



# Worcester Charter 400 Festival

## Project and Essay Competition

### Registration Form

The aim of the competition is to encourage people to have a better understanding of your area, place and identity by looking at who or what was important to the City in 1621, and why, and what has developed since 1621 to make Worcester what it is today. You may include maps and images in your finished work, but they must have copyright permission for use if relevant. If you can, provide references and note what sources you have used. The top entries may be published, but these must include references.

Places where you may find things to help you include your local library, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service at The Hive, Worcester City Museums, Worcester Cathedral, Greyfriars, Royal Worcester Porcelain Museum, and the Worcestershire Soldier Museum.

Deadline for receiving entries: 5pm Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

### **Category: School Years 8-13, aged 13 to 18**

**Prize worth £250**

Name: .....

Please Print)

Age on 31 July 2021: .....

Address: .....  
.....  
.....

Email: .....  
.....

Telephone contact: .....

School: .....

What we want you to do: After reading this passage extracted from Victoria County History, write an essay up to 2000 words long on one of the questions below:

*The charter of 2 October 1621 is a long and elaborate document in which the whole government of the city is reviewed and recast. It begins by declaring that the city 'ever hereafter is, shall be and remain, a free city of itself, and that the said city of Worcester precinct, circuit and going about and jurisdiction thereof shall extend and reach out . . . unto seven wards of the same city.' The city was declared a county of itself and incorporated by the name of the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of the City of Worcester, with a common seal. The government of the city was entrusted to the mayor, 'six lawful and discreet citizens' as aldermen, a sheriff and two chamberlains, a body of twenty-four, including the mayor and aldermen, and a body of forty-eight, including the two chamberlains. To this body was assigned 'one Counsel House within the guildhall of the said city.' It was further appointed that each year on the Monday next after St. Bartholomew's Day the mayor, aldermen, twenty-four and forty-eight should elect one of the twenty-four, willing to accept office, as mayor, six of the twenty-four as aldermen and one of the twenty-four or forty-eight as sheriff, he not having previously served that office nor been mayor nor bailiff. The two chamberlains were to be elected by the same authority from among the forty-eight; the recorder, who must be learned in the law, should be chosen by the same body. Provision was also made for the election of a common clerk, auditors, coroners, escheator, sword-bearer and sergeants-at-mace. These officers, as also the recorder, should hold their office at the will of the mayor, aldermen, twenty-four and forty-eight, and, with the exception of the recorder and common clerk, were subjected to loss of franchises, fine and imprisonment if they refused to bear office after their election. Entrance into the common council of the forty-eight was obtained by co-option.*

*The legal powers of the city authorities were further defined. Upon each Monday a court of record was to be held in the gild hall by the mayor, recorder and aldermen, or any three of them, to which such jurisdiction was given in matters of debt, trespass and pleas of land as had formerly belonged to the court held before the bailiffs, aldermen and chamberlains of the city. Power was given to execute the law merchant; the mayor, recorder and aldermen were declared justices of peace within the city; the sheriff was empowered to hold a court, called the county court of the city, each month; the corporation was allowed to purchase real property up to the yearly value of £100; tolls, rights of fair and market, chattels of felons and fugitives, wastes and commons were confirmed as they had been held in times past. The only exception to the authority of the corporation was contained in the last clause of the charter by which it was ruled that nothing in the charter should be construed to the loss or prejudice of the bishop or of the Dean and Chapter of Worcester. All privileges enjoyed by the cathedral body before the granting of the charter were declared inviolate, 'the liberty of bearing the sword before the mayor of the said city according to the tenor of these presents excepted.'*

### Question 1

The charter outlines the roles of those with responsibility. How might these roles have changed over the course of 400 years? Reference could be made to individual families who assumed these roles?

### Question 2

The charter makes reference to institutions and places recognisable today, such as the Cathedral, the Guildhall, the Mayor and the less well known Clothiers Guild. Investigate why these were of such importance in 1621 and how their relevance may have changed over time.

### Question 3

Was Worcester of 1621 a very different place to the city of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Discuss in terms of economic, social and political characteristics.

To enter the competition please fill in the Registration details above and return this page by email to:  
[tourism@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@worcester.gov.uk)

Return the completed Project in hard copy or electronic format to this email or alternatively post or deliver it to  
The Tourist information Centre, The Guildhall, High Street, Worcester, WR1 2EY

**Based on the attached precis of James I Charter for the City of Worcester, choose a question to show how the importance of the Charter may have changed over time. Your answer may be up to 2000 words long and specify which question you are answering**

**Your work must be original and include references to elements which are not your own**

The judges' decision will be final

The decision of the judges will be announced formally on 2 October, Charter Day, 2021

The judges may decide not to award a prize

The prize will be £100 worth of tokens

The closing date for receipt of entries is 3 September 2021

Competition supported by:



Worcestershire Archaeological Society [www.worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk](http://www.worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk)



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