

Lichfield City Council

Donegal House, Bore Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6LU

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

26 October 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

Representative 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 **2.00pm** on **Tuesday 2 November 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 Deputy Town Clerk (sarah.thomas@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 27 April 2021 (**copy attached**). [Minutes adopted by the City Council on 14 June 2021].

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM JBAC MINUTES

5 ANNUAL REVIEW

To consider the enclosed report by the Museums and Heritage Officer [**APPENDIX 1**]

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

6 DR JOHNSON'S BIRTHPLACE TRUST BANK ACCOUNT

The current balance of the Birthplace Trust Bank Account stands at £21,482.61. This includes £8,000 in grant funding received in April 2021 related to coronavirus closure. The Birthplace Trust account largely comprises funds from Blum family gifts and is specifically for collection care and conservation related projects. As established at the March 2018 meeting of this committee, approval of JBAC members must be sought for purchases over £500.

Estimated costs for the refurbishment of the Wood Library were presented at the April 2021 meeting (£5,050), to be spent in the 2022/23 financial year.

The following additional use of the fund is requested:

- **£1846** to replace outdated UV window film throughout the Birthplace building. This invisible film provides essential protection from light damage for the collection and furnishings. The total cost of the work is £2566, of which £800 in funding has already been secured by the Museum Support Officer from West Midlands Museum Development.
- **£672** to install blackout blinds in the London Life Room and **£440** for the Hay Hunter library. The current arrangements in these rooms are consistently too light for the objects on display. Following the change of lighting during the rewiring works, black-out blinds would enable better levels of collection care while retaining a light enough room for visitor comfort. The selected blinds would be provided by CVS, at the standard for historic buildings.

RECOMMENDED: That the purchase and installation of UV film (£1,846) and selected blinds (£1,112) at a total of £2,958 from the Dr Johnson Birthplace Trust Bank Account be approved.

7 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – UPDATE AND PROPOSALS FOR 2022/23

To consider the report at **APPENDIX 2** (attached).

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the report be noted

2. The Committee to decide whether or not it wishes the external redecoration of the Museum to be considered within 'Stage 3' of the redevelopment project. If so, JBAC to request that more detailed costings be obtained for presentation to a future JBAC meeting to allow further detailed discussion

3. That the Committee make a recommendation to Council as to the extent of any second phase in 2022/23 with the corresponding costs to be drawn from the Council's capital reserve; the projected second phase costs being approximately £75,000 [any adopted recommendation will then form part of the draft 2022/23 Repair and Renewals programme to be considered by Council at its January 2022 meeting.

8 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In the Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday 26 April 2022. 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.

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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 banister 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

Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum Visitor Numbers 2020/2021 Annual Report

2020/2021	2019/2020	2018/2019	2017/2018
1,653	20,994	21,427	18,287

The 2020/2021 period shows a significant decrease in visitor numbers due to periods of closure during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Museum was closed to visitors for 6 complete months in the current reporting period, from March – July 2020 and from November 2020. Visitors were welcomed back under limited conditions over the summer period.

Prior to the pandemic, visitor numbers had consistently increased since the introduction of free admission to the museum in October 2005. An unprecedented increase in visitors to 16,000 during Johnson's Tercentenary celebrations in 2009 had been consistently surpassed from 2013 onwards.

The quarterly breakdown of visitors was as follows:

Apr – Jun 2019	5,604	Jul – Sep 2019	7,075
Apr – Jun 2020	0	Jul – Sep 2020	1,200*
<i>Quarterly difference: -100%</i>		<i>Quarterly difference: -83%</i>	
Oct – Dec 2019	4,899	Jan – Mar 2020	3,416
Oct – Dec 2020	453**	Jan – Mar 2021	0
<i>Quarterly difference: -91%</i>		<i>Quarterly difference: -100%</i>	

**Museum reopened on 14 July 2020 ** Museum closed from 5 November 2020*

When visitors were able to return, they gave generously with a donation per head of 43p, representing a 19% increase on 2019/20 and the highest recorded average donation. Sales per head similarly rose to £1.32, an 83% increase on average spending in 19/20.

