

## **OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT**

### **1. Civic Matters: Lucy Clarke, Civic Officer**



On Monday 23 April the annual St. Georges Court was held in the Guildhall. The court was well received with over 100 people in attendance. Ale Tasters once again gave their witty reports along with this year's High Constables Peter Young and Philip Preece. The Court was then closed, and proceedings were ended with the Toast to; 'The Immortal Memory of St George' proposed by Cllr Mrs Baker.

On 14 May the Annual Council and Banquet was held. The new Civic team for 2018/19 are; Mayor, Cllr David Leytham; Deputy Mayor, Cllr Peter Hitchman and Sheriff, Mr Michael Mullarkey. During the Council meeting the Mayor named his Chaplain as Reverend Linda Collins and his Cadet, Corporal Chloe Wright from the 1206 (Mercian) Squadron Air Training Corps. The Mayor proudly announced Cadet Cpl Wright's promotion to Sergeant during these proceedings; her parents and Flight Lieutenant Chris Kelly as well as Wing Commander Sue Power were all in attendance to witness this special achievement.



Following the meeting a banquet was held for 123 guests, during the speeches the Mayor and Sheriff announced the charities they would be supporting during their year in office which are St. Mary's and Lichfield Greenhill Bower Trust.

Due to the ongoing refurbishment of St Mary's, the first Mayoral service was held in the Guildhall on Sunday 20 May and was led by the Mayor's Chaplain Reverend Linda Collins, Duncan Moon very kindly agreed to play the piano.

On Sunday 27 May in keeping with tradition, the Civic party processed from the Guildhall to St. Michaels Church for the Annual Bower Sunday service. The service at St. Michael's was led by Revd Simon Baker, after which everyone processed back to the Guildhall where the marching band gave a short performance before everyone retired for refreshments.

On Monday 28 May the Court of Arraye was held in the Guildhall. The seventh Lichfield Scout Group kindly helped us once again providing seven Men at Arms dressed and ready for inspection for the start of court. This year's High Constables; Jack Crawford and Jonathan Oates called upon the Dozeners to give their reports to the Lord of the Manor.

This year marked a special occasion for the 1206 Mercian Squadron Air Cadets. The Mayor presented an Illuminated Scroll incorporating the City of Lichfield in to their squadron name. Over 300 Cadets and staff from across Staffordshire were on parade after months of practice in preparation for this special occasion.



This year's Lichfield Greenhill Bower Queen, Charlotte Mace and Ambassador, Danielle Cliff were then crowned by the Mayor before the procession continued the traditional route around the city.

Preparations remain ongoing for the Town Crier Competition which takes place on 7 July currently there are 13 Town Criers wishing to take part. Arrangements also continue for the Mayoress at Home (28 July) and Sheriff's Ride (8 September).

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

As detailed in the Town Clerks report to Council in Agenda Appendix 8, the City Council is being asked to consider the installation of bollards around the Market Square. To assist the Council in its deliberations the Markets Officers have conducted a Trader survey to seek their views and to ensure the position of the bollards will not prohibit day to day activities on the Square. Unfortunately out of a total of 54 traders only 10 chose to respond with an equal split of 5 for the installation of Bollards and 5 against, but helpful suggestions for the locations for removable bollards were received.

From 18 - 25 May Lichfield Markets took part in NABMA's national *Love Your Local Market* campaign. The Square was decorated with bunting and many Traders created special offers for the event, which could be obtained by quoting, **"Love your local market."** Photos and offers were posted to the Markets Page on Facebook which was then shared by "What's on Lichfield", "Local Events in Your Area – Lichfield," Lichfield and Jono's



Tourism.



The Market Square is now booked every Sunday through to the end of September and some of our regular hirers are booking dates for 2019. The variety of bookings includes Arts & Craft Markets, Bella Dame Outlet Marquee and Lichfield Food Festival, plus ice cream and fish & chip vans.

As part of the ongoing improvements to the Markets a survey has been conducted on the market traders' roof sheets to identify any that need replacing.

The improvement in the weather has generated a lot of interest and enquiries, resulting in more new traders who have booked to stand in June.

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

2644 visitors came to Johnson's Birthplace in April and early May. There have been many special events and activities over the past two months.

A popular Easter trail devised by volunteer Margery Dunlevy attracted 142 families during the school holidays with excellent feedback, and the return of code-club 'Spy School', led by Museum Attendant Kevin Lynch was sold out.

