Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews June 2007

The launch of *Time Gentlemen Please*, an entertaining account of Winchester's pubs, hotels and breweries written by Phil Yates, was a fitting event to launch the Trust's 50th Anniversary year as well. Peter White, the well-known Wintonian broadcaster, kindly did the honours at the Mash Tun where he is the licensee, in the presence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, assembled individuals who had contributed in various ways to the publication and Trust members. Winchester's hostelries contribute significantly to its history and character so it is appropriate that the Trust should be associated with this book for which it is indebted to Phil, who has generously donated his work to the Trust and has, in addition, invested his considerable skill and energy in promoting and distributing the books. This work has resulted in very healthy sales to date.

The City Council's Vision for Winchester was advertised as the subject of the meeting held at the Theatre Royal in March. It was disappointing that there was little reference during the evening to the contents of this document. However, in April, the Trust arranged a presentation to an invited audience at the West Downs Centre to suggest how the character of "the unique and irreplaceable asset" that is Winchester should be safeguarded for future generations. The presentation was made by Michael Carden MBE and Trust Vice-President Judge Christopher Clark QC chaired the meeting. The audience responded with interesting and varied comments on the problems to be considered and there was considerable support for the Trust's proposals.

Further events are planned for coming months. On Sunday June 3 some members have kindly agreed to open their gardens to Trust members and guests as circulated previously. The Summer Walks programme has been arranged by Chris Pile who, fortunately for the Trust, took over the organisation of this important annual activity from Nick McPherson. Starting with a double bill at the Cathedral on June 7th, Chris has produced a very interesting programme and we are grateful also to those who have agreed to lead the walks.

On Saturday June 23 the Trust has been invited to join with the Winchester Archaeology Rescue Group, the County Record Office and the City Museums Service to take part in the Summer Fete for the Mayor's charities to be held in the gardens of the Bishop's Palace at Wolvesey. The theme of the display is to be 'Exploring Hampshire through the ages'.

On July 26 there will be a Reception to celebrate the 50th Anniversary and to thank our retiring President, Sir Peter Ramsbotham, for his long and valued support of the Trust. Details of this event are given separately. All events and activities can also be found on the Trust's website www.cityofwinchestertrust. co.uk

Of course 50 years of Trust activity deserves celebration but it is also an appropriate time to look to the future and how the Trust should steer its course through predicted choppy seas ahead. Whatever the chosen course, the Trust will need the support of active volunteers to keep it afloat. In a separate article contributed by David Marklew you will read of the work done by the Planning Advisory Group. Shione Carden, who chairs this group, has been doing so for 20 years and a successor must be found if

this important activity is to continue. Other activities are in need of assistance too and you will find a 'Wanted' advertisement listing activities in need. If you can help, please get in touch for further details. In conclusion, I can say that it is not all toil; there is satisfaction and good company too.

In writing about Trustees who do so much for the Trust, Antony Skinner, past Chairman has continued to work for the Trust in so many different areas from maintenance of the Heritage Centre, co-ordinating publicity, being vigilant over matters concerning planning, Winchester's trees, and being ever willing to help with all our activities. We were all shocked to hear of the horrible car accident that did so much damage to his face, hit by the windscreen. We were all relieved to hear that he is making a good recovery after extensive surgery and I am sure all members would wish to send him good wishes for a full and speedy recovery in due course.

Patricia Edwards

Planning Appraisal Group - TrustNews Jun 07

The pressures on **Stockbridge Road** recorded in the last TrustNews seem to have been reduced, if only temporarily. The appeal against the refusal of the proposed **Aldi store** has been dismissed, and the Sunrise Senior Living development at **Warden Hill**, involving the demolition of three houses for a 3-storey block of 80 assisted-living bedrooms, has been refused on traffic grounds and because its scale, design and massing would be incongruous and visually dominant. The applicants have gone to appeal against this refusal and the Trust is writing to support the planners' decision. However, two major schemes in this locality still await a decision: the **Waitrose store** and the demolition of **3-5 Burnett Close** for the Churchill Retirement Living development of 35 sheltered housing apartments.

