

WELCOMING EVERYONE TO LICHFIELD



LICHFIELD DISTRICT CITY OF SANCTUARY

A warm summer welcome to this 6th newsletter, marking the turn of the half-year, and the return of balmy, sun-filled days - I hope!

In my last newsletter I mentioned that events held during the course of 2024 demonstrated how, through kindness, compassion and tolerance, we may *all* live alongside each other in peace and harmony, irrespective of race, creed or beliefs, in the cause of non-judgemental support and inclusivity. Well, 2025 has certainly lived up to this excellent example, with the resounding success of the 'Look Who's Here' event, which was staged just a week or so ago on 13th April @ the Garrick Theatre. This was such a landmark event, and was such a deserved testament to the enormous efforts and commitment of the wonderful team of LDCoS volunteers who made this event possible (not to mention the supportive collaboration of the Garrick Theatre), that I make no apology for devoting the bulk of this newsletter to the celebration of this very special day. Enjoy the spectacular, joy-filled photos and feedback from our roving reporters (particular thanks here to Rehana Firth), and help us to make such events a regular feature for our richly diverse City.

It is of no less joy to me to include in this summer issue a very moving piece by a young house guest of one of our trustees, recalling summer vacations spent with his grandparents in Ukraine. It is a beautiful piece of writing, and vividly creates a poignant picture of happy sun-filled innocent childhood summers.

Wishing you all a very happy summer, and safe holiday travels.

ROSEMARY BISHOP



Ed-

IN THIS ISSUE

- ◆ 'Look who's Here'
- ◆ My childhood summer holiday in Ukraine
- ◆ 'Ukrainian Library'
- ◆ A truly magical Easter experience
- ◆ Annual Iona Community picnic @ Beaudesert Activity Park
- ◆ Calendar of events 2025
- ◆ Action Group Update
- ◆ Membership Form + Gift Aid Declaration
- ◆ Nigel Gann shares his comments/ experiences of last quarter's activities/ achievements
- ◆ Reg has the last word - after all, he has just had a Birthday !



'Look who's here !'

'A celebration of the rich and diverse culture that is Lichfield'

Sunday 13th April, 11:00 am—3:30 pm, Lichfield Garrick theatre

On Sunday 13th April, LDCoS, in collaboration with Lichfield Garrick theatre, invited members of our community who have been displaced from their native homes, or who may face discrimination or exclusion as a result of racism, poverty, abuse, sexuality, disability or violence, to join us in celebrating their skills, culture and life experiences. This colourful platform also provided a valuable opportunity to draw the attention of the local business community to the existence of this rich but untapped pool of skilled personnel, all of whom are eager to find employment, self-employment or volunteering opportunities where they can deservedly use the many skills which they have to offer.

Stalls displaying, demonstrating and selling crafts, goods and services were spread through the theatre, and activities and performances were staged throughout the day, many on the main stage. Visitors were invited to enjoy multi-lingual storytelling, artists at work, advice from experts and professionals, and a performance by LDCoS-funded Ukrainian choir, led by renowned musician Cathy Lamb.

Members of the public, representatives of local businesses, professional organisations, community services and local council members, responded to our invitation to visit, share in and benefit from this inaugural showcase of the culture and largely hidden skills with which we are so richly endowed in Lichfield, and we are delighted to report that a good time was indeed had by all.

I will now proceed to offer a photographic tableau in order that you may relive this wonderful day in all its glory, but I believe that the true testament to the success of the day may be summed up in the following communication received by Nigel Gann during the evening following the event -

Good evening Nigel , I just wanted to say thankyou for todays event. From the moment we walked in to the minute we left we had people of all ethnicity talk to us , from listening to stories from the Ukraine people that now live in Lichfield to young people interested in what we do. We have shared stories of the police in other countries and the differences between us , it has helped break so many bridges and highlight to us the amount of different cultures we have here in Lichfield .

It was lovely to meet so many different people and help, with advice and reassurance, people who have entered this country and have not had the opportunity to talk to the Police. They were so grateful to see and talk to us , it made our job all worth while .

If there is anything we can do in the future please do not hesitate to contact me

Kind regards

PCSO Hilary Barrett



Look who's
Here! ”



Volunteers welcome visitors with
smiles - and cake !



