

WELCOMING EVERYONE TO LICHFIELD



JANUARY 2025

LICHFIELD DISTRICT CITY OF SANCTUARY

I find it hard to believe, as I write this, that the first quarter of 2025 is drawing rapidly to a close! Whilst the seasonal festivities are now a dim and distant memory, I do hope that you enjoyed observing and celebrating your respective festivals with your families and friends, and I wish you all good health, peace, happiness and security during 2025, in a community within which LDCoS will continue to strive for inclusion, understanding, tolerance and compassion - sentiments which we sincerely believe transcend any differences of belief and religion.

In the December 2024 newsletter, I highlighted with pleasure the advancing plans for a Ukrainian library, which I am delighted to report is now ready for its family launch event on 08th February in Garrick theatre ground floor café, between 12:00—2:00 pm (more later in this newsletter).

In addition, I reported on the forthcoming 'Cinderella' collaboration at the Children's Museum in Sudbury. This was an enormous success, and artwork contributed by members of the Ukrainian art group met with much acclaim and praise (more later). Indeed, our contribution was so well received that David Longford is due to attend a meeting very soon, during which it is hoped that further collaborations may be mooted.

All of the events held during 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, and to this end, your membership sadly remains more important than ever. Our membership has now reached 104, and I sincerely thank every one of our members for your generous commitment and of time and finance, but **please** continue to help us to co-ordinate the vital services and advice which we have been privileged to provide to those who might otherwise remain isolated and marginalised, since LDCoS was formed, and please feel free to share this newsletter with friends and family who may also wish to join our ranks (see last page of this newsletter for membership form).

With my kind wishes to you all.

ROSEMARY BISHOP

Editor

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

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

LDCoS is delighted to announce that an exciting event is due to take place at Lichfield's Garrick theatre on

Sunday 13th April ,between 11: am and 3:30 pm. **'Look who's here !'** will truly display and celebrate the culture, skills and talent which refugees and other displaced persons bring with them to share with their resident community, and is also set to draw the attention of the 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 use the many skills they have to offer.

In collaboration with Lichfield Garrick theatre, LDCoS are inviting all 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 and life experiences.

Stalls will display and offer for sale, crafts , goods and services, including jewellery, wood carving, ornaments, tailoring, books, paintings, photographs, food, language classes, volunteer recruitment opportunities, and so much more !

There will also be activities and performances throughout the day, many of which will take place on the main stage, including the LDCoS-funded Ukranian choir, superbly led by distinguished and ever-enthusiastic musician Cathy Lamb, dramatic performances, multi-lingual story-telling, artists at work, advice from experts and professionals, and so much more !

Members of the public, representatives of local business es, professional organisations ,community services and local council members, will be invited to visit, to share in , and to benefit from this showcase of the culture and largely hidden skills with which we are so richly endowed in Lichfield.

If you would like to offer your assistance at this exciting event, host a stall or present an activity or demonstration - or if you would simply like to learn more, please contact either of the following contacts by e-mail, or telephone 07950 797901

secretary@lichfield.cityofsanctuary.org

admin@lichfield.cityofsanctuary.org

Make a note in your diary, and please join us, if you can, in making this landmark event an enormous success, and a true celebration of what these wonderful, unique people with whom we are privileged to share our City have to offer.





From 30 November 2024 to 6 January 2025, The Children's Country House at Sudbury invited visitors to 'be transported into a tale as old as time', as mice, clocks, pumpkins and more took over the property and told the story of Cinderella. Visitors were able to admire Christmas trees in the hall, meet Father Christmas, follow Cinderella's journey, and to be enchanted in the surrounding gardens, all of which celebrated the 'Once Upon a Time' festive theme.

Following David Longford's kind suggestion that LDCoS might wish to collaborate at this event, art group tutor Mariana Karasel, Luba Rodionova and Abi Parkes led a highly productive - and enjoyable - workshop, where glass slippers, pumpkin coaches and ugly sisters were artistically represented in abundance. The results of these endeavours were subsequently displayed at the Once Upon a Time Cinderella exhibition, and met with much pleasure and praise.

