



# Lichfield City Council

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**Town Clerk: Anthony Briggs** B.A. (Hons), CiLCA

20 April 2021

**To: Members of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee**

Councillors Mrs G Boyle (Chairman) and J Anketell, D Dundas, Mrs J Eagland, T Matthews, C Rapley, C Spruce and R Yardley

**Representatives of Johnson Society**

Mr P Jones and Mr J Winterton

**Honorary Members**

Mr Robert Awty and Mr Antony Thompson

**Also to:**

Museums and Heritage Officer (Joanne Wilson)

Museum Support Officer (Penny Taylor)

Dear Committee Member

**Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee (JBAC)**

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee to be held via 'Zoom' at **10.30am on Tuesday 27 April 2021** at which the following business will be transacted. Any member unable to attend should forward their apologies to the Town Clerk.

A link enabling members to join the meeting will be circulated separately and is also available to the public by email to the Town Clerk ([tony.briggs@lichfield.gov.uk](mailto:tony.briggs@lichfield.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely

Town Clerk

## AGENDA

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

**3 MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 November 2020 (**copy attached**). [Minutes adopted by the City Council on 7 December 2020].

**4 MATTERS ARISING FROM JBAC MINUTES**

**5 SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM (SJBM) FORWARD PLAN 2021-2024**

To consider the enclosed Forward Plan [**ENCLOSURE 1**]. The plan has been considerably revised to incorporate activities relating to the Birthplace Development Project.

**RECOMMENDED: That the Forward Plan 2021-2024 be adopted**

**6 ACCESS POLICY STATEMENT UPDATE**

To receive the updated SJBM Access Policy Statement (**APPENDIX 1, attached**). It is the requirement of the Accreditation standard for museums that policy is reviewed and formally adopted by the governing body on a regular cycle.

**RECOMMENDED: That the SJBM Access Policy 2021 be adopted.**

**7 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT**

To consider the enclosed progress report – **APPENDIX 2, attached**.

**RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted, and proposals therein be supported**

**8 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – REVISED ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS**

Updated drawings have been provided by LCC's appointed Architects, Brownhill Hayward Brown [**ENCLOSURE 2**].

- The front step designs have been altered to incorporate feedback from members, including an adjusted position for the lift controls and the alphabet railings replaced with a Johnsonian quotation.
- A modern finish is preferred for the yard external toilet block to indicate that it is an addition. The proposed cladding uses rugged tiles manufactured from recycled plastic waste.

Feedback will be submitted to the Architect and revisions made as required prior to the submission of a planning application. Expert opinion will also be sought from a disabled access specialist.

**RECOMMENDED: That the drawings be considered by the committee, with feedback to be provided to the architects.**

**9 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**To Resolve: that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, by reason of the confidential nature of the business next to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the Meeting.**

**10 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – RESPONSES TO WORKROOM TENDER**

To consider the MHO's report at **APPENDIX 3** (attached for Members), and the associated responses from the companies who submitted tenders (**ENCLOSURES 3 & 4**).

**RECOMMENDED: That the submissions be considered and a preferred designer selected.**

**11 MUSEUM SUPPORT OFFICER – CONTINUATION OF ADDITIONAL HOURS**

To consider the MHO's report at **APPENDIX 4** (attached for members) and the recommendation therein. *The MSO will leave the meeting at this point.*

**12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

In the Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday 2 November 2021. Following adoption of the Minutes of the JBAC meeting of 6 November 2018, additional meetings may be called in the meantime if appropriate.

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

## Lichfield City Council

### Minutes of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee Meeting held via 'Zoom' at 10.30 am on Tuesday 3 November 2020

PRESENT:

**Representing Lichfield City Council:**

Councillor Mrs G Boyle (Chairman), and Councillors J Anketell, D Dundas, J Eagland, T Matthews, C Rapley, C Spruce and R Yardley

In Attendance:

Joanne Wilson (Museums & Heritage Officer)  
Penny Taylor (Museum Support Officer)  
Tony Briggs (Town Clerk)  
Mr Tony Thompson  
Mr Robert Awty  
Mr P Jones & Mr J Winterton (Johnson Society representatives)

Apologies:

None

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

None.

