guide Dogs for the Blind and Staffordshire Blood Bikes.

Due to the refurbishment of St Mary's, the Mayoral service this year was held in the Guildhall on Sunday 21 May. The service was led by Reverend Nest Bateman and Duncan Moon kindly agreed to play the piano. The service was attended by City Councillors and civic dignitaries. The Mayor's Cadet was also in attendance with his commanding officer Flight Lieutenant Chris Kelly and a further six Cadets.

The start of the Bower celebrations was heralded with the Court of Arraye at 10.30am on 29 May. Before the Court began the Mayor inspected the Men at Arms which once again came from the 7th Lichfield Cub Scouts. The Dozeners then delivered their humorous reports to the Steward of the Manor under the watchful eye of the High Constables. The Court was then closed and following a Toast to the success of the Bower, the Civic party gathered in front of the Guildhall to watch the Bower procession where the Mayor crowned Miss Lichfield Greenhill Bower at 12 Midday.



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

Wednesday Trading Trial

The trial has started and to date has created extra rental income of at least £120 per day (the cost of hiring half the square). Over the coming weeks any effect on other market trading days will be monitored.

Lichfield Home and Garden Festival

We are pleased to report that the festival caused minimal disruption to the general Saturday market.

Relocated Bower Market

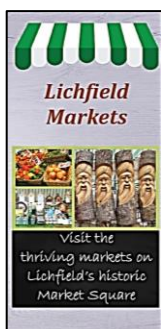
Overall the relocation of the market was successful. There were however eight fewer stalls this year as the bottom of the pedestrian precinct on Baker's Lane had been leased to alternative traders by LDC.

Market Cancellation

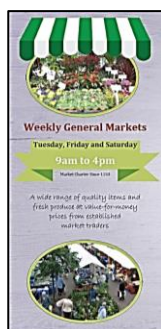
The market was cancelled on 6th June due to severe weather warnings and forecast gusts in excess of 45mph.

Updated Market Leaflets

The tri-fold market leaflets have been redesigned to reflect the style of our posters and other leaflets. We are in the process of distributing them to local libraries, tourist information centres and hotels.



Front Cover



Front cover opened



Leaflet Fully Opened



Back Cover

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

Much has been happening at the Museum this spring, with groups, events, family activities and building repairs. Over the Easter holidays young visitors enjoyed 'Sam's Detective trail' devised by volunteer Margery Dunlevy, and undertook training in 'Spy School', a popular word and code game session created by attendant Kevin Lynch.



Children have also enjoyed a visit to the Museum in organised groups from St Chad's and The Willows primary schools.

Adult learning opportunities continue to thrive with a new poetry group joining the existing book, writing and Latin groups that meet at the house, and Sue Bray continues to meet groups outside the Museum, this time with a talk to 50 members of the 'Choices' group from Derby. 40 members of the 'Rural Concierge' group from Hereford took a guided tour in April.

The Museum team also enjoyed learning about the history of the Birthplace in a collections training session (pictured) looking at how the building has changed and been used over 300 years.

The largest recent event was Staffordshire Day, when the Birthplace took a lead role in bringing together local talent, groups and charities from the area in a celebration as part of the 'Garrick 300' events. Performers included Students from South Staffordshire College, Lichfield Poets, Lichfield Storytellers, Lichfield Lighthouse Company, the Upstagers and a foot-stomping finale from Wildfire Folk. The 'You're Probably from Lichfield, if....' local history group held a display in the Birthplace, the LDC Arts officer created Mad Wigs on the market square and there was community market with partners stands. Over 500 visitors were welcomed to the Museum and Guildhall Cells on the day.



Other partnership projects this month have included the display of 9 works from the Birthplace collection in Lichfield Cathedral's Turner exhibition, which has been welcoming crowds of up to 1000 a day, the culmination of many months of work and liaison. The M&HO has also undertaken the move of the LCC civic silver collection and items from the Birthplace collection which were on loan to Lichfield Museum at St Mary's in the Market Square, ensuring temporary secure storage while work takes place in the building. A new play appearing at Lichfield Garrick in the autumn takes inspiration from the Birthplace archive of Anna Seward letters, and playwright Carolyn Scott-Jeffs has been using the Museum library for her research. Behind the scenes, a scaffold has been erected in the back courtyard and the roof repaired, the M&HO has attended an Access audit workshop as part of the development project, and the final preparations for the Museum's summer Garrick exhibition are underway.

4. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

The old Prison Cells remain open to the public every Saturday from 10.00am to 4.00pm with a volunteer on hand to offer historical information.

St Georges Court and the Court of Arraye were both held at the Guildhall, and the Scouts also used the building following their annual St Georges Day Parade.

On Staffordshire Day, the Corridor Gallery displayed work by local school children and the Old Prison Cells were open, attracting many visitors to the building.



In the run up to Bower weekend, the Prince and Princess selection was held in the Main Hall. On the actual weekend, the Bower Model Fair display was located in the Guildroom, and included a café serving bacon sandwiches for visitors. This was followed by the Bower Sunday Service and the Court of Arraye on Bank Holiday Monday.

The Guildroom has been used twice for elections, and other activities such as the Annual Town Meeting, a drinks reception, and Trinity Players for a rehearsal prior to their show, 'Singing in the Rain' at the Garrick.

Sinfonia held a Spring Concert, and the Lichfield Arts have held six concerts and a Jazz & Blues weekend.

In the last few weeks we have had one Wedding Ceremony, four Wedding Receptions and a 40th Birthday Party. This weekend we have another Wedding Ceremony and a 10th Wedding Anniversary Party. In total, we have 10 Ceremonies booked this year.



We continue to attract our regular bookings including the National Trust, RSPB, U3A, Bridge, Needwood DFAS, Chess, Ballroom Dancing, heyday Friendship, Italian Class, Three Spires Townswomen's Guild, Darby & Joan, Meditation, Ladies Cameo, Band Practice, Slimming World and the Historical and Archaeological Society.

We have had two regular Craft Fairs and a Fabric Sale. A Bible Exhibition was held in the Guildroom and we have also had a photo display in the Corridor Gallery. We also held a Medium Event evening recently.

5. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

Limburg Guests Attend Mayor Making

On 15 May, Lichfield's new Mayor, Cllr Janice Greaves, was invested at the Annual Meeting of the City Council in the Guildhall. Janice, daughter of Mrs Doris English, former Mayor of Lichfield herself and a founding member of the Twinning Agreement, has close connections to our twin towns and was very pleased to welcome eight guests and friends from Limburg, who made a special trip to Lichfield to join in her celebrations.



Work Placement – Thomson Travel Agency, Bore Street

On Monday, 12 June, Laura Peluso, an 18 year old Limburg student, started her three week work experience placement in Lichfield, kindly provided by travel agents Thomson in Bore Street. Her work placement is being funded by the European Youth Programme 'Erasmus+'. Laura is studying for a vocational profession as an international office assistant at the Peter Paul Cahensly College in Limburg. We wish her a very pleasant and interesting time in Lichfield.

Ring Twinning Anniversary

The 25th anniversary celebrations of the Ring Twinning between Ste. Foy, Limburg and Lichfield will be held in Ste. Foy during the weekend of 6 October to 9 October 2017. 80 guests from each twin City have been invited to join the Ste. Foy Council and Twinning Association for the celebrations. Visits to two museums in Lyon, an ecumenical church service and international table tennis and tennis tournaments between the 3 City clubs are planned. There will be a friendship dinner for all participants on Saturday night, where guests get the chance to talk about events over the past 25 years and to form new friendships. All travel costs and expenses will be borne by the individual participant and accommodation is mostly with Ste. Foy guest families.

Twinning Partnership Conference

The Twinning Officer took part in a Twinning Partnership Conference in Bristol on Friday 12 May. The occasion was the 70th twinning anniversary between Bristol – Hannover – Bordeaux and the Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, opened the conference in Bristol's Town Hall by celebrating the success of the past 70 years and the hope to encourage future collaborations. The conference was attended by over 110 delegates; professionals and volunteers involved with twinning relationships all over Britain, to discuss the future of City partnerships in the context of Brexit and Britain's evolving relationship with Europe.

