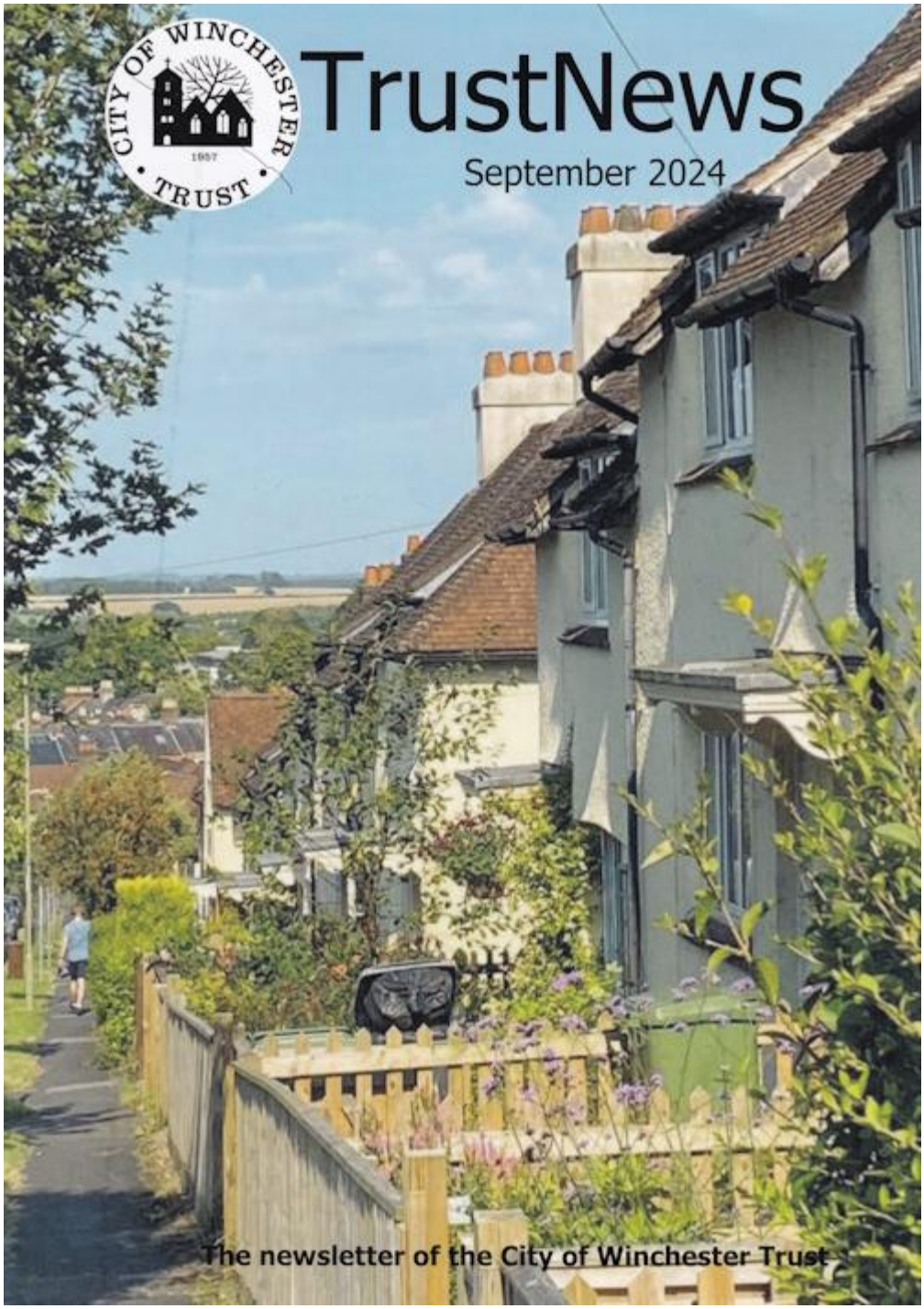
Terraces, Milverton Road - TrustNews Sep 24



Terraces, Milverton Road (Photo City of Winchester Trust)

Chairman's Jottings - TrustNews Sep 24



St John's Street (Photo E Proudman)

Listed buildings

I find it difficult sometimes to understand the thinking that is behind some decisions by conservation officers. I understand that of course historic buildings require special attention and a regard for what materials are used and applied. However, I do think that there is a danger of damaging listed buildings by making them so expensive to upgrade with the demands and bureaucracy that surrounds conservation issues, that owners and prospective owners will avoid necessary improvements, or make improvements without listed building permission using cheaper and inappropriate materials. This could mean precious, historic buildings deteriorating, and may even make prospective owners avoid buying them.

