

## For Council: 9 March 2026 APPENDIX 4

### OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

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

On Saturday 31 January, the Mayor and Sheriff held their third fundraiser - a Charity Ceilidh Dance in the Guildhall with 70 guests attending. The band 'Mucky Duck' & caller Mike Gentles were very well received and encouraged everyone to participate. All guests tucked into half time fish & chips from Sefton's chip shop before enjoying more dancing.

The night finished with the raffle raising an impressive £390.00 for their chosen charities, Staffordshire Blood Bikes & Lichfield Foodbank. The Mayor gave a vote of thanks to all the guests as the evening came to a close. In total, the event raised an impressive £1,794.00, including proceeds from bar sales, ticket purchases, and the raffle.



Lichfield celebrated Shrove Tuesday on 17 February with the hotly contested pancake races in the city centre. Keen entrants gathered in Bore Street at noon for the time-honoured event, determined to put in a truly "*pan-tastic*" performance. The sunshine drew in large crowds, led by our exuberant Town Crier, Adrian Holmes.

The Mayor of Lichfield, Cllr Claire Pinder-Smith, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Rosie Harvey-Coggins, Deputy Mayor's Consort, Andy Harvey-Coggins, Sheriff of Lichfield, Revd Ian Hayter, and Sheriff's Consort, Sally Hayter, oversaw the competition to ensure everyone followed the rules.

With over 50 contestants, there were plenty of enthusiastic participants. Each race saw competitors run along Bore Street towards the Guildhall, flipping their pancake once at the start and again shortly before the finish line. Larger-than-usual crowds gathered around both the start and finish, thanks in part to the half-term break. It was wonderful to see so many excited children getting involved.



The winner of the Ladies' Final was Britney Lewis from John German Estate Agents, who secured her name on the Golden Pancake Day Trophy for the third-year running. She also received a hamper of goodies courtesy of *Data Careers*.

The Gents' Race was won by Arnold Obadai of Sweatbox Boxing Club, while 10-year-old Finlay Newcombe claimed victory in the Under 10s Race. Finally, triumphing in the Mascots Race was Fin Jones from *Wynniatt Husey Accountants*, who dashed to victory dressed as a hotdog! Coincidentally, *Wynniatt Husey* also sponsored this year's Mascot Race with a £50 cash prize for the winner. All our winners also received a Pancake Race Winner medal and certificate.

Following the races, the Civic Party made its way to the Market Square, where the Mayor opened the Shrovetide Fair, courtesy of Anthony Harris of Pat Collins Funfair, with the children present able to enjoy a free ride.

The pancake races were organised by Lichfield City Council, who would like to thank the following Bore Street businesses for sponsoring this year's event: *Wynniatt-Husey Accountants* and *DataCareers*.

Planning also continues for International Women's Day at the Guildhall on Sunday 8 March and for the Mayor and Sheriff's Entertainment & Tea event for Lichfield residents over the age of 70, to be held in the Guildroom on Friday 20 March.



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

### Pool Walk (Site 29)

Following recent reported instances of water build up on pathway, two blocked drains which run between path and pool have been professionally cleared.



### Friary Remains (Site 19A)

Removal of fallen branch from large cedar tree and precautionary reduction of overhanging limbs to rear of Brewhouse & Kitchen premises (pictured opposite)

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

- **St Michael's Churchyard (site 60)** – Surfacing repairs to main driveway completed via CIL funding.
- **Northern Plantation (site 1)** – In support of LDC's Christian Fields Vision, initial tree works to remove dead trees and branches have been undertaken in the woodland area surrounding the small car park off Eastern Avenue (between Stychbrook Cemetery and foot underpass). Planning for improvements to the access road and car park itself are being progressed.
- **Weston Road Bus Shelter (BS3)** – Repairs following damage caused by recent road traffic incident.
- **St Chad's (site 12A)** – debris cleared from broken limb.
- **E.ON Footpath Lighting** – Fecknam Way to Johnson Close (FP32) – installation of new column and lantern complete. Gaiafields Rd to Dimbles Hill (FP29) - foliage cleared around lighting column.
- Door to door visits at **Hazel Grove and Elm Gardens** following disquiet arising from the works that began at this LCC open space following representations from a resident at December Council. The proposals have been provided to residents and are supported by a significant majority. The work was then undertaken on 23 February.



