

## For Council: 24 July 2024 APPENDIX 4

### OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

#### 1. Civic Matters: Harriet Chatwin, Civic Officer

The Court of Arraye was held in the Guildhall on Monday 27 May. The 7th Lichfield Scout Group kindly helped once again providing seven Men at Arms who were 'inspected' by the Mayor, Cllr Sam Schafer, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Claire Pinder-Smith & Sheriff, Cathy Wood. This year's High Constables, Helen Winter & Richard Hunt, called on the Dozeners to give their reports to the Lord of the Manor. The Civic party then gathered outside Donegal House for the traditional Lichfield Bower procession which featured music, dancers, local community groups and floats including a 'Community Monarch' display. The festivities later moved on to Beacon Park where several rides & stalls were set up for the fun to continue.



The Mayor led the Lichfield City Council team in the annual Swinfen Broun Challenge Trophy bowls match against the Lichfield Museum Bowling Club on Wednesday 19 June, celebrating the centenary of the event. As a celebration of the centenary anniversary, the club invited players to don their best 1920's apparel. With the sun shining, an enjoyable evening was had by all and despite the best efforts of the City Council team, the Bowling Club took the trophy once again with a score of 127 to 33.

After the match, the Mayor presented the trophy to the Club President, Fred Perry, who thanked everyone for taking part and supporting the event. The Mayor then gave a brief explanation about the history of the challenge match, which has been played since 1924, though it was not until 1926

that the trophy was donated by local benefactor, Colonel Swinfen Broun; it has been fought over ever since!

Players then retired to the Hub for a light supper prepared by members of the Bowling Club. The Mayor concluded the evening by drawing the raffle which raised £173.00 for the Museum's Bowling Club's charity fun day. We look forward to continuing this tradition again on Wednesday 18 June 2025.



*The Mayor of Lichfield, Cllr Sam Schafer, presenting the Swinfen Broun Challenge Cup to Captain of Lichfield Museum Bowling President, Fred Perry.*

At the time of compiling this report, preparations are ongoing for the following quarter including the Back-to-School Uniform Event on Friday 18 August and the Mayor & Sheriff's first charity event of their civic year; a Music/Quiz evening on Saturday 31 August, in the Guildhall.

## **2. Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum: Kimberley Biddle, Museums and Heritage Officer**

The Birthplace Museum Attendants welcomed 1,500 people during June. The site received Tripadvisor's Travellers' Choice Award; the accolade formerly known as Certificate of Excellence. The accolade is given to attractions that consistently receive excellent reviews from visitors.

On Saturday 15 June, the Birthplace hosted Tea with Mrs. Thrale, a ticketed theatrical event about the life of Hester Piozzi, née Thrale. Written and performed by Museum Attendant Christine Genders, the event explored Piozzi's work, family, and her friendship with Samuel Johnson. In-person tickets for the event sold out, and the performance was made available to view via live stream.



Following stakeholder consultation, a brand-new logo and accompanying icon has been selected for the Birthplace. Designed by Vertigo, the new look is classic, modern and versatile, with an accessible font. The logo will inspire the new website aesthetic to create a strong brand identity for the Birthplace.



The Birthplace has been working with museum education specialists, Up An' At Em! History, to trial new education sessions with local schools. Willows Primary School brought two classes to visit on 19 June, they said the trip was "brilliantly organised, timings worked well", and that the sessions were, "very relevant to the Georgian Greats unit and so this is something the children took a lot from - especially with the artifacts". The sessions have been set up to facilitate multiple classes and full day visits.