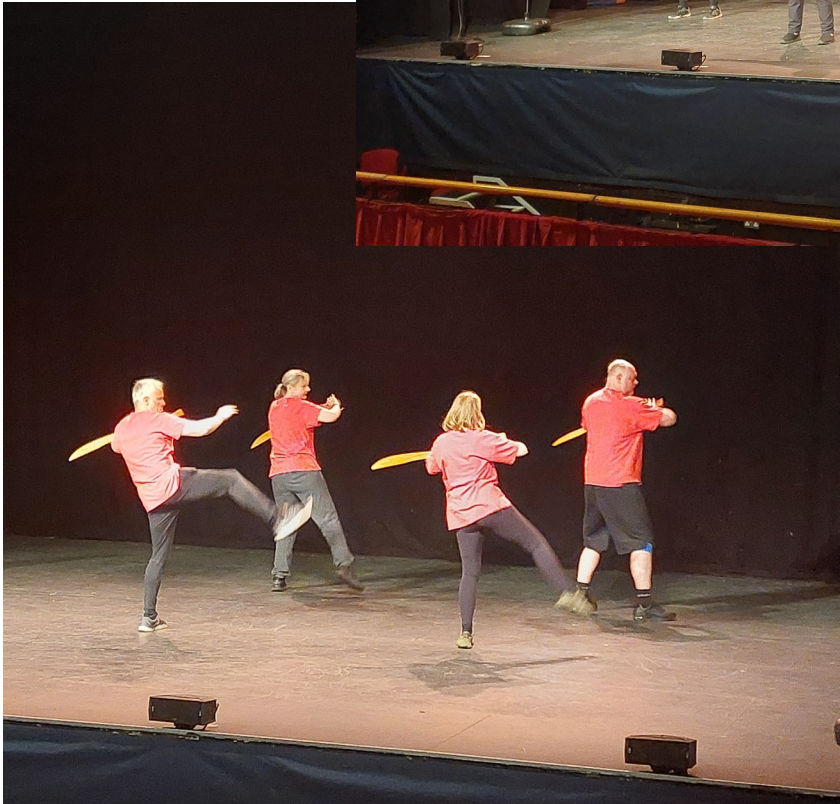
Ukrainian Choir in full voice.

(Note the exquisite embroidery of the traditional Ukrainian Vyshyvanka)





Lights, Music, Camera, Action !





My childhood summer holidays in Ukraine.



When I was between 6 and 14 years old, I was still a schoolboy. Every year during summer holiday time, my sister and I went to stay with our grandmother and grandfather in a village in the countryside. We were there for at least two months, probably more like two and a half. Actually I don't remember exactly, because I had different exams and the school term always finished on different dates.

As it happened, my parents were born in the same village and knew each other from school years. After they grew up, mom and dad finished college and professional schooling. The details don't really matter). My father did military service in the army and finally they married. After they married, they relocated to the big city. It was Vinnitsa. As a result of their marriage, I had two grandmothers and two grandfathers in the same village. For me it was very comfortable, and I could visit them all together at the same time. They were wonderful people.

On working days we lived in the house of the parents of my mom and at the weekend we rode on our single bicycle to the house of my father's parents. I liked to spend time with my second grandparents as well. At the weekend I rode horses and fished. There I played with friends and cousins as well. It was cool.

Usually on workdays I got up at 7:30 am and went to breakfast. Always my grandmother cooked hearty breakfasts and they were very delicious. The first meal of the day is very important to feel "full of beans". It was a big plate with 3 fried eggs, homemade bacon, vegetables and salad or herbs from our allotment, one glass of raw milk and sweet buns. Yum, yum... When I remember that, my saliva begins flowing.

We ate only fresh and homegrown products, which we grew and animals we cared for. They included: fruits, vegetables, herbs and salads, milk and homemade cottage cheese, homemade pickles, homegrown birds and homegrown meat from rabbits, pigs and beef, and as many different other produce as we could possibly grow and breed in the garden at the home.

After breakfast we had a regular routine, house work. My first task was escorting cows and calves to pasture. After I went home, usually my work was to: feed our rabbits and homegrown birds (chickens, ducks and geese). My grandfather had about 20-22 rabbits, and usually he tried to keep around the same number. "Why? Actually - no idea!" One time I asked him, and I got an answer, but too difficult for my age and as a result I didn't understand anything.

During the morning routine, grandmother was cooking breakfast.

So, a few hours flew by, and at lunch I went to get the cattle from the pasture. I took a bucket with me, and near the pasture from the local well I drew water and fed the cows and calves. The well was in the middle of a small garden with fruit trees. I liked to relax and dream there.