**2 MINUTES**

***RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.*** [Minutes adopted by Council on 2 March 2020.]

**3 MATTERS ARISING FROM JBAC MINUTES**

None

**4 REPORT ON RE-OPENING POST COVID-19 RELATED CLOSURE**

Members considered the Museum and Heritage Officer's (MHO) report (Appendix 1).

***RESOLVED: That the report be noted.***

**5 CHARGES FOR SERVICES**

Members considered the existing charges as contained at Agenda Appendix 2. The MHO confirmed that the current charges are benchmarked with other museums but an in depth review of charges had not been carried out for some time. Cllr C Rapley asked that concessions be considered for the unemployed; the MHO confirmed that main admission to the Birthplace is free, but that concessionary rates for events would be looked into further and a further report submitted to the Committee in due course.

***RESOLVED:***

***a) That the charges as set out in the report be approved***

***b) That delegated authority be granted to the MHO and Town Clerk to set charges in the interim if required (within reasonable parameters of the current charges).***

***c) The charges to be reviewed at the November 2021 meeting of JBAC and annually thereafter.***

**6 DR JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE TRUST**

Members considered the agenda report that confirmed the current balance of the Trust account stands at £14,668.81; the balance includes a generous \$10,000 (£7391.43) donation from the family of the late Etta Blum that was received in August. The Committee considered the MHO's proposal for allocating this funding towards the renovation of the

Museum library area, including rehousing of the current Blum library collection and further corresponding improvements in facilities in line with the wider redevelopment plans for the museum. At the suggestion of Councillor C Spruce it was agreed that the donation be acknowledged via a plaque or similar when the work is completed.

**RESOLVED:** *That the report be noted, and the proposed use of the recent \$10,000 donation be approved in principle, with further reports to follow to the Committee as to the detail of that work and the acknowledgement of the donation in the form of a plaque or similar.*

## **7 EBAY SHOP**

As contained in the SJBMM Forward Plan, proposals were put to the Committee for the creation of a Birthplace Bookshop eBay 'shop'

**RESOLVED:** *That the opening of a Birthplace Bookshop 'eBay shop' be approved.*

## **8 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF HERITAGE TRAIL INFORMATION BOARD**

Members considered the proposal to re-site the heritage trail information board currently located outside the Birthplace Museum. There was concern as to the content of the board as it would not provide information on the Market Square despite being located thereon. The MHO and Town Clerk agreed to raise the issue with LDC and to confirm to the Committee whether a separate 'Market Square' board was proposed; it was suggested by Cllr D Dundas that LCC CIL monies could be utilised to fill any budgetary shortfall that may arise as a result of the Committees discussions and recommendations. The Committee urged caution in the final siting of the board in order to allow maintenance access to the new railings and to not prevent easy viewing of the statue reliefs.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:** *That the Council approve in principle the re-siting of the heritage trail information board currently sited outside the Museum to the side of the Johnson Statue on the Market Square; the detail of the content of the board or the provision of a further 'Market Square' board to be further pursued by Officers.*

## **9 GROUND FLOOR ADAPTATIONS – DISABLED ACCESS**

Members considered the detailed reports and appendices that illustrated the progress made over the past few months regarding options for disabled access to the museum. It was confirmed that the proposed toilet facilities would be DDA compliant. Mr R Awty asked that the position of the lift controls be revisited as they appeared vulnerable to the elements. There were also some reservations on the 'alphabet' railings. Cllr C Rapley asked that attention also be paid to the possibility of disabled employees at the Museum, rather than seemingly focusing solely on disabled visitors and volunteers. It was agreed that this would be investigated further, notably in relation to the layout of the Museum Attendant desk area. The committee urged that plans should be developed in consultation with disabled users: it was confirmed by the MHO that Ann Johnson, whose report had informed much of the proposal, is herself a wheelchair user.

