



# Lichfield City Council

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Town Clerk: Anthony Briggs

TB/JW/J1/2

12 July 2018

**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:**

Other Interested Parties including City Council Members and Birthplace Museum employees and volunteers

Dear Member,

**Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee**

Following the release of the 'Review of the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum' report as commissioned by the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee, you are invited to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Committee to be held in The Moulton Room, Guildhall at **10.30am** on **Thursday, 19 July 2018** to discuss the report and its recommendations.

*The Chairman wishes to encourage all interested parties to attend, can you please therefore **confirm your attendance** with Penny Taylor, Museums Administration Assistant Tel: 01543 264 972 or email: [sjmuseum@lichfield.gov.uk](mailto:sjmuseum@lichfield.gov.uk) to ensure that appropriate facilities and refreshments are provided for attendees at this meeting.*

Yours sincerely

Town Clerk

**Apologies for Absence**

## AGENDA

**1 REVIEW OF THE SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM BY SUSAN DALLOE CONSULTANCY**

To receive the above report, a summary of which is attached, and to discuss the recommendations therein, with particular reference to the following broad headings:

1. Feel of House
2. Universal Access
3. Museum Displays and Interpretation
4. Facilities
5. Exterior
6. Any Other General Objectives raised at the meeting (*the detail of such objectives to be further discussed at subsequent meetings as priorities, funding and timescales become clearer*).

The full report has been circulated electronically, with hard copies being available to read at both Donegal House and the Birthplace Museum. A limited number of copies will be available at the meeting.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

Members of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee to make recommendations to Council based on the outcome of discussions at agenda item 1.

Members are particularly asked to formalise the Committee's view on the appropriateness of redevelopment of the Museum at this time; the priorities for any redevelopment; and authority for the Museums and Heritage Officer to progress scoping work related to funding applications as appropriate.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN**

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## THE SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM: SUMMARY OF RECOMENDATIONS

The following document is a brief summary of the report by Susan Dalloe Consultancy, June 2018, to accompany the full report and including key recommendations for development, grouped for discussion (drawn from parts 4 and 5 of the report)

### Present the Museum with a feel of a house throughout

Recommendation	Report item
Modern lighting and strip lighting removed and replaced with dimmable reproduction period lighting	4.2.4
All service pipes and modern heating services need to be considered. In many places around the property there are modern features which could be changed, removed, covered or upgraded.	4.2.4
Holistic review of safety/fire equipment - ensuring compliance but more appropriate to historic house setting	4.2.3
Hand-painted signage in an 18 <sup>th</sup> century style, quotes and words from the Dictionary throughout the building	4.1.1
All multimedia to be mounted in 18 <sup>th</sup> century style furniture	4.1.2
Rugs and suitable replica curtains could be created	4.2.4

### Universal Access

Recommendation	Report item
Establish universal access to the Bookshop (with digital 'fly-around' available, see page 37), and ground floor where possible Ramp drawing and three options for lift platforms to the front door explored in detail – see page 54 for full review of the options, and see <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qo0ZGkYik28">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qo0ZGkYik28</a> for example of best practice platform option in operation	4.2.1, 5.2.1
Option for introducing a lift into the courtyard, with access to upper floors through back windows discussed and costed (see page 44 for feedback on this option from workshop groups)	5.3.2

### Develop Museum displays and interpretation

Recommendation	Report item
Improving Museum text panels and case labels	4.1.1, 5.1.1
Replace Museum display cases throughout	4.1.2, 5.1.2
Re-allocation of display rooms, See 4.2.3 (page 41) for a full list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parlour to become introductory room (Blum library relocated)</li> <li>'Johnson's Lichfield' and 'Johnson's People' in Intro room</li> <li>Current AV room to become display on Johnson's Family</li> <li>'Johnson's Travels' themed room in attic developed</li> <li>Addition of area on legacy, donors and Francis Barber in attic</li> <li>Area for temporary exhibitions in the existing AV Room and option for Birth Room</li> </ul>	4.2.3 4.1.1 4.1.1 4.2.3 4.1.1 4.1.7
Addition of low and high-tech interactives, See 4.1.5 (page 37) for a full list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive timeline table in Intro room</li> <li>Upgrade Dictionary Room interactives</li> <li>Video about how books are made in workroom</li> <li>Option for digital exhibitions on bookshop terminal</li> </ul>	4.1.1 4.1.4 4.1.6 4.1.7
Kitchen display development to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive kitchen display – handling collections, smells and voices</li> <li>Removing sliding panels and opening up windows</li> <li>Removing door to existing cupboard and opening up second area of kitchen for display</li> <li>Basement areas to be treated for damp ingress</li> </ul>	4.1.6 4.1.6 4.1.6 4.2.4

Architectural Tour of house to exist alongside Johnson Tour using models, mirrors, discovery doors and to include:	4.2.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some access to barrel vaulted boiler room to be established</li> </ul>	4.2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full model of the Birthplace</li> </ul>	5.2.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cupboard under stairs opened up as display area</li> </ul>	4.2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cupboard beside office opened up for architectural display</li> </ul>	4.2.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views across city (market square, cathedral) accessed in some rooms</li> </ul>	4.2.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace free-standing attic display screens (currently block view of eaves)</li> </ul>	4.1.1
Introductory Film:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New short audio-visual as main introduction to house in Parlour</li> </ul>	4.2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing introductory film edited into chronological chunks to access on smaller screens at relevant points around the house.</li> </ul>	4.1.1
Improved access to Johnson's works to include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bookcase with various editions of the Dictionary</li> </ul>	4.1.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copies of relevant works throughout displays</li> </ul>	4.1.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library display areas</li> </ul>	4.1.5

### Improve Facilities

Recommendation	Report item
Accessible public toilet built in courtyard, including baby changing facilities. For discussion of possible layout see 5.3.3	4.2.3, 4.3.2
Possibility of glass-roofing the courtyard could be explored (or other weather proofing), allowing for coffee machine and breakout area for bookings. On Courtyard Developments, see also:	4.2.3
Stairs into cellar from yard could potentially be opened up for use	5.3.1
Possibility of creating an additional room underneath the courtyard space (basement extension)	5.3.2
The possibility of acquiring the adjoining building is discussed as a solution to events, office, storage and research space, with historic precedent	5.3.4
Birth Room to become an events/meeting/performance space, including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of display cases and rehanging with paintings</li> </ul>	4.1.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cupboards to hold private hire equipment (projectors etc)</li> </ul>	4.3.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible event furniture, in keeping with house (non-plastic)</li> </ul>	4.3.4
Storage:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new furniture and display cases to have ample storage solutions built in</li> </ul>	4.3.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School bags and coats store could be in barrel vaulted area</li> </ul>	4.3.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some nooks and crannies suggested to become additional exhibition space, so some off-site storage will need to be sought - little potential on site</li> </ul>	5.3.1
Libraries:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-organise material (move some off site) allowing space for interpretation and working areas</li> </ul>	4.3.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public terminal for accessing collections</li> </ul>	4.3.3
provision of folding stools for visitors to carry around in hidden units	4.2.5

### Exterior

Recommendation	Report item
Liaison to ensure stalls and hoardings are not placed in front of the Birthplace obscuring its presence	4.2.1
External signage with information about the Museum 24 hrs available - option for something digital	5.2.1
Signage around the city at car parks and at salient junctions could be enhanced to mark the building, as well as the development of city trails.	4.2.1

Joanne Wilson, Museums & Heritage Officer  
June 2018