Planning reforms

You will all have seen the widespread coverage of the new government's proposed planning reforms, aimed at achieving the building of 1.5 million new homes over the next five years. I agree with the government that planning decision-making requires some fresh thinking, to improve as well as speed up the process, which can be so slow that it becomes a ï¬nancial burden to all who have to deal with the process. In return for overhauling the planning system all applicants should be made to improve the quality of information they provide for the buildings, layouts etc that they are applying for. The bonus for a good planning application should be a fast-track decision.

A cornerstone of the proposed planning reforms is a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework, which is out for public consultation. This is the first step in a number of promised changes aimed at increasing the number of new homes being built by local authorities, including Winchester City Council. This has had an impact on WCC's timetable for progressing the latest draft of the District's local plan.

Patrick Davies's article on page 10 gives more information on what this means for Winchester and his own personal view about WCC's decision to accelerate the publication for public consultation of the next draft of the plan. At the time of writing, this was due to take place at the end of August, and the Trust will be reviewing this new draft and making comments as necessary.

Keith Leaman

Bushfield Camp - TrustNews Sep 24

Richard Baker with an update on the planning application



View of Bushfield Camp

In October 2023, the Church Commissioners for England submitted an outline planning application (23/02507/OUT) to develop Bushfield Camp for mixed use flexible business and employment uses. The Trust objected to the application.

The Trust assessed the application against Policy WT3 in the current adopted Local Plan that allocates the site for employment use. The Trust maintains that a wider range of uses, proposed by the applicant in the outline application, and those that are set out in Policy W5 in the current Local Plan Review (the draft Reg 19 Local Plan) have not been subject to public examination.

The Trust set out a number or reasons to support its objection. A significant quantum of proposed floorspace is not within the employment use class and represents a speculative application to meet an unidentified need.

If land for employment is required, priority should be given to allocating land for regenerating sites in the town centre.

On the evidence provided, it was concluded that the proposed development would be visually intrusive and have an adverse impact on a rural site that is outside the urban edge, the landscape setting and the settlement gap between Winchester and Compton Street. The site is in a sensitive area in terms of biodiversity and is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

The traffic and parking that would be generated by the proposed development, despite the mitigation measures proposed, are unlikely to make a positive contribution to the City Council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan.


The beech hanger at Bushfield Photo Save Bushfield Camp

All these issues are too important to be considered as reserved matters.

For these reasons, the Trust concluded that the impact of a scheme of this magnitude and complexity is not appropriate or acceptable and that the outline application should be Refused. The full text of the Trust's comment can be viewed on the Trust's website.

At the time of writing, 1,004 documents had been submitted for this application: 114 documents from the applicant, 30 from consultees, 849 from objectors and 11 from supporters. National Highways have requested a third extension of time until 28 August, to enable further information to be provided by the applicant and allow them to provide the City Council with fully informed advice.

The timetable for the Reg 19 Local Plan that includes the revised Policy W5 for Bushfield Camp is for the Plan to be subject to a period of public consultation, followed by an Examination in Public and a Planning Inspector's report before adopting the Plan at the end of 2025. At the end of July the Government published its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for consultation. There is uncertainty about the impact that the NPPF will have on the timetable for the adoption of the Reg 19 Local Plan.

In these circumstances it is difficult to predict how and when the City Council will determine the outline planning application for Bushfield Camp, which has received such a large number of objections.

St John's Street - TrustNews Sep 24

Elizabeth Proudman outlines its fascinating history.



