

For Council: 14 June 2021 APPENDIX 2

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee Meeting held via 'Zoom' at 10.30 am on Tuesday 27 April 2021

PRESENT:

Representing Lichfield City
Council:

Councillor Mrs G Boyle (Chairman), and Councillors
J Anketell, D Dundas, J Eagland, 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 and Mr Robert Awty (Honorary
Members)
Mr P Jones & Mr J Winterton (Johnson Society
representatives)

Apologies:

Cllr T Matthews

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Penny Taylor (MSO) left the meeting prior to the discussion of agenda item 11 (Museum Support Officer – Continuation of Additional Hours.

15 MINUTES

Cllr C Rapley requested the addition of 'and volunteers' in the sentence at Minute 9 (Ground Floor Access) '*...attention also be paid to the possibility of disabled employees and volunteers at the Museum...*'.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the amendment set out above. [Minutes adopted by Council on 7 December 2020.]

16 MATTERS ARISING FROM JBAC MINUTES

Mr T Thompson requested clarification on the recommendations to Council from the previous meeting, it was confirmed that the new text for the heritage trail board had been installed, and that the timescales for the board to move to the Market Square were unknown. On the second recommendation, it was confirmed that the estimated costs of phase 1 of the development project had been included in the City Council's 2021/22 budgets.

17 SAMUEL JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM FORWARD PLAN 2021-2024

Members considered the draft Forward Plan document. Surprise was expressed at the relatively low percentage of visitors to the Museum who were actually from Lichfield, and it was agreed that local publicity and events that would draw in local people should be encouraged. It was also acknowledged that a high percentage of visitors who live outside the City was very positive for the Museum as a tourist attraction and for the wider benefits such an attraction generates for the City.

Councillor D Dundas stated there should be a longer term ambition within the Forward Plan, notably to acquire a neighbouring building on Market Street if possible; the opportunity may be present for raising funds through international Johnson connections. Cllr C Rapley suggested the former Feria building on Bore St as an example of a local building much in need of renovation that could potentially be suited to the provision of extra storage space –

and potentially other uses associated with the Museum, though acknowledged the building does not have the convenience of being adjacent to the Museum.

Mr R Awty informed the Committee that the potential purchase of an adjacent building had been discussed at length previously and concerns regarding expense and timescale had led to the current proposals for the redevelopment of the Museum. It was agreed however that the long-term aim of acquiring the adjacent building be added to the Forward Plan to ensure that if the opportunity arose, it could be pursued.

RESOLVED: That subject to the addition of the aim to acquire the adjacent premises as set out above, the Forward Plan 2021-24 be adopted.

18 ACCESS STATEMENT POLICY UPDATE

Members considered the draft SJBM Access Policy statement in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Members noted that it is the requirement of the Accreditation standard for museums that the policy is reviewed and formally adopted on a regular cycle. Mr T Thompson requested clarification of the term 'community languages' and suggested this may be better expressed as 'other languages'. This was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That subject to the amendment as set out above, the SJBM Access Policy 2021 be adopted

19 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

Members considered the Museum and Heritage Officer's report. The MHO explained that the recent work completed on the ground floor inner step has been successful, allowing for wheelchair access with minimal impact on the historic fabric of the building. Members also considered the proposal to use the Blum family gift to improve the Museum's library study area, and a suggestion that publicity for the redevelopment could begin in May. The MHO also confirmed the appointment of electrical contractors to carry out the necessary rewiring.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the proposals therein be supported.

20 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – REVISED ARCHITECTS DRAWINGS

Updated architect drawings were considered by members; the drawings incorporate feedback from members as to the front step design, as well as proposed drawings for the external toilet block proposed for the rear yard. The drawings for the external toilet block were confirmed as being appropriate, but health and safety concerns were raised regarding the proposed spiral bannister for the external steps, and the railings which were considered too fussy and out of keeping with the remainder of the building. There was a divided opinion on the use of Johnson quotations within the railing design, and concerns as to the control mechanism for the disabled access platform.

RESOLVED: The Committee request clarification as to how the control mechanism would be protected from vandalism and how it would be operated (in order to balance the need for an autonomous experience for the user but to guard against misuse). Further drawings are requested of the proposed steps and railings, with a simpler design more in keeping with the building to be presented. The MHO and Town Clerk to discuss further and circulate the revised drawings for comment – a meeting of the Committee to be called if required.

21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: 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.

22 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – RESPONSES TO WORKROOM TENDER

Members considered the MHO's report and the associated responses from companies who had submitted tenders. *[Council is asked to note that the Tender sums fall below the requirement for a formal meeting of the Tenders Committee as set out in the City Council's Financial Regulations].*

RESOLVED: *That 'Vertigo' be confirmed as the successful bidder for the Workroom tender.*

23 MUSEUM SUPPORT OFFICER – CONTINUATION OF ADDITIONAL HOURS

Members considered the MHO's agenda report.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That the existing 7-hour extension to the MSO's working hours be approved for a further period of 24 months from January 2022.*

24 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

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

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.25am**