

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee Meeting held in Committee Room 1, Guildhall at 10.30 am on Tuesday 4 October 2016

PRESENT:

Representing Lichfield City Council: Councillor R Awty, and Councillors J Brooks, Mrs G Boyle, C Spruce and R Yardley.

Representing Johnson Society: Mr R Davies

In Attendance: Joanne Wilson (Museums & Heritage Officer)
Tony Briggs (Deputy Town Clerk)

Apologies: Councillor A Thompson

30 MINUTES

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.* [Minutes adopted by Council on 18 April 2016.]

31 MUSEUM ADMISSIONS 2015/2016 (ANNUAL REVIEW)

Members considered the Museum Admissions report 2015/2016 (**Agenda Appendix 1**), noting in particular that the total number of visitors over the period exceeded 18,000 and that the number of school visits had risen sharply.

RESOLVED: *That the Museum Admissions 2015/2016 report be noted.*

32 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Further to the recommendation of the Committee at its March 2016 meeting, Members considered the update from the Museums and Heritage Officer following her investigations into the principle of reimagining and remodelling the displays at the museum. The proposal to include a sum in the region of £5,000 within the 2017/18 budget for the recruitment of a consultant was considered. It was felt that the appointment of a consultant and subsequent report centring on the visitor experience and facilities at the museum would be of great benefit in planning and executing the reimagining. The report would also be of assistance in future funding applications and help to ensure the Birthplace keeps pace with the proposed changes at St Mary's and other City Centre initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That a provisional sum of £5,000 be included within the 2017/2018 budget to engage a consultant to carry out a review of the Museum.*

33 ONLINE COLLECTION LAUNCH

The Committee considered the impact of making the collection held by the museum available online for the first time. It was agreed that the increased accessibility to the collection would promote the Birthplace to a worldwide audience and increase partnership opportunities with similar institutions. The quoted costs were agreed as being very competitive. Mr Davies advised that funding from the Johnson Society may be available to assist with this project.

RESOLVED: *That the Museums and Heritage Officer apply to the Johnson Society for a funding contribution towards the launching of the collection online.*

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That the Museums and Heritage Officer undertake necessary work to launch the collection online and that ongoing costs and charges are approved, pending an outcome from the funding application to the Johnson Society.*

34 RECOVERED OIL PAINTING

Members considered the report of the Museums and Heritage Officer (**Agenda Appendix 2**) outlining the circumstances in which a painting previously believed lost – 'Johnson Awaiting an Audience with Lord Chesterfield' (by Lumb Stocks, copy after E.M. Ward C.1848), donated to the

Birthplace in 1901 and badly damaged in the flood of the Birthplace basement in 1973 - had been found in the possession of conservator Jesse Bruton. The Committee considered the estimated £600 cost of reclaiming and reframing the painting. Mr Davies advised that an application for funding to the Johnson society to contribute towards the recovery would be appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the Museums and Heritage Officer apply to the Johnson Society for a funding contribution towards the reclaiming of the previously lost painting.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the City Council underwrite the cost of reclaiming the painting, pending an outcome from the funding application to the Johnson Society.

35 GARRICK 300 (INFORMATION REPORT)

The Museums and Heritage Officer updated Members on local plans to celebrate the 300th birthday of David Garrick in 2017. The collection of Garrick items held at the Birthplace will form part of an exhibition in Summer 2017 highlighting Garrick's close relationship with Johnson and several local partners have already been enlisted, including the Garrick Theatre, Darwin House, Visit Lichfield and St Mary's. The City-wide Heritage weekend will focus on the theme in 2017.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

36 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday, 23 March 2017.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.00 AM