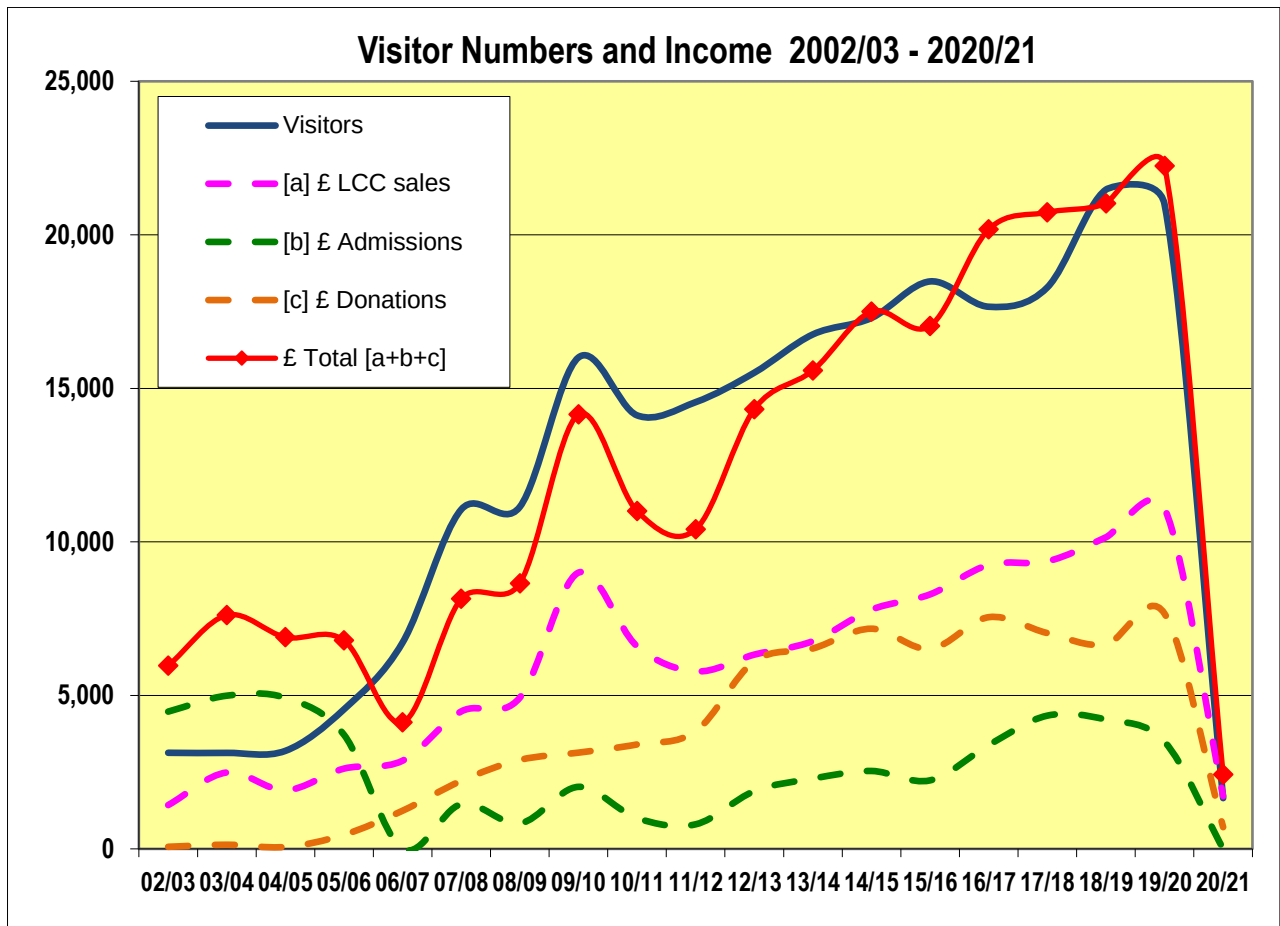
Indications from the present financial year

The Bookshop reopened in April 2021 and the Museum in July 2021.

