

For Council: 31 July 2018 APPENDIX 1

OFFICERS' INFORMATION REPORT

1. Civic Matters: Lucy Clarke, Civic Officer



Representatives from the Guide Dogs for the Blind and Staffordshire & Shropshire Blood Bikes both came to the Mayors Parlour for the official cheque presentations by the former Mayor Cllr Mrs Janice Greaves and Sheriff Cllr Andrew Smith. Each charity was presented with a cheque to the value of £5040.98.



On Wednesday 27 June the Mayor, Sheriff, Deputy Mayor and team members from Lichfield City Council played the traditional Swinfen Broun Bowls Match against Swinfen Museum Bowls Club in Beacon Park. Unfortunately, Lichfield City Council were defeated yet again with a score of 118 to 50.

The evening proved a great success and was enjoyed by all in the glorious sunshine.

On Saturday 7 July the City Council hosted the fourth Lichfield Town Criers' Competition. Thirteen town criers from all over Great Britain came to take part in this year's competition. Our own Ken Knowles was not allowed to compete but nevertheless provided a 'benchmark cry' for the judges prior to round one. The first round of cries at Speakers Corner gave the competitors an opportunity to tell the judges and audience about their home towns. After a break for lunch the second round was held and the Criers were asked to proclaim on this year's theme "*The Year of the Woman*".





At the tender age of 9, the youngest Town Crier in the UK came along to support his Grandfather who was competing. Although too young to take part himself, Ollie delighted locals and visitors alike by taking to Speakers Corner to cry himself. The overall winner was Terry Ford from Otley, 2nd Prize was awarded to Adrian Holmes from Sandwell and 3rd Prize was awarded to Paul Gough from Nuneaton and Bedworth. The Lonza Atkin award for Best Dressed Crier was awarded to Brenda Willison from Newmarket and Best Dressed Couple went to Terry Stubbings and his wife Trish from Liverpool. Many local businesses sponsored and supported this colourful and entertaining event.

Preparations remain ongoing for the Mayoress at Home taking place on 28 July 2018, Sheriffs Ride and Dr Johnson Birthday in September along with Mayor & Sheriff's Charity Events – a Craft Fair during the August Bank Holiday and a Charity Barn Dance to be held in October.

2. Markets: John Beard and Lisa Howard, Markets Officer

In a bid to increase occupancy levels and promote the Market, the Markets Officers have undertaken a number of initiatives including: Contacting lapsed traders, Facebook posts shared to a number of local groups, promotion through Best of Lichfield and a call to action added to the bottom of the Farmers' Market leaflets which are printed in-house. Leaflets have been distributed to local libraries, tourist information centres, attractions and hotels.

Further to the Council's resolution at its meeting on 18 June to install bollards on the market square the Markets Officers have been working with the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and Leader to facilitate this.

Last month the Wednesday Grub Club organised by Cockerhoop relocated to the Cathedral Close, the organisers did not provide the City Council with an explanation and it is unclear if they will be using the Market Square for future Grub Club events.

The Markets Officers visited the City Councils' stall contractors, All Fit to undertake an inspection of the Market stall frames, boards and trailers. The purpose was to ascertain any repairs or replacement which may be needed so these can be included in the budget for 2019/20. It was determined that a total of 20 stall ends and 20 support bars would be needed and possibly one new trailer. Indicative quotes will be collated to help inform the budget setting process for next year.

3. Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum: Jo Wilson, Museums and Heritage Officer

2916 Visitors came to Johnson's Birthplace in May and June. Recent special events have included: *Dr Johnson's Wikiwords: Shakespeare* The second part of the year-long collaboration with Fired Up theatre saw Johnson attempting to crowdfund his edition of Shakespeare's works. Half Term Fun Activities were held for families in the late May school holidays based on 18th century cabinets of curiosities and Richard Greene's Museum.

'The Blazing Words, Glitt'ring Gold: Illuminating' Art from Lichfield Calligraphers exhibition was opened by the Mayor, Cllr David Leytham on 15 June and will be displayed all around the Birthplace throughout the summer.



Birthplace attendant Sarah Dale led a painting workshop for word based Kindness stones which were then hidden around the City. Other activities have included *Writing Spaces* an event for National Writing Day led by the Museum's writing group and a Special display and inspired by Johnson's Willow, to support Lichfield Festival's Willow Walk, being given by former Museum Attendant David Titley.



Outreach talks have included Bedworth and Cheslyn Hay Historical Society and Guided Tours conducted for Bakewell and District Historical Society and Walsall Proboscis Group. School visits have included Rocklands school in Lichfield, KEVI Stafford, Belper School and a home education network. The MHO also took part in testing the new Visit Lichfield website and the Autumn and Winter events programme for the Museum has been confirmed, the new leaflet will be available in August.

The written report from Susan Dalloe Consultancy has been received and arrangements made for the extraordinary meeting of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee will be held on 19 July, shortly after the preparation of this report.

4. Twinning: Gabriele Lasch-Burden, Twinning Officer

During the summer holiday period, with schools and colleges closed, the number of twinning activities and exchanges has been limited.

The Limburg student from the PPC School, who was due to undertake a three week work placement at the George Hotel in Lichfield in July, injured herself and was unable to fly, hence the work experience had to be cancelled. The Twinning Officer would like to thank the George Hotel for offering this placement.

In June the Revd V. Standing from Lichfield visited Limburg and was very grateful that the Limburg Twinning Association's chairwoman Mrs. Heide Bein kindly offered her time to show him the sights of the city.

