

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Sarah Wallace, Civic Officer

On Thursday 21 April the City Council arranged celebrations for Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday.

The Civic party processed to Speakers corner to listen to local school children read their own compositions about the Queen.

The compositions had been completed as part of a competition and the winners each received a medal and a commemorative coin. All the entries for the competition were later displayed in the Guildhall gallery on St George's day for the public to enjoy.

The procession then continued along Pool walk where the Mayor dedicated a new *Tilia Europea* tree before continuing into the Remembrance Gardens to light a Beacon. This was accompanied by music and much flag waving!



St George's Court was once again held in the Guildhall on Saturday 23 April. The Ale Tasters delivered their report in their usual humorous style and even though the barrel was leaking there was still plenty of beer to go round! At the Court, John Crowe and Les Ashley were elected as High Constables for the forthcoming year.



At the Annual Council meeting on 16 May Cllr. Mrs Sheelagh James was invested as Mayor for the coming year; Cllr. Mrs Janice Greaves became Deputy Mayor and Cllr. Robert Yardley, Sheriff. The newly elected Mayor took the opportunity to announce that her Chaplain for the year would be Revd Ian Hayter and Cadet Corporal James McAree would serve as her cadet. The evening concluded with a celebratory banquet for 126 guests catered for by the Olive Tree.

A thanksgiving service was held at the Guild Church of St Mary on Sunday 22 May conducted by Revd Linda Collins.

The Bower celebrations began with a Church service at St Michaels Church on Sunday 29 May followed by the light hearted Court of Arraye on Monday 30 May. Men at arms were once again provided in the form of local Cubs and Scouts who clearly enjoyed dressing up as Knights even if they were a little bewildered by the proceedings. The Mayor then crowned Miss Lichfield outside the Guildhall at 12 noon after which the Civic party joined the Bower procession.

2. Markets: Lucy Clarke, Assistant Markets Officer

Lichfield's popular monthly Farmers' Market celebrated its 15th Anniversary on Thursday 2 June. The event was a great success with help from the Mayor, Cllr. Mrs Sheelagh James and Town Crier Ken Knowles who both attended on the day. The celebration cake was creatively baked by one of the Farmers' Market traders, Dream Bakery. Free slices of cake were handed out after the Mayor officially cut the cake at 12 noon. It didn't last very long!

Throughout the day children were treated to free face painting on the Visit Lichfield stall jointly provided by Lichfield City Council and Lichfield District Tourism Team. The Owl Experience was very well received with their wonderful display and free craft activities provided by Colin Manning at Creative Outdoor Learning, making outdoor inspired tree cookies and stick people.



The City Council held a raffle competition, raising £88 for the Mayor and Sheriff's charities, the We Love Lichfield Fund and Erasmus Darwin Foundation. The lucky winners of the raffle were drawn and announced by the Mayor at 2pm.

Established by the City Council back in June 2001 the monthly Farmers' Market has since become a prominent fixture in Lichfield, hosting more than 30 local traders, all from within 50 miles. Six of the original traders at the very first Farmers' Market held in Lichfield are still successfully trading today.

Re-Paving on the Market Square

Work is set to start on the next phase of re-paving of the market square commencing 8 June. Arrangements have been made to receive a large delivery of paving blocks to be stored adjacent to the skip. Paving blocks will be secured safely with fencing for up to four weeks to complete the works. This will take the pressure off the short time scale of two non-market days to complete a section.

ITV News on the Market Square

ITV Central News Political Correspondent Alison McKenzie and her team set up a You Booth on the Tuesday General Market 24th May to film public opinions on the EU Referendum. ITV Central News is currently filming at lots of towns and cities across the West Midlands.

Bees on Market Square

After the recent Bower Fair on Market Square we were informed by the candy floss trader that she had received a lot of attention from honey bees nested high up in the tree outside St. Mary's main entrance. Nick Burton, Open Spaces Officer was quick to react and on Wednesday 1st June the bees were safely removed from the tree and re-homed at Nick's very own bee hive located in Yoxall.



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

The Birthplace welcomed 2,500 visitors in April & May and had a busy two months with groups, events and projects. Events over the two months included a big celebration of the history of the Birthplace and surrounding area as part of the Staffordshire Day weekend with a local history display and reminiscence event, 'Sharing Stories'.

Over 150 visitors came to share memories of the City and enjoy the old photographs on display, provided by local Facebook group 'You're probably from Lichfield, if...', and a display about the Birthplace building organised by volunteer Nicola Young.