### 3. Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum: Kimberley Biddle, Museums & Heritage Officer

The Birthplace has made a strong start to the year, with Museum Attendants welcoming 1,428 visitors in January, the highest total for that month to date.

February has also been a busy month, marked by the start of a programme of building improvements focused on upgrading the staff kitchen and welfare facilities. All works have been carefully designed to protect the integrity and historic fabric of the Grade I listed building, ensuring that improvements meet modern hygiene and health and safety standards while respecting the character of this nationally significant site.

Works commenced on 2 February and are scheduled for completion on 27 February. To minimise disruption, the museum and bookshop closed briefly from 2 to 10 February and reopened to visitors on 11 February, with only the ground floor and basement remaining closed while contractors continue their work in a carefully coordinated manner.

#### Enhancing Interpretation and Displays

Building on the successful installation of new interpretation panels exploring the life of Francis Barber earlier this year, we have continued our programme of improvements across the museum.

In the London Life room, all existing interpretation panels have been refreshed, helping visitors gain a clearer understanding of the world in which Samuel Johnson lived.



As part of this update, a newly written panel introduces David Garrick, outlining his connection with Lichfield and his friendship with Johnson. By highlighting Garrick's significance as one of the most celebrated actors and theatre managers of the 1700s, we further emphasise Lichfield's remarkable cultural legacy.

We have also installed a new panel exploring daily life in London during the time of Johnson and Garrick. It examines key aspects of eighteenth-century social life, including the vibrant pleasure gardens, bustling coffeehouses, and influential dining clubs that brought together writers, artists,

actors, and thinkers. This broader context enables visitors to imagine the sights, sounds, and social networks that shaped their careers.

### **Twilight Event: Audience Consultation**

As part of our *Opening Chapters* audience consultation project, we hosted a special out-of-hours *Twilight Event* on Thursday 29 January. We welcomed local community groups, organisations, and representatives from the arts, tourism, and heritage sectors for an evening of conversation, discovery, and hands-on exploration.

*Opening Chapters* aims to deepen our understanding of the needs, expectations and experiences of both existing and under-represented audiences. The *Twilight Event* was central to this work, creating a relaxed and informal space for honest feedback and shared ideas.

Guests explored the museum after hours, met members of our team, encountered a Georgian cook in the historic kitchen, tried quill pen writing, and enjoyed getting up close to objects from the collection. A hands-on activity invited participants to consider what everyday life was like in the 1700s, using objects as prompts for discussion.

Throughout the evening, feedback was gathered in creative and interactive ways. Guests completed surveys, voted on what they love and what they feel less connected to using emoji stickers, and shared their priorities at our voting stations. This gave us valuable insight into which stories and themes they would most like to see reflected in future displays and programmes.

The event was well attended and filled with curiosity and thoughtful discussion. Many attendees commented on how enjoyable it was to experience the museum in a different way and to feel genuinely involved in shaping its future.

The insights gathered will inform the next stage of the project, ensuring that future exhibitions, displays, and programming reflect the voices and interests of the communities we serve.

This project is supported using public funding from Museum Development Midlands (MDM) and Arts Council England.



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

### **Jono Oates Supports the Birthplace with Commemorative Badges**

Jono Oates of Jono's Tourism has very kindly donated commemorative badges of the Johnson's Head Bust to raise funds for the Dr Johnson's Birthplace Trust. The stylish badges were produced using the remaining funds from a GoFundMe campaign set up by Jono to assist with the restoration and installation of the 1884 bust, which was unveiled in 2024 above the door of 10 Bird Street.

The Birthplace team would like to thank all those who contributed to the campaign and extend special thanks to Jono for this generous donation and for continuing to champion the Birthplace and the wider heritage of the city. The badges are available to purchase in the Birthplace Bookshop, with all proceeds going to the Dr Johnson's Birthplace Trust.

Further details about the project to repair, restore and reinstate the bust can be found on the [Birthplace website blog](#). The blog post highlights Peter Hone's donation of the bust as a gift to the people of Lichfield and acknowledges the extraordinary support of local people, organisations and businesses, including Jono, the GoFundMe campaign, The Johnson Society, Viking E-Cigs, and The George Hotel.

