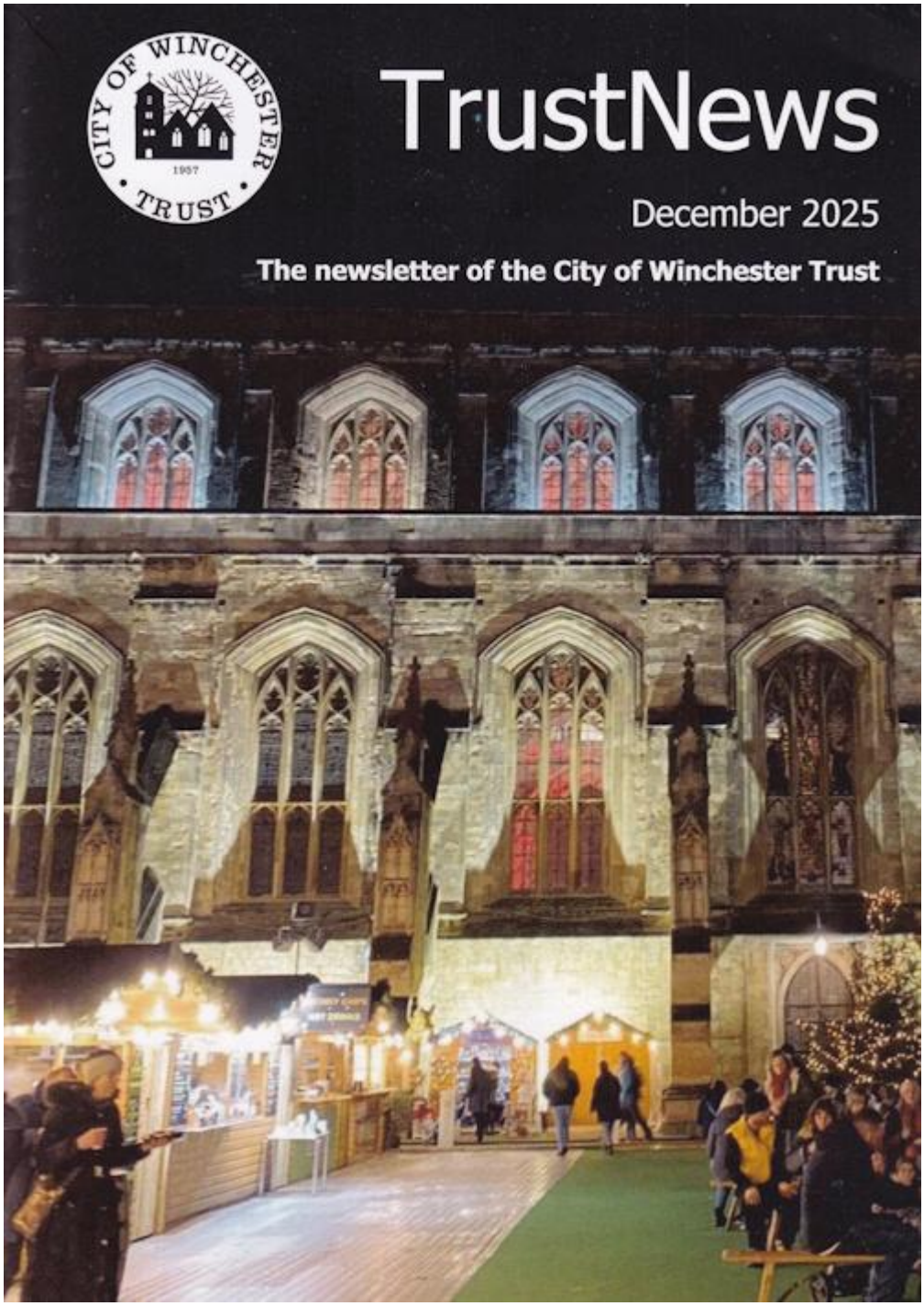
Cathedral Nave at Night - TrustNews Dec 25



Cathedral Nave at Night (Photo courtesy of Tina Wallbridge)

Chairman's Jottings - TrustNews Dec 25

Winchester - and what good looks like for the City



Anthony Gormley's sculpture, Sound II,
Winchester Cathedral Crypt (photo courtesy of Tina Wallbridge)

I wrote in the last newsletter about the current localism debate, about 'people and place' and about how the distinctive character and quality of Winchester contributes to our shared sense of identity and belonging. We clearly value its heritage assets and their settings and I spoke of the work the Trust is now doing to draw a clearer picture of what good looks like for the city going forward. There are three emerging themes or overlapping layers of this picture or map; access & moveme nt, heritage assets and the city's landscape setting. Having spoken last quarter more about the first two of these, I am now going to talk about the landscape setting and the synergy this has with access and movement from the countryside edges of the city into the historic centre. This is a key area for improvement that will contribute significantly to our day to day lives and the quality of the place in which we all live.