Members of the Lichfield Twinning Association and the Lichfield District Ramblers spent a walking weekend in the Rhineland near Limburg with friends from both of our twin towns of



Limburg and Ste Foy. A number of walks took place, with breath-taking views of this unique and beautiful waterway. It is planned that Lichfield will be the location for the next international biannual walk in the spring of 2020.

This year, the Limburg Council is sending two of their apprentices to Lichfield in the first week of October for their annual work experience week abroad. A placement programme to experience as many local government organisations as possible is being organised.

The owner of the dance school *Team Catalyst* from Lichfield has been invited by the Josat dance studio in Limburg to attend and adjudicate a national dancing competition at the beginning of October. The Lichfield dance group took part in a festival in Limburg some years ago and they forged a close link between the two dance studios.

An A-level student from Limburg is looking into the possibility of a year's internship in a Lichfield company before starting his university course in Germany; suitable companies are being contacted.

A number of activities are being discussed for the 2019 programme, which include: A volleyball club from Sainte Foy is looking to organise a competition between the clubs of all three twin towns in France as well as the possibility of a drama class from a Limburg high school taking part in next year's *Mysteries*. In addition a Lichfield female choir has asked for a collaboration with a male choir from Limburg to organise a joint concert in Lichfield.

5. Guildhall: Helen Winter, Guildhall Bookings Secretary

The Old Prison Cells are open to the public again most Saturdays now until the end of October and five Cells tours have been recently held via the Green Badge Guides.

We continue to attract our regular bookings: Band Practice, Bridge, Chess, Darby & Joan, Heyday Friendship, Italian Class, Ladies Cameo Group, Lichfield Poets, National Trust, Needwood DFAS, RSPB, Slimming World, Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society and U3A. In addition 26 meetings from outside agencies/societies have been held in the building since the last report and the Scouts AGM.

Private bookings have included a 10th Wedding Anniversary Party and a wedding reception.

Lichfield Arts have had a concert and their *Blues and Jazz Festival* at the beginning of June.



Lichfield Spires 41 Club and Lichfield Round Table were shown a demonstration of the medieval marshal art of sword fighting by Daniel Antrobus who is a keen ambassador for HEMA (Historic European Martial Arts). The Guildhall setting for this exhibition and instruction was perfectly suited to this art. Examples of sword play from the early 14th century up until modern day were all displayed.

Lichfield Singers & Duncan Moon held a charity concert and the City of Lichfield Concert Band also held their spring concert.

Two student events were held recently; South Staffs College's Film Night to showcase students work and Lichfield College students held their Fashion Show.

On 10 June Lichfield District Soroptimists celebrated their 20th Anniversary with a Charter Lunch in the Guildhall and Talent Match Lichfield hosted a Tea Party for their volunteers in the Ashmole Room.

A violin concert of Paganini Caprices I was held as part of the Lichfield Festival. Further events as part of the Festival include Paganini Caprices II and Hansel & Gretel.

In addition there has been a Craft Fair, a fabric sale and three Market Research Bookings as well as a Pet Portrait and Art Exhibition in the Corridor Gallery. A Bible Exhibition was recently held in the Guildroom and Cathedral Pen's had their annual show in the main hall.

The Guildhall Bookings Secretary also looks after bookings at Boley Park Community Centre. The hall is used by regular hirers Monday – Friday day time and evening, and Sunday mornings. Since the beginning of June there has been a 30th Birthday Party, a Christening Party, family get-together and two children's parties. A Stamp Fair, Pre-School's Spring Fair, Lichfield Society of Artists Exhibition and the regular Stamp Fair were also held.

6. Open Spaces and Tree Management: Nick Burton, Open Spaces Officer

The dry weather has turned the grass brown in many areas. What money is saved on having to mow less has to be used on keeping hanging baskets and flower beds alive.

The very wet Spring with the strong early growth and now the long dry spell is putting some stress on the trees. Branches have been down in the Festival Garden, Warren Close and Johnson Close. These have been cleared quickly.

The route for the Lichfield in Bloom judging Day has been finalised with a range of the best things in Lichfield to show the judges. It now ends with a light lunch at St. John's Hospital where there is an example of how a new build can be sympathetically landscaped. The judging day will be filmed for a BBC programme on Britain in Bloom, due to air next year.

A working party was organised for nine employees to work at Dovehouse Fields for a day helping the community. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and a lot was achieved from willow weaving to clearing ground, and filling a raised bed. Staffordshire County Council has renovated and painted the A51 underpass which is a well-used route from Christchurch to the City.

Most of the benches on City Council land have now been renovated and the bench outside the Friary Library was moved further from the bus stop removing a potential hazard and keeping the path clearer.

The repairs to the cracked and damaged brickwork/balustrades to the walls in the Garden of Remembrance and the repairs to the damaged wall at the entrance to the Heather Gardens from the Walsall Road have now been completed.



7. Deputy Town Clerk: Sarah Thomas

On the 29 June the Deputy Town Clerk accompanied the Civic Officer to Shire Hall in Shrewsbury for a training course for Civic Heads and their support Officers. The course proved to be very informative and a good opportunity to network with other Officers.

In addition the Deputy Town Clerk has also obtained a Personal Alcohol Licence and is now a qualified Designated Premises Supervisor, along with the Town Clerk.

The Deputy is working with the Markets Officers to facilitate the installation of Bollards on the Market Square. Work continues to progress with the City Council's Health & Safety Consultants, Terrain. An updated Health and Safety Handbook has now been issued to all staff and it is hoped that some training workshops can now be arranged.

There has been a change in procedures this year regarding policing for the Sheriff's Ride. As part of this process the Deputy is attending the Safety Advisory Committee at the District Council on the 19 July in order to fully brief them on the requirements of the day.