Just in case you were not fortunate enough to attend this enchanting event, please see below just one example of the artwork which our art group created for the occasion, entitled 'Ukrainian Cinderella'. Well done Mariana, and well done to all of you wonderful artists who contributed to this fairy tale spectacle.



LDCoS Children's Christmas events



Let's Imagine

As detailed in the December newsletter, refugee children and their families were invited to join LDCoS volunteers for after-school drinks and snacks, together with an empty gift bag which they were invited to fill up with a book of their choice during a visit to Waterstone's bookstore (supplemented at the close of event by sweet treats !) after a story-telling session from local historian, tour leader, and accomplished orator Sarah Dale. Each child also received a printed copy of a refugee story, written and enchantingly illustrated (see below) especially for the event by xxxx xxxxxxxx, bearing LDCoS and HCB branding.

Thanks, as always must go to xxxx for making this seasonal event such a success, and to HCB for their generous financial contribution. What have you got planned for Christmas 2025 xxxx ??



HCB Solicitors



Art Class Christmas Party



Following the success of another creative term under the expert tutelage of Mariana Karasel, the artistic children enjoyed a festive reward for their endeavours at a very happy Christmas party, where festive art work was created in a fun-filled atmosphere, with presents for all after much consumption of Christmas snacks and goodies.



These festive activities and treats were happily supplemented by the welcome attendance of cuddly visitors generously donated by friend of LDCoS, Pauline. Thank you so much Pauline, these festive characters made the party-goers very happy, and quickly found new homes amongst the children.



Sanctuary



Sanctuary, a powerful new musical from the Red Ladder Company, premiered at The Hub Lichfield during October. This production sought to explore the issues of safety and sanctuary, and asked the question: "Do we want safety and freedom for only ourselves, or for us all?" I am delighted to report that we had our very own cultural attaché (Janet Crews) at this event, who very kindly submitted the following review to the editor to share with fellow members.

'This was an excellent and poignant telling of the story of an Iranian refugee who sought sanctuary at St Mary's Church. Alland, a campaigning journalist, was forced to flee his own country following involvement in protests for women's rights. He feared imprisonment, torture and death, and for his own family's safety, but his asylum claim had been rejected and he faced possible deportation, hence his request for sanctuary. The vicar was sympathetic, but the Church hierarchy was not, thus followed a battle between Christian and humanitarian values, rule of law and propriety, powerfully played out in a drama of speech and song performed against the impressive backdrop of St Mary's stained glass church window. This production explored the role of the church and Christian values, and when it is right to defy the law in order to uphold human rights, whilst movingly conveying the hopes and fears of the displaced, and the traumatic effect of immigration on those already vulnerable and frightened. It also addressed emotive questions "What does it mean to be British?" "Who should be allowed into the country?" Big questions, with no easy right/wrong answers, but powerfully and sensitively explored by this production. Well done, a great show !'

Director Cheryl Martin said: "Sanctuary comes at a critical moment in the conversation about immigration, refugees and asylum seekers. I hope this musical helps open up this conversation because it's one that goes to the heart of who we are and the kind of society we want to live in."

Sanctuary co-writer Sarah Woods said "A lot of people who come to the UK seeking asylum are here because they've stood up against oppression, doing things that many of us might not have the strength to do. We can learn a lot from them and the stories they share with us. Boff Whalley (co-writer) and I have been collaborating for a number of years, including co-creating work with people seeking refuge and asylum and this is a story that we both feel needed to be told."

Thank you Janet for an excellent review, and thank you Red Ladder Company for addressing this very difficult issue.

Action Group update/report

‘Community as a Superpower’

In a change to the normal format, the Trustees’ and Action Group’s New Year was launched on 13th January, with a collaborative ‘open-forum’ meeting entitled ‘**Community as a Superpower**’, to which trustees and other members were invited.