Winchster Cathedral (photo courtesy of Tina Wallbridge)

I was at a lecture earlier in the year by Kim Wilkie, esteemed landscape designer, and he talked of the nature of our English landscape, from a historic perspective but he also talked passionately about the present and future. He extolled the virtue of peoples' individual gardens in our existing cities and he advocated landscape rather than just roads being fundamental to shaping the future of our existing cities and new areas of housing development. Inspiring stuff from Kim who I know has spoken well to the Trust in the past about a vision for Winchester's landscape setting.. ..all this chiming with me about the key part landscape has now to play going forward, alongside pragmatic access and environmental improvements for our city, to enhance that sense of place and identity for the city and sense of belonging for all of us. So hopefully we are all agreed that our mission to conserve and enhance our historic city very much includes our city's distinctive landscape setting; our world heritage chalk streams, waterways and green fingers (all be it currently disjointed) that thread through and out to the South Downs.

A landscape vision still needs to be drawn for Winchester as I see the disconnects in the everyday life of our city from it's urban green spaces out to the surrounding countryside. Having said that, if you walk south from our High Street you have the most stunning of heritage buildings and landscape settings, through the Cathedral Close or following the River, actually the Navigation, to Winchester College, past the Castle to the water meadows, to St Cross on to the Handlebar Cafe and into the South Downs national park and beyond.

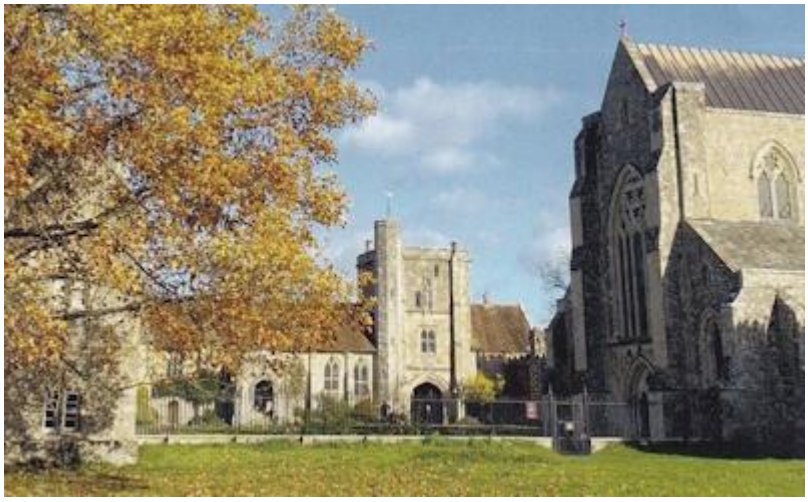
Walking north (and west or east) from the High Street it is not so good or easy to navigate as yet and there are real disconnects and barriers. To the north, for example, through the existing bus station site (which is a particularly grim walked experience currently!) and the surrounding traffic dominated roads and culverted waterways. This all should be better and our visioning for the city will address this and provide a framework as a context for change as when individual opportunity sites come forward for development. The bigger picture view is essential to join these up and make sense as a whole.

So we are proactively engaged in discussions with Winchester City Council and its development partners about the proposals for the current central area sites to advocate these sites playing their part in improving, not only the quality of that part of the city, but also to provide better connections to and from the High Street northwards. Ln my mind this should be linked to current questions about River Park, and what to do for the best there, which should also be considered in the context of the bigger city picture of these access, movement and landscape connections into the city centre and out to existing neighbourhoods and new homes beyond the edges of the city.

I'll conclude briefly with what I talked about at our recent AGM, about what we plan to do more of as the Trust in coming years. There are three things we can and should do more of; to be proactive and collaborative in our approach, to create a clearer picture of what good looks like for Winchester going forward (with a focus on heritage, access/movement, landscape) and to grow our membership and opportunity for engagement. Hopefully you will see that we have already started doing more of the above in our day to day activity.

My thanks to Tessa Robertson who is leaving us after many years as secretary to the Trust, please see Keith's words (page 17) ...and a very warm welcome to Emma Talbot-Williams who joined us in October and has already very ably taken on this role for us.

