

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Sarah Wallace, Civic Officer

There have been no Civic events during August but the Mayor, Sheriff and Deputy Mayor have been kept busy with engagements in and around the City.

September however will be one of the busiest months for Civic events. Preparations have been ongoing for several weeks now for the Sheriff's Ride on Saturday 10 September and the Johnson Birthday Celebrations on Saturday 17; and on 28 September the City Council will award the Freedom of the City to DMS Whittington.

Forthcoming Events:

- Sunday 13 November: Remembrance Sunday Service
- Friday 25 November: The Mayor and Sheriff's Charity Dinner Dance. Entertainment by the Bluebird Belles – more details to follow.
- Tuesday 6 December: Mayors Carols

2. Markets: Lucy Clarke, Assistant Markets Officer

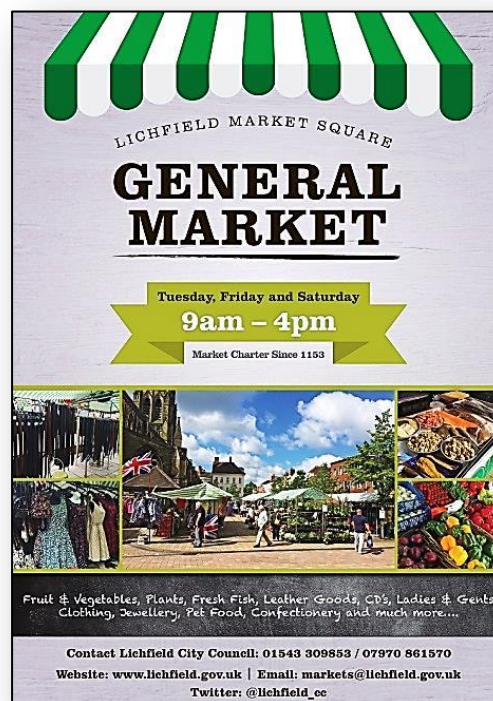
Re-Paving on Market Square

Work is set to start on the final phase of re-paving the Market Square in early September. Arrangements have been made to receive a large delivery of paving blocks to be stored alongside the skip, and paving blocks will be secured safely with security fencing for up to three weeks to complete the works. The re-paving will not affect any planned events in the City or on the Square.

Advertising/Marketing

There has been a national decline in take up of market stalls and general market footfall. Traders are currently finding conditions very difficult with many reducing from double stalls to just one stall over the last couple of months. We currently have nine permanently empty stalls on a Friday market and six permanently empty stalls on a Saturday market. We have considered temporarily reducing the amount of stalls erected but are restricted by the stall layout - stalls empty on a Friday are actually needed on a Saturday, making changes difficult. During the winter months we are also restricted due to the stall lighting layout. Current opportunities for amending the stall layout are therefore limited but this is something which could be addressed when the stall erection contract is re-tendered later this year.

New leaflets to advertise the General market and Farmers' & Craft Market are now complete and are being sent out to tourist information centres



within a 30 mile radius of Lichfield. The new advertising literature will also feature in a coach touring magazine to help encourage tourism to the City.

Street signs used on market days outside the Guildhall to guide the public to the market square have also been updated with our new look. We now have lockable poster cases on the market square to promote markets/events to the public on non-market days.

Market Square & Minster Pool Walk Bookings

Market Square bookings continue to prove successful on non-market days. The Arts & Crafts Fair is due to attend in both late September and late October, along with midweek bookings from Arriva Buses, Staffordshire County Council Foster Care and MacMillan Cancer Care.

Minster Pool Walk has been booked for a Georgian Festival Food Market across the three day Heritage Weekend in September; and a Twinkly Christmas market booking has also been received for Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 December.



Half-Relocated Market – Heritage Weekend

Eleven stalls are to be re-located to Market Street on Saturday 17 September 2016 as half of the Market Square will be made available for the celebration and civic ceremony marking Samuel Johnson's birthday.