After receiving a warm welcome, attendees were invited to break into groups to consider the following topics -

- What makes a bad/unsuccessful community.
- Appreciate/celebrate what we do @ Lichfield District City of Sanctuary.
- Desire - what might/should we do/be doing.
- Design - what do we need to do.

All of the extremely pertinent points made during this session * were relevant to the future of LDCoS , and further enlightening responses continue to be received from volunteers, all of which are greatly appreciated, and will truly help us to achieve the essential core goals which we now consider to be a priority for 2025 - and indeed moving forward thereafter.

In the meantime, it is entirely thanks to the passion and commitment of volunteers/members that the following forthcoming events/developments have been made possible, all of which indeed demonstrate our commitment to making this city a truly landmark ‘community superpower’.

1. **Bringing families together:** As previously lauded in this newsletter, 8th February saw the launch of the Ukrainian book initiative @ Lichfield Garrick theatre, during which families from the Ukraine community will be invited to meet each Saturday between 12.00 - 2.00pm in the Garrick Theatre Café to read, socialise and to enjoy quality time with other Ukrainian families and indeed the local community. The bookcase, funded by LDCoS, and kindly housed by the Garrick, will eventually be filled with books for adults and children in Ukrainian and in English, and it is hoped that this will be an important and enjoyable social hub for friends and families.
2. **Asking refugees about their needs:** There will shortly be a consultation evening with our guests from Ukraine to ensure that funding bids which we make on their behalf continue to truly meet their articulated needs and wants. A further update will be provided when this has been confirmed, and members will be invited to attend and support this important event.
3. **"Look Who's Here":** As detailed elsewhere in this newsletter, this exciting event is due to take place @ Lichfield Garrick theatre on 13th April 2025, with refugees, migrants and other residents invited to display their skills, talents and experience in a celebratory landmark showcase which is set to take place across the theatre - including the main stage ! - between 11:00 and 3:30 pm. Local dignitaries, employers, organisations and council officers/members will be invited to embrace and celebrate the richness and diversity of Lichfield culture, with interactive events including stalls of goods and food, performances of music and dance, and demonstrations of skills and crafts to be offered. This event has been made possible by the supportive and indeed enthusiastic collaboration of the Garrick theatre, and it is sincerely hoped that all who attend will feel proud and fortunate to number these wonderful people amongst our community.
4. **Our Administrative Officer:** By mutual consent, community coordinator, Abigail Parkes, has now regretfully moved on, but happily she remains a committed member, so we shall continue to see her around. Following Abi’s departure, we are pleased to advise that Rosemary, our longstanding treasurer and book-keeper, has agreed to take on extra responsibilities as our new Administrative Officer. Her paid contract will continue until October - and possibly beyond, dependent on funding.

This is an important period of change at the charity, as founder members stand back, and new volunteers and paid workers come forward. Much of this will be formulated and agreed at our Annual General Meeting, scheduled to take place on the Saturday of Refugee Week: 21st June (venue to be confirmed). In the meantime, if you would like to join our Fund-Raising Group and/or our Event-Planning Group, please contact either secretary@lichfield.districtcityofsanctuary.org or admin@lichfield.districtcityofsanctuary.org

We look forward to seeing you at the above-detailed events, and indeed in embracing and celebrating these exciting changes in Lichfield District City of Sanctuary.

* A full transcript of the results from these brainstorming sessions will be available to members upon application to - secretary@lichfield.districtcityofsanctuary.org or admin@lichfield.districtcityofsanctuary.org)

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

Among all the disturbing news, we are delighted to announce the greatest ever demonstration of richness and diversity in Lichfield.

On Sunday, 13th April, in partnership with the Garrick Theatre, Lichfield District City of Sanctuary will welcome dozens of creative people with roots from all over the world – and in Lichfield itself – to a celebration and showcase of skills and talents.

