

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held in Guildhall, Lichfield on Monday 9 June 2025 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors C Pinder-Smith (Mayor), J Anketell, H Ashton, C Ball, J Blackman, J Christie, J Eagland, M Field, A Fox, C Greateorex, R Harvey-Coggins, A Hughes, P Knight, A Lax, J Madden, J Marshall, P McDermott, P Ray, D Robertson, S Schafer, J Smith, E Strain, B Watkins, M Warfield and R Yardley.

APOLOGIES: Councillors D Baker, R Bragger, K Farrelly and A Rushton.

15 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor detailed the events and functions she had attended since coming to office including the Annual Town Meeting, a visit to Lichfield Sailing Club and the Bower. Also visits to Lichfield Soroptomists and The Well, noting that engagement with recipients of grants awards had been rewarding and it was beneficial to learn more about their work in the community. The Deputy Mayor had attended the opening of a hair salon and a care home.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr A Lax declared an interest in agenda item 12 (Minute 25) and left the room during discussion and voting thereon.

17 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 15 May 2025 (Nos 1-14) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18 MATTERS ARISING

None.

19 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That comments submitted to Lichfield District Council for the period 20 March to 29 May 2025 and made in the name of LCC via delegated authority, be received.

20 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 4 June 2025, including consideration of the 2024/25 out-turn, and the annual review of the City Council's Asset Register and associated policy. Cllr A Fox commended the work of officers in preparing the relevant paperwork and for an out-turn that reflected closely the anticipated spends contained in the original budget. Cllr C Greateorex queried the AGAR fixed assets figure (Box 9) being the same for 2024/25 as for 2023/24 and asked whether the Town Clerk was confident that this would be acceptable to the external auditor. The Town Clerk confirmed that acquisition values are used for this calculation, and while the sums in the adopted asset register may vary due to insurance valuation increases etc, the base figures provided for the external auditor were appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes and recommendations of the Audit Committee meeting held on 4 June 2025 be adopted and that:

- 1 The Report and Out-Turn Statement 2024/25 be received.**
- 2 The Council, acting in the capacity of sole Trustee of the Johnson Birthplace Charitable Trust, make a payment of £12,606 from the Trust Funds to the City Council as the contribution to the expenditure incurred by the City Council in operating the Museum during the 2024/25 financial year.**
- 3 In respect of the External Auditor Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2025:**
 - a. The council approves the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Return) and that this be signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk on behalf of the Council.**
 - b. The Council approves the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Return) and this be signed by the Mayor on behalf of the Council**
 - c. The Council notes the Annual Internal Audit Report section of the Annual Return**
 - d. The Council note the dates for the exercise of public rights - commencing on 11 June 2025 and ending on 22 July 2025.**

21 GRANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the Grants Advisory Committee meeting held on 2 June 2025. The minutes included recommendations for grant funding to Lichfield Society of Artists, and CIL funding for Darwin Hall and Sandfields Pumping Station via Lichfield Waterworks Trust. Further recommendations for delegated authority to award (or not) grants to Liberty Jamboree and Lichfield Community Sports CIC pending receipt of additional information from the applicants were also included. Cllr C Greatorox asked whether the part funding of the classroom project was going ahead; the Town Clerk advised that, to the best of his knowledge, the required match funding had not yet been achieved. The Town Clerk further confirmed that the proposal was for an external classroom.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Grants Advisory Committee held on 2 June 2025 be adopted.

23 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Members considered the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 21 May 2025. The Mayor, Cllr J Marshall and Cllr A Hughes encouraged all councillors to attend future Annual Town Meetings as it provides an important networking event and opportunity to engage with groups working in the community. The Mayor noted that The Well is now being prescribed as talking therapy by Westgate Practice.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 21 May 2025 be noted.

24 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members considered the draft appointment of representatives on outside bodies.

RESOLVED: Appointments on outside bodies be confirmed as indicated below.

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2025/26

Outside Body	No of Reps	Period of Office	2024/2025 Appt Ends	2025/2026 Appointments
Boley Park Community Hall Management Committee	4	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr S Schafer</i>
			Jun-25	<i>Cllr D Baker</i>
			Jun-25	<i>Cllr R Yardley</i>
			Jun-25	<i>Cllr J Eagland</i>
Boley Park Community Hall Trustees	4	Until retire or replaced	Until retire or replaced	<i>Cllr J Eagland</i>
				<i>Cllr R Yardley</i>
				<i>C Spruce</i>
				<i>Cllr M Warfield</i>
Bower Committee	1	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr J Marshall</i>
Curborough Community Association	1	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr C Ball</i>
Darwin Hall Community Association	4	Until retire or replaced	Until retire or replaced	<i>Cllr J Christie</i>
				<i>Cllr A Hughes</i>
				<i>Cllr B Watkins</i>
				<i>Cllr J Marshall</i>
Dovehouse Fields Community Garden	2	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Naomi Lane</i>
				<i>Cllr J Smith</i>
Dr Milley's Hospital	1	4 Years	Mar-27	<i>Cllr R Harvey-Coggins</i>
Erasmus Darwin Foundation	1	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr B Watkins</i>
Friends of Samuel Johnson Community Hosp.	1	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr A Lax</i>
Friends of Lichfield Historic Parks Group	1	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr H Ashton</i>
Guild of St Mary's Centre Lichfield (Ltd)	1	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
Johnson Council (non-voting observers)	2	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
			-	<i>Sheriff in Office</i>
Lichfield Arts [non-voting observer]	1	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr C Pinder-Smith</i>
Lichfield District City of Sanctuary	3	3 Years	Mar-28	<i>Cllr H Ashton</i>
				<i>Cllr D Baker</i>
				<i>Cllr C Ball</i>
Lichfield Camera Club	1	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
Lichfield Conduit Lands Trust	2	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
		4 Years	Jun-25	<i>Kate Greening</i>
Lichfield Rail Alliance, West Coast Rail 250 etc	1	1 Year	Jun-25	<i>Cllr M Warfield</i>