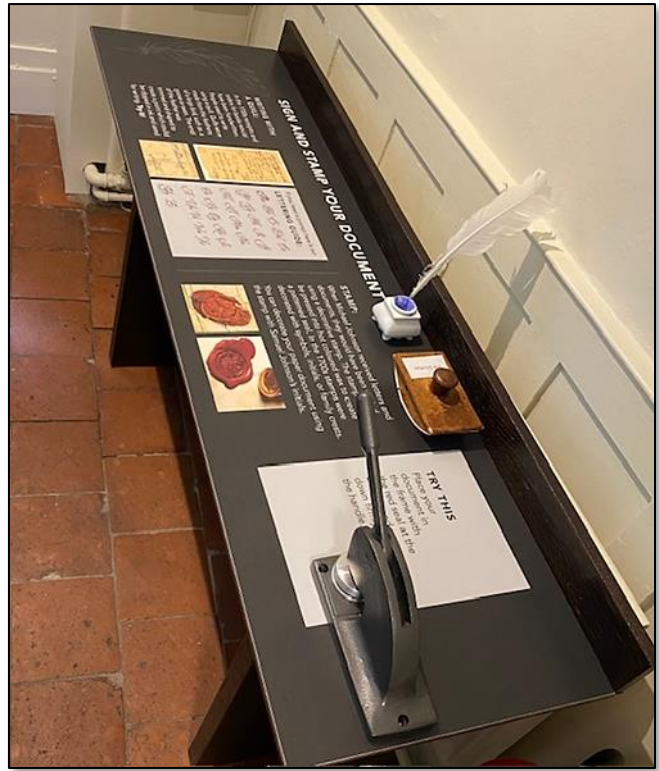
In addition to the new education sessions, Up An' At Em! History and the Museum Support Officer have been developing loan boxes. Loan boxes are ideal for schools who may not be able to visit in-person; they contain activities, replica objects with handling notes, and replica clothing to try on. Once finalised, the Birthplace boxes can be borrowed by schools to provide teachers with weeks of cross-curricular activities covering topics such as history, literacy, art, geography, and wellbeing, all through learning about Samuel Johnson.

Listed Building Consent has been granted to replace the roof access window in the attic. The existing window had previously been sealed closed, preventing access to the roof and gutters. Access is essential for periodic maintenance and inspections, and to investigate the valley gutter following issues identified in October's drone survey. The new window will match the appearance of the existing window, and the frames and cills will be retained.

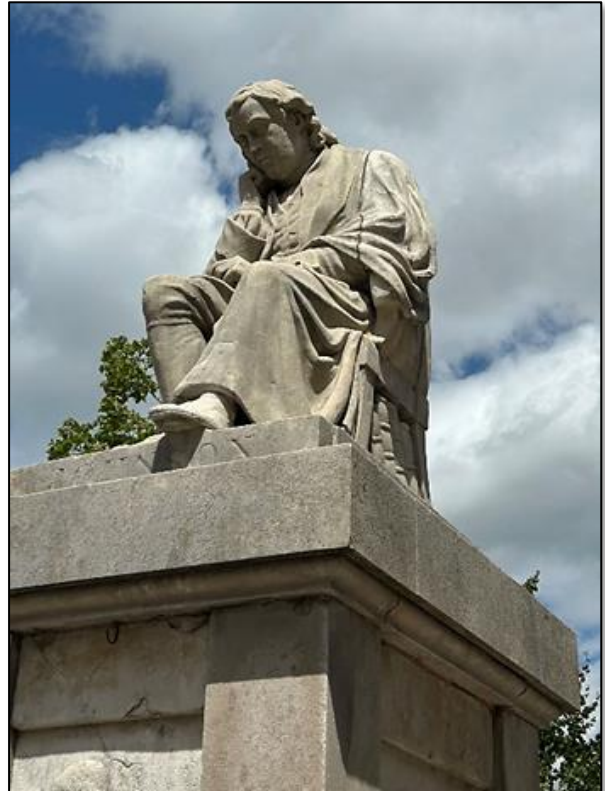
Work continues on the collection audit to ascertain that objects are in the correct locations, and that the information on the inventory and other documentation is accurate. The audit has provided a good opportunity to review the condition of objects, such as an early 1700s oil on canvas landscape painting which was discovered to be in poor condition. Past exposure to damp through flooding had caused flaking and cracking, and if left would have resulted in further paint loss. The painting is currently being stabilised by a conservator, and once returned will be put back on display at the Birthplace.