Dance, music, visual arts, jewellery, woodcraft, martial arts, tailoring from Asia, Africa, America and elsewhere; displays and demonstrations; participatory dance and exercise will fill the Garrick from 11.00 to 3.30pm.

If you have skills or knowledge or advice to offer, please contact secretary@lichfield.cityofsanctuary.org

If you want to come along and enjoy the showings and spectacles, just drop in. There is no entry charge.

We invite you to explore what historian Simon Schama describes as “the gift of immigration, the gift of lots of different cultures”.

We welcome you to a festival of membership, belonging, community and shared identity.

See you there!



**“Look who’s
here!”**

**A celebration of the rich
and diverse culture that
is Lichfield.**





Building a Ukrainian library - February launch



As previously reported, back in January 2024, LDCoS started working with the Ukrainian community and Staffordshire Libraries to get a stock of Ukrainian books available to the growing community here in Lichfield, and in collaboration with the Garrick theatre, who very kindly offered space for these books to be displayed and enjoyed by Ukrainian families, this wonderful project has now come to fruition, and was launched with an inaugural family event on 08th February 2025 in the café area at the Garrick, hosted by Luba Rodionova.



Matt Clay welcomes Luba (and books !) to the Garrick theatre

Sincere thanks must go to Luba for making this wonderful project - which promises to give so much pleasure to so many of our Ukrainian community members - possible. **BUT, we need your help to ensure the continuing success of this worthwhile venture.**

First of all - just come along and have a coffee, or even better, to 'meet, and greet' attendees. If you would be interested in volunteering your services on the occasional Saturday, please contact us via admin@lichfield.cityofsanctuary.org.

Secondly, we are looking for children's games to entertain our young visitors, so if you have any which your offspring have grown out of (or just discarded !) please let us know - the more the merrier !



LICHFIELD
GARRICK
THEATRE & STUDIO

Calendar of LDCoS events February - August 2025

Date	Time	Details	Venue	Attendees
Saturday 08th February + weekly thereafter	12:00-2:00pm	Ukranian 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
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
Thursday 01st May (provisional)	7:00-9:00pm	Action Group meeting	Curborough Community Centre	Action Group
Saturday 14th June	3:00-5:00pm	AGM LDCoS	Curborough Community Centre	All members welcome
Wednesday 6th August	12:00-2:00pm	Volunteer Fair	Lichfield Guildhall	All welcome

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.

And finally -

A word from our most prestigious honorary member Reginald Gann Esq

Well, here we are again in a new year, with Spring just around the corner (or so I am led to believe). My dutiful devoted cook and bottle washer continues to juggle her civic duties with her most essential 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). I am pleased to note 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 continue to actively campaign 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, both on two feet and on four paws, as we progress apace through 2025.

There is much excitement, understandably, within the exalted ranks of LDCoS, as I write this column, regarding the forthcoming **"Look who's here !"** event, which promises to be a truly remarkable celebratory showcase for the culture, skills and talent which we are now so privileged to acknowledge, embrace and have at our disposal within our own community. I am particularly delighted that the Garrick theatre have generously offered the use of the main stage area for dramatic, dance and choral performances, and ever conscious that slots for this prestigious platform would rapidly be filled, I swiftly submitted my own modest application, offering to perform Samuel Johnson's dramatic monologue ' **A Very Fine Cat Indeed**'. This extremely moving dramatic monologue celebrates the life of Johnson's favourite cat, Hodge, and describes how he came to like cats ,and how he came to own Hodge. He also gives a spirited account of his adventures in London coffee houses, his friends and enemies, and his passion for liberty and the rights of animals. I have been practising in front of a mirror in my very best silk cravat, and I feel that I can now give this wonderful piece the gravitas it truly deserves, whilst also imbuing the piece with my own feline spirit and charm. I await a response to my offer as I write this column, but watch this space, and book seats early - such a performance will undoubtedly be a memorable and unique event.

Must draw to a close now, I think I heard the postman.....



Reginald Gann Esq