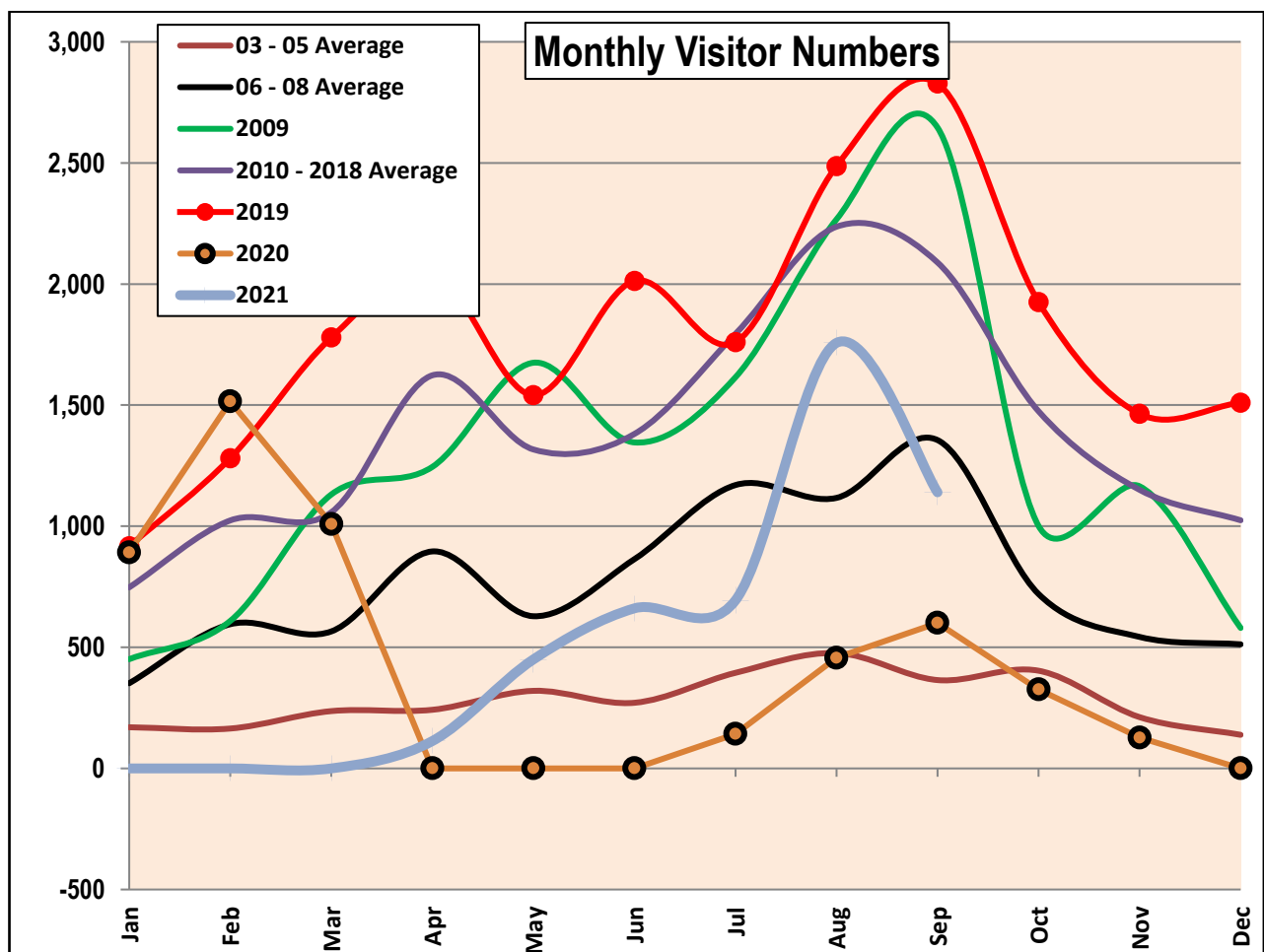
Figures from the present financial year indicate a well performing summer within the context of post-pandemic recovery. Monthly figures for the two complete visitor months available from 2021, compared with 2019, are shown below:

August 2019	2,487	September 2019	2,828
August 2021	1,757	September 2021	1,140
Difference: -29%		Difference: -59%	

Please see overleaf for tables giving an overview of Visitor Numbers and Income 2002-2021 and Monthly Visitor Numbers



*Admissions refers to guided tour, school and special events admissions from October 2005 onwards, when standard visits to the Museum became free of charge.



JBAC: 2 November 2021 APPENDIX 2

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – UPDATE AND PROPOSALS FOR 2022/23

Project Update

At its meeting of 3 November 2020, this Committee resolved to support the principle of a three-year Birthplace Museum redevelopment project and made a recommendation to Council that the elements included within year one of that programme be funded from the Council's capital reserve. The three-year project is based upon the following headline provisions and costings:

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

On adoption of this recommendation by Council, 'phase 1' was included in the draft 2021/22 Repairs and Renewals programme and adopted by Council at its January 2021 meeting. Significant progress has been made on phase 1, including:

- Submission of the planning and listed building consent applications. The outcome of the application was imminent at the time of writing.
- Continued consultation with disabled access expert Ann Johnson.
- Museum designers Vertigo finalised the design and started fabrication of the contents for the Workroom display, in close consultation with expert Bookbinder Arthur Green. The MHO has compiled exhibition content for the interactive screen for the room.
- Preparations to reglaze the workroom windows to replace the mid-20th century wired glass with a firesafe alternative more in keeping with the historic property.
- Paint testing was undertaken in the Workroom to establish whether any historic wall finishes were present to inform the colour scheme for the room. The tests found no evidence of historic material.
- Rewiring began on September 20 and work throughout the top three floors of the building was completed to schedule, with discrete surface mounted installation and very minimal disruption to the historic fabric. Work was halted on 6 October by the identification of Asbestos Insulation Board throughout the ceiling of the display kitchen and storage areas, preventing the completion of the ground floor wiring and access to power for the upper floors. A specialist survey was undertaken, and an air test confirmed that the area poses no immediate health risk. A report on the next steps to safely contain and manage the material and enable the rewiring to be completed is imminent. The bookshop has remained open throughout the work.