After the cattle finished drinking, I untied them and drove them home. I had a question: 'Why water the cattle, if they go home to be milked and fed again?' I did not understand the answer and did not listen to my grandfather. Once I was lazy and I did not take a bucket. To take the full bucket of water to the cows, I usually had to walk about 100 meters. A full bucket of water was very heavy for a small boy. When I came to the cattle without water and untied them, they ran home like mad, taking out everything in their way.

2

I tried to hold them but could not. I ran all the way and didn't know what was going on. Eventually, as they ran into the yard of the house and headed for their cattle pen with a loud moo, I began to guess. Grandpa asked me 'what happened?' and I told him. First we fed the animals and then he said, 'Do you know why you should feed them before you untie them?' I said with confidence, 'Yes, because they are thirsty and tired under the sun. If they do not drink, they run home to drink quickly'.

After lunch and a short rest, I took the animals to the pasture again. After that, I had plenty of free time for my personal affairs. Usually with local kids I walked to the river bank. There was a local beach where we sunbathed, played games and had a fun time.

In the evening, the story of the cattle was repeated again, but without cattle watering, because it was not so hot after dinner and they walked home patiently.

After dinner I could get back to my own affairs. Usually, we would gather in a big group with local guys and girls. We had different games, football, basketball, lit fires, played guitar and told stories. We were not the only children who came to visit relatives from big cities during the holidays. All parents tried to send their children on summer holidays anywhere: to the village of their grandparents, relatives, or to the summer pioneer camps. Even though it was not official, the pioneer camps were especially for those who had strong ties in government circles or parents who held higher civil servant jobs. There were guys from different parts of the country and even from different countries. Everyone was happy and having fun.

From time to time I went fishing. Usually I warned my grandfather about it and he took care of the animals instead. In the evening before fishing I prepared fishing lure and bait, checked the weather for a good day off and prepared the fishing equipment. For different weather and for different types of fish I needed to prepare a different fishing bait and lure. I set the alarm clock at 4:30 am. I woke up, took the ready-made fishing gear and fishing lure and went out fishing. Around 5:30 am I started to fish. It was cool, sitting in silence, on the river bank, listening to the sounds of nature and frogs, and meeting the first rays of the sun and relaxing from daily routine. After a few hours I usually had several kilos of fresh fish ready.

At the end of summer I helped with the harvest, but most of the harvest was in autumn, during short holidays or weekends. All the relatives came. Uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters all came to help. Our allotment, orchard and fruit garden were huge. It was 3 or 4 days of work, enough for everyone.

After the harvest, Grandpa and Dad would take one pig and slaughter it. Meat was distributed equally to all the relatives and a little bit prepared for a holiday meal at the end of the harvest season. Also, my grandfather had a small-scale apiary with 14 hives. It was a modest apiary, but anyway every year he collected about 60 kg of honey. He also gave honey to his whole family.

So I spent the summer holidays in the village, and it's a modest story about how it was.

There is still a winter break to write about, but that is a separate story.....



Ukrainian Bookcase'

'Ukrainian Bookcase' is an event for children and their families led by LDCoS volunteer, Luba Rodionova, at the Garrick Theatre, Lichfield on 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month.

Luba is a gifted storyteller who works with children to foster Ukrainian language and traditions through books, games and crafting.

If you would like to know more about 'Ukrainian Bookcase' sessions, please contact admin@lichfield.cityofsanctuary.org



A truly magical Easter experience



Grateful thanks once again to Sam Kirman and all the wonderful team @ Middleton Hall for their generous hospitality over Easter weekend, as Mariana Karasel, Sveta Shpykuliak and a very excited group of children enjoyed an egg hunt, Easter bonnet making and an Easter story telling session where Easter traditions from both Ukraine and Great Britain were shared. It was a truly magical day accompanied by sunshine, smiles and laughter.

In Sam's words -

The visit the group did over Easter was lovely, all our volunteers / team adore seeing everyone have such a wonderful time here ! They spent the whole day at the Hall which was fab - hope they enjoyed & everything went well on their part.

Happy to have a chat with anyone for future events / collaborations for 2026!

Thank you Sam and team, and thank you to Mariana and Sveta for making this an event to remember for a group of very happy children.