Wishing you all the best for a very Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.



Autumn at St Cross, Winchester (photo courtesy of Tina Wallbridge)

Bob Wallbridge

Volunteers Needed .. - TrustNews Dec 25

We are looking for two architects to join the Planning Advisory Groups (PAGs). The panels meet once a month on a Thursday usually for a couple of hours. We are also resurrecting our social media presence if anyone is interested in helping. Please contact Emma at secretary@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk

---

Local Plans: 2020-2024 and 2026-2044 - TrustNews Dec 25

John Beveridge



The Trust has been concentrating on the Local Plan covering the years from 2020 to 2040 as it went through its stages towards adoption. Although there is more work to do before the Plan is adopted, the City council's website shows the first documents that are starting the process for the next local plan covering the years from 2026 to 2044. This unusual step follows the new government's urgent wish to increase housing numbers in England and requires more land to be allocated for housing in the District than is allocated in the 2020 to 2040 Plan.

The remaining work to be completed on the Local Plan 2020 to 2040 includes the Planning Inspector's full report following the conclusion of the public examination in June. In advance of this, the Inspector submitted a short preliminary report on 10th September indicating that she was satisfied that the plan is legally compliant and sound in planning terms provided certain changes are made. The City Council has now published a list of modifications they are proposing to make to the Plan arising out of the June Public Examination and the Inspector's September Report. These are subject to public consultation which has now begun and runs until 16th January 2026 and the Trust will consider if it wishes to make any representations.

A large part of the Planning Inspector's September report addresses the housing needs of the District and how and where these are to be provided by 2040. The Inspector has decided to make significant changes to the City Council's proposals, requiring the calculations to run for 16 years from 2024 to 2040. The total housing provision is now 11,106; within this Winchester's share is 4,455. The needs within the District are 290 less than the Plan is proposing, so this extra provision is designated for the unmet needs of the neighbouring local authorities to the south. This is considerably less than the figure of 1900 dwellings the City Council originally proposed for those unmet needs. The Inspector remarked that further consideration should be given to those needs in the future which is likely to be through the next local plan mentioned above.

Other matters of general interest include comments on the energy efficiency and carbon neutrality standards for new development. The City Council has proposed standards that are higher than existing or proposed building regulations and do not follow a formal Written Ministerial Statement. The Inspector considered national planning guidance and has accepted what the City Council has proposed so these will be retained in the Plan. This strengthens the thrust of the Plan to aim for strong policies addressing climate change through reducing carbon emissions and adapting to its impact.

The Trust was part of a group, including several parish councils, which argued for the rejection of the allocation of the Bushfield Camp site for substantial mixed use development. It is now clear this will be retained and attention will now turn to the delayed planning application.

Election of Mayor for Hampshire & Isle of Wight May 2026 - TrustNews Dec 25

John Beveridge.

All those concerned about climate change have a chance to influence the candidates in the Mayoral elections for Hampshire next May through the website Voice for Climate and Nature. Created by individuals and organisations in Hampshire, it is a way to lobby the candidates to adopt policies that reduce the impact of climate change. The Mayor will have significant powers in the areas of Transport, Energy, Planning and Health.

2025 Heritage Open Days Walk/Talks - TrustNews Dec 25

Jonathan Mardall reports on The Trust's contribution to this year's Heritage Open Days.



Heritage Open Day Walk

As the Trust's contribution to the HOD this year, we decided to have a guided walk across the Water Meadows and then a talk about the Handlebar café - with (just) the talk repeated in the afternoon. These two events were open to all, no trust members of the Trust and both were very well attended.



Heritage Open Day Talk

We were extremely lucky to have Isabella Powell, the Duncan Lewis Stewart Fellow of Natural History at Winchester College to lead us across the Water Meadows from New Hall to the Handlebar Café. There was bad news and good. The bad news was a) that there has been a 97% loss of wildflower meadows in England since the 1930s; and b) that only 15% of England's rivers are in 'good or better' ecological condition. The good news was that our Water Meadows are home to many wildflower species, in part because they are managed with grazing which both helps to control the grass species and prevents the grass from dominating. They are also managed in a way that takes account of the nutrient levels, both of the meadows themselves and of the river: supplementary 'feeding' only takes place if completely necessary and no fertilisers are used. We were also lucky in that Isabella was able to take us into the 'hidden' Fallodon meadow, which is usually reserved for the College's Natural History Society. Isabella gave us a delightful and informative walk in the sunshine.


