

## OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

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

On Saturday 7 September the Sheriff, Dr Daryl Brown successfully completed the



#### Sheriff's Ride.

In keeping with this historic tradition, 51 riders joined the Sheriff on the 20-mile perambulation of the City boundaries. The High Sheriff of Staffordshire, Mr Ashley Brough was also in attendance and accompanied the ride in a spectacular horse drawn carriage with the Sheriff's parents and Consort for the first and final parts of the ride. The Sheriff's father, Dr Neville Brown was himself Sheriff of Lichfield in 2011 making them the first father and son to have held this position.

At Freeford Manor an additional 103 guests joined the Sheriff for a buffet luncheon where they were entertained by 'Jazz Tones'. Mrs Barbara Lewis once again presented the prize for best dressed Horse and Rider; which this year was won by Emily Hunt and *Bentley*.



At the end of the day the Ride was escorted back into the City by the Sword and Mace Bearers. The Sheriff was welcomed into the Close by The Dean and representatives of the Chapter at Lichfield Cathedral before continuing onto the Guildhall where the Ride culminated with three cheers for the Sheriff and applause for all the riders that completed the Sheriff's Ride.

The Sheriff's Ride is the largest event the City Council undertakes and would not be possible without the support of the many volunteers and landowners. The Council was once again supported by 1206 (City of Lichfield) RAF Cadets at Darnford Park and by Lichfield Unit Police Cadets at the Freeford Manor lunch stop.

The Johnson Birthday Celebrations were held on the Market Square on Saturday 14 September. In keeping with tradition, just after midday, the Mayor placed a laurel chaplet on the statue of Dr Samuel Johnson after which St. Michael's choir sang Johnson's last prayer to music by Peter Hawsworth their Musical Director.

As part of the Heritage weekend the celebrations and activities continued throughout the day including a Mini Town Criers competition carried out under the watchful eye of the City's Town Crier, Ken Knowles and Mace Bearer, Richard Hunt. The Mayor and Sheriff both judged the competition and the worthy winner was announced, Sophia aged 7. The Entertainer toy shop kindly donated a £15 gift voucher to the winner.



Preparations continue for the Remembrance Sunday Service on 10 November and Mayor and Sheriff's Charity Dinner Dance on 23 November.

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



A total of 2,750 visitors came to the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum in September, with 450 attending on Saturday 14 September for Johnson's 310th Birthday celebrations. Visitors enjoyed cake and activities including original letterpress printing with the Small Print Company inside the house, as well as a programme of performance on the Market Square. Following the Civic ceremony visitors were entertained by the Intimate Theatre, Wildfire Folk, Three Spires Morris, Lichfield Mysteries, the City of Lichfield Concert Band and the mini-town crier competition.



On Monday 2 September the Museum took part in family activity afternoon ‘*Space Camp*’ at St Mary’s alongside Lichfield Library, Erasmus Darwin House and other partners. The Museum’s new term of Latin classes started with excellent numbers of new students in the beginner sessions. The month ended with ‘The Girl in the Picture’, a new play written by David Titley and performed by Intimate Theatre with two showings to a full house and excellent reviews. This was the first event for which online booking has been available via ‘Eventbrite’, which encouraged new audiences to this event.



Group visits this month included the Arts Society of West Essex and English Literature students from Derby University. The Birthplace has been invited to take part in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion programme offered and funded by West Midlands Museum Development and attended the first session this month in Birmingham.

This month the Museum also loaned a painting of ‘Johnson visiting Lichfield Cathedral’ by John Fulleylove to the Cathedral, to be displayed alongside the iconic portrait of Samuel Johnson by Joshua Reynolds which is on loan to Lichfield from the National Portrait Gallery until January 2020. The Birthplace has also supported the exhibition by providing text for the display and offering training on Samuel Johnson for Cathedral volunteers.

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

The Lichfield in Bloom results were received on the 5 September and it was rewarding for all those involved that for a third consecutive year Lichfield was awarded with a Gold. Both Lichfield District and City Councils make a large contribution to this project and this is a huge achievement for the City as a whole. The improvements made at the entrances to the City by the addition of new colourful planters were a factor in this success and represents a collaboration between the BID and the City Council.



The natural meadow in the Festival Garden was also mentioned in the judge’s report with them commenting that *“it offers visitor and resident the opportunity to view less formal wild species of flowers along-side the softer grass such as bents and fescues”*. Further improvements have been made since by the City Council with the replacement of all the *Welcome to Lichfield* signs around the City that have been funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The RoSPA safety reports on the playing areas at Curborough and Netherstowe have been received with mainly low risk scores, though work to improve the surfaces under play equipment will be required this year.