Another painting undergoing conservation is The Prospect of the City of Lichfield, a landscape view of the city which dates from 1680. The painting has been poorly restored in the past and is extremely dirty with little discernible detail. Once the painting has been cleaned and stabilised by a conservator it will be returned to the Ashmole Room at the Guildhall.

Finishing touches to the new Workroom display at the Birthplace were installed at the end of June, including an interpretation panel and hands-on quill pen and stamp interactive (both pictured overleaf). A screen will be installed at the end of July providing visitors with the option to find out more about Samuel Johnson's father, Michael Johnson, and watch a short film showing how a book is made.



The Museums and Heritage Officer organised for the Samuel Johnson and James Boswell statues in Market Square to be cleaned, as well as the Remembrance Garden plaque on Minster Pool Walk. 'Before and After' photographs of the Johnson statue are provided below. Quotes are being obtained from a metal conservator to restore the Old Schoolmaster's House and Bishop Langton's Bridge plaques.





### 3. Open Spaces: Nigel Boden, Open Spaces Officer and Jane Varley, Clerical Officer

#### Bishops Walk (FP20)

Overhanging tree growth has been removed from walkway and lamp columns cleared of obstruction.



#### Spearhill (Site 43)

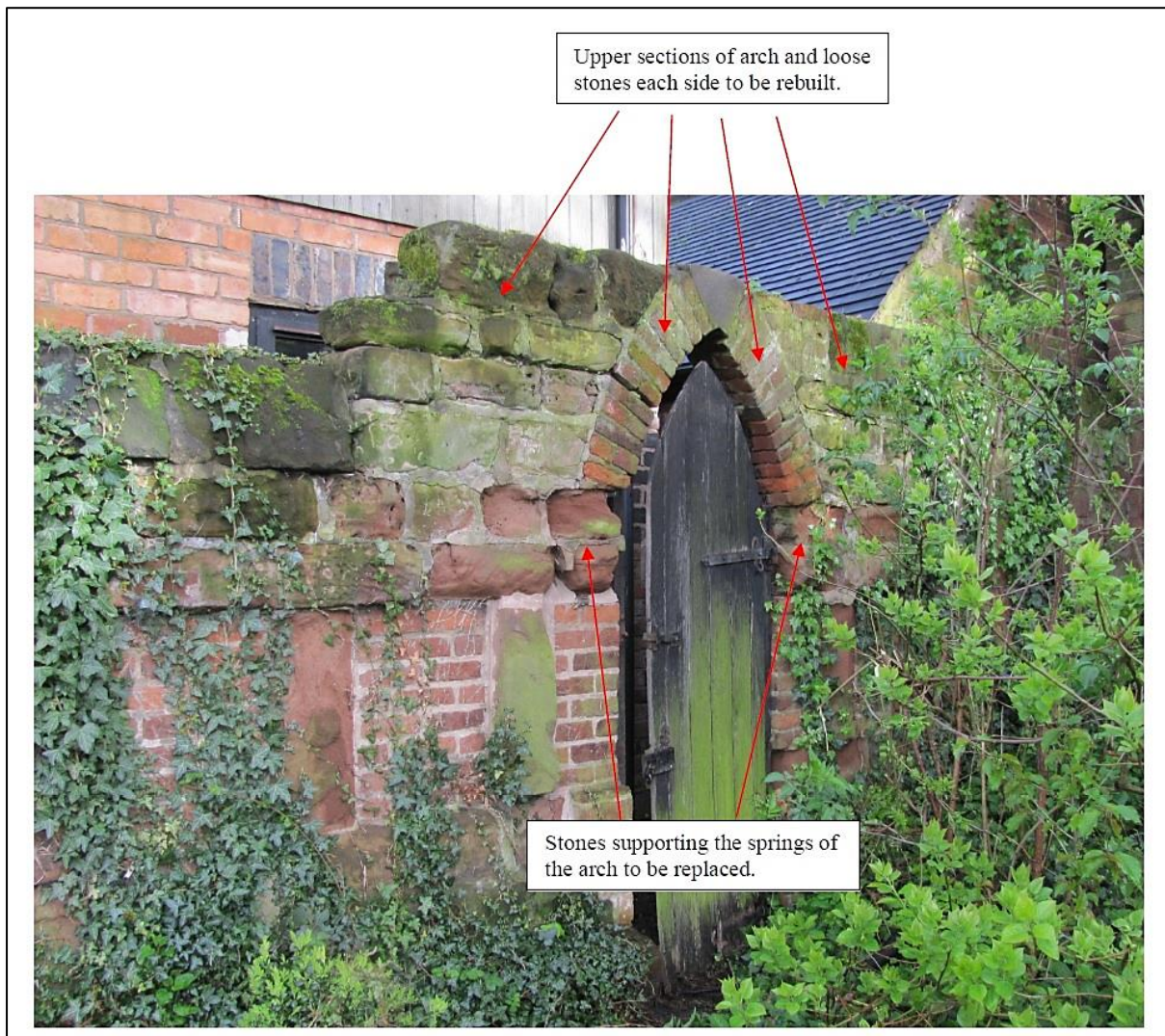
Several sycamore trees on this site scheduled for crown lift and cut back from road / adjacent property where appropriate.