The scheme to demolish and replace **Winton House, Andover Road** with 77 new dwellings has been approved, but the more contentious development replacing **Greenacres Special School** is still under consideration.

The proposal to replace **Lang House, Chilbolton Avenue**, with a 3-storey block of fourteen 2-bedroom flats has been refused because of its scale, mass and bulk. Similar reasons were given for the refusal to allow **23 City Road** to be replaced by a block of 14 flats, and we understand that the current developers are now considering building the previously permitted scheme for 11 flats, which we felt had a crisp design that would do much to enhance the neighbourhood. The nearby development at **38-42 Stockbridge Road**, which we had felt would not have the same effect on its locality, has been permitted.

It is good to see that the proposal to alter the roof at **7 Alswitha Terrace, King Alfred Place**, has been refused because it was considered the design and scale of the proposed extension would be unsympathetic and seem incongruous, and would therefore be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.

The refusal to allow a 2-storey dwelling to be attached to **43 Cromwell Road** has been taken to appeal and the Trust has written in support of the decision.

Two applications have caused considerable local concern. The first is the proposal to demolish the **Stanmore Hotel, Stanmore Lane**, to make way for a 65-bed nursing home that Colten Developments want to build. We had been informed that the pub was no longer a viable concern and, having accepted this fact, felt this was a suitable site for the proposed development and that on the whole the scheme was satisfactory, apart from a few minor quibbles. The other is at **40 Cheriton Road**, where it is proposed that a 2-storey extension should be added to the existing house to provide four 2-bedroom apartments and a 2-storey block of four 2-bedroom apartments should be built alongside. Although not listed, the symmetrical design and setting of this house make a considerable contribution to the character of the road that is worth preserving, and we therefore objected to this proposal. We especially disliked the proposed extension, which we felt would detract from the symmetry of the house because its style aimed to copy that of the original and was not set far enough back from the front façade. We suggested it should be set further back and be made of different materials, and could perhaps have a contemporary design so that it was clear it wasn't part of the original design. We also suggested that, to preserve the open space around the house that is so important for its setting, cars should not be parked immediately in front of it and that, instead of being sited almost level with the existing house, the new contemporary-style block should be set further back, so that the feeling of open space could be preserved. It was also considered unacceptable that there were no drawings showing how the development would fit into the street scene.

We have also objected to Winchester City Council's proposal to replace the row of garages at **Garage Court, Fivefields Road**, with another row of flat-roofed garages which, according to the example given of the type of structure being considered, would be just as ugly as those at present occupying the site. A 2-storey residential development here would have been given permission in 2004, if local concerns about the type of occupant concerned had not been raised. It is therefore clear that the site could be used for something other than replacement garages, and as it belongs to WCC we have suggested that it might be a good candidate for affordable housing, which would be a more creative use than the one proposed.

Members have raised concerns about the fate of two apparently unloved buildings, and it is therefore good to be able to report that two recent applications should allay their fears. One is **Chestnut Mead, Kingsgate Road**, which, apart from ivy growing over the windows, has shown no sign of life since the proposal to demolish it was dismissed on appeal at the end of 2003. An application is currently wending its way through the system to convert the existing house into three dwellings and to build two new houses in the rear garden. We felt these 3-storey 5-bedroom houses were both too tall and should be reduced to 2 storeys, but otherwise welcomed the scheme. The other is the **Prince of Wales, 26 Hyde Street**, another property with a sadly neglected appearance. At last it seems that a satisfactory rear extension is being proposed, after considerable effort has been made by the applicant to reduce its height enough to be acceptable to the adjoining property, and we wait to see whether the planners will agree to this latest scheme.

Shione Carden

Blurred Vision - TrustNews Jun 2007

Recently Winchester City Council published its 'Vision for Winchester' and has been promoting debate and discussion on what it calls 'Towards our Future'. In essence this sets out targets for meeting policies in the current Local District Plan which runs to 2011, and looks beyond it. But, to some extent it is whistling in the dark, because one essential ingredient of the future of Winchester is shrouded in uncertainty: the size of the population it will need to support in future, and where they will live.

