

CM/JW/J1/2
8 March 2016

To: Members of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee
Councillors R Awty, Mrs M Boyle, J Brooks, C Spruce, A Thompson and R Yardley

Representative of Johnson Society
Mr P Jones

Also to:
Museums and Heritage Officer (Joanne Wilson)

Dear Committee Member

Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee to be held in Committee Room 1, Guildhall at **2.00pm on Thursday 17 March 2016.**

Yours sincerely



Christopher Moulton
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 October 2015 (**copy attached**). [Minutes received by City Council on 19 October 2015]

3 FORWARD PLAN

To consider the updated Forward Plan 2016-2019 (**Appendix 1 enclosed**).

This has been updated from the full forward Plan 2015-2018 and contains details of the key strategic aims for the Museum during the period.

RECOMMENDED: That the updated Forward Plan 2016-2019 be adopted.

4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum Forward Plan 2015-2018 identifies the need to “assess use of available public space and allocation of rooms in building, research potential funding for large scale redisplay of rooms” (see section iii,b: Update interpretive materials and displays), with initial reporting indicated for March 2018.

The last full redisplay of the collections and building layout was completed in 1989/1990,

primarily with EU funding. In 2005, the redisplay of the Dictionary room was undertaken using a gift from a private individual. As in these previous redisplays, the onus would not be on the City Council to meet the full costs of such a project, and the identification of external funding and liaison with the Heritage Lottery Fund would form an integral part of the planning stages.

There is a considerable lead-in time required to develop the proposals, acquire funding and deliver a redisplay; and the table below outlines the likely timescale of such an undertaking.

Much has changed in 26 years. At the last development in 2005 the Birthplace received **3,200** visitors in a year. Now with over **18,000** visitors a year, public consultation and benefit would be at the heart of the development of such a project. Whilst there is plenty that is successful in the current layout and a sustainable approach to redisplay is advisable, the changing needs and expectations of museum visitors, new approaches to museum interpretation and collections management; and knowledge about caring for the collection and historic building should be represented. Similar development projects have already taken place in comparable museums in the area and, with the planned developments across the city centre underway, consideration should be given to safeguarding the continuing success, relevance and vibrancy of the Birthplace.

An indicative timetable:

2016-17	Identification of external consultants to undertake a review. Initial liaison with funding bodies
2017-18	Review and consultation
2018-19	Submission of first-round application
2019-20	Development phase
2019-21	Submission of second-round application
2021-22	Delivery Phase

RECOMMENDED: 1. That the principle of re-imagining and remodelling of the collections at the Museum be agreed.

2. That the Museums and Heritage Officer undertake necessary investigatory work to establish costings for the appointment of consultants to carry out a review of the Museum, with a view to this being included within the 2017/18 budget.

5 VOLUNTEER TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Volunteers contribute a huge amount to the Birthplace, with a team of 10-15 regular volunteers giving their time and skills to equal the total equivalent of a full time member of staff. Following the introduction of paid Attendants in the 2000's, no culture of regular and structured volunteering had been established (with the exception of a few discrete projects and placements) until 2009. Volunteers now join the Birthplace in specified and advertised roles, and are integral to many activities including collection care and documentation, audience development, events, education and marketing, all of which the Birthplace could simply not achieve without volunteer input.

To date, no reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses of any kind has been offered to volunteers at the Museum. However, the payment of limited out of pocket expenses is increasingly being recognised as best practice in the sector, and is the standard for organisations such as the National Trust.

If parking and public transport costs were refundable to volunteers at the Museum (on the production of proof of purchase, and with caps based on local journeys), it is anticipated that the total cost would be under £1000 per year. Provision of reimbursement would recognise the contribution made by those who volunteer and would also remove a barrier to volunteering, improving access to involvement in the Birthplace for all of the community.

RECOMMENDED: That the City Council adopt a policy of offering limited reimbursement in respect of travel expenses, to volunteers working at the Museum.

6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday, 4 October 2016.