### **Friary Remains (19a)**

The remains of the Friary are a scheduled ancient monument. Significant concerns have arisen regarding the stability of part of the wall, and the condition of the wooden door on the rear boundary wall. A structural engineer's survey of the doorway and surrounding brickwork has been completed, with recommendations as set out in the photograph below. It is also suggested that at least some of the loose cement pointing should be replaced with appropriate lime mortar and that some sandstone stones not crucial to rectifying the arch are in need attention/replacement. A tender document based on this report has been prepared and issued by LCC's professional advisors. It is hoped a contractor will be appointed during the summer. Discussions with LDC's Conservation Officer and Historic England regarding this project are ongoing.



**Other matters progressed/completed since the last report and in addition to routine inspections include:**

- Friary Remains (19a) - Damaged bench has been scheduled for repair.
- Remembrance Gardens (28) – South Staffs Water have identified further problem with sewer that runs through Garden. Remedial works planned.
- Woods Croft to Swallow Croft (FP 27) – repair to damaged fence at top of Nether Beacon



- Curborough Community Centre (9) – Replacement of picnic table to front of premises
- Library Corner (33) – two benches identified for repair
- St Chad's Churchyard (12C) – investigation into a collapsed grave in the closed churchyard
- Warren Close (45) – 2 x horse chestnut trees to be crown lifted
- Festival Gardens (19C) Shrubs cut back alongside Franciscan View apartments
- Three replacement bins are being requested on various pathways.
- Hanging Baskets are now in place throughout City Centre, watering of which is funded by Lichfield City Council (Pictured – hanging baskets at Guildhall and Donegal House).



- Wildflower areas continue to bloom and attract positive comments, notably on social media. The photograph (below) of the new wildflower area adjacent to the Sports Club on Eastern Avenue was taken by District Councillor Jamie Checkland in early July.





#### **4. Markets: Jeremy Williams, Markets Officer/Michelle Read, Office Administrator**

Jake Lane continues his additional Wednesday trading his fruit and vegetable stall on Market Square.



On Tuesday 14 May a Market pitch provided to support National Dementia Community Awareness Week, with Councillor Janet Eagland among the volunteers providing information and support to members of the public.





Due to the Bower Fair (pictured) being on the Square from Saturday 25 May until Tuesday 28 May we lost two market days as the traders we unwilling to relocate to Pool Walk due to access & extra street trading cost

The Graffiti has now been removed from the electric boxes on the market block these have now be refreshed, and anti-graffiti coating added.

All food stalls are still being monitored for standards of food hygiene and to ensure compliance. We are working in conjunction with Jane Hall, Environmental Health Officer at LDC, who we keep informed of any new food traders who join the market.

All Licences have been signed and PLI checks have been completed to ensure these are current and up to date.