The anniversary of the publication of Johnson's Dictionary was marked with a well-attended History Workshop 'Delve into the Dictionary', led by Attendant Sue Bray. Lichfield Poets performed their own series of poetry on the theme of 'Myths and Legends' in the Birth Room and Primary School visits from St Chad's in Lichfield and Riverview Primary, Stapenhill, are both now regular annual bookings. The 0-5-0 group based in Birmingham visited the Birthplace for a guided tour.

In addition, staff and volunteer teams visited St Michael's Church to see the Johnson family memorial and find out more about the history of the churchyard with local historian Dr Trevor James, where they received training from bookbinder Roy Fell on the traditional methods that would have been used by Johnson's father.



A small exhibition 'Who was Richard Greene?' created by volunteer Nicola Young opened and is on display until 10 June. The Birthplace also took part in Staffordshire Day, providing a venue for filming an online video on 'Staffordshire Heroes', and organised a 'Johnson's Heroes' walking tour of the city in partnership with local tour guide Jonathan Oates.

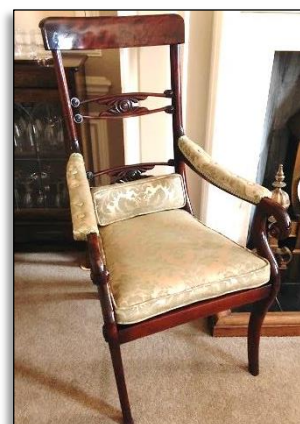
The Museum and Heritage Officer is pleased to report that the Birthplace collection is now online, with over 8,000 records accessible by the public. This public version shows a selection of available information taken from the larger in-house 'modes' database, and



marks the culmination of two decades of work of inventory and cataloguing. The basic entries will be continuously updated with information and images. The catalogue can be found at the Museum's main website 'Collections' area, or directly at <http://collections.samueljohnsonbirthplace.org.uk>.

A 1915 visitor book containing the signatures of JRR Tolkien's close friends who died in the Somme, has been loaned to the exhibition 'Consequence of War' at Lichfield Cathedral. The Museum also attended Lichfield BID's 'Expo' to meet local business owners and discuss possible partnership opportunities.

The Museum's volunteer 'Clean Team' have completed an entire bi-annual conservation clean of the Museum's displays, and a historic chair used by over 3000 brides in civil marriages in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lichfield, which had been in storage for decades in the Guildhall cells area, has now been reupholstered and moved to the Mayor's Parlour for the enjoyment of Members and the Mayor's guests.



Museum Consultants Susan Dalloe and Huw Edwards presented their report and some of their recommendations to members and the staff and volunteer team from the Museum, concluding their contract to review the Birthplace displays, facilities and access. A full written report is pending.

#### **4. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer**

At the beginning of May, the Twinning Officer welcomed 6 teachers from two Limburg vocational colleges to Lichfield for a meeting with the Head of Lichfield Campus South Staffordshire College. The aim was to establish links and investigate possible collaboration between the colleges, including work experience exchanges and other joint projects. This initial meeting was very positive from both cities' perspective and more detailed talks with the South Staffordshire College apprenticeship team are planned.



Over the bank holiday weekend of 4 – 8 May, the Lichfield Twinning Association was host to a group of 50 visitors from Lichfield's German twin town of Limburg. A full and varied programme was organised for the guests on Saturday which included a City tour, visits to the Sandfields Pumping Station, the Johnson Birthplace Museum, Darwin House and much more, including a day out for some to the Barber Institute and Winterbourne House in Birmingham.

On Sunday, Peter Walker gave a tour and explanation of his latest exhibition in the Cathedral "The Consequence of War". The visitors then returned to the Guildhall where they were greeted by the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Janice Greaves. One of the Mace Bearers and the Town Crier were on hand to showcase the City Council's silverware, ceremonial sword

and maces. Peter Barrett, chairman of the Lichfield Twinning Association also gave an informative presentation on Regalia and Traditions of Lichfield.

After a tour of the Guildhall, the Old Prison Cells and the Mayor's Parlour, everybody enjoyed light refreshments. Later in the evening the Guildhall was the setting for the Friendship Evening with more than 100 visitors and hosts enjoying a nice meal in a relaxed atmosphere. The weekend culminated on Monday with an excursion to the Wedgwood Pottery Exhibition in Barlaston, before delegates returned home to Limburg on Tuesday morning.

