



Lichfield City Council

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Town Clerk: Anthony Briggs

TB/JW/J1/2

4 April 2019

To: Members of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee

Councillors R Awty, Mrs G Boyle, J Brooks, Mrs S James, C Spruce, A Thompson and R Yardley.

Representative of Johnson Society

Mr P Jones

Also to:

Museums and Heritage Officer (Joanne Wilson).

Dear Committee Member

Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee to be held in The Moulton Room, Guildhall at **10.30am on Thursday, 11 April 2019.**

Yours sincerely

Town Clerk

Apologies for Absence

AGENDA

1 MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 November 2018 (**copy attached**). [Minutes adopted by the City Council on 5 December 2018].

2 A PROSPECT OF LICHFIELD FROM THE WEST

To receive a verbal and written report from Cllr Robert Yardley detailing his work in photographing 'A Prospect View of Lichfield from the West' in order to reveal more detail. The resulting image is attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted and the best thanks of the Committee be given to Cllr Yardley for his efforts.

3 FORWARD PLAN

To consider the updated Forward Plan 2019-2022 (**APPENDIX 2** enclosed). This has been updated from the full Forward Plan 2018-2021 and contains only details of the key strategic aims for the Museum during the period.

RECOMMENDED: That the Forward Plan 2019-2022 be adopted.

4 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

As reported at the last meeting of this committee, the Heritage Lottery Fund grants scheme was closed to new applications following a strategic review. The newly-named National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) opened at the end of January. The Birthplace development project will now sit in the larger 'Grants for Heritage' category, which is one category for all projects ranging from £250,000 - £5 million.

Decisions are made at four meetings throughout the year. Before an application can be made, an 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) must be completed and, if successful, we will be invited to make an application. The Birthplace EOI has now been submitted and a decision is due by the end of April. If invited to apply, a Development phase application will be submitted to the late August deadline, for which an outcome would be known in November 2019.

The present timetable could therefore stand as:

Summer 2019	Development Phase Application submitted
Winter 2019 – Spring 2020	Development Phase
Summer 2020	Delivery Phase Application submitted
Winter 2020 – Summer 2021	Delivery Phase
Autumn – Winter 2021	Evaluation

While waiting for the fund to reopen and the outcome of the EOI, work has continued on the content of the project including detailed quotations from a Museum displays design company.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted

5 COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY AND VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

To consider the enclosed Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Volunteer Agreement, attached at **APPENDIX 3**. This is an update to the 2015 documents, required by Arts Council England's Museum Accreditation scheme.

RECOMMENDED: that the updated Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Volunteer Agreement be adopted.

6 KEELE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

To receive a report from the Museums and Heritage Officer on the recent completion of the '18th Century Textual Studies' Project in partnership with Keele University at **APPENDIX 4**.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted

7 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In the Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday 5 November 2019. Following adoption of the Minutes of the JBAC meeting of 6 November 2018, additional meetings may be called in the meantime if appropriate, particularly in response to the need for Committee guidance in the NLHF fund submission process.

ANY OTHER URGENT OR NECESSARY BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN.

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Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee Meeting held in the Moulton Room, Guildhall at 10.30 am on Tuesday 6 November 2018

PRESENT:

Representing Lichfield City Council: Councillor R Awty (Chairman), and Councillors Mrs G Boyle, J Brooks, Mrs S James, C Spruce and R Yardley.

In Attendance: Joanne Wilson (Museums & Heritage Officer)
Tony Briggs (Town Clerk)

Apologies: Councillor A Thompson.

58 MINUTES

It was noted that Councillor A Thompson's name was not included on the list of attendees though he had been present at the meeting.

RESOLVED: *That subject to the inclusion of Councillor A Thompson on the list of attendees, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.* [Minutes adopted by Council on 23 April 2018.]

59 MUSEUM ADMISSIONS 2017/18 (ANNUAL REVIEW)

Members considered the Museum and Heritage Officer's (MHO) report (Agenda Appendix 1), noting in particular the steady and manageable increase in visitor numbers and the increase in level of spend per visitor. The MHO stated there were around 2,500 engagements through social media per month and the Birthplace website, and it was agreed that these should be represented in the annual review in future years.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

60 REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATE

The MHO provided a verbal update to the Committee, confirming it was the intention to have a draft Heritage Lottery Fund bid prepared for consideration at the March 2019 meeting of the Committee. It was agreed that the two main points that required further consultation were disabled access and proposals for the Birth Room, and that such consultations would take place during the development phase which is scheduled to begin in 2019. The MHO confirmed meetings had taken place with County and District Council officers in regard to disabled access proposals and that positive discussions were ongoing, with the next step being the preparation of concept drawings.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted*

61 ASHMOLE ROOM PAINTING CONDITION REPORTS

The Committee considered the MHO's report at Agenda Appendix 2 relating to the professional evaluation of the paintings currently displayed in the Ashmole Room, Guildhall which are part of the Johnson collection.