Heritage Open Day Walk

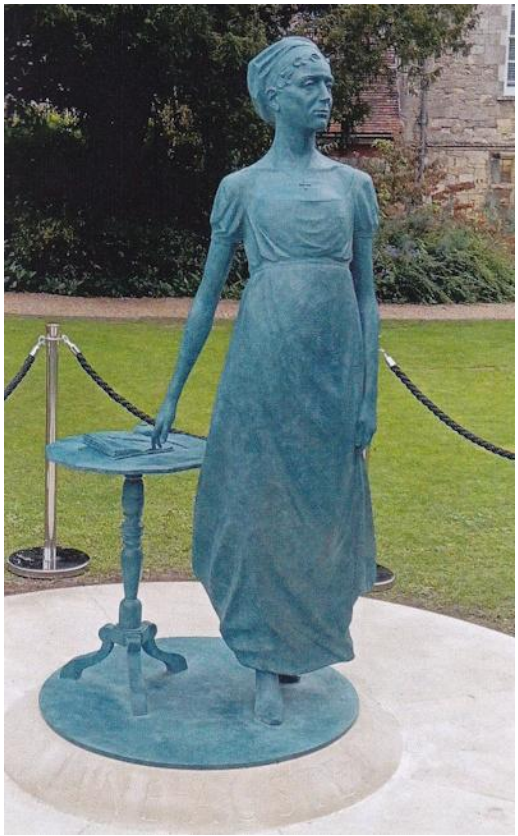
In the second part, Mark Drury of SPUD (Space, Placemaking and Urban Design) and Nick Mirchandani of ArchitecturePLB told the astonishing and uplifting story of the Handlebar Café. It began as an idea from a group of local teenagers attending spudYOUTH Creative Workshops, a Hampshire-based programme giving young people hands-on experience in architecture and placemaking. Inspired by the new cycle route through Winchester and the iconic Hockley Viaduct, the group imagined a cycle- friendly café that would welcome riders, walkers and the whole community. What started as sketches and models became a four-year journey of research, planning meetings, presentations and public consultation. Working alongside ArchitecturePLB, the young designers not only secured planning permission but also inspired extraordinary local support. Over £50,000 was raised through contributions from local authorities, Sport England, businesses and individuals - turning a dream into reality. It was a moving story with many ups and downs. But, as many of you will know, it won a City of Winchester Trust Design Award for 2024 and it has become a highly successful business, much loved by both walkers and cyclists. Not only that but six of the original group have gone on to study architecture and for one of them,

it was his initial design for the café - in a railway carriage - that gained him entry to the course!


Heritage Open Day Talk

Jane Austen Statue - TrustNews Dec 25

Bob Wallbridge


Jane Austen Statue

October saw the long awaited unveiling of the statue of Jane Austen erected in the Cathedral Close to mark 250 years since Jane Austen's birth and to celebrate her genius as a writer and one who is appreciated so widely across the globe.

The Trust was invited following its donation of £500 towards the cost and Bob Wallbridge and John Beveridge attended the unveiling ceremony and the service in the Cathedral before hand.



Unveiling of Jane Austen Statue

The artist selected by the Cathedral, Martin Jennings, has been more recently appointed to make a statue of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth ll.

The statue has not been without some controversy in its conception; it is well worth a visit to see what you make of it yourself. It is good to see that the two most recent new statues in the city celebrate the lives and contribution of women in Winchester's past; these provide some balance to those memorials to so many men.

A new parish council for Winchester? - TrustNews Dec 25

Patrick Davies with an analysis

Winchester City Council has launched a Community Governance Review for the Winchester town area to explore whether there would be support for the creation of a new parish council for the currently unparished part of the city. This consultation runs till Monday 22nd December.

This follows the Government's intention to create new unitary councils across Hampshire in 2028, which will be responsible for the services currently delivered by the county council and the city council. The new review could result in the creation of a new parish council for the Winchester town area.

This consultation will explore whether there is support for a new local council for the unparished area of the town and it will explore whether local communities feel that some of the neighbouring parish boundaries still make sense and are effective.