The bust required extensive restoration and specialist installation, carried out by Jones Carving, Messenger BCR, Brownhill Hayward Brown Chartered Architects, Hibberd Consulting Engineers and Green Power Plant Hire, all of whom kindly donated their time to the project, which was led by Lichfield City Council.



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

A new trader has joined the Fruit & Vegetable stall on Wednesdays. Following a successful Christmas on the market selling flowers and other floral items *Poppies* (pictured) has welcomed the opportunity to continue trading on a non-market day.



#### Tuesday Market Update

There are currently three pitches vacant on the Tuesday market with a new trader 'Joyem' selling candles and reed diffusers starting on 24 February. On Tuesday 27 January, the market was restricted due to high winds.

#### Friday Market Update

Unfortunately on Friday 10 January, the market was restricted due to heavy snow fall but the Square was cleared and deemed safe for trading. This did result in representations from traders who were reluctant to pay arrears, however as the market was not cancelled the arrears were not waived. The Markets Officer reiterated the severe weather policy and terms of the traders licence. Following these events the Severe Weather Policy was reviewed for clarity, with an updated version put before the Commercial Services Committee at its most recent meeting

#### Saturday Market Update

The Saturday market remains full. The Markets Officer maintains a list of casual traders from all the markets that are invited to stand when permanent traders are absent or take holidays.

#### Vegan Market

The Vegan market will return on Sunday 17 May 2026. The Vegan market has only booked three markets for 2026 due to poor trader attendance last year. They will be looking at having a biodiversity market on Sunday 20 September 2026, depending on the success of this market, other future bookings may be made.

#### Producers' Market

The Producers market had its first market of 2026 on Sunday 1 February and will continue throughout 2026. This market, operated by CJ Events, is held on the first Sunday of the month. The market is well supported with around 30 traders standing each month and is immensely popular with customers.

There are a high number of traders that attend, not always the same traders each month and all have variety of goods to sell.



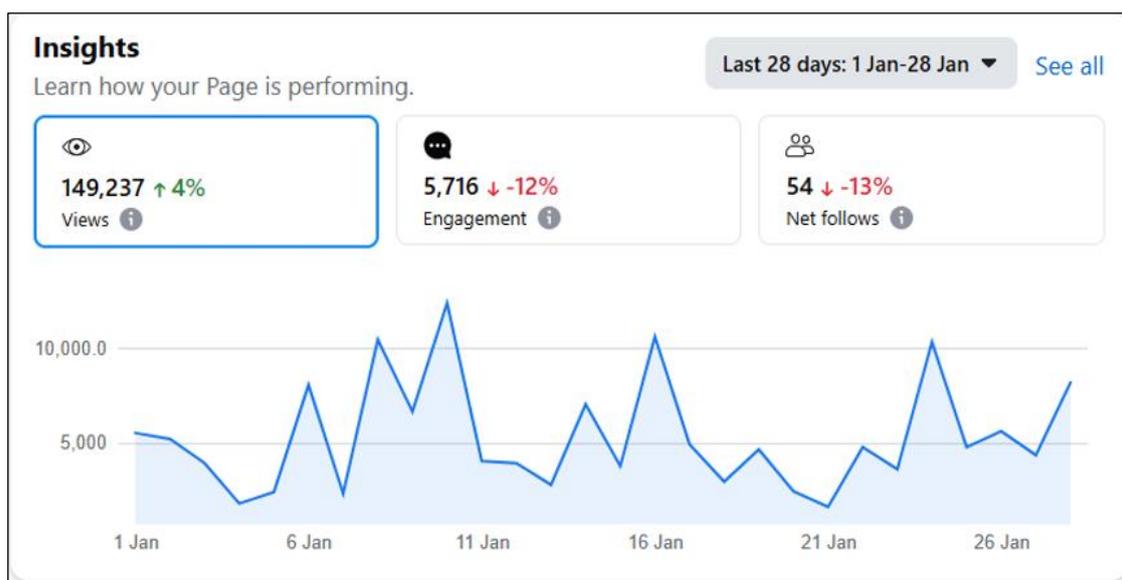
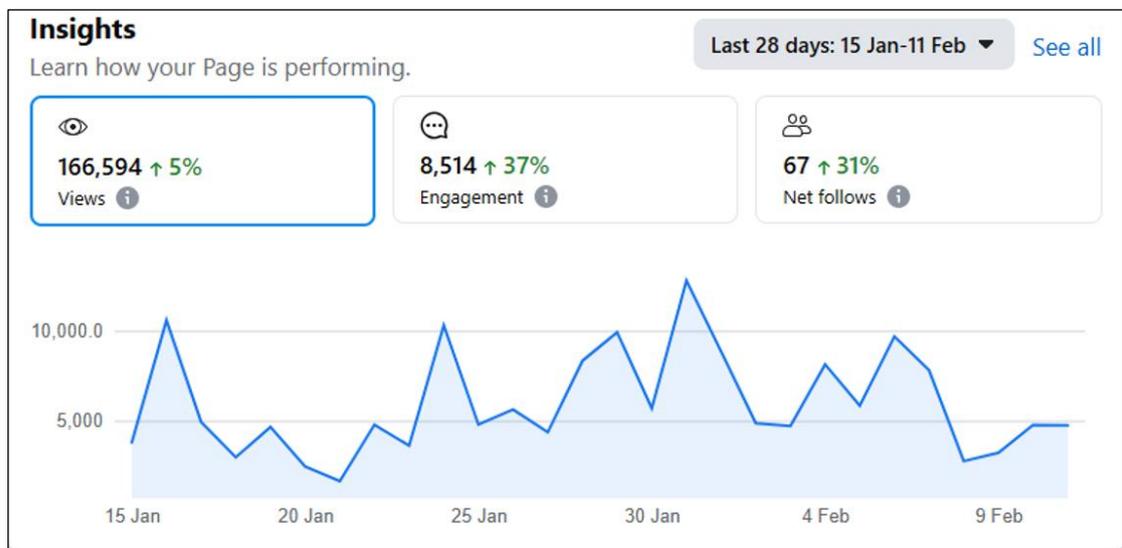
Officers continue to work on the provision of additional themed Sunday markets and Community days.