The plan itself provides for 7,295 dwellings to be provided between 1996 and 2011. Of these, 5,049 had been built by 2006 and 3,805 further sites had been identified by then, including 1,100 in a major development area west of Waterlooville. Even if none of those 1,100 is built by 2011, it is clear that Winchester District can meet the Plan target. In addition 805 sites are already identified for completion after 2011.

However, the Government, through its regional office in Guildford, has persistently pushed for the Plan numbers to be substantially exceeded. The Government Office for the South-East (GOSE - or God's Own Special Experts) demanded that the Plan period be extended from 2011 to 2016 so that building rates could be increased, but were rebuffed by the Inspectors at the Local Plan Inquiry. They have persistently tried to trigger implementation of all the reserve sites for Major Development in Hampshire (including Barton Farm) even though the monitoring process set up under the County Structure Plan has found, year after year, that there is no need for any of these before 2011. Indeed, the 2007 exercise found that Hampshire's countywide housing targets will be comfortably exceeded without the need for any of the MDAs. Planning permissions in the last three years have been granted at a much faster rate than builders have been able or willing to implement them.

There are two flaws: the Structure Plan itself is being superseded and a mismatch between houses being built for the market and those for the 'affordable' sector.

There are two flaws in this promising ointment. First, the Structure Plan itself is being superseded by the emerging Regional Plan for the Southeast as a whole. GOSE has been at work arguing strongly that the housing figures for the region should be substantially increased over those proposed by the Regional Assembly. The safeguard of the monitoring system is now removed, and without the need to show compelling justification before MDAs can be implemented.

Secondly, although total numbers of homes being provided exceed current target levels, there is a mismatch between those being built for the market and those for the 'affordable' sector, where there is a very large shortfall.

Until this problem is solved, there seems little reality in planning Winchester's future in any great detail, as so much of the pattern of services that will be needed must depend on the population to be catered for - and where they live.

One temptation to be avoided is to increase total housing numbers so that the proportion taken up by affordable dwellings can be met. (Builders are adamant that they can operate successfully only if the share of affordable units in their developments is kept within given limits).

The other obstacle to achieving 20:20 vision by 2020 is that any Government which `solved' the housing problem by eliminating the shortage of accommodation would be signing its own death warrant. Any increase in the supply of homes would result in a fall of at least 15-20% in the market price of existing houses. If millions of voters were to see tens of thousands of pounds wiped off the value of their property, they would be quick to record their reaction at the ballot box.

Harvey Cole

Planning Appraisal Review - TrustNews June 07

Most members of the Trust will be aware that the Trust inspects every planning application made in the city and makes comments on many of them. You are probably not aware of the amount of work involved in this process. A review of the process was recently carried out by three trustees, David Marklew, Antony Skinner and Keith Leaman. The Trust Council is now seeking more members who might assist in the process.

The planning appraisals are a fundamental part of the Trust's work and have been for many years. The City Council respects the Trust's views and takes them into account when making planning decisions. The appraisals are carried out every week by panels of four Trust members composed of a non practising architect and lay members. There are twelve members who regularly do this task aided by a number of reserve panel volunteers. Shione Carden chairs and runs the planning appraisal process with great commitment and dedication which impinges considerably on her personal and family life. The planning appraisal work is also a growing commitment for all the group members.

The panel's comments are carefully composed and are rarely challenged by members but it is inevitable that they are questioned from time to time. The comments need to be (and almost always are) robust to such challenges. There has been some concern that the Trust can appear to be very negative because usually only its criticisms and objections receive any publicity. To correct this view, more complete statistical information will now be provided with the summary of comments which are provided to the Trust Council and through the website, annual report etc. This will now include: total number of applications considered, number deemed not to require a comment, number of "comments" and number of "objections". This will put the number of actual objections in context. The Trust very rarely formally "supports" planning applications. It is felt that a proposal would have to be truly exceptional to receive the Trust's wholehearted support because the opinions of the membership are so varied. Each month the panels consider on average about 100 planning applications. In the most recent month, April, which was a quiet month

because of Easter, 50 applications were considered. The Trust formally objected to 7 of these and commented on a further 20.