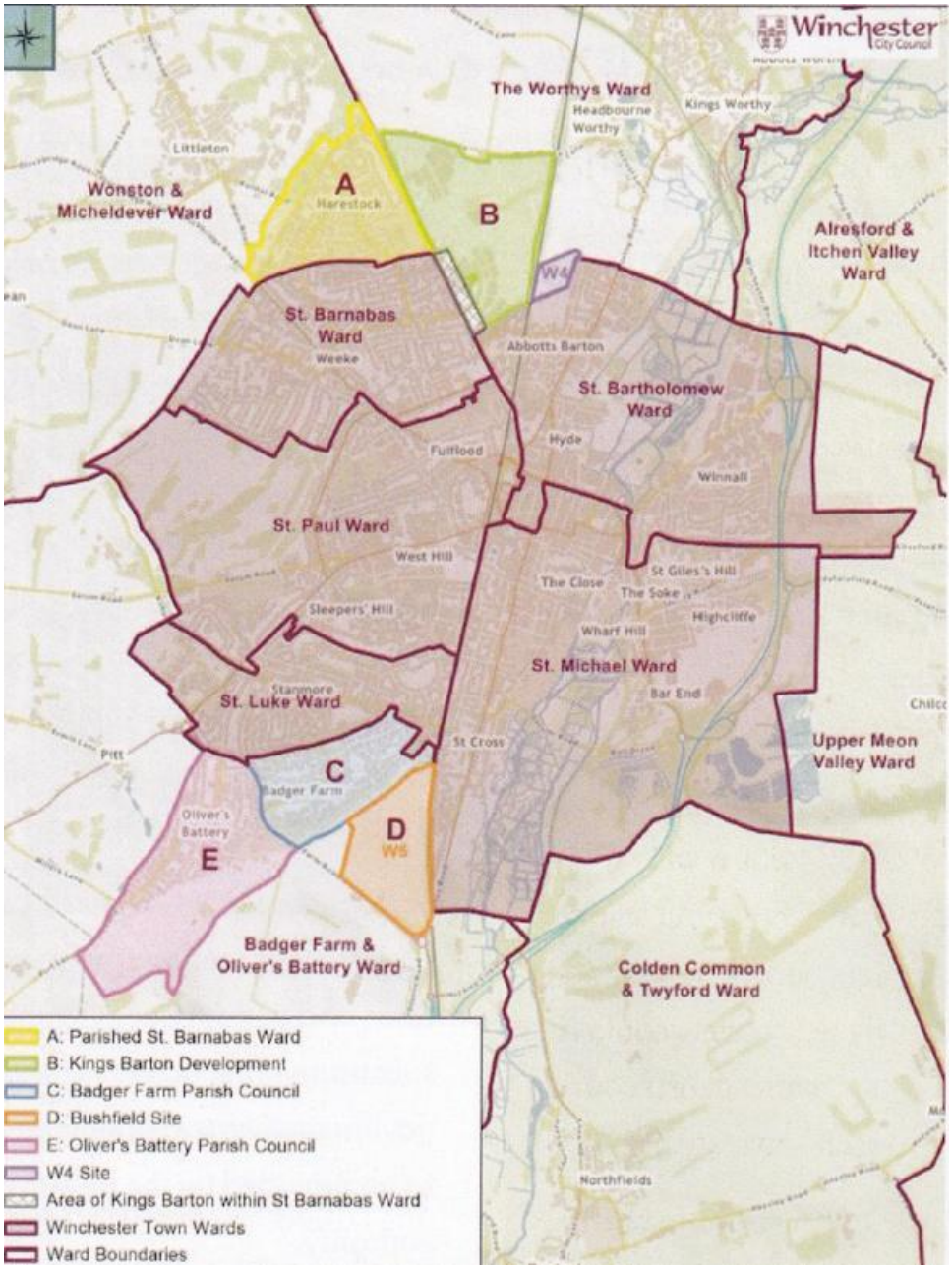
The consultation also explains that the creation of a parish council is one of the ways Winchester's historic city status and Mayoralty can be retained beyond the creation of new unitary councils in 2028.

A second stage consultation shaped by the responses to this first one will follow in summer 2026, with a final decision expected to be made by the City Council in autumn 2026.

Currently there is a Winchester Town Forum, which deals with issues affecting the unparished Winchester town area. All the city councillors who represent the unparished area are members. The Forum has a budget and residents currently living within the town area pay a 'Special Expenses' annual charge as part of their Council tax bill, similar to the precept paid to a parish council and this year is approximately £90.08. This money is ring-fenced to provide services and events in the Winchester town area.

Parish councils are similarly funded through a precept. A parish council determines what services, if any, it wishes to provide, and sets its own budget requirements. A new parish council would have additional costs, such as employing a parish clerk and offices. Across the present Winchester district, the parish precept varies depending on what services are provided. These currently range from £58.40 - £232.49 per year.