Outside Body	No of Reps	Period of Office	2024/2025 Appt Ends	2025/2026 Appointments
Mary Slater's Charity	2	1 Year	-	Mayor in Office
			-	Sheriff in Office
Michael Lowe's and Associated Charities	5	4 Years	15 July 28	Cllr A Hughes
			23 April 26	Donna Greateorex
			3 April 26	Hannah Jell
			April 2029	Cllr B Watkins
			Nov 28	Cllr J Eagland
Municipal Charities	4	1 Year	-	Mayor in Office
		4 Years	Nov-28	Cllr C Ball
			Nov-28	J Fox
			Nov-28	H Ashton
Purple Flag Accreditation	1	Until retire or replaced	Until retire or replaced	B Watkins
South East Staffs CAB	1	1 Year	Jun-25	Cllr D Baker
SPCA - Executive Cttee (nomination only – subject to election by SPCA)	1	2 Years	Sep-26	Cllr J Marshall
St Giles Hospice Local Government Friends'	1	4 Years	Jun-27	Cllr J Anketell
Support Staffordshire	1	1 Year	Jun-25	Kate Greening
Twinning Association	3	1 Year	-	Mayor in Office
			Jun-25	Cllr H Ashton
			Jun-25	Cllr S Schafer

Summary of Changes

Outside Body	Current Representative	2025/26 Proposal
Bower Committee	Cllr K Farrelly	Cllr J Marshall
Lichfield Conduit Lands Trust	G Boyle	Kate Greening
SPCA Executive Committee	Cllr H Ashton	Cllr J Marshall
Support Staffordshire	Cllr D Baker	Kate Greening
Michael Lowe's	P Hitchman	Hannah Jell
Boley Park Management Committee	Cllr M Warfield	Cllr S Schafer
Dovehouse Community Gardens	Cllr P Knight	Naomi Lane
Twinning Association	Cllr A Fox	Cllr S Schafer

25 REVIEW OF EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Members considered the request from Cllr A Lax to extend her current leave of absence. Cllr J Marshall, Cllr A Hughes, Cllr C Greateorex and Cllr P McDermott all said they were very pleased to see Cllr A Lax at the meeting and appreciate her expertise particularly on planning issues and climate change. Cllr Lax stated that she hoped to be able to attend regularly in future and thanked councillors for their support over the previous months.

RESOLVED: That the current leave of absence be extended, and be reviewed again at the December 2025 meeting of Council.

26 PAYMENT OF REGULAR SERVICE PROVISION BY DIRECT DEBIT

Members considered the list of Direct Debits as detailed in the agenda report. Cllr C Greateorex noted that there are three different suppliers of water for three buildings and queries whether this could be reduced to one or two. The Town Clerk to look in to the matter further

[subsequent enquiries confirmed that Pennon are the company who take the direct debits for Source for Business who provide the fresh water; Water Plus provide the used water/drainage services and are separate. The South Staffs Water DD remained in the council list because the change was in-year and there needed to be a consent from council to enable that (then) live DD to continue]

RESOLVED: That the City Council renews its resolution to enter into direct debit payment arrangements with those providers listed in the agenda report; the resolution to be considered for further renewal at the meeting of the City Council in June 2026.

27 OFFICERS' REPORT

Cllr J Blackman highlighted the website statistics and noted that this will be useful information for committees, e.g. it could be used for marketing the hire of the Guildhall.

Cllr H Ashton said it is a wonderful report and asked if it could be more prominent on the website.

The Mayor suggested that councillors could link this page to their social media accounts.

Cllr J Eagland added her compliments to the officers involved.

Cllr A Hughes congratulated all staff involved in the VE Day celebrations and was pleased to see the reviving of the museum shop.

Cllr J Smith was pleased to see a good turn out at the VE Day celebrations and commended the magnificent organisation of the event.

Cllr C Greateorex asked if the Friary Remains gate is open or locked. The Town Clerk advised that it is kept locked as it gives access to the curtilage of other property.

Cllr C Greateorex queried how the lockable bollard at Nether Stowe was now not removable through unlocking only (referring to the text stating the same in the officers' report) and what the other requirements now are for it to be removed. The Town Clerk advised the phrasing in the officers' report was perhaps ambiguous, and that the bollard had now been concreted in, so was not now readily removable.

Cllr C Greateorex also asked if the packaging on the leather keyrings sold by the museum shop states that the leather is recyclable. The Town Clerk advised he would check with the Museums and Heritage Officer. *[subsequent discussions confirmed that The keyrings aren't individually packaged but they do have a price label informing customers that they are recycled leather]*

Cllr S Schafer asked when the website was last revamped. The Town Clerk advised this was completed in 2016.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

28 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Councillor C Greator raised the following queries:

The payment to The Erasmus Darwin Foundation. The Town Clerk confirmed that payment relates to a paid ticketed talk by S James at the museum that was billed through The Erasmus Darwin Foundation.

The footpath resurfacing at Masefield Close - whether the footpath is owned by the City Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that it is.

Whether the new leadership of the council is aware of the nature of the legal work completed by Keelys. The Town Clerk confirmed that the matter was currently being progressed and that the Leadership were aware of the current status.

RESOLVED: That payment of accounts be approved and confirmed for the period 1 March 2025 to 31 March 2025 in the sum of £106,133.80 General Account and £793.43 Imprest Account

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.06PM

MAYOR