View from Joyce Garden towards the Old Blue Boar and St John's Croft Photo E Proudman

People have lived in St. John's Street for a very long time.

When the Romans came to Winchester in 43 AD and built their walled city, there was already a prehistoric path running up the hill to the downs. It became a Roman road leading from the Eastgate. Beside it was a graveyard and Roman bones are found whenever there is new building. St. John's church is first mentioned in the early 1100s, but it is possible there had been a Roman building on the site. A mosaic in front of the altar must come from somewhere nearby and a reused Sarsen stone is built into the east wall.

King William Rufus gave his bishop a licence to hold a great fair on the hill every St Giles' Day, and in the early 1200s a bishop established the Soke. This area outside the city wall was the bishop's property and it became his liberty - that means he was landlord and lawmaker. The fair and the establishment of the Soke was good for St John's Street. Prosperous merchants built fine houses there and one, the Old Blue Boar, still survives.



St John's Street with the Chancel of St John's Church. Engraving after a drawing by OB Carter c. 1830. Winchester City Council/Hampshire Cultural Trust

The church had wider aisles built with a rood screen and a beautiful new window. It was one of the richest parish churches in Winchester. In 1373 William of Wykeham founded his college. The first boys had their school on St Giles' Hill and used St John's church as their chapel. Wykeham left money to build the church tower and the fine archway into the south aisle. The Soke prospered. But in about 1780 the new turnpike road was built, and St John's Street became a back lane. The Old Blue Boar, by then an inn, closed.

Many good small houses were built lower down the road, and in 1862 a parish school was opened. St. John's Croft, beside the site of the old Bubb's Cross, became a fine mansion. Mrs Joyce lived there, and when she died in 1927 her son gave the meadow in front of the house to the citizens in her memory in perpetuity - Joyce Garden.

After the second world war many of the houses were shabby, and a new ring road round Winchester was to be built to accommodate the motor car. The school was closed and most of St. John's Street was to be demolished as slum clearance. But fortunately, local people objected, the Winchester Preservation Trust, now the City of Winchester Trust, was founded and the plan was scrapped. Most of the Victorian houses were saved and are now much sought after. Parking is a problem, but then St. John's Street was never planned for cars.



St John's Street before (1970s) renovation Photo City of Winchester Trust



St John's Street after (1980s) renovation Photo City of Winchester Trust

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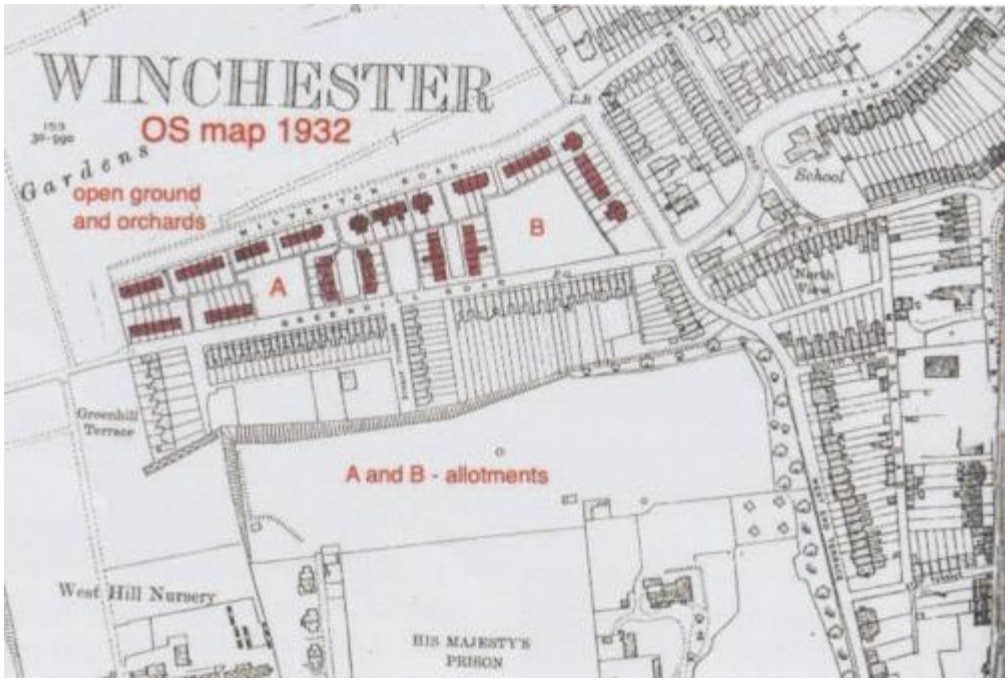
Winchester Working Men's Housing Association - TrustNews Sep 24