Annual Iona Community Picnic Beaudesert Activity Park



Once again, on May 10th LDCoS were invited to join the Iona Community for a day in the countryside to mark their annual picnic at Beaudesert Activity Park. On a blissful sun-filled day, members and invited refugee families came together to enjoy everything that this wonderful centre has to offer, aided and ably abetted by LDCoS volunteers Rehana and Jonathan Firth, xxxx xxxxxxxx and David Melhuish. Grateful thanks must also go to Kendall & Wall for their usual excellent transport service, and in particular Tony, our wonderful driver for the day, who nobly stayed to assist in the activities. Last, but by no means least, thanks of course to Beaudesert for their habitual hospitality.

The success of the day can best be summarised by xxxx xxxxxxxx in the following brief but glowing report -

"A wonderful day was shared by all attending. New friendships were made. Interesting topics were discussed. A bluebell walk was enjoyed. Climbing and Go-Karting added the finishing touch to the day. Oh, and a very good barbecue lunch. Yum and thanks"



Beaudesert
Outdoor Activity Centre
Adventure Made Easy

LDCoS calendar of events 2025

| Date | Time | Details | Venue | Attendees |
|--|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Saturday 08th February + weekly thereafter | 12:00-2:00pm | Ukrainian book launch | Lichfield Garrick Theatre | All welcome |
| Sunday 09th February | 2:00-4:00pm | Valentine-theme art workshop | Curborough Community Centre | Art group |
| Thursday 20th February | 5:00-7:00 pm | Community Event 'Look Who's Here' 'walk through'/planning meeting | Lichfield Garrick Theatre | Community Event planning group |
| Monday 24th February | 2:00-4:00pm | Treasurer's meeting | Covey Close | NG + RB |
| Wednesday 26th February | 7:00-9:00pm | Action Group meeting | Curborough Community Centre | Action group |
| Friday 28th February | N/A | Quarterly newsletter online despatch | N/A | N/A RB to take fwd |
| Monday 10th March | 7:00-9:00pm | Fund raising group/Event Planning Group meeting | Covey Close | Fund raising/Event Planning group |
| Thursday 13th March | 5:00-7:00 pm | Community Event 'Look Who's Here' planning meeting | Lichfield Garrick Theatre | Community Event planning group |
| Monday 17th March | 7:00-9:00pm | Trustees meeting | Curborough Community Centre | Trustees |
| Tuesday 18th March | 7:00-8:30pm | Ukrainian consultation re funding | Minster Hall (provisional) | By invite |
| Saturday 12th April | 2:00-4:00pm | Volunteer Fair | Lichfield Cathedral | All welcome - PT and RF to attend |
| Sunday 13th April | 11:00am-3:30pm | Look Who's Here' Community Event | Lichfield Garrick Theatre | All welcome |
| Tuesday 15th April | 7:00-9:00pm | Fund raising group meeting | Covey Close | Fund raising group |
| Monday 28th April | 7:00-9:00pm | Action Group meeting | Curborough Community Centre | Action group |
| Saturday 10th May | 10:00am-16:00pm | Iona Community Annual Picnic | Beaudesert Activity Centre | By invitation |
| Monday 19th May | 7:00-9:00pm | Trustees meeting | Curborough Community Centre | Trustees |
| Friday 30th May | N/A | Quarterly newsletter online despatch | N/A | N/A RB to take fwd |
| Saturday 14th June | 3:00-5:00pm | AGM LDCoS | Curborough Community Centre | All members welcome |
| Tuesday 17th June | 7:00-9:00pm | Fund raising group meeting | Covey Close | Fund raising group |
| Monday 23rd June | 7:00-9:00pm | Action Group meeting | Curborough Community Centre | Action group |
| Friday 11th - Sunday 13th July | N/A | Fuse Festival | Beacon Park, Lichfield | |
| Monday 14th July | 7:00-9:00pm | Trustees meeting | Curborough Community Centre | Trustees |
| Saturday 02nd August | 11:00am- 15:30 approx | Middleton Hall Outing | Middleton Hall | All welcome. Volunteers required |
| Wednesday 6th August | 12:00-2:00pm | Volunteer Fair | Lichfield Guildhall | All welcome |

CANCELLED

NOTE - LDCoS will not be represented @ event

Action Group update/report



**We need
you !**



My report this month is actually in the nature of a plea!

The Action Group continues to have a dedicated group of around twelve members. We meet approximately every eight weeks and discuss and devise new projects and make them happen. All of the activities you are reading about in this magazine could not have happened without members of the Action Group volunteering their skills and time.

In the next few months, we will be planning our summer picnic to Middleton Hall (open to all members) and organising an Autumn visit to a National Trust property for our refugee families. In addition, members of the Action Group will be organising and hosting the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 14th June.