RESOLVED: *That the MHO pursue a funding application to the Woodmansterne Art Conservation Awards fund in relation to the restoration of the portrait of Esther Day by James Millar.*

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

a) *Due to the expense of the proposed restoration work to 'A Prospect View of Lichfield from the West', it instead be professionally photographed in an effort to reveal greater detail at reduced expense.*

b) *That a sum of £4,000 be set aside from the City Council's 2019/20 budget to cover the cost of the restoration of the portrait of Elias Ashmole.*

c) *That the Town Clerk investigates the costs and impacts of installing UV filters to the windows in the Ashmole Room in order to protect the displayed paintings.*

62 KEELE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee considered the MHO's agenda report. There was discussion as to the appropriateness of allowing students to have access to unlet space in Donegal House to pursue their studies, given the space restrictions in the Birthplace Museum. It was agreed that this would be revisited.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk to take the necessary action to ensure the Committee's ongoing support for the partnership with Keele University is evidenced in the application to the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme.

63 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee discussed the frequency of its meetings, noting that six monthly meetings were somewhat infrequent, especially during the redevelopment of the Museum.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the frequency of meetings of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee be increased from twice to four times per year during the redevelopment of the Museum; the frequency of meetings to be reconsidered thereafter.

64 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Thursday 11 April 2019, though subject to change pending discussion at full council of Minute 63 above.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.25 AM

'The Prospect of the City of Lichfield'

The painting in the Ashmole room, known as 'The Prospect of the City of Lichfield' dates from 1680, and is a landscape view of Lichfield that is very dark, with little discernible detail. The landscape below the clouds is virtually black, and not how it would have originally looked.

The Plan

I have previously photographed paintings at County Buildings in Stafford that have resulted in detail and colour being revealed, that were not easily seen by the naked eye in the original. With this in mind, the plan was to attempt to photograph the painting to see if a similar result could be achieved. This is a non-destructive process, which it was hoped would allow more detail to be seen in the dark land mass.

How it was done



The painting was taken off the wall and moved into the Guildhall where there is more working space. Jo Wilson from the Birthplace Museum was present to oversee the project, and two people from 'All Aspect Art and Print' based in Shenstone came to remove the painting from its frame and the Perspex that covers the canvas. Duncan and Dean from 'All Aspect Art and Print' are experts at picture framing, printing, and dealing with artwork, so they can ensure the painting is not damaged during the removal and reframing afterwards.

The first thing we noticed was that the painting had been previously varnished rather enthusiastically, and there were now lots of cracks in the varnish. The edges of the



painting that sit inside the frame were in a poor state, with areas almost crumbling away.



The painting was placed upright on a table, sitting on top of soft cushioning to protect the edges. Two photographic studio lights were positioned at either side of the painting so a soft light bounced from reflective lighting umbrellas would skim across the surface at a shallow angle.



As the lights were moved more to the front, hot spots of light became noticeable, so with a little experimenting the best angle was found that lit the entire painting without hot spots of light in any areas. The Camera was on a tripod perpendicular to the artwork, at a distance so that perspective distortion did not occur. A canon 100mm F2.8 L Macro lens was used, which is an extremely sharp lens. This was attached to a Canon 5D MK 1V, and the images were shot in RAW. RAW means the data collected from the camera sensor is not processed by the camera to produce the familiar jpeg. Software is used to

process the RAW data on a computer, meaning maximum data is available to be used.

Results

During processing of the RAW files, shadow areas were brought up and contrast applied. The resulting images were saved as an uncompressed 290 mb TIFF file and also a more manageable jpeg.

The very acute side lighting revealed the colours in the underlying pigments and allowed details that were originally painted to become visible.



Conclusions

The results exceeded our expectations, and even showed six figures in the foreground. A gateway structure can be seen in front of the Cathedral, along with many buildings. Prints have been made available for inspection. There are now inexpensive options available for consideration, which could include a print being displayed alongside the original painting.