Richard Baker on social Housing in Fulflood



1932 OS Map with annotations showing the WWMHA estate in Fulfood

The Winchester Working Men's Housing Association was founded in 1911 by a group of voluntary, philanthropically minded people to provide good quality housing for rent to people in the city. Today the Association trades as the Winchester Housing Society.

All the Society's homes are in a single development on the side of a valley in Fulflood, built on four acres of land conveyed to the Association by the Ecclestiastical Commissioners. In 1911 the land was on the edge of the Victorian quarter of Fulflood, north of Greenhill Road. The site rises uphill from east to west and slopes downhill from south to north, to land that was used for allotments, gardens and orchards.

The Association appointed the architect Norman C H Nisbett (c1860-1918), a partner of John Colson and Surveyor to Winchester Cathedral from 1908, to design the housing.

Nisbett designed an estate of 2 and 3 bedroom homes, in terraced blocks or semi-detached units. The houses are designed in the style of the Arts and Crafts Movement, with two storey houses with brick and stucco walls under tiled roofs that step down the contours with cat slide roofs above first floor windows with generous eaves. The estate was completed in 1912. For the time the houses were luxurious, compared with the slums in the Brooks area in the city centre. All had gas supply, although the modern conveniences of bathrooms with inside toilets, central heating and double glazing were not installed until government grants became available during the 1970s.



Terrace, Greenhill Road Photo City of Winchester Trust



Terrace, Cheriton Road Photo City of Winchester Trust

All the houses have front and rear gardens and combine to make attractive streets and a valued and well maintained social housing estate.

In 1978, the allotment on site B was developed by Winchester City Council to provide 17 flats and the allotment on site A is now a residents' car park.

Spring and Summer Talks Programme - TrustNews Sep 24

After a break of a few years when we had no talks at the Heritage Centre, we decided to restart them this year with a series of three starting in April and finishing in June. Penny Patton, the wife of our former chair Iain Patton, kindly agreed to organise them. We were unsure how popular they would be and were very pleased

they all attracted enthusiastic audiences, filling the space available in our upstairs meeting room.

Two concentrated on the history of parts of Winchester and one on the Itchen Valley between Winchester and Alresford. Our speakers had researched their subjects fully and gave us a lot of detailed information with stimulating illustrations. Elizabeth Proudman spoke about the long history of the street in which she lives, St John's in the Soke, the attractive buildings - including its delightful and unusual church - and the changes in the demographic character of the residents over the years. See her article on page 4.

Richard Baker spoke about the Itchen Valley, reminding us about the beauty of its river and landscape which had prompted the naturalist and former Foreign Secretary Edward Grey to build a cottage near the river for use as a weekend retreat. All the attractions of the valley can be enjoyed through the network of public footpaths.

Derek Whitfield covered the development of Fulflood and Weeke, 19th and early 20th century additions to Winchester as part of its expansion following the coming of the railway. We heard about the sale of Cathedral land for the development of the area, and the various local developers, architects and builders. The British military disaster at Kut in the Mesopotamia campaign in 1916 impacted some of the residents of the area, with the deaths of sons in captivity following the surrender of all defending forces.

We would like to thank the speakers and all those who made these talks happen.

Design Awards 2024 - TrustNews Sep 24



Design Awards 2015

27 entries have been received for this year's Design Awards, and are currently being shortlisted by our judging panel, chaired by Sasha Bavan of London-based architects Knox Bavan.

Site visits of those entries on the shortlist will take place this month and the winning entries will be presented with their awards at a ceremony this winter.

