



Lichfield City Council

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Town Clerk: Anthony Briggs

TB/JW/J1/2
29 October 2019

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

Also to:

Museums and Heritage Officer (Joanne Wilson)

Dear Committee Member

Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee (JBAC)

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee to be held in The Moulton Room, Guildhall at **10.30am on Tuesday 5 November 2019**.

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 and appendices of the Meeting held on 11 April 2019 (**copy attached**). [Minutes and appendices adopted by the City Council on 23 April 2019].

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM JBAC MINUTES

5 JBAC COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Following the elections of May 2019, two longstanding JBAC members stood down as Councillors and therefore relinquished membership of this Committee. Former Councillors Mr Bob Awty and Mr Tony Thompson have many years of experience and considerable knowledge both of the Birthplace and of Dr Johnson himself.

Both former Councillors have expressed an interest in keeping up to date with developments at the Birthplace and their input would no doubt be both constructive and informative.

The Committee may make a recommendation to Council that its membership be amended if it so wishes, however the rights of honorary members should be clearly set out.

If the Committee is minded to make such a recommendation it may be appropriate to offer a 'non-voting' honorary membership, whereby honorary members would be allowed to speak on any matter within the remit of the Committee, but not vote. This would serve to preserve the integrity of the decision process of the 'core' Committee and also isolate honorary members from any adverse comments or occurrences resulting from a recommendation of the Committee.

The Committee is asked to consider the appropriateness of a recommendation to Council that an invitation to become honorary lifetime members of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee be extended to Mr Bob Awty and Mr Tony Thompson. The honorary membership to allow both individuals to attend and participate fully in meetings of the Committee, with the exception of voting rights.

6 MUSEUM ADMISSIONS 2018/19 (ANNUAL REVIEW)

The Museums and Heritage Officer (MHO) to report on admission figures for this period as **APPENDIX 1** attached.

7 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATE

As reported verbally at the last meeting of this committee, the initial Expression of Interest (EOI) form submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) was not accepted but the NLHF asked to visit the Museum to discuss the project. The MHO met with a representative in May and the feedback was very encouraging, the proposal was overall considered to be of high quality but suggested adjustments included the overall project to be less building-centred and include more engagement activities, and to be more specific about which new groups of users would be engaged. It was also suggested that seeking further match funding would be advisable, and that a much longer lead-in time to develop the stages of the application would be realistic.

Work completed since May has included meeting with an expert in autism and neuro-divergent audiences, taking part in West Midland Museum Development's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training from September and signing up to their 'Open Access' audit scheme to start in October. Proposals for accessible solutions for the ground floor have been drafted by the architect and are currently awaiting feedback from the Listing Officer and Historic England.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted

8 MUSEUM ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT: FIXED-TERM ADDITIONAL HOURS

The post of Museum Administration Assistant (MAA) was created in November 2017 and the post was recruited to in February 2018. The MAA currently works 22 hours per week (three days Tuesday - Thursday) on general enquiries and office duties, online promotion of the Museum, sales records and shop stock, school and guided tour bookings and supporting the day-to-day needs of the Museum Attendants. The MAA has delivered good results in the post to date but as the Museum becomes busier annually and the MAA's hours are increasingly filled, many essential everyday tasks unavoidably return to the MHO for two days each week, inhibiting the progress of larger pieces of work and limiting available opportunities for partnerships, projects and events which the Museum could be involved in. In 2018/19 the Birthplace received 94% more visitors than it did a decade ago: a doubling in the number of users, generating considerable increases in workload.

The draft plans for the Development Project budget include a back-fill of staff time in order to allow the MHO two days a week of dedicated Project Management time to oversee work once it is underway. However, as there is much work to be done to put initial applications together before this funding might be achieved, it would be helpful if consideration were given to extending MAA hours on a fixed-term basis while the MHO develops the project plans and completes applications to pursue external funding. This would enable the MAA to provide

additional administrative support and further ensure that the day-to-day smooth running of the Museum is not negatively impacted by the work required to achieve the Development Project. To that end a request for consideration of additional hours on a fixed term basis is to be discussed by the City council's Staffing Committee at its meeting on 7 November 2019.

Such a request must of course be balanced with the competing priorities for the City Council's budget which remains under considerable pressure for 2020/21; for each additional hour worked the cost to the council (including on-costs) is approximately £13.50 per week, or £700.00 per year.