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

The Birthplace Museum welcomed over 3,800 visitors in July and August, with visitors enjoying events including the ongoing 'Harmony & Grace' calligraphy exhibition and popular school holiday activities 'Summer Fun at Sam's House'. The Birthplace took part in Lichfield Festival week by joining the Ragdoll trail and holding a pop-up poetry event as part of the year of Shakespeare 400 events, with sonnets in surprising places working with a wide number of partners across the City including the Fuse Festival.



Other partnership work included meeting with the Cathedral School, the Garrick and Dr Johnson's House in London to plan events for the 300th Birthday of David Garrick in 2016.

The school term ended with excellent feedback from the Mercia Education group, who took part in a creative writing project at the Museum, partly funded by an SCC Community Arts Grant. King Edward VI School in Edgbaston were a new booking for the A-Level Dictionary Workshop, and Lichfield students Sam and Heidi completed work experience placements over the summer. Their work included contributing to the Museum's social media platforms, and the Birthplace now has over 1000 followers across Twitter and Facebook.



Guided Tour groups included Dr Johnson's Reading Group from Johnson's House in Gough Square, and the Flintshire Historical Society. The Autumn and Winter events programme was finalised and leaflet produced. Advance bookings for the new adult-learner Latin classes scheduled for September have been very popular, and the course is already oversubscribed. Behind the scenes, repair work has been continuing in the 'London Life' and 'Introduction' rooms and preparations for Johnson's 307th Birthday and Lichfield's Georgian Heritage Weekend are underway.

4. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

The 2016/17 Repair and Renovation programme is now well under way, the major elements of this being the subject of a separate report to Council. Additional smaller scale repairs have also taken place, including repair to the leaded glass in the Minstrels' Gallery. The ovens in both kitchens also had an annual deep clean this month. Despite this ongoing work, we have been able to facilitate bookings by liaising closely with contractors and hirers.

Although it has been a little quieter in the main School holiday period, U3A, Ballroom Dancing, Bridge, Meditation, Slimming World, Darby & Joan, Heyday Friendship, Chess and the Ladies Cameo have all maintained their regular bookings.

A Retirement Party was held at the end of July, and we have had two wedding ceremonies and four wedding receptions up to the beginning of September.

The old Prison Cells are still open on a Saturday and continue to attract many visitors. We have also had some 'Blood Thirsty Tour' parties visit the Cells.

We have had three Craft Fairs, a leather sale and hosted for the Food and Drink Festival and Lichfield Arts Beer Festival.

Cross Culture Images have used the Corridor Gallery on two occasions, and a photographer also hired the space to display his work.



A Market Research company hired the Guildroom to test non-alcoholic beers; and Persimmon Homes recently held a consultation in the same room in respect of the Cricket Lane development proposals.

Rebecca Newman, a noted Soprano, performed on the Market Square prior to her Concert in the Guildhall at the end of July.

5. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

Wade Street Jazz Concert

On Thursday 25 August, Lichfield's 25-piece Community Band "Blast Off" and "Tritone Quintet", a jazz band made up of musicians from 3 countries (England, Holland and Germany), both led by Nick Dewhurst, performed a joint concert in Wade Street Church. Last summer, Tritone Quintet also performed in Limburg at the annual Serenadenhof Summer festival, which was hugely successful.



Twinning Feature

The Mercury feature on Twinning is progressing well. Thank you to all Members who have supplied photographs and input so far, Any milestone photographs are still being considered for inclusion.

International Meeting in Limburg

An invitation has been received from Limburg for a small delegation to attend an international meeting on 11 and 12 November 2016 where all three authorities are to discuss the planning arrangements for next year's 25th Anniversary celebrations of the Ring Twinning agreement in Sainte Foy. Members will recall that the Mayor of Sainte Foy, Mrs. Veronique Sarselli, has invited 80 guests each from Lichfield and Limburg to join in the celebrations from 6 to 9 October 2017.