We would love to have more members join us on the Action Group and help make more things happen. As the saying goes 'Many hands make light work' Tasks our Action Group volunteers take on may range from writing a bid to apply for a funding stream, liaising with Kendall and Wall to provide transport for our outings, baking a cake for an event, or putting out tables and chairs for a meeting

If you feel you would like to join us on the Action Group and attend meetings in order to add your ideas, comments and points of view about what we do and how we do it, please do contact us. Or, if you think you would find it difficult to get to meetings but would like to volunteer a skill or some time, or help in anyway with the upcoming events, please do get in touch. We would love to see you and would really appreciate your support.

Pam

Pam Tomlinson

Chair, Lichfield District City of Sanctuary Action Group

admin@lichfield.cityofsanctuary.org



LICHFIELD DISTRICT CITY OF SANCTUARY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Thank you for showing an interest in Lichfield District City of Sanctuary.

We invite anyone living or working, or with any other interest in, the area of Lichfield District Council to join us in helping to make Lichfield a welcoming and supportive city and district that provides sanctuary to all who need it, especially vulnerable people.

There are 3 types of membership:

- Individual membership
- Delegate membership, as the representative of a Lichfield-based organisation
- Organisational partnership, as a group sharing and committed fully to our objectives

We hope that members will contribute to the organisation. Here are some of the ways in which you could do this:

- Make an annual or monthly donation enabling us to offer practical support to incomers – perhaps based on an amount equivalent to one-thousandth of your annual income
- Help to develop projects and events designed to inform people about national and local sanctuary issues
- Provide practical short-, medium- or long-term support to incomers, for example, welcoming, orientating incomers, shopping, language-development, accommodation
- Collecting and distributing materials – clothing, toys, books
- Engaging with immigrant status and other issues around refugees and asylum-seeking
- Serving as a member of our Board of Trustees or our Steering Group, helping to develop and monitor policy and/or providing specialist support (e.g. in financial or legal issues)
- Engage in campaigning on national and local issues of sanctuary

What benefits do you get from membership?

- The knowledge that you are helping some of the world's most vulnerable people and addressing serious global issues while helping to enrich the culture and ethics of our home
- Regular news and information about immigration laws and the government's conduct of refugee and asylum-seeking issues
- Access to a range of events provided or supported by Lichfield District City of Sanctuary in the area and beyond
- The opportunity to engage in local developments and improve the environment in which we live.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS OR TYPE (questions in italics are optional)

LICHFIELD DISTRICT CITY OF SANCTUARY

Preferred title & full name

Name by which you prefer to be known

Address

Telephone/mobile numbers

Email address

Self-identifying gender

Self-identifying origin

Type of membership: Individual
 Delegate membership (name of organisation)
 Group partnership (name of organisation.....)

What skills/experience/qualities do you have that might be of value to Lichfield District City of Sanctuary?

What, if any, role(s) might you like to take on in the organisation? (on separate page if preferred).

Please sign to show that you support the declaration below:

The core principles of Lichfield District City of Sanctuary are:

- 1. All asylum seekers, refugees and migrants should be treated with dignity and respect.***
- 2. A fair and effective process to decide whether people need protection should be in place.***
- 3. No one should be locked up indefinitely.***
- 4. No one should be left sick or destitute in our society.***
- 5. We should welcome the stranger and help them to integrate.***

I support (or we support) this declaration. I am happy to be contacted by Lichfield District City of Sanctuary by email/telephone/post (delete as appropriate)

Signed

Name Date

Group (if applicable)

Please return the form to The Administration Officer at admin@lichfield.cityofsanctuary.org

Or alternatively by post to 34 Rocklands Crescent, Lichfield, WS13 6DH

If you feel able, we welcome donations by BACs into Lichfield District City of Sanctuary's account at Lloyds Bank, sort code: 30-98-97. account number 79373963, either ad-hoc, or by standing order arrangement. You may also pay a cheque or cash into this account.

If you are a current UK taxpayer you can boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate. In order that we may do this on your behalf, please complete and return the Charity Gift Aid Declaration on the next page, if appropriate, when returning your membership application form.

Thank you.