There currently appear to be enough volunteers, both architects and lay members, to provide the four members required each week. It is important that Panel members live in a variety of locations throughout the area to avoid bias and this is currently the case. However many of these members have been doing this task for many years and a succession of new volunteers is needed. Shione Carden administers the whole procedure for the groups including preparing the rota, arranging the accommodation for weekly meetings, ordering the planning files for the panel meetings, briefing the chairmen etc. She also keeps detailed records of the Trust's comments on all the applications. Nevertheless much of the knowledge and all the expertise in using this data lies with Shione herself.

The review raised no fundamental concerns about the process or the outcomes. However there is concern that the process is very dependent on Shione Carden and the Trust needs to provide her with more back up and support and ultimately to find a new leader for the group in the not too distant future. Any Trust members who feel they could help with planning appraisal, either reviewing planning applications or assisting with the administration should contact Shione Carden on 01 962 863 005

David Marklew

"A tremendous and irreplaceable asset" - TrustNews Jun 07

This is the description of Winchester in the new planning document for the whole South East Region of England. The City of Winchester Trust wants everyone to consider what this means. Whether we live in the City or outside, we know Winchester is special to us, but are we aware that it is a "tremendous asset" in national terms? And what is meant by the word "irreplaceable"? When something is described as irreplaceable it means that it could be lost - and gone forever. Obviously the place itself could not be lost, so it is its character that is vulnerable.

The Trust was founded 50 years ago to help preserve the character of Winchester. This was a time when demolition of irreplaceable buildings was taking place all over the country, buildings no one would now dream of knocking down. Influenced by Government pressure, the City Council saw no reason to keep the streets that contributed so much to the character of Winchester. The Trust's founders, however, were more far-seeing and tried to halt the loss. They had little success in the Brooks and Colebrook Street areas, but were more successful with Canon Street.

It is the Trust's claim that for half a century it has tended to be more far-sighted than the authorities, primarily because we have the privilege of being able to question the application of government policies. When policy poses a threat to the character of Winchester, we endeavour to find the means of influencing its application for the long term benefit of the City. The Trust, for example, led the successful battle against the government's plan to build a motorway through the water meadows when many in the establishment believed it to be inevitable. The Trust successfully resisted the

official scheme for a four-lane inner ring-road that would have sliced diagonally through St John's Street, crossing the river on a massive concrete bridge, up North Walls before swinging round into Sussex Street and beyond. And long before it was considered possible by anyone else, the Trust advocated park-and-ride in preference to increasing the multi-storey car parks in the central area.

Today the Trust is concerned that three things threaten the character of Winchester: the change in balance between its age-old administrative role and its function as a growing and over-expensive dormitory town; the ever-growing pressures of traffic on the City's road system; government policy which is forcing unprecedented growth in the south east region. Some infer that the Trust's concerns are resistance to change. This is not the case. The Trust is concerned to preserve the character of Winchester, not to maintain the status quo. We greatly value the way Winchester has changed in response to the pressures of the time, evolving its rich character which we treasure today, and we want this evolution to continue. But we want the changes to enhance the character of Winchester rather than detract from it.

It is the duty of all of us, as Winchester's caretakers for future generations, to find the means of providing what the City needs: access and movement, affordable housing. the growth of the educational establishments and a healthy commercial sector, without going the way of clone-town Britain surrounded by the familiar carapace of residential and industrial sprawl. We posed this question at a recent meeting: how can Winchester and similar towns develop successfully while retaining and enhancing their unique identity, heritage and setting? And we put forward the following steps that we believe need to be taken.

1. A careful definition (to which we all contribute) of what it is that makes Winchester unique.
2. A Shared Vision of Winchester's future (already embarked upon by the City Council).
3. Identification of the likely conflicts between our own differing aspirations, and pressures imposed from outside.
4. A process of conflict resolution aimed at enhancing the character and setting of the City.
5. A Winchester masterplan or conceptual framework that will guide future development.

Seneca said it all a long time ago: "Our plans miscarry because we have no aim. When a man does not know what harbour he is making for, no wind is the right one."