The direction of the Committee is sought in regard to:

a) The principle of increased hours on a fixed term basis for the post of Museum Administration Assistant

and

b) If the Committee lends its support to the proposal at (a), an indication of what it believes to be an appropriate increase in number of hours worked per week. [the post is currently 22 hours per week, therefore the maximum number of additional hours per week is 15 as this would result in the post becoming full-time.]

The proposal is to be considered by the City Council's Staffing Committee on 7 November 2019, the views of this Committee will be used to inform deliberations at that time.

9 VACANCY - MUSEUM ATTENDANT POST

Five Attendants are employed in a rota across public opening hours (with only one Attendant on duty at a time). One Attendant, Sue Bray has given notice of her intention to retire at the end of October 2019 after 16 years at the Museum. It is the view of MHO and the Town Clerk that five attendants remains the optimum number in order to ensure that weekend rotation and full rota cover can be maintained. The Committee supported this view upon the retirement of two Attendants in 2017, with the posts being recruited to subsequently.

The matter of recruiting to this role is scheduled to be discussed at the meeting of the Staffing Committee to be held on 7 November 2019.

RECOMMENDED:

- a) That the thanks and appreciation of the Committee, together with best wishes for the future, be extended to Sue Bray***
- b) That the Committee once again formally supports the view that five Attendants is the optimum number for the Birthplace currently***
- c) That the Committee request favourable consideration be given to the proposal to recruit a new Attendant to the now vacant role (the proposal to be considered by the City Council's Staffing Committee on 7 November 2019).***

10 ASHMOLE PORTRAIT RESTORATION

Following a recommendation of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee as adopted by Council on 3 December 2018, a sum of money was included from 2019/20 budgets for the restoration of the portrait of Elias Ashmole that hangs in the Ashmole Room, Guildhall. The portrait has now been transported to the conservator's studio.

The windows of the Ashmole Room have been covered with UV protecting filters following the conservator's recommendation.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

11 BIRTHPLACE TRUST CONSERVATION FUND

Following a recommendation of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee as adopted by Council on 23 April 2018, the Town Clerk and M&HO have delegated authority to commission conservation work for items under £500 using funds from the Dr Johnson Birthplace Trust account, which largely comprises the Daniel Blum fund for book purchases and collection conservation projects. Current work being undertaken utilising Birthplace Trust Funding is an urgent repair to Samuel Johnson's inscribed copy of Richard Twiss's 'Travels through Portugal and Spain' (1775) at a cost of £300, and a new book cover to be made for the same object at £250. The account balance currently stands at £7,779.69, following a generous donation of £1000 from a charitable fund in November 2018.

Three further pieces of conservation work from the fund are currently proposed:

- Volume one of the Letters of Lord Chesterfield (1775) which has split in two halves down the spine (£250)
- A day of a conservator's work on site to refix labels and make small repairs and fully appraise runs of 'Gentleman's Magazine's and 'Monthly Review' (£360)
- A copy of Bailey's English Dictionary (1736), the pre-cursor to Johnson's own, which was gifted by Lord Charnwood in 1938 and has a detached cover (£735)

RECOMMENDED:

- a) That the total spend of £550 to date be noted**
- b) That the Committee supports the proposal for spending a further £1345 on the conservation of the items listed above.**

12 BIRTHPLACE TRUST PAYPAL ACCOUNT

The Museum PayPal account was set up in 2007 but was little-used until recent years. The service allows individuals to make donations online, and since summer 2019 make online bookings for events using the website 'eventbrite'. A small balance has now built up. In order to access these funds, they must be transferred to a linked bank account. To meet auditing requirements, it is recommended that permissions for making such transfers are approved and minuted. It is therefore suggested that delegated authority be granted to both the M&HO and Town Clerk to make payments from the Paypal account to the Birthplace Trust bank account or to the Lichfield City Council bank account as appropriate.

RECOMMENDED: That delegated authority be granted to the M&HO and Town Clerk to make online payments from the PayPal account into the Birthplace Trust Bank Account and Lichfield City Council Bank Account.

13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In the Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday 28 April 2020. Following adoption of the Minutes of the JBAC meeting of 6 November 2018, additional meetings may be called in the meantime if appropriate, particularly in response to the need for Committee guidance in the NLHF fund submission process.

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 in the Moulton Room, Guildhall at 10.30 am on Thursday 11 April 2019

PRESENT:

Representing Lichfield City Council: Councillor R Awty (Chairman), and Councillors J Brooks, Mrs S James, A Thompson and R Yardley.

In Attendance: Joanne Wilson (Museums & Heritage Officer),
Penny Taylor (Museum Administration Assistant)
Tony Briggs (Town Clerk)
Richard Davies (representative of the Johnson Society)

Apologies: Councillor C Spruce

65 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record. [Minutes adopted by Council on 5 December 2018.]