There is no obligation for the city council to transfer assets to any new parish (with the exception of allotments). The consultation document gives further examples of how other assets such as street furniture, parks and open spaces, buildings and cemeteries might be considered.



Parish Boundaries

Should the proposal to establish a new parish/town council receive support, the city council will explore whether the following areas which the Council document explains could be included within its new boundary:

1. Part of Littleton and Harestock Parish: the section currently located in the St Barnabas Ward (identified in yellow on the Council's map).

2. Kings Barton and W4 Development Area, west of Courtenay Road. These areas are shown in green and purple, respectively, on the map. Alternatively, the creation of a new parish council to represent just the Kings Barton and W4 areas could be considered as well as the option of remaining part of the existing Headbourne Worthy Parish.

3. Badger Farm Parish Council Area: This existing parish is shaded blue on the map.

4. Bushfield Camp Site which is currently part of Compton and Shawford Parish marked in orange on the map.

5. Oliver's Battery Parish Council Area, which is shaded pink on the map.

The City Council will invite feedback on whether each of these areas should be incorporated into the proposed parish/town council boundary.

A better way?

Winchester's current role as the home of both the present City and County Council with a wide range of local government offices and historic buildings suggests to me that Winchester could well become the home of the new unitary council for central Hampshire once the boundaries are settled. The issue of the historic status of the City could also be presented through appointing as Charter Trustees the newouncillors for the town area.

Government guidance on local government reorganisation was that town and parish councils were no substitute for effective neighbourhood governance arrangements which were to be provided by the new unitary authority.

In my view it will not be a helpful exercise if most of the parish councils adjoining Winchester are objecting to losing parts of their present parishes to Winchester.

The first stage consultation is now running until 22nd December, open for the views of all local residents and organisations.

College Site Visit - TrustNews Dec 25

Bob Wallbridge reports on The Trust's visit to the new girls' accommodation at the College



The Trust was invited in November to visit the construction site of the new accommodation being built by Winchester College.



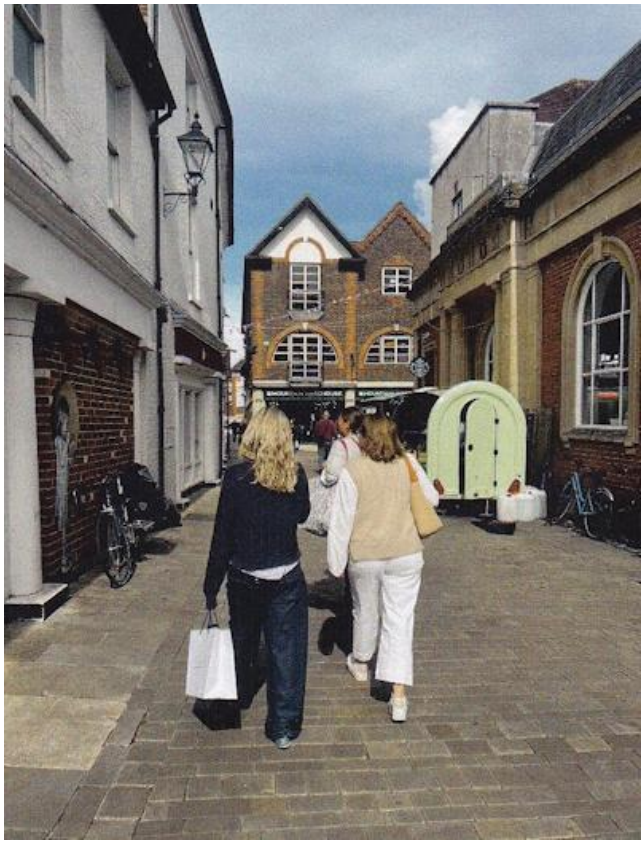
The building will provide sleeping accommodation for 160 girls and will be completed early next year. Trustees and chairs of the Planning Appraisal Groups attended and enjoyed an informative tour with the client and architect, a return visit is planned to see the completed project in the new year.



Our thanks to Rupert Cook, Kaori Ohsugi, Stanton Williams, and Simeon Cox at Winchester College for the visit.

Place and movement. A new vision for Winchester - TrustNews Dec 25

Richard Lewis, strategic transport and planner .



"The Good" - Market Lane

I was delighted to be asked to present a vision for transport in Winchester at the Trust's AGM. My first question to the audience was, "What places do you like from this selection of pictures?"



"The Good" - High Street

The images were a mixture of streets to the north and south of the High Street, and the high street itself. People told me they liked some of the places shown and disliked others. The places people said they didn't like had one thing in common.