Michael Carden MBE

Summer Walks 2007 - TrustNews Jun 2007

Walks start at 6.30pm from the Heritage Centre (unless otherwise stated). Please arrive at the start point in good time to allow a prompt start. There is a suggested donation of £2 per person. Non-members welcome.

7th June	**Winchester Cathedral (2 walks)** **William Walker & Stained Glass** **Meet inside the West Door of the Cathedral** **An extra donation is requested. The usual entry charge on the door is £4**	**David Farthing** Trust Member & Cathedral Guide
14th June	**The Importance of Space Proportion and Detail**	**Keith Leaman** Architect & Trust Council Member
21st June	**Architecture Week** **The University of Winchester**	**John Browning** Architect
28th June	**The Southern Railway** Meet outside station, Station Hill	**Phil Yates** Trust member & author
5th July	**St Cross Hospital and Chapel** Meet at Porters' Lodge, St Cross. (Donations also to St Cross Hospital)	**Michael Carden** MBE AADip RIBA Trust Vice Chairman
12th July	**The Civil War**	**Elizabeth Proudman** Blue Badge City Guide
19th July	**Twyford Waterworks** Meet on site, Hazeley Road, Twyford	**Matthew Feldwick** Twyford Waterworks Trust
26th July	**Beating the Bounds**	**Andrew Rutter** RIBA MRTPI Retired City Conservation Officer
2nd August	**Progression of the Traditional Winchester as a Window on the World**	**Robert Adam** Architect
9th August	**Buildings of the High Street** Meet in Broadway by the Guildhall	**Robin Freeman** Architectural Historian and Local Studies Librarian
16th August	**Visit to Central Works Bus Station**	**Peter Munaghan** Friends of King Alfred Buses

50th Anniversary Reception - TrustNews Jun 07

Members are invited to a Reception on Thursday 26 July 2007, 7.00 - 9.00pm
At the Gurkha Museum, Peninsula Barracks, Winchester

This occasion will be the opportunity for Trust members to thank the retiring President,
Sir Peter Ramsbotham, GCMG, GCVO, DL for his support and encouragement over many years.

Light Refreshments - Tickets £12.50 obtainable from:
The Secretary, City of Winchester Trust,
32 Middle Brook Street, Winchester S023 8DG

Numbers limited to 100 - so don't delay.

Hyde Abbey Gardens - TrustNews Jun 07

Recently the Trust made a further contribution to the Friends of Hyde Abbey Gardens to assist in the completion of the lighting system and received the following letter from Mrs Barbara Hall:

On behalf of Friends of Hyde Abbey Garden, I am writing to thank the City of Winchester Trust very much for their kind contribution towards the lights for the Garden, the final element of Kim Wilkie's design. All donations towards the lights will be officially recognised when the scheme is completed. In the meantime, the idea of putting a temporary sign on site is being considered to show people what progress is being made.

Fund-raising is creeping on but any assistance you or other members of the Trust can give in spreading the word would be very much appreciated. Again, thank you very much indeed for your kind response.

A timely reminder - TrustNews Jun 2007

Subscriptions are now due and a great many have been received on time by Standing Order, for which many thanks. If you pay by cheque, please accept this reminder. Rates remain £10 single & £15 family. If you would like to start paying by Standing Order, please contact the Secretary.

Time Gentlemen Please! - TrustNews June 07

A History of Winchester's Pubs, Hotels and Breweries, by Phil Yates, £9.95 Available from Heritage Centre

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Welcome to new members - TrustNews Jun 07

Mr & Mrs T. Sexton,
Mr & C. Fox,
Mr & Mrs C. Matthews,
Mr R. Bottone,

Mrs M. Chisholm,
Mrs G.M. Saunders

Dates for Your Diary - TrustNews Jun 07

Sunday 3 June
Gardens open as advertised
Thursday 7 June 6.30 pm
First of Summer Walks
Saturday 23 June
Mayor's Summer Fete 11 am - 4 pm
Thursday 26 July 7.00-9.00 pm
50th Anniversary Reception at Gurkha Museum - See separate notice
Friday 28 September 7.00 pm Annual General Meeting
Speaker: Professor Martin Biddle