The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum Forward Plan Strategic Aims & Objectives 2019 – 2022

This document is updated annually from the full SJBM Forward Plan 2018-2021 (next full plan to be approved March 2021). The Museum is currently undertaking a development project and it is recognised that this project will significantly contribute to all objectives within our strategic aims, particularly those at ii, iii and iv.

Our key strategic aims are:

i) Operate to a high professional standard, making the best use of available resources

- a) To maintain ACE Accreditation status
- b) To maximise all possible revenue streams
- c) To maximise staff development
- d) To maximise volunteering

ii) Build our audiences and respond to user consultation

- a) To attract more local, family and young visitors
- b) To monitor users and consult non-users
- c) To increase the number of education visits and partnerships
- d) To increase the number of group visit bookings

iii) Develop access to the Museum and collection

- a) To improve awareness of, and access to, all parts of the collection
- b) To update interpretation and displays
- c) To improve facilities for researchers and publicise provision more widely
- d) To assess and seek alternative solutions to access limitations

iv) Care for the Museum building and collection

- a) To improve the storage and care of the collection
- b) To improve the documentation of the collection
- c) To ensure the ongoing protection of the collection against disaster
- d) To ensure the continued maintenance and sustainability of the Birthplace building

Work completed in 2018 – 2019

In addition to tasks identified as 'ongoing' and reported in monthly officer reports to Council, significant activities relevant to meeting the strategic aims included:

i)	First full year with new Museum Administration Assistant in post and regular oversight of shop stock and events bookings New volunteering relationships with South Staffordshire College, Keele University and attendance at KEVI volunteering fair
ii)	New literature for Group bookings produced Considerable build in social media use and audience, including introduction of Instagram and working with college students to create content

	Established part of the University of Birmingham work placement scheme and newly Keele university post-graduate placements
iii)	Online collection search and blog launched Wood Library project to update resources for researchers and clear space
iv)	New store established at Donegal House Minor repair works identified in Quinquennial inspection carried out A significant number of collection images added to modes database Documentation plan goals completed

Achievement of Current Objectives

i) To operate to a high professional standard, making the best use of available resources		
Objective	How to be achieved	Achieve by
a) To maintain Accreditation status	Maintain Museum policy and procedures in preparation for return application	Ongoing (next return due in 2021)
b) To maximise all possible revenue streams	Update stock displays and introduce new souvenir lines, with 10% target increase per year for total spend per head Maximise donation and the use of gift aid, aiming at 50p average donation per head by March 2021 Regular programme of a least six special events per year planned, well publicised and profitable or cost-neutral. Increase group and education bookings by 20% per year (see ii.c & d) Establish an improved online shop area as part of new website plans, and research options for internet second hand book sales for specialist donated stock Include improvements into facilities for event visitors and hirers in development project	Ongoing; annual figures reported at October BAC Ongoing; annual figures reported in October BAC Ongoing; season ahead schedule July & December Ongoing; annual figures reported in October BAC March 2020 October 2021
c) To maximise staff and volunteer development	Continuing regular in-house training sessions, make staff & volunteers aware of relevant training possibilities. Match volunteer and attendant staff interests to appropriate tasks and projects Creation of 'How to' guides as part of SJBm succession planning, to enable volunteers and Attendants to take on varied tasks and roles	Ongoing, 3 sessions held annually Ongoing Ongoing
d) To maximise volunteer input	Liaise with universities, colleges and volunteer recruitment centres Targeted recruitment for volunteers to work with specific areas and projects when places vacated (especially schools and marketing)	Ongoing Ongoing