The Sheriff's Ride this year returned to a route which was last used four years ago. The path had become very overgrown in the meantime and needed a lot of clearance.

The opening of this route would not have been possible without the help from Miller Homes for their access, ACW Arb for their tree clearance and Lichfield District Council for their heavy-duty equipment to clear the green lane.

The reintroduction of this route has contributed to the safety of the Sheriff's ride as Eastern Avenue, with its heavy traffic, no longer needs to be used.

#### **4. Markets Report: Jordan Appleyard, Markets Officer**



Stall occupancy has been maintained throughout September with Tuesday and Saturday markets running at almost full capacity. There has also been a new trader, Amalsons who can be found selling a range of natural honey and associated products on both the Friday and Saturday Markets.

The Markets Officer is working with Councillor Checkland and the Deputy Town Clerk to look at ways to increase stall occupancy and footfall to all the Markets but with particular emphasis on the Friday Market which has recently suffered a decline in occupancy.

A request for Traders to attend a Christmas themed Market, to run alongside the Christmas Lights Switch On Event has gone out via the City Council's social media accounts and has generated numerous enquiries.

The Markets Officer is also working alongside Cockerhoop in an attempt to increase trader attendance at the Farmers Market; local businesses have also been given the opportunity to attend.

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

Limburg City Council's latest public office apprentices, Nathalie and Henry, arrived in Lichfield on 5 October for their annual one-week work experience. The aim was for them to learn about the differences in public service provisions in both countries. The students spent time at the City, District and County Council Offices, as well as the Library, Tourist Information Centre, Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum and Erasmus Darwin House.

At the City Council they were introduced to the responsibilities of the Guildhall Bookings Officer, the Open Spaces Officer and the Markets Officer. At the District Council they were able to observe Human Resources, Reception and the Beacon Park team. They were extremely impressed by their day at Staffordshire County Council in Stafford, observing a full Council meeting in the morning and having a guided tour of the building in the afternoon. The Twinning Officer would like to thank Councillor Greateorex for arranging this interesting and informative day. They were also able to help out at Lichfield Library, speaking with a local author; helping with a coffee morning and observing the Tourist Information Desk located inside St. Mary's centre.

Both the students were hosted by a family from the Lichfield Twinning Association and flew back to Limburg, full of new impressions of work and social life in Lichfield.

## **6. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary**

Following the summer holidays all bookings by regular hirers have re-commenced. The Guildhall continues to be popular for small groups to meet and there have been a total of twelve separate bookings during September.

Commercial bookings have included Craft Fairs, a Bible Exhibition in the Guildroom and a display in the Corridor Gallery. There have been several private bookings, including a pre-wedding gathering for photo's, prior to a service at Lichfield Cathedral; a Wedding Reception; a Harry Potter themed childrens birthday party; Ruby Wedding Anniversary party and a post wedding party.



The Old Prison Cells are open until the end of October on Saturdays and there have recently been four cell tours with several booked in over the Halloween period.

Lichfield Arts held two concerts as well as their Autumn Beer Festival.

During September the Johnson Society held their Annual supper and Lichfield Greenhill Bower held their cheque presentation.

Boley Park continues to attract bookings, mostly children's birthday parties. There are private bookings most weekends now until Christmas as well as Christmas Craft Fairs.



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

The Civic Officer's report provides details of the Sheriff's Ride which took place on Saturday 7 September. Prior to the arrival of the wonderfully turned out horses and riders, there was a rather less glamorous duty to be performed in the field in which the marquee was placed at Freeford Manor for the Luncheon. Cows had previously been in the field so the City Council team, armed with shovels and wheelbarrows were on hand to remove the deposits left by the cows.



This is just one example of the work undertaken by City Council staff that falls outside of their regular role but allows events such as the Sheriff's Ride to be such a success. The Deputy Town Clerk would like to thank all staff who worked so tirelessly behind the scenes before, during and after the event.

Preparations for the Christmas lights Switch On now continue at a pace and the Deputy has been meeting with various stake holders and agencies in preparation for this event. Work also continues with the Markets Officer to promote the General Markets and increase footfall.

Health & Safety matters continue to be reviewed and improved. A new Fire alarm panel has recently been installed in Donegal House as the previous one had reached the end of its life, together with wireless sensors the new system is a much higher specification.

The Deputy has also provided secretariat support at the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Party Committee and Planning Committee.