The conference was supported, amongst others, by Airbus UK, The German Embassy and Burges Salmon and guest speakers included the Mayor of Hannover, Mr. Thomas Herrmann, Prof. Katrin Kohl, Jesus College Oxford and founder of the Oxford German Network and Dr. Debbie Pinfold, University of Bristol. A UK- wide communication network between cities with twinning relationships is planned, to access ideas for future initiatives and information, such as funding opportunities through organisations such as the UK-German Connection.

A general consensus was that twinning, as a non-political agreement between partner Cities, will continue to flourish and may become even more important in the future.

Exchange Enquiries

Limburg City Council will be sending their apprentice Elena Stolz to Lichfield City Council in October for a week's work experience in public organisations, which has become an annual event between our two Cities.



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

In May the Minster Pool Walk was used during the Home and Garden Festival for demonstrations of raptors and owls. Although not used for many stands and stalls the Open Space was enjoyed by many visitors. Also this month a team from Talent Match helped with weeding the City Station beds ready for the Summer planting.



A number of trees in several Open Spaces have been quite spectacular this month, the Paulownia or Foxglove tree in the Remembrance Garden and the chestnuts in the Festival Garden have been very colourful, for example.

St Michaels Church is running a survey of local opinions for their 7 acre churchyard before drawing up a plan of management and development.

It was good to be asked to contribute as it is a real wildlife gem in the heart of the city and there are many opportunities to preserve and expand habitats for wildlife. There are still some trees requiring attention, with inspections being scheduled at this time.



It is the season for maximum growth so work has been necessary on a number of hedges, and clearance of trees around lights, to keep the LCC paths both clear and safe.

7. Deputy Town Clerk: Tony Briggs

Following the issues at Boley Park Community Centre as previously reported, a CCTV system has now been installed. The system is capable of remote viewing and will provide greater security and peace of mind for hirers. All City Council owned community centres now have a CCTV system installed.

As part of the remedial work following the fire safety risk assessment carried out at Donegal House a few weeks ago, additional emergency lighting and fire exit signage has been installed in the building. The fire alarm and intruder alarm monitoring at Donegal House and the Guildhall has also been consolidated so that one company is responsible for all the

monitoring. This will help to reduce costs and also ties in with plans to extend the newly installed Guildhall fire alarm to cover Donegal House and remove the current ageing system in Donegal House.

The commencement date for the repair work to the Donegal House roof has been revised by the contractor due to workload; repairs are now due to begin on 19 June rather than 30 May. Tender submissions for the renovation to the Guildhall beer cellar are due to be received imminently. Discussions will then be held with Lichfield Arts and the contractor to establish a mutually convenient date for the works to be completed. The repairs to the chimneys and roof at the Birthplace Museum have been completed on time and within budget; there is already a noticeable difference as the areas affected by water ingress begin to dry out. Necessary remedial work identified during the periodic electrical inspection at the Birthplace has also been completed.

Following the repairs to the stairwell roof of the Guildhall it became obvious that water ingress had damaged the timbers of the staircase below. Further investigation revealed several timbers to be in very poor condition with rot spreading. The contract for this remedial work has been awarded and is due to begin shortly. While relatively minor and low cost, this work will ensure the safety of the stair structure and prevent expensive repairs in years to come.

The clearance of the stairwell is proceeding well with many items now disposed of and the area being much more presentable and accessible than previously. The removal of redundant sanitaryware, associated cupboards and redecoration of the area will be put forward for inclusion in future R&R budgets. This would ensure available space is maximised for storage and that redundant pipework is appropriately capped or removed.

The final phase of repairs to the Guildhall heating system has now been completed with two TRV's replaced in the Committee Room and a replacement sump pump also installed.

Progress continues to be made on the Neighbourhood Plan; following receipt of further informal comment from the District Council emerging policies have now been included in the Neighbourhood Plan and further minor changes made to some text and policies. It is hoped that the document will be submitted formally by the end of June.