

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Lucy Clarke, Civic Officer

The annual Remembrance service was held in the Cathedral on Sunday 10 November. Following the Cathedral service, the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr James Leavesley DL, accompanied by the Mayor, led the civic party into the Remembrance Gardens to observe the national two minutes silence and then perform the wreath laying ceremony, after which the Dean of Lichfield, the very Reverend Adreian Dorber gave the blessing.



A professional public address system was used once again to ensure the large crowds could hear the ceremony. Oakwood security were employed to enforce the road closure and ensure public safety. After the wreath laying ceremony in the Remembrance Gardens, around 80 guests returned to the Guildhall for light refreshments. The Mayor, Cllr Mrs Deborah Baker gave thanks on behalf of Lichfield City Council to all those involved on the day and Mr David Haynes gave a toast on behalf of the Royal British Legion.



From left to right: DMS Whittington Wing Commander Mrs Susan Power; Mercian Regiment Major General Mr Ian Cave; Vice-Lord Lieutenant, Mr James Leavesley DL; Mayor of Lichfield, Cllr Mrs Deborah Baker; Deputy Mayor, Cllr Robert Yardley; Sheriff of Lichfield, Dr Daryl Brown; The Dean of Lichfield, The Very Revd Adrian Dorber and Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Nest Bateman.

The Mayor and Sheriff's Charity Dinner Dance is due to take place shortly after the completion of this report, and preparations continue for the Mayor's Carol Service on Tuesday 3 December, Mayoral Service on Sunday 12 January 2020 and Mayor and Sheriff's Charity Beer & Skittles on Friday 24 January 2020.

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

October was a busy month for events and activities at the Museum. 2000 people visited, including organised groups and school visits from the Hallamshire Arts Society, Erasmus Darwin Academy and Pingle Academy.

A number of events took place including a 'craft and cuppa' morning for Silver Sunday, a day aimed at combating loneliness in older audiences, and a private hire booking for the book launch of 'the Burning Zone', the first of a trilogy set in Lichfield and based on Richard Greene for which the author carried out research at the Birthplace and features an image from the Museum collection.



A highlight of the month was the partnership with Lichfield Arts during the L2F Festival of Folk. The Birth Room became the studio venue for 'The Museum Sessions' on Saturday 19 October with over 200 visitors attending throughout the day of talks and performances relating to folk music, history and language. Museum staff and volunteers took part in the Heritage and Arts procession through the streets, and for the first year also hosted the L2F Art Competition, with a small display of finalists from the 12-20 October and a prize-giving presentation during the festival.

Younger visitors enjoyed half term activities including 'creepy creatures' craft activities on October 31 based on animals from the Dictionary, and the Birthplace joined in with 'Visit Lichfield' Trick or Treat tours to be a stop for families. Lichfield Storytellers presented 'Tales from Beyond the Grave' in a popular ticketed evening event for adults on October 23.

Behind the scenes, visiting scholar from Barcelona Francesca Blanche-Seurat ended her residency at the Birthplace with a fascinating training session on Anna Seward collections for the Museum team. A new till for the bookshop arrived and training took place and wireless internet was installed, for researchers and event bookers to use. The Museum welcomed the trainees from Limburg for a day.



The month ended with the excellent news that the Birthplace Museum had won the Bronze Award in the Small Visitor Attraction of the Year category at the Staffordshire Good Food and Tourism Awards, presented at an awards ceremony at Aston Marina.

The MHO and MAA attended a training session on providing access for neurodivergent visitors, and the MHO attended the second Equality Diversity and Inclusion Champion day, both organised and funded by West Midlands Museum Development. The Guildhall Cells, also looked after by the MHO, closed for the season with an average of 150 visitors on open Saturdays since April.

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

Following a two-day course on inspections of play equipment in October organised by LDC it has been possible to make improvements to the reporting of all Open Space and footpath inspections, with each area being allocated a statistical value according to risk.



Many mature trees have been losing branches this autumn possibly due to the very dry summer last year and the very wet weather this year. Unfortunately, the Clock Tower Cedar has lost three large limbs this year and its proximity to the highway means for safety reasons it has to be felled. It is hoped that other trees such as a Fir in the Festival Gardens, both Blue Cedars at St. Chads and a large black Poplar near the Gazebo can be managed and made safe without felling.

The late fall of leaves this year has meant more work than usual was required in the Garden of Remembrance to keep it clear in readiness for the wreath laying ceremony and act of Remembrance on 10 November. As part of the preparations all the paths and railings were jet washed to ensure the Gardens were at their best for this poignant day. All the leaves collected are turned into leaf compost for use next year.



4. Markets Report: Jordan Appleyard, Markets Officer

Stall occupancy has remained good on both the Tuesday and Saturday Markets and signs of improvement can also now be seen on the Friday Market.

The Market Trader's Liaison Committee met in October, the committee is made up of Traders, Council Officers and Councillors who come together every six months to discuss improvements that could be made to the market including advertising and ways to attract new Traders.

At its meeting on 21 October the Council resolved to set up a Markets Working Group to look at the decline of the Market and report back to Council. The terms of reference and membership of this group were adopted at Council and the first meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday 18 November; the Minutes of the meeting will be included as a separate agenda item.

On Wednesday 13 October the inaugural Community Day was held on the Market Square. Local charities and service providers were invited onto the Square free of charge to promote their activities and engage with the public.