The total spent in 2021/22 to date is **£9,100** on professional fees and services. Items currently awaiting invoice total an additional £31,200, bringing the current year total to **£40,300**. Scheduling for the toilet installation and Workroom refit is dependent on the planning outcome. It is hoped that all planned work can still take place before the end of the 21/22 period with a work start time as early in the New Year as possible. A contribution to the workroom display from CIL funding (£14,625) means that spending in 21/22 is projected to be a corresponding amount under the allocated budget, with further savings to potentially emerge from monies set aside for contingencies.

As uncertainty over external funding remains, JBAC is once again asked to consider the appropriateness of the proposed second phase in readiness for the budget setting meeting

scheduled for January 2022 and make a recommendation to council that any second phase elements are funded by the City Council. Such projects would be funded from LCC's *capital* reserve which is estimated to be around £1.56m at 2021/22 year end.

Proposals for 2022/23

While officers will continue to explore all possible funding options in the meantime (such as HS2 project funding, CIL etc), the full cost of any recommended scheme should be allocated to City Council reserves initially in order that an appropriate budget can be set by the Council on the principle of informed choice for 2022/23.

The second phase broadly consists of:

- New Parlour Displays
- Improvements to library and research area (using Blum funding)
- New external steps to Market St elevation

A full breakdown of costs, including the broad split of contingency, additional costs and professional fees is provided at **APPENDIX A to this report**. The costs have been updated to include an adjustment to the order of rooms to be refitted and to remove the resolved access beyond the staircase. These initial costs are indicative estimates only, members are asked to note that final costs will be determined by the tender process in line with the City Council's financial regulations and may therefore vary from those presented herein.

In addition, the latest Quinquennial report on the Birthplace recommended an exterior repaint and minor repair work as a long-range item for consideration. The indicative cost included in the report was £25,000. The view of the committee is sought on whether this work should be considered as an additional item within the scope of the ground floor project. If so, detailed costs can be obtained for discussion at a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the report be noted

2. The Committee to decide whether or not it wishes the external redecoration of the Museum to be considered within 'Stage 3' of the redevelopment project. If so, JBAC to request that more detailed costings be obtained for presentation to a future JBAC meeting to allow further detailed discussion

3. That the Committee make a recommendation to Council as to the extent of any second phase in 2022/23 with the corresponding costs to be drawn from the Council's capital reserve; the projected second phase costs being approximately £75,000 [any adopted recommendation will then form part of the draft 2022/23 Repair and Renewals programme to be considered by Council at its January 2022 meeting.

APPENDIX A

UPDATED COSTS FOR GROUND FLOOR DEVELOPMENT

Total:	£	279,090.55
Stage 1	£	75,321.58
Rewiring	£	12,000.00
Works: Toilet Pod and associated items	£	13,900.00
Workroom Displays (<i>funded via CIL</i>)	£	14,625.00
Yard Display	£	5,000.00
Bookbinding consultation (and creation of working model)	£	2,500.00
Proportion of Fees, additional costs, and contingency	£	27,296.58
Stage 2	£	75,068.48
Bookshop Displays (<i>*switched with the Stage 3 Parlour</i>)	£	19,350.00
Works: New Steps	£	28,638.00
Proportion of Fees, additional costs, and contingency	£	27,080.48
Stage 3	£	128,700.49
Works: Lift	£	71,570.00
Parlour Displays (<i>*switched with the Stage 2 Bookshop</i>)	£	30,050.00
Proportion of Fees, additional costs, and contingency	£	27,080.49
Consultation and Fees	£	26,587.75
Archaeological Monitoring	£	1,625.00
Heritage Statement	£	1,180.00
Planning Application Fee	£	234.00
BHB Fee: Concept	£	3,767.75
BHB Fee: Planning	£	3,767.75
BHB Fee: Construction	£	4,709.69
BHB Fee: Tender	£	6,593.56
Structural Engineer	£	3,000.00
Consultation: neurodiverse audiences	£	1,050.00
Consultation: access expert input and feedback	£	300.00
Designers: preparation of material for planning applications	£	360.00
Works: additional costs	£	29,869.80
Works: preliminaries and misc. items	£	7,690.00
Works: example Mark-up at 10% for Option A (Opening)	£	12,179.80
Works: contingency	£	10,000.00
Project contingency (10%)	£	25,000.00
Sub-Total	£	81,457.55

Note: above costs are based on supplier estimates. The appointment of suppliers will be subject to tendering processes in accordance with LCC Financial Regulations.