ii) To build audiences and respond to user consultation		
Objective	How to be achieved	Achieve by
a) To attract more local, family and young visitors	<p>Develop a targeted 'locals' advertising campaign within development project</p> <p>Develop special events to appeal to a wide range of audiences, including free of charge events/activities. Ensure that the museum and all special events are well and widely publicised locally, maintaining strong links with local media. bi-annual leaflet, posters and press releases 1 month ahead of events.</p> <p>Make wider use of social networking and social media to advertise museum and connect with younger audiences</p> <p>Develop interpretation, displays and interactives to appeal to a wide audience, including responding to youth consultation held in 2014 (see iii.b)</p> <p>Recruit young volunteers through local schools and colleges to develop areas such as social media (see also i.d)</p>	<p>October 2021</p> <p>Ongoing; season ahead schedule</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing; 2 posts per week</p> <p>Ongoing; to be considered within re-display project</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
b) To monitor users and consult non-users	<p>Carry out an effective survey to be completed by visitors, and regularly compile statistics</p> <p>Identify and conduct market research with non-user groups including focus groups, questionnaires and interviews as part of the</p>	<p>Annually; data compiled in January and reported</p> <p>March 2020</p>
c) To increase the number of education visits and partnerships	<p>Maintain a database of school contacts and make termly contact to market current offering</p> <p>Develop upon school visits partnership with Erasmus Darwin House</p> <p>Recruit volunteer(s) to assist with development, marketing and delivery of museum education.</p> <p>Extend the museum's education provision to also cover Key Stages 3 and 4 within development project</p> <p>Maintain and develop work experience partnerships with higher education institutions</p>	<p>Ongoing; quarterly mailout</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>October 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
d) To increase the number of group visits bookings	<p>Develop the group visits offer</p> <p>Targeted postal and e-campaign to relevant interest groups locally and in Midlands)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual</p>

iii) To increase access to the Museum and collections		
Objective	How to be achieved	Achieve by
a) To improve awareness of, and access to, all parts of the collection	<p>Programme regularly changing items within permanent displays and small exhibitions or displays to provide access to reserve collections, with one display every summer.</p> <p>Enable more of the collection to be displayed by providing more</p>	<p>Ongoing; display reported annually</p> <p>October 2021</p>

	display case space and room for changing displays within development project. Incorporate digital archive interactives (for e.g. manuscript collection), in development project.	October 2021
b) To update interpretive materials and displays	Working with Museum designers within development project, update displays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve tactile and sensory interpretation provision within development • Develop high and low-tech interactive displays, in response to feedback • Improve interpretation of Museum libraries and bookcases, re-display significant books • Re-allocation of rooms to update the visitor journey in displays. 	October 2021
c) To improve facilities for researchers and publicise provision more widely	Improvements to Wood Library in development project to create a dedicated and user-friendly space for research visitors. Evaluate user experience. Raise academic profile of Museum through forging and maintaining links with universities, research institutes and libraries	October 2021 Ongoing
d) To assess and seek alternative solutions to the physical limitations of the building	To act on advice and action points from 2017 Access Audit and 2018 Consultant report, to provide level access to the Museum building as far as possible, and virtual access to everything beyond within development project.	October 2021

iv) To care for the Museum building and collection		
Objective	How to be achieved	Achieve by
a) To improve the storage and care of the collection	Re-organise collection locations within new Donegal House storage Prioritise collection care tasks within SJBM work plans, carrying out tasks and projects as specified in the SJBM Collection Care Plan Identify key items requiring conservation and work with Johnson Society (Friends fund) to raise funding for work.	October 2020 Ongoing Ongoing
b) To improve the documentation of the collection	Maintain numbers of volunteers who regularly work on both the collection database and paper records Improve records and add images to collection database. To produce an overall Collection Management Plan & Framework Clear backlog of old accession and provenance information and enter into database.	Ongoing Ongoing March 2021 Ongoing

c) To ensure the ongoing protection of the collection against disaster and damage	<p>Ensure that all staff are fully trained in the Museum Emergency plan procedure</p> <p>Fully analyse environmental monitoring data and produce report with recommendations</p> <p>Research further improvements into heating system controls to address specific issues raised in environmental monitoring report as part of development project</p>	<p>Ongoing; annual testing</p> <p>Ongoing; annual</p> <p>October 2021</p>
d) To ensure the continual maintenance and sustainability of the Birthplace building	<p>Conduct regular visual checks of the building and report any issues promptly</p> <p>Implement improvements outlined in the SJBM Environmental Action Plan, with replacement of lighting for LED and low energy within development project</p> <p>Carry out quinquennial inspection and programme works arising</p>	<p>Ongoing, fortnightly checks</p> <p>Ongoing, lighting by 2021</p> <p>Next report due 2021</p>

THE SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

Name of museum: The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum (SJB), Accredited Museum 767

Name of governing body: Lichfield City Council (LCC), as sole trustee of the Dr Johnson Birthplace Trust, Charity No. 500046

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 20 April 2015

Date at which this policy is due for review: April 2019

This policy guides the work that SJB does in the field of collections care and conservation, along with the SJB Collections Care and Conservation Plan which will help to deliver the statements made in this policy. Conservation is defined as the prevention, protection, care and restoration of our cultural heritage. SJB recognises that caring for collections is a fundamental duty for all museums, and that our approach to collections care and conservation should be based on a combination of preventative and remedial conservation. Preventative conservation covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects and structures. Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value. SJB's collections work is guided by Benchmarks in Collection Care, SPECTRUM standards and the Museum Association's Code of Ethics, and we are committed to ensuring the long-term preservation of our collections and historic building.