Charities such as the Greyhound Trust and the Royal British Legion stood alongside representatives from the Police, Staffordshire Libraries and the NHS. Members of the public were entertained by Liberty Staffordshire who sang and signed several popular chart songs. This was their first public performance and many proud parents also came along to offer encouragement.

The event proved hugely successful attracting a good footfall and generated a lot of interest on Social media. Feedback from the exhibitors was positive with many requesting to attend again. It is hoped that turning the Market Square into a 'Community Hub' will become a regular event in the future, with the next one scheduled for early Spring 2020.

The Markets Officer has also been working on a festive market for the Christmas lights Switch on, taking place on 24 November. A variety of traders and food stalls have confirmed their attendance. The Markets Officer has also been working closely with Licensing Officers at the District Council to ensure all those standing are compliant as well as contacting local businesses to keep them informed of the event and resolve any issues before the day.

The Markets Officer has recently conducted a survey of Traders following a request by some to trade on 21 & 22 December. As these are non-market days, Traders would be subject to Street Trading charges. However, the results of the survey confirm that there are only 4 Traders who wish to attend which eliminates the days being classed as a special event, to qualify for special event status a minimum of 10 Traders are required. Those who do wish to stand will be allowed to do so and processed in the usual way.

5. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

The Chairwoman of the Limburg Twinning Association, Mrs. Heide Bein, visited Lichfield in October on the occasion of former Lichfield City Councillor, Doris English's 90 birthday. Doris was is a longstanding member of the Twinning Association and has maintained close links with Limburg. Whilst here, Heide also met with the Chairman of the Lichfield Society of Artists, Jason Reakes, to discuss a possible art exhibition in Limburg in the spring of 2020. Jason presented Heide with a copy of the society's 75th anniversary history book. The book documents the society's involvement with Twinning since the 1990s, as well as the intention to play a part



in maintaining the close cultural and artistic links between the two cities in the future. Initial discussions relating to Limburg's anticipated contribution to the Lichfield Festival of Artists in June 2020 were also held.

The Limburg Twinning Association organised a fundraising "Tea-Talk" to celebrate Queen Victoria's German born husband Prince Albert's 200th birthday. The event included a traditional English afternoon tea and a talk about the royal couple's two visits to Lichfield; the facts and photos of these visits were provided by a Lichfield local historian.

A second Lichfield college group exchange with the Limburg College FDS has now been agreed for the first week in June 2020, and a drama class from the ARS College in Limburg will again be taking part in the Lichfield Mysteries on 15 February 2020 at Wade Street Church.

The Twinning Officer is seeking a host family for a 16-year-old student from Limburg from 2 March - 8 May 2020 whilst on a work placement,



if members are interested or know of a possible host family please contact the City Council Offices. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Robert Yardley, recently welcomed two such students from Limburg City Council's apprentices, Nathalie and Henry. The Mayor of Limburg has written to the City Council to thank them for their compassionate letter expressing solidarity following an incident in which nine people were injured.

6. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

Most of the regular hirers are now back following the summer break, including U3A Gardening, U3A, Band Practice, Bridge, Slimming World, Chess, Italian Class, Ladies Cameo, RSPB, National Trust, Staffs Archaeological and Historical Society, and Arts Society Needwood Lichfield. A local group has also been holding regular rehearsals for a play which was performed recently.

The old prison Cells are now closed to the public for the winter and will reopen again in April. Commercial bookings have included a Craft Fair and Market Research booking to test washing detergent fragrances. Lichfield Arts held a total of five concerts as well as their annual L2F weekend. A local theatre group performed a horror play over two nights in October titled '*Let the Right One In*'.

The local Citizens Advice Bureau held their AGM in the Guildhall and Lichfield Camera Club also held a weekend Exhibition in the Guildroom.

The Guildhall continues to be popular with private hirers such as Mercian Labels who held a celebratory dinner in the main hall and there have also been several Wedding Receptions.



Lichfield Society of Artists hired the Guildroom over a weekend for their Autumn Exhibition which proved very popular, attracting a total of 422 visitors, including the Mayor, Sheriff and Deputy Mayor.

Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust (LHCRT) received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services at a ceremony in the Guildhall in November. Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr Ian Dudson CBE, was in attendance to present a

certificate to LHCRT president, Eric Wood. The event was attended by many of the Trust's volunteers, Civic dignitaries and representatives of the groups and businesses who have played a part in the on-going restoration of the canals.

The Queen's Award, the equivalent of the MBE for voluntary sector organisations, recognises the outstanding contribution made to local communities by individuals devoting their time for the benefit of others. The citation praises the Trust for *'restoring a derelict canal to improve the environment and for the benefit of the local community, wildlife and tourism'*



Boley Park CC continues to attract bookings, primarily children's birthday parties and most weekends up to Christmas are now booked. The diary for 2020 is now available.

7. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

The Deputy Town Clerk has been working closely with the Markets Officer to facilitate the first Community day on the Market Square. It is hoped that the success of the inaugural event can be built on in the future and more charities and services will attend. The day proved to be very popular with a strong presence on Social Media.

The Deputy is also working closely with the Markets Officer, District Council Officers, numerous contractors and performers to deliver the Christmas Lights Switch On event. A full post-event report will be provided to members at January Council.

The City Council's Health & Safety Consultants, Terrain, will be conducting their annual review in early December and the Deputy will be working closely with them to implement any recommendations which are made.

The Deputy provided support at the recent Remembrance Sunday service and wreath laying Ceremony, has attended the Market Traders Liaison Committee meeting and will be attending the Markets Working Group meeting and Planning Committee.