In addition, Officers have identified the possibility of holding a Young Traders market. The NMTF is organising a national initiative to provide a vital platform for young entrepreneurs to showcase their innovative products and ideas. Young traders from 16 -30 are invited to take part, as the scheme spans eleven regions across the UK. A member of the markets team will be attending a Zoom meeting to find out more details.

The market team is also looking into the possibility of celebrating the granting of the market charter, and if it is possible to have the charter regranted by the King in 2026.



### Social Media Insights



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

As in previous years, the Guildhall has been quiet after Christmas.

### Civic Events

The Mayor & Sheriff held a successful charity event at the end of January. Following the Shrovetide Pancake Race, refreshments were served in the Guildhall.

### Charity/Voluntary Rate

Bookings in this category include our regular hirers: Bridge, Chess, U3A, and RSPB, Chess, Band Practice and the National Trust. Other charity events include 3 meetings, and 4 Lichfield Arts Concerts.

Following January Council, from April this category of bookings will be re-named the Subsidised Rate.

### Private Bookings

There have been 2 meetings and an AGM.

A private dinner was held to celebrate 30 years living in Lichfield. There are also 2 40th Birthday Parties booked for February.

The Worshipful Company of Smiths are booked in for their Annual Feast at the beginning of March.

Following Council, from April, this category of bookings will be called the Standard Rate.

### Commercial Bookings

1 meeting has been held in the Whytmore Room.

Slimming World use the Main Hall each Thursday and generate the most income from a single hirer. They have been meeting at the Guildhall for 27 years. They are now looking for other premises following the increase in prices from April.

Our regular Craft Fair returns to the Guildhall on 14 March.

A HS2 drop-in session used the Guildhall on 18 February.



### Boley Park Community Hall

Since January, to the end of February, bookings include 5 children's birthday parties, a First Aid Course, a Stamp Fair, Craft De-Stash event, and Clothes Sale. There were also 2 meetings and an Anniversary Party. A fund raiser also raised £1500.

During February half term, planned maintenance work includes replacing the outside lights with LED lights, and the halls EICR Certificate.

The Management Committee held a meeting and AGM in February and agreed upon the annual price increase of 3.4% for all hirers.

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

The Deputy Town Clerk prepared Agendas and reports for the recent meeting of the Commercial Services Committee and is currently preparing information for the upcoming meeting of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee.