We will meet these aims by:

- Maintaining a planned approach to collections care and conservation, and committing to the care of the collection and building in our forward planning and development
- Ensuring that collection care and conservation issues are considered at object entry stage for all potential acquisitions and for all loans in and loans out of the collections
- Periodically checking collections and maintaining condition records
- Monitoring the museum environment and undertaking integrated pest management, recording, analysing and acting on the information gathered
- Regularly reviewing, updating, sharing and testing our Emergency Plan and related risk assessments to ensure our collections and building are protected from disaster
- Ensuring the continuation of building cleaning staff and access to maintenance staff, and carrying out periodic cleaning of display and store areas
- Ensuring that only professionally accredited conservators are contracted for remedial conservation work, and that professional advice and training has been sought before undertaking basic care tasks
- Training our staff and volunteers to share and uphold our care and conservation aims and follow all procedures when handling and working with collections
- Continuing to act on the recommendations of a collections care health-check report and seeking professional advice when required through the local Museum Development Officer

The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum

Volunteer Agreement

The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum (SJBm) recognises and encourages the valuable contribution made by volunteers.

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between you and the museum. We appreciate you contributing your time and skills to us and we will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.

We will provide you with:

- ★ A welcoming and inspiring environment in which to volunteer
- ★ A full induction to the museum and your role
- ★ The opportunity to ask for help whenever you need it
- ★ Appropriate and clear training before starting any new task or role
- ★ The chance to gain new skills and experiences, and use your existing ones
- ★ Regular opportunities to be given feedback and to give us feedback
- ★ Fair, equal and respectful treatment as a valued member of the museum team
- ★ An environment that is safe and protects you from injury

We expect you as a volunteer to:

- ★ Carry out your role to the best of your ability
- ★ Conduct yourself in a friendly and professional manner
- ★ Follow the training given to you and the relevant policies of the Museum (for example Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities)
- ★ Be realistic about the amount of time and commitment that you can give to the Museum, do your best to come in as arranged and give us reasonable notice if you are unavailable for your volunteering session
- ★ Keep the museum informed of any problems encountered during your time with us, and ask for help whenever you need it.

The Museum is an inclusive environment and we expect staff and volunteers to treat each other and museum visitors fairly and with respect regardless of sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion or race.

This agreement is a statement of values, not intended to be a legally binding contract or a contract of employment between us and can be cancelled at any time by the museum or volunteer.

Date of next review: March 2021

REPORT ON KEELE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

On February 15-16 and March 8-9 2019, SJBM hosted a group of academics, plus four days of school and special interest group workshops from March 18 – 22 as part of the project '18th Century Textual Studies at Lichfield'.

Co-organised by Dr Nicholas Seager from the Department of English at Keele and the M&HO, the events were funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Early-career academics (undertaking or having just completed PhDs) were invited to apply for places at the events. The selected cohort of 12 came from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, York, Bristol, Liverpool, Barcelona and Oslo.



Events took place in the Ashmole Room of Lichfield Guildhall. Each weekend included 3 workshops and a lecture from leading academics in the field, with all workshop material being drawn from the SJBM collections. Objects included manuscript letters and printed letter collections, novels, poetry, auction catalogues, newspapers, magazines, plays and playbills. The academics leading the workshops visited the Birthplace libraries over the previous year and selected their materials in collaboration with the M&HO.

Each weekend also featured a 'pop-up' exhibition of further items from the Birthplace collection, which was open to the general public on Saturday 9 March as part of the Lichfield Literature 'Word Café' event.

To complete the project, Dr Seager and the M&HO led 7 hands-on workshops about printing and book history for A-Level English Students from King Edward's VI School, Cathedral School and the Friary School, the Birthplace Staff and Volunteer team and the Johnson Society.

The project has enabled the next generation of 18th century academics to become acquainted with the Birthplace Museum, and form a network which we will sustain. Participants have already contributed blog posts, and Francesca Blanch-Serrat will be returning from Barcelona in the Autumn for a 3-month research stay to work on Anna Seward, with the Birthplace as her host institution.