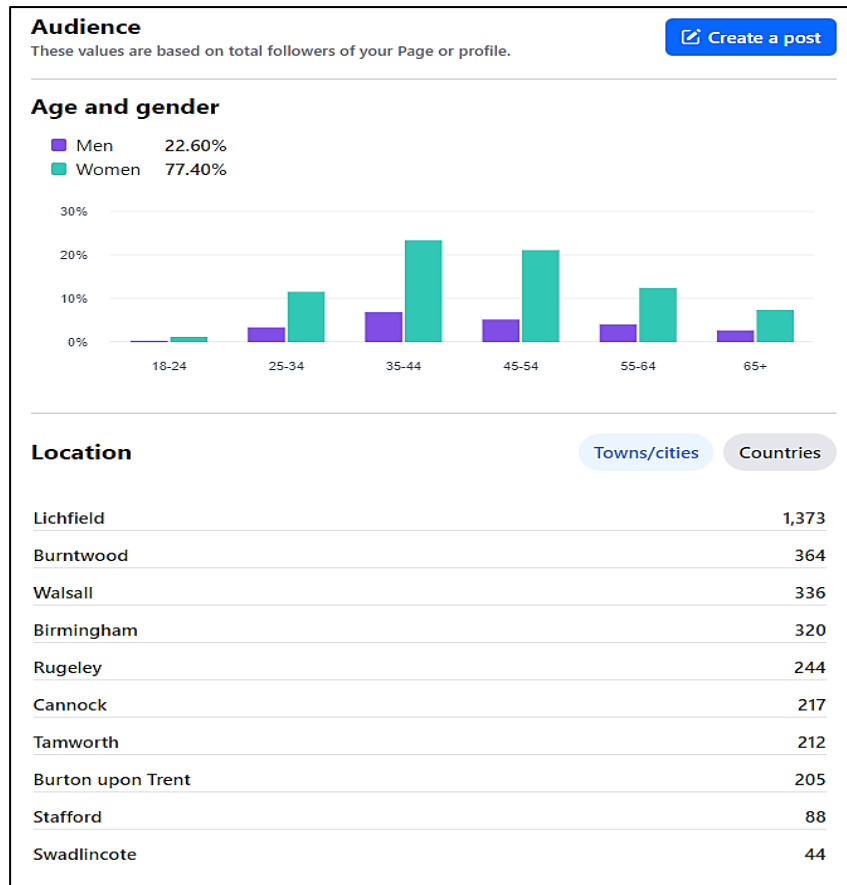


## **Social Media**

All social media platforms maintain a good following with reach climbing with the help of other city council Facebook pages and cross posting of events and activities.

The statistics below show the number of followers on Facebook. Officers are continuing to track numbers and what posts are the most popular. The spotlight posts are proving to be the most effective currently. New trader announcements are also very effective and help the new traders to get established.





## Tuesday Market Update

There is currently one empty pitch which, with several traders potentially in line to fill it. A company promoting renewable energy had their first day on the Square on 2nd July, occupying the bi-weekly pitch that was previously available. John Sapsford who sells pet products has now signed up as a permanent trader.

## Friday Market Update

The Friday market is now full. All traders who stand on that market are now permanent. We have a list of casual traders that can cover and some permanent traders from our Tuesday Market that are able to cover absences and holidays. This also helps to encourage new traders who only trade on Tuesday and keeps variety on the Market.

## Saturday Market Update

Saturday market remains full. One Saturday market was cancelled due to Bower Fair being on site. Officers continue to receive several enquiries each week from prospective traders so that replacements can be found if we get space.

We are continuing to update our contact list of Traders that can cover at short notice asking interested traders if they would like to on the list.



## Vegan Market

The Vegan market runs on the third Sunday of the month. This is getting more popular as time goes on, helping to bring something different on to the market square with a wide range of stalls.



## Producers' Market

The producers market organised by CJ Events operates on the first Sunday of the month.

This market is well supported by traders and is very popular with customers revisiting each time it is on. The producers market on April 5th was attended by 30 stall holders the weather was great with it being a lovely sunny day.