66 A PROSPECT VIEW OF LICHFIELD FROM THE WEST

Councillor R Yardley detailed his work in photographing 'A Prospect View of Lichfield From the West' (a painting that forms part of the Birthplace collection and is currently displayed in the Ashmole Room, Guildhall) in order to reveal more detail.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report be noted and the best thanks of the Committee be given to Cllr Yardley for his efforts.

b) The Museum and Heritage Officer investigates options for the sale of prints of the enhanced painting and also the possibility of an exhibition of this and similar paintings at the Birthplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

a) A press release be compiled and released detailing the project and its results

b) The Council procure a print of the enhanced painting to display alongside the original painting, together with an explanation of the project

c) That expert advice is sought as to what the enhanced painting reveals in regard to the current understanding of Lichfield at the time the original painting was completed

d) Cost estimates be sought for the reglazing of the original painting in order to protect it from damage.

67 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the updated Forward Plan 2019-2022 .

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the Forward Plan 2019-22 be adopted.

68 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Committee considered the MHO's update, including communication had been received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) following submission of an Expression of Interest. The Committee were informed that the initial response from NLHF had been somewhat negative in that the expression of interest would not be carried forward into a full bid at this stage. However, NLHF representatives did wish to meet with LCC representatives to discuss the application and this meeting is scheduled for 15 May. The Committee felt that this meeting was a positive development and supported and encouraged the forthcoming dialogue.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

69 COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION POLICY AND VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

The Committee considered the draft Collections Care and Conservation Policy and draft Volunteer Agreement.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the Collections Care and Conservation Policy and the Volunteer Agreement be adopted.

70 KEELE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Museums and Heritage Officer on the recent completion of the '18th Century Textual Studies' project in partnership with Keele University.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

71 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

In Calendar of Meetings as 10.30am on Tuesday 5 November 2019.

In closing the meeting the retiring Chairman thanked the Committee and the Museums and Heritage Officer for their hard work and support during his tenure. Councillor Thompson, a former Committee Chairman, echoed the Chairman's comments and emphasised the considerable improvements in terms of outreach, visitor numbers and events at the Museum during the past 10 years or so.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.10 AM

Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum Visitor Numbers 2018/2019 Annual Report

2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
21,427	18,287	17,687	18,523

This represents a 17% increase on the previous period. This was the thirteenth full period after the introduction of free admission to the museum in October 2005. 2017/18 visitor figures represent a 94% increase on visitor numbers in 2007/08 (11,054). A significant rise in visitor numbers to 16,004 was seen during 2009/2010 for Johnson's tercentenary celebrations. Following an initial decrease in 2010/11, a steady increase has led to numbers that now consistently exceed that previously unprecedented year, by 34% in the current period.

Apr – Jun 2017 4,357 Apr* – Jun 2018 5,138 <i>Quarterly difference: +18%</i>	Jul – Sep 2017 6,681 Jul – Sep 2018 7,067 <i>Quarterly difference: +6%</i>
Oct – Dec 2016 4,571 Oct – Dec 2018 5,641 <i>Quarterly difference: + 23%</i>	Jan – Mar 2017 3,052 Jan – Mar 2019 3,977 <i>Quarterly difference: +30%</i>

Of the 21,427 visits to the museum in 2018/2019:

- 721 attended a paid event at the museum (770 in 17/18)
- 79 attended as part of an adult group visit (102 in 17/18)
- 429 attended as part of a school group visit (532 in 17/18)

Additionally, 1314 people had contact with the Museum through Outreach activities

Shop sales income had gone down slightly with an average spend per head of 67p (73p in 2017/18 and 38p in 2016/17). The 2018/2019 period saw a 5% decrease in overall donations on the previous year, with annual donation box income at £6,658 (before additional gift aid refund) and an average gift of 32p per free-entry visitor.

**2007/08 is used as the baseline because bookshop visitors were reclassified as service users from April 2007
 the total calendar quarters differ slightly from the annual reporting figures due to variations in the date of week 1.

Indications from the present financial year

The initial figures from the present financial year indicate a sustained increase in visitor numbers, and a considerable increase in sales and donations income, with a current increase of 18% (at week 27)

Apr – Jun 2018 5,138 Apr – Jun 2019 5,604 <i>Quarterly difference: +9%</i>	Jul- Sep 2018 7,067 Jul- Sep 2019 7,075 <i>Difference in this period: +0.1%</i>
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Visitor Numbers and Income 2000/1 - 2018/19