Events continued with a Johnson-themed Sculpture talk and city walk led by Peter Walker. Families enjoyed an Easter trail of the house over the school holidays, created by a volunteer from Lichfield Cathedral School. Regular events such as the Book Group, new Writing Group and Bookworms United continue to thrive, with a special visitor for the Children in April: Milo the trainee guide dog!



Groups visiting the Museum have included Derby Refugee Centre, Ireland-based NAAS Bookgroup, and Staffordshire civic dignitaries.

Going out of the Museum, Norton Canes Historical Society were given an outreach talk, and the Birthplace school borrowing boxes were hired by Abbots Bromley School and Victoria Community School, Burton with alphabet and printmaking activities to help children learn about Samuel Johnson in the classroom.



The Birthplace welcomed school visits from Victoria Community School, Willows School and St Chad's. The Birthplace SCC-funded community arts project with creative writer Stewart Derry is continuing well, with excellent feedback from teachers at King Edward's VI school. Some of the students involved in the project visited the Birthplace on their last session, and the Mercia home-education network held their first session in May.

Other projects have included building care, with works beginning on the Introductory Room and London Life Room, and collection care, with the volunteer clean of the Birthplace collections now completed. The M&HO convened a meeting of local partners with an interest in celebrating David Garrick's 300th Birthday in 2017 and plans for events are beginning to take shape. The Birthplace appeared on Radio 4 in a documentary called 'Made in the Middle' in a segment about Lichfield, with an interview from the M&HO. In training and development, the stored collection was brought into focus with a training session for Museum Attendants to get to know the items that aren't on regular display; Sarah Dale attended a First Aid course, and the M&HO was awarded Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA) after working towards the qualification for 5 years, with support from LCC.

4. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

During recent weeks, several Wedding bookings have been made for the Guildhall next year. Since the beginning of April, three Wedding Receptions and two Wedding Ceremonies have been held here, together with a 90th Birthday Party.

We have had our regular bookings from the Historical and Archaeological Society, Slimming World, Ladies Cameo, Needwood DFAS, Darby and Joan, Lichfield Poets, Concert Band Practice, Bridge, Meditation, Italian Class, Chess, U3A, Heyday and Ballroom Dancing.

The Cells are now open each Saturday from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Volunteers from the Birthplace Museum are on hand to greet visitors and answer any questions. Sinfonia held their Spring Concert on 15th May, and Lichfield Arts have held seven events during the last two months.

We have had two Craft Fayres, a Vintage Wedding Fayre, Fabric Sale and a Corridor Gallery display/sale. Market Research companies have been three times.

The Guildhall was used by the Bower Committee for their Model Fair display of the 28 May. Darwin House held their annual Dinner on 30 April. This was very well attended, and also involved a light display both inside the main hall and outside the building.



5. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

Limburg

The result of the local elections in Limburg, held on the 6 March 2016, is as follows:
CDU (Cons.) 42.88%, SPD (Labour) 33.03%, Green Party 9.18%, DIE LINKE (left wing) 4.69%, FDP (Liberals) 10.23%.

This results in the following seats: CDU 19, SPD 15, GREENS 4, DIE LINKE 2, FDP 5. Turnout was 45.49% with 465,531 eligible votes.
CDU and the Green Party formed a coalition; after talks between SPD, FDP and the Green Party failed.

The Mayor of Limburg Dr. Marius Hahn sent a letter of congratulation to the new Mayor of Lichfield, her deputy and the Sheriff and wished them success in their year in office.

Peter Walker Exhibition in Limburg

At the end of April, Lichfield Cathedral artist Peter Walker finished a 5 week exhibition in Limburg with a workshop for students from 2 secondary schools. The Mayor Dr. Marius Hahn congratulated Peter and his wife on a very successful exhibition – over 600 visitors were recorded.

The Mayor stressed the friendly partnership between the twin towns of Lichfield and Limburg, which is demonstrated by the many different activities between both cities, although this was the first time a Lichfield artist had exhibited his work in Limburg's historic town hall.



In October, Peter will return to Limburg with a planned lightshow on various buildings across the city and the Mayor and citizens of Limburg are already looking forward to this interesting occasion.

Lichfield Mysteries

This year's Lichfield Mysteries saw a French acting group *Fidesiens* from Sainte Foy performing one of the plays, *The Wedding at Cana*, on both days Sun 1 May and Mon 2 May in the Market Square and Wade Street Church. It was a very well received and humorous play, with references to English everyday life, performed in that typical French accent. The Lichfield Twinning Association arranged a lunchtime buffet on bank holiday Monday at Erasmus Darwin House to officially welcome the French group and the chairman Peter Barrett thanked them for taking part in this special week-end, despite the cold and rainy weather.