City Council Apprentices – Limburg

From 15 to 22 October 2016, two apprentices from Limburg City Council will be spending a week long internship at Lichfield City Council. Lena Grenz (19) and Dennis Kreker (17) will be experiencing the varied duties of the City Council, District Council, County Council, Samuel Johnson Birthplace, Tourist Office, Library and Record Office. They will be staying with guest families from the Twinning Association.

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

With the weather improving and the rate of growth slowing it has been possible to really improve the look of the Open Spaces in August. Cut grass has been remaining neater for longer and more beds have been weeded. There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of enquiries from the public.

There is still plenty of tree work to be done, individual tree work is expensive so trees that need some work on them or to be felled this Autumn have been batched, currently 20+ jobs.

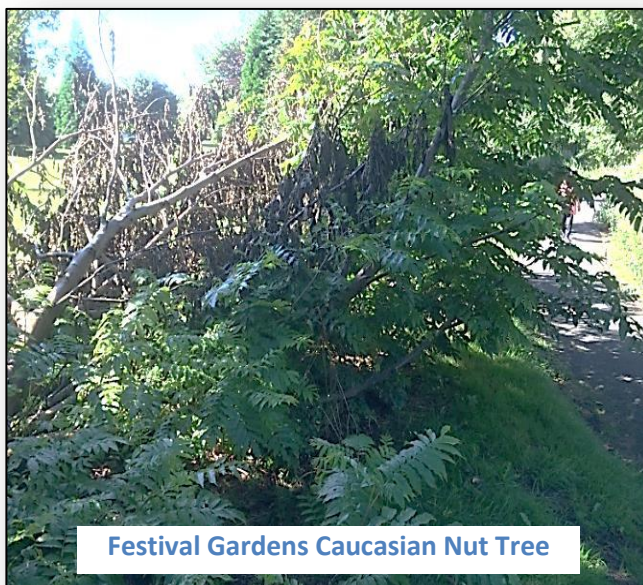
Compliments from the public about the meadow on Tamworth Road have been received by ourselves and the District Council.

A £1,000 grant from the South Staffs Water Company has been applied for in conjunction with the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust to extend the Tamworth road meadow next year. The possibility of securing further grant monies to improve biodiversity in our open spaces is currently being investigated.

A Phase 1 Habitat survey was conducted in 2006 by the Countryside Department of Rodbaston College. If they could be persuaded to run the same survey this year there would be a 10 year interval where the improvement, or not, in biodiversity could be quantified.

The plans for the roundabout bedding have been supplied to Staffordshire County Council for a planting licence, once this has been achieved applications for planning permission for the boards and an advertising licence can be made.

Meadow following the canal route alongside the A51 Tamworth Road. It is not quite the blue mix we had been promised!



Festival Gardens Caucasian Nut Tree

In response to suggestions by the Friends of Lichfield Historic Parks Group some of the trellis climbers along Minster Walk have been replaced.

The Friary Fountain is leaking so has temporarily been stopped until the repairs are done in September.

Work has begun on the route preparation works for the Sheriff's Ride, with instructions being given to the maintenance team to clear various parts of the route.

Also in September the RHS Town in Bloom results are due to be announced.

An application has been made to coppice the Caucasian Nut with a TPO in the Festival Gardens. Most of the multi stems have collapsed outwards and some of the broken branches now cover the pathway.

7. Deputy Town Clerk: Tony Briggs

Renovation of the Guildhall toilets is continuing and is currently on schedule to be completed on 9 September. An update on the 2016/17 repair and renovation work to the Guildhall is the subject of a separate report to Council.

The pre-submission consultation period for the Lichfield City Draft Neighbourhood Plan ends on 9 September. Responses are to be distributed to Neighbourhood Plan Committee Members as soon as possible thereafter in order to inform the next NP Committee meeting, scheduled for Monday 19 September.

The DTC is also assisting with the preparation of several events, all of which are due to take place in September, including the Johnson Birthday celebrations and associated Heritage Weekend, the Sheriff's Ride and the Freedom of the City (DMS Whittington).