



**Report to: Place and Economic Development Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Report of: Managing Director**

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**Subject: CHARTER 400 UPDATE**

**1. Recommendation**

**1.1 That the committee notes the planned activities to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Charter of James I.**

**2. Background**

2.1 This year marks the 400th anniversary of the Charter of James I, which incorporated the City and established a Mayor. Although many of the rights existed since 1189 (Richard I Charter) this Charter is widely recognised as 'creating' the city of Worcester.

2.2 In July 2020, PED Committee approved the reallocation of tourism enabling budget to fund recovery projects including an allocation towards the delivery of the Charter 400 celebrations.

2.3 Local organisations have been invited to get involved by sharing the logo, strapline, web links and other promotional and social media activity. In addition, event organisers and tourist attractions are invited to develop activities that relate directly to the Charter, or to commit to participate in the 'Charter Day' celebration on Saturday 2 October in the Guildhall.

**3. Information**

3.1 In December 2020 a Charter 400 Working Group was established consisting of representatives from the Worcester Heritage Partnership; City Council Tourism and Events Team; Museums Worcestershire; Archive and Archaeology Service; and The Civic Society.

3.2 Key activities to celebrate the anniversary are detailed below:

3.2.1 Charter merchandise – pin badges and tote bags for sale in the Tourist Information Centre

3.2.2 Bespoke Charter Tours will be delivered by Discover History

3.2.3 Themed Charter classes in the Worcester Show Schedule, 15<sup>th</sup> August. The Worcester Show featured in the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme in 1971.

3.2.4 Worcester Festival has created a unique short humorous play and entertaining look at the main events in Worcester over the past 400 years.

This was performed during the Festival in August and will be performed as part of the Charter Day Celebration on 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

- 3.2.5 Installation of the Edward Hurdman blue plaque. Edward Hurdman was the first Mayor of Worcester and his tomb is in All Saints Church. We have partnered with the Civic Society and All Saints Church to erect a blue plaque on this location in September which is also opposite the spot where his house once stood.
- 3.2.6 Commissioning of Wentworth Pewter bowls. Edward Hurdman bestowed two silver bowls to the City in his will and expressed the wish that they are used when the Council met. The bowls have since been lost; Wentworth Pewter have been commissioned to make replica bowls. It is the intention that these will be used in a ceremonial way at full Council meetings.
- 3.2.7 Commissioning of three unique artworks; a tapestry; an enamel hanging sculpture and a large infographic timeline of the past 400 years.
- 3.2.8 Charter Day Celebration on the anniversary date 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Charter Day will include commissioned art displays, exhibition of royal charters, the play, a Reading of the Charter, stands with local history and heritage societies, and work by local school children. Additionally, walking tours of key sites and the chance to sample a specially commissioned Charter ale. Guests will be invited to a Civic event early evening in the Assembly Hall, this will include the opportunity for all past mayors to be officially photographed to mark the occasion. Worcester Cathedral are hosting an Organ Recital in the evening performed by the organist of St Paul's Cathedral, Simon Johnson, and will include music from Thomas Tomkins (Organist of Worcester Cathedral at the time of the signing of the charter).

### 3.3 Wider engagement across the city includes the following:

- 3.3.1 Three Choirs Festival. Three events during the Festival were specifically linked to the Charter celebration; The Marian Consort including music by Tomkins; Orlando Consort music of 16th - 17th C incl. music by Tomkins; Choral Evensong, Worcester Cathedral Choir– music written by Worcester organists.
- 3.3.2 The new St Peters Heritage Trail has highlighted points of interest from the early 1600's to the present day.
- 3.3.3 A partnership with Know Your Place and Worcester BID has enabled the creation of Charter Trail Posters for local businesses in the city centre that are based in buildings connected to the founding members.
- 3.3.4 Perrywood School are delivering a range of activities related directly to the Charter on 1st October that will involve the entire school.
- 3.3.5 The University of Worcester are delivering a series of lectures on 9th October on different themes ranging across the four centuries.
- 3.3.6 Malvern Hills Brewery have created a bespoke Charter ale. This will be promoted to pubs within the city and the county. It is the intention that the ale will be available permanently.

3.4 The above activity is promoted via the Visit Worcester website, in City Life, on social media and in forthcoming press releases.

**Ward(s):** All  
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**Background Papers:** None