

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee Meeting held in the Moulton Room, Guildhall at 10.30 am on Tuesday 18 February 2020

PRESENT:

Representing Lichfield City Council:	Councillor Mrs G Boyle (Chairman), and Councillors Dundas, J Eagland, T Matthews, C Rapley and C Spruce.	D
In Attendance:	Joanne Wilson (Museums & Heritage Officer) Penny Taylor (Museums Administration Assistant) Tony Briggs (Town Clerk) Mr Tony Thompson, Mr Robert Awty Mr P Jones & Mr J Winterton (Johnson Society representatives)	
Apologies:	Councillor R Yardley	

83 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllrs Mrs Eagland and T Matthews declared an interest under agenda item 6 (Ground Floor Adaptations – Disabled Access) as members of Lichfield District Council's planning committee. The Town Clerk confirmed that the general dispensation to speak and vote on such matters allowed them to participate, but both wished to emphasise that their attendance at the meeting did not constitute the formation of an opinion prior to the matter being considered by the District Council's Planning Committee; neither Councillor voted on this matter.

84 MINUTES

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.* [Minutes adopted by Council on 2 December 2019.]

85 MATTERS ARISING FROM JBAC MINUTES

Mr T Thompson requested feedback on the recommendations made at the previous meeting regarding the additional hours for the Museum Administration Assistant Post and the appointment of a Museum Attendant. The Town Clerk confirmed that the recommendations had been adopted but with a minor change; the additional fixed term hours for the Museum Administration Assistant being for a period of 24 months rather than the 36 recommended by the Committee.

86 OPTIONS FOR NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND APPLICATION

Members considered the Museum and Heritage Officer's (MHO) report (Agenda Appendix 1) which presented three funding options available for the redevelopment project and requested the Committee's guidance as to its preferred option. In brief, the three options were:

Option A - access to the largest single pot of funding, and a funded development phase but with the longest lead-in time and the possibility of not achieving funding for the delivery phase.

Option B - enables work to start much earlier, could be the most expensive option for LCC, but would achieve the whole project.

Option C – also enables work to start earlier, could be the most affordable option for LCC and would be seeking the least funding, but *only half of the Museum would be refurbished*, with further fundraising and contributions from LCC required to complete the project.

Considerable detailed discussion was held, with option C being the first to be discounted by majority vote and a further vote held in regard to options A and B.

Discussions were also held on the content of the Draft Expression of Interest form (agenda Appendix 2) and it was agreed that the first two paragraphs be amended to highlight the influence that the building and the City had on Johnson plus the links to other notable Lichfeldians.

RESOLVED:

- a) *That the Committee believe Option B (as presented in the agenda report) to be the most appropriate and that this option for funding be pursued*
- b) *The suggested amendments to the draft Expression of Interest form be made prior to submission*
- c) *Contact be made with local consultancies who may be able to act as Project Managers and their advice sought*
- d) *Advice be sought from Susan Dalloe Consultancy (who have already prepared some of the development project documentation) regarding assistance with funding bid applications and general guidance.*

87 GROUND FLOOR ADAPTATIONS – DISABLED ACCESS

Following recommendations by Susan Dalloe Consultancy, architects provided options for establishing disabled access to the ground floor of the Museum. These plans focussed on the Market Street steps as they are a relatively recent addition. A pre-planning application was submitted in order to receive feedback from the District Conservation Officer and Historic England; they requested an alternative plan, using the Market Square side of the building for disabled access provision.

The Committee expressed considerable concern with the proposal to site the disabled access on Breadmarket Street, highlighting several issues including:

- The narrow footpath along Breadmarket Street and the impact disabled access to the museum would have on this footpath
- In addition to the above, the narrow and potentially difficult access to the Museum itself that the Breadmarket street solution would provide for wheelchair users
- Loss of historic building fabric and the symmetrical appearance of this elevation as depicted in artwork and photographs across the centuries
- The compromises that are made to the internal ground floor layout as a result of this option.

The preference of the Committee was for a return to proposals for disabled access from Market Street.

There was also considerable concern from Johnson Society representatives regarding the proposal to remove a section of wall between the bookshop into Michael Johnson's workroom; the removal of this section of wall being designed to provide disabled access to the whole ground floor and proposed toilet. This matter to be discussed further at subsequent meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk and MHO enter into further discussion with Historic England and the District Council's Conservation Officer, citing the concerns raised by the Committee regarding the proposals for a 'Breadmarket St' disabled access, and seeking responses from them regarding these concerns.

88 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

10.30am on Tuesday 28 April 2020.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 12.00 MIDDAY