

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Sarah Wallace, Civic Officer

Fashion Show Tuesday 15 March

The Mayor and Sheriff held a Fashion Show in the Guildhall in aid of their chosen charities. The Fashion Show was presented by Bustle of Market St and showcased their new Spring/Summer collection. Francesco's, also of Lichfield, provided a hair demonstration and there were stalls selling an array of items. Many local businesses donated prizes for the raffle and the evening was a great success raising £840 for the Mayor and Sheriff's Charities.



Sheriff's Show – Friday 18 March

The Friary School once again hosted the Civic party for the Sheriff's Show. The School donated a row of tickets for their Encore Show. The Sheriff said "This was the first time I have had the pleasure of being present at the Encore production and I was overwhelmed with the quality and inventiveness of the 'acts'. It is a wonderful showcase for the school's talents". Ticket sales and a raffle raised £134.

Charity Quiz Night – Sunday 20 March

A total of nine teams took part, breaking halfway through to enjoy a Fish & Chip Supper. A total of £323 was raised for the Mayor and Sheriff's Charities.

Easter Sunday Service – 27 March

The Civic party together with City councillors processed to the Cathedral for the Easter Sunday Service. This was the last official Civic engagement for the current Mayor and Sheriff before their term in office comes to an end. During refreshments at the Guildhall they were able to take the opportunity to publicly thank friends, family and Councillors for all their support during the year.

Sheriff's Darwin Walk – Sunday 3 April

The Sheriff accompanied by the Mayor, Mayoress and Sheriff's lady led the Darwin Walkers out of the City on Sunday 3 April to complete the 10 mile circuit around the rural boundary of Lichfield. Stephen George and other members of The Erasmus Darwin Walk Trust paused briefly at the statue of Erasmus Darwin before heading cross country to Curborough Craft Centre for tea and cake at Mabel's Tea Rooms which is the half way point of the walk. A number of the walkers went on to complete the walk despite the odd shower in the afternoon.



Entertainment & Tea – Tuesday 5 April

Residents of Lichfield over the age of 70 enjoyed an afternoon of Entertainment and Tea with the Mayor, Mayoress and Deputy Mayor. This annual event is held at Curborough Community Centre and after sandwiches and cakes; guests enjoyed a 'Sing Song' led by Lichfield Singers.

Looking ahead to the 21 April the Mayor is delighted to invite fellow Councillors to join him in Celebrating Her Majesty the Queens 90th Birthday. The Civic party will parade from the Guildhall to Speakers corner at 6.30pm, where at 7.00pm local School Children who have entered a competition will read their winning entries. The celebration will culminate with the Mayor lighting a Beacon in the Remembrance gardens at 8.00pm to appropriate musical accompaniment played over loudspeakers across the Pool to the audience in Minster Pool Gardens.



2. Markets: Lucy Clarke, Assistant Markets Officer

Lichfield District Council has implemented a new Street Trading Licence policy from April 2016. This has affected many planned events throughout the year e.g. 5th Saturday of the month Food Market in Three Spires, Minster Pool Walk bookings, and the Christmas Lights Switch-on market to name just a few. Because of the additional licence fee to traders these events have proved to be not financially viable to the traders and will sadly no longer take place. This could very well have a detrimental effect to footfall and tourism in the city.

On a positive note, it's great to see the monthly Farmers' market being supported by the Visit Lichfield team on Twitter. Social media is a great way to increase public awareness of regular events held in Lichfield. Our aim is to promote the general market in the same way to increase footfall and the profile of the market amongst the general public.



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



The Birthplace team welcomed 1,042 visitors in March, with special events in the month including a History Workshop 'Women in Johnson's World' led by Attendant Sue Bray, a new writers group and an Easter trail for families. The spring and summer events leaflet has been printed and sent across the region. The good news was received that we have once again received full Accreditation in the Arts Council scheme for Museum standards. Collection care has been the priority over the month, with a lively new team of volunteers joining to help with a full clean of the collection and displays.

A small ceramic bust of Johnson was donated to the collection, produced for local firm Lomax in the early 20th century, and the library was used by a research visitor from the Johnson Society to see a number of 18th century caricatures.

Partnership and outreach work this month has included advising staff from DH Lawrence's Birthplace in Nottinghamshire, reporting at the Johnson Society AGM and hosting the annual ceremony on 2nd March. The MHO attended the Tourism and Travel Show at the NEC to promote the city on the 'Visit Lichfield' stand, and Sue Bray attended the district 'Swap Shop' event at Drayton Manor. The MHO also looks after the Guildhall Prison Cell displays and recruited new volunteers ahead of the summer season.

Other projects in development include a series of Latin classes for life-long learners to begin in the autumn, and a creative writing project themed around the Birthplace for secondary school pupils with a local writer. Sessions at King Edward VI School and with a home education group on the Birthplace site are to take place throughout the coming months, partly funded by a SCC community arts grant.



4. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

With the Easter holidays, March has been a fairly quiet month at the Guildhall. We have held four Lichfield Arts evening entertainment events, two Craft Fayres, a Fashion Show, Quiz Night and the Mayor's Easter Sunday event.

On 29 March the Limburg Choir, who were performing at Lichfield Cathedral, visited the Guildhall and were welcomed by the Mayor. We are receiving enquiries for 2017 from organisations that have previously used St Mary's Centre. In addition, we have now had bookings from the RSPB and National Trust.

5. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

On 29 March, the internationally renowned Limburg Cathedral Boys Choir was officially welcomed to Lichfield by the Mayor at the Guildhall. After refreshments, the choir boys had a tour of the Guildhall and the prison cells, which they found very impressive.

The Choir then performed a concert at Lichfield Cathedral which was very well received by the large audience. The Choir Director, Mr. Andreas Bollendorf, thanked the City of Lichfield for their huge support for the concert.

To the great appreciation of the choir, the cathedral spire was floodlit during the evening in memory of Mr. Klaus Knubben, the former director of the Limburg choir, who had died suddenly two weeks previously. He had directed the choir for 28 years.



Erasmus+ Project

Just before Easter two visitors from organisations in Limburg came to Lichfield on a fact-finding project funded by the EU's Erasmus+ project. The aim was to establish the provision of housing, schooling and help for people with learning disabilities in Lichfield. Their visit included organisations like Friends2Friends, Changes, Cherry Orchard Gardening Services, Sheratts Wood, Liberty, Bromford Housing, Saxon Hill School and Craft Barn, Chasewater. They were most impressed by the passion and dedication of the staff of the aforementioned organisations, to make life enjoyable and manageable for people with learning disabilities, in spite of ever reduced government funding. Wayne Mortiboys from Staffordshire County Council kindly explained the plans for a new development of homes in Lichfield and Terry Finn, Staffordshire County Councillor, kindly helped with the organisation of the visit and spent some time with the visitors one day.

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

New Planting

The Woodland Trust supply different categories of trees and hedges twice per year free of charge to encourage tree planting in the community. This Spring LCC organised 30 of these bare rooted plants for King Edward's School. The School gardening club were involved in the planting and a larger batch of hedging planting is scheduled for the autumn.

To commemorate Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday a *Tilia Europaea* has been ordered to replace the one felled on Minster Pool Walk. A plaque on the railings will ensure the significance of the tree is clear for all visitors to see.

Meadows

Meadows are low maintenance, wildlife friendly, colourful and encouraged to gain points for Lichfield in Bloom. To this end LCC has prepared a sample 250 sq. m of ground in the open space off Tamworth Road. Sowing will be completed by volunteers from the Hatherton & Lichfield Canals Restoration Trust.

Another meadow planting is scheduled for the Curborough Community Centre field, and a proposal has been put to SCC for a meadow feature on the Cappers Lane Roundabout.

The Usefulness of Brambles

Brambles are the Marmite of Open Spaces. They are surprisingly loved by the house owners who wish to stop new rights of way and those defending their back gardens from unwanted visitors. They also attract insects, offering them nectar in autumn. Brambles are of course detested by those wanting pristine parks and those walking our miles of footpaths.

Brambles recently provided a possible solution to a copse which had in recent years become a regular spot for unwanted visitors. LDC cleared all the laurels to improve the visibility from the road leaving brambles, holly and nettles as a dissuasion. We will monitor the effectiveness of the deterrent.



Other Work

As requested by the Civic Society we will be repainting some LCC litter bins.

A Solar Light has at last been installed to serve the path between Longbridge Road and Tamworth Road. The newly reinstated uplighters by Minster Pool have been joined by a string of coloured lights. Poolside walk and the Remembrance Gardens will be utilised to celebrate the Queen's birthday on the evening of 21st April.

7. Deputy Town Clerk: Tony Briggs

Work continues on the scheduled renovations to the Guildhall and Donegal House – the identified remedial work to the prison cells was completed in time for their reopening on April 2 and the work schedule for the renovation of the Guildhall toilets is due to be released imminently.

A professional fire safety risk assessment of the Guildhall has been carried out, the results of which will be used to inform the forthcoming replacement of the fire alarms and main control panel, the existing system nearing the end of its serviceable life.

Hard copies of the new Guildhall wedding brochure that was designed in conjunction with the new LCC website have now been printed and are available at Donegal House reception. The brochure is also available to download from the City Council's website.

LCC's social media presence continues to grow, with its Twitter account gaining popularity. We are hopeful that the number of followers will continue to increase and enable us to reach an ever wider audience when publicising news and events.

The DTC is also heavily involved in preparation for the forthcoming Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations, St George's Court, progressing the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed introduction of internet based payment options to the Council, which is the subject of a separate agenda item.