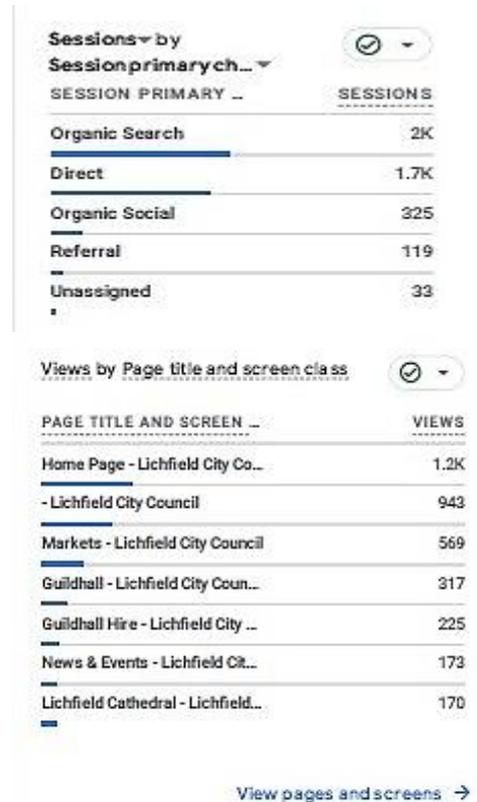
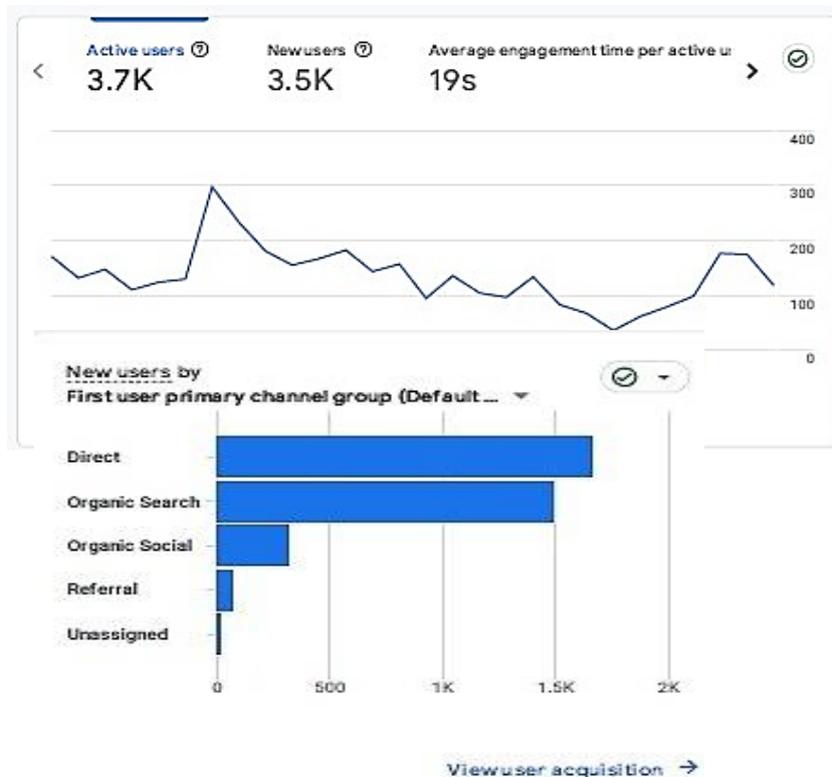
Following the resignation of the Administrative Officer, the Deputy Town Clerk will now be sharing planning responsibilities with the Town Clerk to ensure all necessary tasks are managed efficiently during the transition.

The first Community Day has been arranged for Thursday 28 May on the Market Square and will be held in conjunction with organisations from the Youth Work Alliance. The aim is to encourage a citywide partnership of organisations who can provide events during the school holidays. It will also provide an opportunity to conduct a fun consultation with young people as to the services and activities they would like to have access to in the City. Further Community days have been scheduled for Thursday 7 July and Thursday 27 August.

The Deputy Town Clerk is working with the Markets Officer to organise more themed Sunday markets and is also coordinating with the Civic Officer to prepare for Sophie Capewell's Freedom of the City presentation and the forthcoming Twinning weekend.

## 7. LCC Website Statistics

Previous reporting period (reported to members January 2026)



## Current Reporting Period