## Food Festival

On 18 and 19 May the first of Lichfield's 2024 Food Festivals was held, with the organiser utilising Pool Walk. There were some issues arising that will be put to the Market Working Group in detail for discussion at its next meeting.





## 5. Guildhall & Boley Park Community Hall: Helen Winter, Bookings Officer

In addition to some of our regular bookings (Band Practice, Bridge, U3A, Lichfield Friendship Centre, Slimming World, Staffs Archaeological & Historical Society, National Trust and the RSPB) the Guildhall has been busy with the following events:

Four craft fairs have been held. There is a break for a couple of months with the next craft fair is booked for 24 August:



Lichfield Greenhill Bower held their annual Toast to the Bower, and Bower Model Fair in the Guildroom:





Lichfield Arts have held a Silent Disco and their annual Blues & Jazz Festival:



Private bookings have included a 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party, 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party, Engagement Party and a private banquet (pictured).

Friends 2 Friends also held an exhibition in the Guildroom. Seven meetings were held in various rooms by different organisations.

Lichfield Festival have booked the Guildhall for some of their events – on Sunday 7 July – Ghosts, Werewolves and Country Folk, Tuesday 9 July – Tracy Borman – with a large audience expected.

Commercial bookings include the Party Bingo and Upfront Disco's for grown-ups (pre-sold tickets to both event). Further bookings are in the diary. Market Research have also been four times.

Liberty Jamboree also held a successful awards night.

The Guildhall is busy in the next few weeks – bookings include with two Wedding Ceremonies, three wedding receptions, a Blessing followed by Reception, and some birthday parties.

The Cells are open Saturdays from 10:00am – 4:00pm until the end of September (except on days we have whole building bookings or no volunteers).

Recent routine maintenance includes the annual servicing of the blinds, repairs to a radiator shelf at the back of the main hall, servicing the extractor fans in the main hall. The ovens in the first-floor kitchen are also due to be cleaned soon.



## Boley Park Community Hall

The hall continues to be busy with bookings for children's parties (although less parties are usually booked during July/August). A playscheme is booked in for 4 weeks in the summer holidays. There has also been a craft fair, with another booked for mid-July. Pre-school also held their Summer Fair. The next Stamp Fair is on 3 August. The accounting year ends on 31 August, so I will also be working on the annual accounts soon.

## 6. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

The Deputy Town Clerk recently provided secretariat support at the meeting of the Biodiversity and Climate Control Committee and will assume overall responsibility for all future meetings.

The Deputy will also deputise for the Town Clerk at Full Council in July.

Agenda items are being prepared for the next Markets Working Group meeting.

It is now six months since all City Council employees received their original training regarding Critical Incidents. The Deputy Town Clerk and Mayor's Sergeant have therefore been delivering refresher training to all, and initial training to any new members of staff. The training has also been rolled out to the Cells volunteers. It is anticipated that the Terrorism Protection of Premises Bill (*Martyn's Law*) will be passed in the next Parliament. The National threat level remains substantial.

A further Community Day has been scheduled for Thursday 29 August 2024 on the Market square. Over 60 charities, voluntary organisations and service providers have been invited to attend to showcase the work they do in the community. This is a free event, and it is hoped that the addition of face painters, live music and ice cream will attract a good footfall. The initial response has been good, the Deputy will provide a full report to members at the next Council meeting.



# Community Day



- \* Including
  - Free Health Checks
  - Lichfield Litter Legends
  - Samuel Johnson Birthplace
  - The Big Red Bike
  - Lichfield Arts
  - The Hub @ St Mary's
  - St Giles Hospice
  - Liberty Jamboree and many more

\* An opportunity to meet local organisations, charities and service providers. Come along and find out about the wonderful work they do

**THURSDAY 29 AUGUST 2024**

**10.00 am to 3.00 pm**

**Market Square, Lichfield**

Email: [deputyclerk@lichfield.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@lichfield.gov.uk) Tel: 01543 309854





Organised by Lichfield City Council

Preparations continue for the Christmas Illuminations Switch On Event on 24 November.