Housebuilding - TrustNews Sep 24

Keith Leaman on targets and problems



A design for modern high density housing by Snug Architects

Central governments over many years have recognised that there is a housing crisis and that there is a need for large numbers of new housing to be built, in particular homes that are truly affordable for first time buyers. It appears easy to put in a manifesto that there is a requirement for X thousand houses per year, but such statements appear not to recognise the many difficulties, or the social upheavals that radiate from such a directive, and it is not surprising that meeting these manifesto demands has so far not been achieved. To meet government aspirations, there needs to be a total rethink on how housing in large quantities can be delivered.

The following are just some of the problems that need to be overcome.

Costs

The cost of land in the south and southeast is a major consideration. A developer in this area of the country has rolled up costs of land acquisition and infrastructure as well as some new houses before they can start selling, so much needed affordable homes are low down on the priority list. Up until recently 20% of new housing has had to be affordable, now it is 40%. An almost impossible task for most developers, with the cost of land in the south and southeast being what it is.

Layouts and movement

Layouts are dominated by vehicle movement requirements, leading to ribbon development and parking problems. Land take-up for vehicles (roads, parking etc) is roughly 50% of the total, with 50% left for buildings and recreational areas. Other forms of movement, that is, cycling and walking, are seldom considered with the same degree of importance as vehicles, and in some housing areas, not considered at all. A reassessment is needed of roads and parking standards by County authorities.

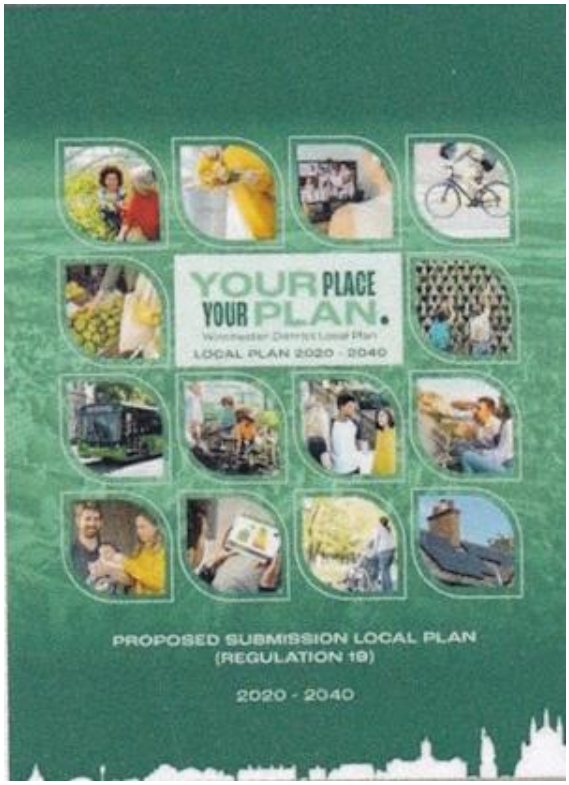
Density

Currently, most housing is built at a low density. It should be possible and even desirable to build at a much higher density. Desirable because a greater sense of community can be achieved, infrastructure costs are halved and more open land is therefore made available for recreation. Higher densities can still lead to very popular communities: much of central Winchester with its terraces and flats is built to a density double that of a housing estate.

It is easy to quote the housing numbers to be achieved but I think it is likely to be impossible to manage this unless the way in which housing is delivered is fundamentally reassessed and planned, not only to deliver the numbers required, but to dramatically improve the quality, character and sense of place, leading to the enjoyment of living within a community.

Winchester's Local Plan - what next? - TrustNews Sep 24

Patrick Davies has a personal view



Winchester City Council has reacted to the new Government's publication of a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by bringing forward a Cabinet meeting to approve an early publication of its own proposed submission of the next stage of its Local Plan (Regulation 19).

The Council is keen to proceed with this early timetable to avoid having to take into account now the likely revised housing numbers which will have to be built according to a revised formula for all district councils in the country. In Winchester's case the new annual figure is likely to be 1,099 - a 62% increase over the present figure. (Most other districts in Hampshire have similar or greater increases.)