**RESOLVED:**

**a) That the principle of access to the Birthplace building (as opposed to off-site provision) is supported**

**b) That the revised accessible entrance at Market Street is approved**

**c) That the committee believes scheme A2, the platform area in existing internal doorway, (rather than the alternative of a new opening to Michael Johnson's workroom) is the most appropriate way forward**

**[All documentation relating to this item is available to members of the Council on request to the Town Clerk]**

## **10 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – GROUND FLOOR DESIGNS**

Members considered the designs prepared by Vertigo (Agenda appendix 7; the visuals being designed to act as a first stage for feedback and consultation). While generally approving of the designs, there was some disquiet as to the presentation of the bookshop as the designs did not appear to incorporate the necessary modern equipment such as the

till, display shelves etc. It was agreed that the MHO would revisit the scheme with the consultants in due course.

**RESOLVED: That the designs be noted**

**11 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – FUNDING AND PROPOSAL FOR PHASED WORK**

Members considered the MHO's report detailing the withdrawal of the funding stream that the City Council had been bidding in to in order to fund the proposed redevelopment of the Birthplace. A phasing of works was suggested, with a recommendation for a three year 'phase 1' project to focus on the necessary rewiring of the museum, redevelopment of the ground floor, addition of a visitor toilet and the creation of ground floor wheelchair access. The proposal is to split the costs across three financial years as set out below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Project focus</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
2021/2022	Rewiring; Toilet; Workroom;	£75,321.58
2022/2023	Bookshop; Steps	£90,304.58
2023/2024	Lift installation; Parlour	£118,216.58

All costs would be allocated to the Council's capital reserve in the first instance, though other opportunities for funding are being actively explored. It was noted that the City Council would be unlikely to be able to set a balanced revenue budget for 2021/22 as a result of COVID-19 and that all proposed works would result in a corresponding reduction in the Council's capital reserve. Cllr C Spruce stated that the Museum was an appropriate focal point for the City Council's reserves; the proposal being to update one of the City's major buildings and preserve it for future generations. There was discussion as to whether it would be better to complete the work as soon as possible rather than relying on phasing, but it was agreed that a delicate balance needed to be struck between carrying out the work in an appropriate and considered manner, attempting to access available funding, and not drawing out the whole process to such a degree that it compromised the core principle of value for money.

**RESOLVED: That the principle of a three-year ground floor project is supported**

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the estimated 2021/22 element of phase 1 costs as set out above (£75,321.58) be included in the draft Repairs and Renewals programme to be presented to Council at its meeting of January 2021, and that favourable consideration be given to that item when it is formally discussed.**

**12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

10.30am on Tuesday 27 April 2021.

**13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr D Dundas, who had left the meeting due to a conflicting engagement following agenda item 9, had previously asked that two points be raised under AOB.

Firstly, clarification was requested regarding the Museum's Charitable status; the Town Clerk confirmed that the Museum is owned by the Dr Johnson's Birthplace Trust (charity number 500046) and that the sole Trustee of the Trust is Lichfield City Council. The Town Clerk agreed to provide further information to Cllr Dundas directly.

Secondly, Cllr Dundas had asked whether any further improvements to the Museum were planned in the longer term in addition to those on the agenda; the Town Clerk stated that he would provide Cllr Dundas with a copy of the Museum's Forward Plan.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS**

**THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.15am**



**THE SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM  
ACCESS POLICY STATEMENT**

**Date of acceptance by governing body:**

**Date of review:** March 2023

The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum (SJBМ) is committed in our Key Strategic Aims to increase access to our Museum and collections, and to diversify our audiences. Lichfield City Council (LCC), operates SJBМ as sole trustee of Dr Johnson's Birthplace Trust (Registered Charity 50046), and includes within its Service Objectives "To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents."