They were all car places. They were streets clearly designed with motor traffic in mind, with bland development largely turning its back on them, or they were car parks, junctions and roundabouts. The places people loved were of a human, walkable scale with interesting historic buildings and a sense of comfortable enclosure-the ratio of street width and building heights and details.

We should strive to retain the low-traffic characteristics of the most popular places and demand more of them. To achieve this we need a transport vision and concept which starts to move private motor traffic away from places we want to regenerate while encouraging and enabling walking, cycling and public transport.


"The Bad" - Friarsgate/Tanner Street

I outlined a vision to achieve this. At the most local scale we might start to masterplan the central areas to identify areas where we can replace roads with streets and car parks with new homes, businesses and public squares, restoring the Saxon street and river pattern and opening up new public spaces where people want to spend time.

At the next level, we might review the public transport system and decide to terminate buses differently, review the one-way system to have fewer busy roads, and introduce bus gates to remove through traffic.



"The Bad" - Lower Brook Street

At the top level, we might consider a trial of luxury express coach services to bring people into Winchester from surrounding towns and villages. If the trial works, it could be coupled with park and ride car parks dotted at intervals along the routes, including on the edge of the smaller settlements, to capture car traffic earlier and reduce congestion on Winchester's approaches. Benefits of such an approach include reduced congestion towards Winchester and improved public transport for the surrounding area.

To illustrate what could be done, I showed examples of similar cities. The Oxford Transport Strategy has been reviewed several times since the 1960s and has progressively removed through traffic from the centre and led to more public transport use and cycling.

Around Cambridge, several new developments have been built to higher densities and incorporate a range of local services and frequent buses prior to first occupation. Car parking is accommodated by making four storey maisonettes with the top dwellings having generous roof terraces.

And in Shrewsbury, a new linear modal filter along the river gives through access to buses, taxis and cycles only with general traffic sent to the bypass to access destinations in the town.

The Trust is currently considering ways of taking this forward in the form of a timely review of the existing Winchester Movement Strategy written by Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council and adopted in 2019.

Richard Lewis - Active Planning - www.activeplanning.co.uk

Tessa Robertson - TrustNews Dec 25

Keith Leaman writes about Tessa's time with the Trust



Many Trust members will be well aware Tessa retired as secretary to the City of Winchester Trust in September this year, after having served in this position for eight years.

Besides undertaking the secretarial work Tessa took on responsibility for editing both the Trust News as well as the Planning Appraisal Groups (PAG) work of editing their comments and preparing them for publication and submission to Winchester City Council.

Preparing work for publication is, in my opinion, not easy. In the case of the Trust News interesting articles have to be identified, organised, prepared, and issued on a given time. Tessa seemed to manage the editorship with ease! The end result was always interesting and resulted in an enjoyable professional product.

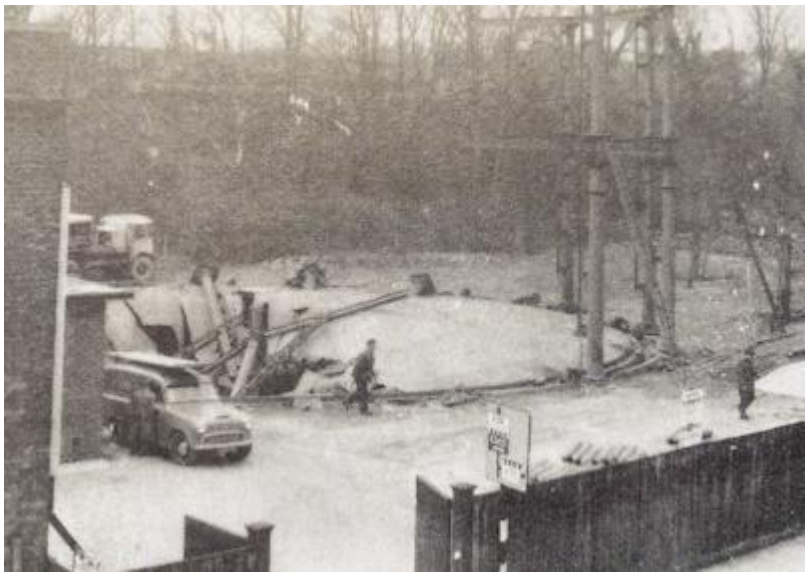
The four PAG groups deliberations requires different skills of both diplomacy, as well as a reasonable understanding of the bureaucratic planning procedures. Tessa managed this as well, and was often more knowledgeable than the professionals!