I went to the Cabinet meeting on 19th August and was one of the members of the public who had registered to speak. Most of the other members of the public taking part were representing Parish Councils concerned about new, and modestly small, housing allocations. I spoke immediately after the Council's appointed King's Counsel who justified their intention to speed up their Local Plan regulation 19 consultation so as to avoid the need to consider new housing allocation numbers at this stage.

I remain far from convinced that what the Council now intends will actually achieve their objective of having a sound new Local Plan approved speedily by an Inspector next year. As all other local authorities in Hampshire face similar challenges and a degree of cooperation between them all should be encouraged, it is not clear if the Government will actually allow this situation to continue.

The Council's case is that progress on their current regulation 19 document will avoid housing developers seeking and obtaining planning permissions for inappropriate development on unallocated sites. I argued the reverse: that failure to consider the likely new housing numbers would actually encourage new housing applications on unallocated sites.

After more than four hours of the Cabinet meeting they did actually touch on a point I had raised earlier: that in the near 600 pages of the Regulation 19 document there was not a word about the NPPF current consultation. I think a sentence may now be added!

The Cabinet's recommendations will go to a special Council meeting next week. The Cabinet members in conclusion stressed the importance to them of issues other than housing numbers, specifically the challenge of climate change, and of affordability. I agree but don't think housing numbers should be put to one side at this stage.

Since all the parties currently represented on the City Council are supporting the same way forward I expect the Council meeting will agree to the Cabinet recommendations next week without any dissent.

And this issue's award for good design goes to... - TrustNews Sep 24



An interesting new seating arrangement (and coffee table?)
in the new Central Winchester Regeneration Area pop-up park...

Summer Walks Programme - TrustNews Sep 24

Jonathan Mardall on the highlights



Trust walkers on Magdalen Hill Down Photo J Mardall

St Swithun was clearly not happy with us! One walk was cancelled, one held indoors and one postponed, all due to rain. Nevertheless, eight walks took place, most with 15 to 20 participants, and our guides educated us in a wonderful variety of subects.



Christopher Normand and Trust walkers, Winchester College War Cloister
Photo J Mardall

Christopher Normand gave us a passionately immersive talk about the College's War Memorial, beautifully renovated in its centenary year. Judith Martin responded brilliantly to the need to hold the talk indoors and introduced us to the largely unsung part played by Thomas Micklam and the Conservative Land Society in the development of Winchester's housing stock.

Richard Baker - giving only his first repeat talk in over twenty years - uncovered many fascinating historical and architectural points of interest for us on West Hill. Clare Dixon revealed the secrets of Parchment Street, which I suspect most of us had walked past a hundred times, and Geraldine Buchanan brought to vivid life the Winchester of Jane Austen.

On Magdalen Hill Down, Fiona Scully explained the world of butterflies to us and the wonderful diversity of local habitats, while Justin Ridgment and Mark Butt gave us a marvellous insider's view of the extraordinary new University building on Romsey Road.



Listening to Fiona Scully on Magdalen Hill Down Photo J Mardall



University of Winchester nursing teaching area Photo J Mardall

We finished the season with an entrancing trip back in time to King Alfred's Winchester in the company of Barbara Yorke. (We still have our rescheduled walk on the Winchester Union Workhouse, by Caroline and Richard York, to come.)

One plea. Winchester is surprisingly noisy, even after 6pm. If anyone knows of an inexpensive microphone and receiver 'tour-guide system' for twenty people, please let us know.

To all our guides, who very generously give their time and expertise free of charge, and to our participants, who proved stoic in sometimes rather wet conditions - many thanks!

Signage in Winchester - TrustNews Sep 24


The Brooks Shopping Centre
Shopmobility
Market
TIMPSO


ST THOMAS STREET


COOK
LITTER


Bespoke Biking Hub & Café
KING
WALK


TIME DETECTIVE
AGENCY


An
Independent
Store
Clothes
Jewellery
Gifts


LITTLE
MINSTER
STREET



Footer - TrustNews Sep 24

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