SJBМ recognises that it is essential to assess and address physical and intellectual barriers that may prevent any members of society from accessing the education, research and enjoyment that our collections, building and services can offer. SJBМ is free of charge to enter and is signed up to the 'Kids in Museums' manifesto as an inclusive and family-friendly space. Taking due notice of the Equality Act 2010, LCC's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement and the Museums Association's Code of Ethics, SJBМ is committed to developing the best access possible within our available resources and the constraints of a Grade I listed building with many steps.

We will achieve our aims by:

- Making a clear commitment to developing access in our forward planning and future developments
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers receive training and support to welcome all visitors and to share these aims
- Identifying and addressing access issues through the completion of checklists and access audits, planning and regularly reviewing our progress
- Developing our interpretation to facilitate physical, sensory and intellectual access to our collection and the information available about our collection, both at the Museum site and online, incorporating diverse narratives.
- Monitoring and consulting our users and non-users to guide our development
- Ensuring our building is easy to find and move around, and that information to help plan a visit is readily available and accessible to all
- Providing information in community languages and large print
- Offering a variety of events and activities with wide appeal, including free of charge events and concessionary rates where applicable.
- Communicating with transparency about our accessibility, on-site and on our website.
- Making reasonable adaptations within the constraints of our Grade I listed status.





## JBAC: 27 April 2021 APPENDIX 2

### DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

Work on delivering the first phase of the ground floor project began promptly after the available budget was confirmed in January, ensuring that the planning application process can begin after the April JBAC. Revised drawings were provided by the Architects and are presented to the committee as a separate agenda item.

During Architect site visits to develop plans to overcome the protruding lower step of the internal staircase, it was discovered that the step was a separate piece, not original to the 1707 structure, and had been removed during previous renovation works. The investigation also revealed a small structural issue which required immediate repair. This work was carried out in March, and the step replaced with alternative fixings which enable it to be removed when required. This will allow a wheelchair user to access the entire ground floor once Bookshop entry can be established,



*Step in usual position (shown after works completed)*

*With step removed*

with the most minimal impact on historic fabric and appearance. A rope barrier to prevent use of the flight while the step is temporarily removed will be installed on the landing above.

A brief for Michael Johnson's Workroom was written and sent to recommended exhibition design companies. The returned submissions are presented as a separate agenda item.

Estimates for rewiring were obtained and, in accordance with LCC financial regulations, Darwin Electrical selected. Darwin Electrical bring previous knowledge of the Birthplace wiring and presented lower costs. Work on preparing the rewiring schedule will be carried out while the Museum remains closed to the public.

In February 2021, the National Lottery Heritage Fund re-opened funding schemes. Positive feedback had been received from Lottery Fund advisors prior to the closure of funds in 2020, so an updated project interest form is in preparation to re-start the application process for funding future phases of the project.

Within the updated plans, it is proposed to allocate part of the Blum family's recent gift of \$10,000 towards refurbishing the Library study area. Estimated costs for improvements are £5,050, and this amount can also be used towards a match-funding contribution. A Blum Study area would be created within the Wood Library, with a commemorative plaque on the furniture. Items from the existing Blum library collection would be moved into a section of the Wood Library bookcases, enabling easy access by students and researchers. This work could be undertaken as early as the 2022/2023 phase of the project.

A plan for accommodating furniture and collection items due to be removed from the Workroom has been devised. This will include an area of Johnsonian furniture replacing a floor-standing display board in the attic, and relocation of the dresser to the Kitchen display.

It is proposed that the project be launched to the public in May 2021, using a dedicated page of the Museum's website to include images of draft designs, a statement about the project, and an invitation to join a specific mailing list for interested parties to be updated on the project. The mailing list would also be used to invite public feedback at appropriate points in the ongoing project. The Development Project page of the website would provide transparency, community engagement, and may also encourage donors to contribute to future phases.