During the weekend, a new sporting link between the two twin towns was formed when the Friary Judo Club welcomed two members of the Judokwai Association Limburg to their club training on Saturday morning as well as to a special Judo Masterclass with British Olympian, Ashley MacKenzie on Sunday. A possible return visit to Limburg is planned for early next year by the Lichfield Judo Club.



## 5. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

The Old Prison Cells are open to the public again most Saturdays now until the end of October. Work has started on clearing the last Cell. In recent weeks we have had four Cell tours including a school party and Twinning visit.

We continue to attract our regular bookings: Band Practice, Bridge, Chess, Darby & Joan, Heyday Friendship, Italian Class, Ladies Cameo Group, Lichfield Poets, National Trust, Needwood DFAS, RSPB, Slimming World, Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society and U3A.

There have also been a further 27 meetings from outside agencies/societies held in the building and 1 study day. Private bookings have included a 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday party and two wedding receptions.

Craft Fairs, a table top sale for the Cats Protection and a Corridor Gallery display have all proven popular. There has also been a Wedding Fair, the first in recent years (pictured), and the Round Table Children's Wish charity held a Spring Fair. Market Research also returned for a one off



booking.

The Stroke Association held a drop in day in the Guildroom with an opportunity for the public to have their blood pressure checked. The Bower Model Fair was held on Bank Holiday weekend, which included a vintage vehicle outside the Guildhall this year, and their usual inside displays and café. The British Lung Foundation held a fund raising evening and the Lichfield U3A held their first Showcase Day (whole building booking) which was extremely well attended and was opened by the Mayor.

Lichfield Arts have held a total of four concerts, a fund raising event for Fuse 2018 and Lichfield Sinfonia also held a concert.

On 30 April the Guildhall bookings secretary attended an EXPO event at the George Hotel with the Twinning Officer to promote LCC and the Guildhall. This has resulted in several local charities making bookings at the Guildhall in recent weeks.

Maintenance work has been carried out on the heating system in the building and new blinds have been fitted in the Main Hall to replace the previous aged and unreliable installation.

Bookings at Boley Park Community Centre remain busy. The hall is used by regular hirers Monday – Friday day time and evening, and Sunday mornings with an additional 99 bookings from the beginning of April to present.

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

It is a busy time of year for Open Spaces. The long wet March followed by a hot period has created a lot of tree and verge plant growth. The road crossing by the Heather Garden (pictured) had to be cleared and the trees near the entrance to Christchurch cut back. Similar jobs are to be done for cherry trees overgrowing a private hedge at Francis road and an imbalanced horse chestnut in Boley Park leaning towards a house.



Preparations for **Lichfield in Bloom** are proceeding with exciting new projects. There include new flower beds at Swinfen to greet the judges; a narrow boat planter by the Tamworth Rd and a reed bed and small pond at Dovehouse Fields. The scouts have achieved a lot in the Friary Garden, planting out a medieval flower bed.



This colourful bank of pink campion is one of the successes from last year and is now being enjoyed by drivers on the A51.

An experiment of longer grass over the Summer in a corner of the Festival Garden will be monitored for increased biodiversity and wildlife and closer cut walkways through the grass will allow access. Staffordshire County Council have

now issued a planting licence for the roundabout at the junction of St Foy avenue and the Birmingham road. This is modest planting with mahonia, cotoneaster and geraniums for a perennial insect friendly result.

In addition, Lichfield District Council has granted planning permission for 4 advertisement boards on the Kensington Oval Roundabout which will be sponsored by Jukes Funeral Directors, it is hoped that they will be completed by judging day on 26 July.

## **7. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas**

The Deputy Town Clerk worked closely with Hilton Studios to produce an illuminated scroll which was presented to the 1206 Air Cadets on the 29 May to commemorate the inclusion of the name City of Lichfield into their Crest.

May is a particularly busy month for the City Council and the Deputy Town Clerk supported the Civic Officer at the Annual Council meeting and banquet. In addition on the 23 May the Deputy Town Clerk attended the Annual Town meeting which was well attended by members of the public as well as many of the charitable and voluntary organisations which the City Council recently awarded grants to.

The Deputy is also working closely with the Markets Officers to raise the profile of the Markets to try and improve stall occupancy. Work continues to progress with the City Councils Health & Safety Consultants, Terrain as well as reviewing the City Council's internal processes and procedures.