New Facebook Page

The Lichfield Twinning Association has a new Facebook page. It is very professionally managed by Mrs. Kathryn Walker, the wife of Sculptor Peter Walker, who have both become the latest members of the association. There are lots of interesting photos and videos from many twinning exchanges. The Twinning Officer also posts official events on this Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/Lichfieldtwinningassociation>

Twinning Association

The Twinning Association, run by dedicated volunteers, had a stand at this year's Support Staffordshire "Volunteers' Week" Celebration in The Guildhall on Friday 10 June to showcase the interesting links between citizens of Lichfield, Limburg and Sainte Foy.

English Garden Party in Limburg

The City of Limburg is holding an annual English Garden Party on 10 July. Lots of typical "English" events have been organised, such as horse races, a photo with the Queen, old-timer exhibition, original English roses sale and "teatime" including chocolate covered strawberries.

Limburg Bands at the Fuse Festival

At this year's Fuse Festival there will be 2 bands from Limburg participating. The first band is called Back2Basix. They are a college band from Limburg and are playing pop and pop rock on Sunday 10 July at 12pm on the Momentum Stage.

The second band is called Hanne Kah and Band. The music of Hanne Kah is handmade folk rock and she will be playing on Sunday 10 July at 12.45pm on the Momentum Stage.



The musicians will be welcomed by the Mayor, Cllr. Mrs. Sheelagh James on their arrival on Friday 8 July and will be staying at Wade Street Church with Rev. Ian Haytor for the duration of the Festival. This is a joint project between Lichfield City Council and the Lichfield community band Blast Off, led by Nick Dewhurst, to highlight aspects of international young musicians coming together in harmony.

Future Events

- Eight members from the Lichfield Chess Club are interested in an exchange tournament in Limburg.
- Scouts groups and girl guides are looking into a possible exchange visit to Limburg.
- Four volunteers from Limburg are looking for a 4 week placement with organisations for people with learning difficulties financed by the European Erasmus+ Project Fund.
- Artist Peter Walker is looking into the possibility of organising an art projection for the 25th twinning anniversary to be held in Sainte Foy from 6 – 9 October 2017.

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

In addition to its role in the Queens's 90th Birthday Celebrations, The Remembrance Garden also provided three oak saplings from the Verdun Oak. A representative from the "Galleywood Folk", a parish in Essex, plans to visit Lichfield soon to receive two of them to be planted in their parish as part of their Verdun anniversary celebrations. An acorn hunt & collection will be required this autumn around the tree as requested by the Woodland Trust. Meadow sowing has been completed by members of the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust off the Tamworth Road. In addition, the Allotment Association sowed a small open space at Curborough.

Community work is very much a part of gaining an award from the RHS for all the work at the Community Centre and the open space. A Saturday morning volunteer day at the Centre got some more gardening and painting done.

The "Friary Remains" requires some stone replacing and repointing work. Stonemasons have been asked to quote for this work for which there is s106 money allocated. Prior to work commencing we will obtain approval for repairs to a Monument.



May, June & July remain the busiest months of the year in open spaces & footpaths. Grasses & hedges grow very quickly with the occasional issue requiring urgent attention.

Dates for the diary: RHS Town in Bloom judging for Lichfield is on 20 July. RHS Park in Bloom judging for Curborough is provisionally on 19 July.

7. Deputy Town Clerk: Tony Briggs

Several tenders for scheduled renovations to the Guildhall and Donegal House are now in progress and it is hoped that work will start very soon, especially to the external elements of these works.

Discussions are ongoing with our web developers about the fine detail of the PayPal online payment option, and it is hoped this will be live before the end of June.

The Neighbourhood Plan continues to progress, with the draft revisions following the most recent meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee now complete and the document being readied for public consultation.

Many of the City Council's historical photographs have been stored in various rooms in the Guildhall and Donegal House for many years, including the photograph of Alderman Henry Hall JP receiving the Freedom of the City in 1948 shown opposite. Several of these photographs have now been scanned and added to the City Council's new Flickr page.

Civic portraits, some of which date back to the early 20th century, are currently being scanned and will be added to the site as soon as possible. This will provide a lasting and readily accessible record to all who are interested in the history of the City.



Around 200 photographs have been scanned to date. The City Council's new Flickr page can be found here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/141498010@N05/albums>