LICHFIELD DISTRICT CITY OF SANCTUARY

Charity Gift Aid Declaration

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below :

☐

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years
(delete as appropriate) to:

Name of Charity *LICHFIELD DISTRICT CITY OF SANCTUARY*

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

Title_____ First Name/Initial(s)_____

Surname _____

Full Home Address_____

Postcode_____ Date_____

Please notify the charity if you:

Want to cancel this declaration

Change your name and/or home address

No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Selfo-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Nigel Gann, Secretary and founder member of LDCOS, shares his comments -

'The Perfect Trustee'

Most charities, large and small, are struggling for volunteers and trustees. It is estimated that the proportion of people in the UK engaged in voluntary work has halved since Covid. There is a lot of speculation as to why this should be - so we won't go there! But we know that many charities and other voluntary organisations in Lichfield are in the same boat.

So who makes a perfect trustee for Lichfield District City of Sanctuary?

First, of course, it is a commitment to our aims. Our mission is:

- 1. To relieve the needs of refugees and asylum seekers resident in Lichfield by providing a network, services and support; and***
- 2. To promote equality and diversity in the public space, providing activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds and to deepen relationships between the host community, refugees and asylum seekers, and other marginalised people.***

So there's a very practical role – meeting and engaging with people who come here having been displaced from their homes by war, famine, political actions and so on. Volunteers learn how to get on with people with lived experience of being refugees – being a compassionate human being is the only qualification here.

There is also the desire to help Lichfield develop as a welcoming environment, on the watch for mindless discrimination and thoughtless 'othering' of people. So being a compassionate human being is a fine start.

Of course, trustees have a legal status, but it isn't a frightening responsibility – we have experienced trustees as well as entirely new ones who will help you through the business. The only possible financial risk – as we are a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation – is that you might lose one pound if something goes very wrong. So a compassionate human being with a pound in their pocket more than qualifies.

And, of course, we have meetings. We usually have four or five legal meetings of the board each year. But it is an absolute rule that these are not full of interminable, unintelligible financial and legal detail. One of our mantras is that meetings should be enjoyable and places of learning as much as of decision-making. They are places where we decide actions – often put to us by our Action Group – and it is a requirement that people with lived experience of displacement should be involved in our leadership. At the moment, half of our trustees bring that experience to the board.

And we have the joy of amazing occasions and opportunities – trips and picnics, events of all kinds. And the satisfaction of knowing that arrivals here from often war-torn and traumatic backgrounds are learning and engaging and finding new lives and new hope.

So join us, please. We look especially – but certainly not exclusively – for both and fluid genders, for young people, for people from a variety of backgrounds.

So, if you are a human being – and a compassionate human being – get in touch! You will be very welcome.





And finally -

A word from our most prestigious honorary member (and erstwhile Birthday boy) Reginald Gann Esq

Forgive the brevity of my words this month, as I recover from the excesses of my recent Birthday celebrations. I am graciously pleased to report that I was appropriately wined (well, watered to be exact) and dined by my loyal servant, aka Sheriff of Lichfield, who will, I am greatly relieved to report, be able to make yours truly her no 1 priority once again, following the relinquishment of her chain of office upon completion of her year of Shrieval office. Whilst I resented playing second fiddle to Civic duties - particularly as I was cruelly overlooked as her chosen consort - I am reluctantly compelled to acknowledge (admittedly with proprietorial pride) the incredible commitment and dedication which my devoted servant has demonstrated throughout her year of office whilst maintaining her obligations to my good self and her continuing commitment to the Lichfield Foodbank, as well as tending to the many needs of my less devoted servant (aka your esteemed founder member and secretary).

This last quarter has been truly celebratory, not only because of my own Birthday on May 4th, but with the glowing success of 'Look Who's Here' (I personally think it was a case of 'Look Who's Not Here', but perhaps my invitation got lost in the post ??). It is events such as this which truly show what you humans can achieve, with kindness and non-judgemental compassion. Be proud of our wonderful city, and embrace the rich tapestry of culture and skills which our multi-national community offers to us all, felines included. Let us **all** do our little bit towards a world where we can all live alongside each other, irrespective of race or number of paws.

To this end, I am pleased to note once again that LDCoS membership continues to grow , and as always, I extend a warm and gracious welcome to all those new members who have helped to swell our ranks. I am still lobbying for an additional question to be added to our membership form regarding feline preferences, but in the meantime, thank you to **all** members, both new **and** old, for your continuing loyalty and generous commitment of both time and financial contributions, no matter how small. This is sincerely appreciated, and may LDCoS continue to offer a supportive, open-hearted, inclusive welcome to all who arrive in our wonderful City, on foot, paw, hoof or claw, as we progress through 2025.



Perhaps that third helping of Birthday tuna was a little bit excessive (nice though)
zzzzzzzz



Reginald Gann Esq