There are many other diverse activities that require front of house as well as back up work, for example, Winchester walks, Trust property repairs, archives, Design Awards, lecture programmes, meeting minutes, etc.. Once again Tessa managed these with ease , and never a cross word!! Looking at the tasks Tessa managed over the eight years, I am amazed; she certainly made my Chairmanship days easy.

Thank you, Tessa for all the work that you have undertaken for the Trust.

Charles Wittman Benny 1794-1870: Mayor and Entrepreneur - TrustNews Dec 25

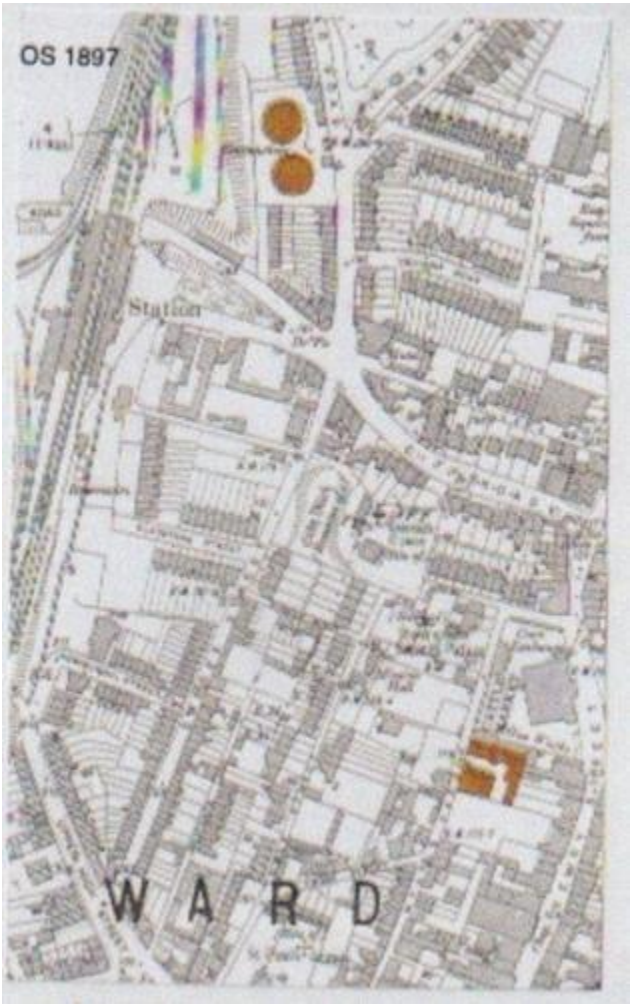
Richard Baker with the second part of another article in our occasional series on people that have shaped Winchester



Demolition of the Andover Road gasometer 1959

This is the second part of the article on Charles Wittman Benny, the first part was published in September's Trust News.

In 1850 Benny formed the Winchester Water Works Company to construct a reservoir on the site of a burial ground for soldiers, east of the Catholic cemetery in Romsey Road. The reservoir,in the form of three large covered tanks containing 380,000 gallons of water, was served from a well 200 feet deep in West Hill and powered by two steam engines to raise the water. The water company's biggest contract was with the Board of Ordinance for the supply of water to the barracks. It also supplied water to the College, the new King Alfred training college and the corporation ï¬re engine. Arrangements were made to the inns served by the Hyde Street Brewery and a large number of private households, when 13 miles of water mains were constructed to serve 700 families. A large circular reservoir and pump room serves the city today and has been supplemented by another reservoir on the west side of the city in Sarum Road.



Map showing Andover Road Gasometers and Staple Gardens Gas Works

Provision of coal-gas supplies for towns and cities was one of the first public utilities. Winchester got its first gas works in 1832. The gas works was made into a company, the Winchester Gaslight and Coke Company in 1834. The gas works was built in Staple Gardens next to the Corn Exchange, with an initial contract to light the streets of Winchester for 21 years. The works comprised a coal store and purifier, coke

yard, two retort houses and a boiler and engine house. The contract was cancelled after one year, which placed the Company in a precarious position. It was not until 1865 when the company was reformed as the Winchester Water and Gas Company with Charles Benny as Chairman that the enterprise was put on a sound commercial footing. In the 1880's the gas holders were moved to Andover Road, alongside the railway line.

As a property developer, Benny opened in 1859 a hotel The Royal, in St Peter Street and bought land for the Congregational Church on Jewry Street.

In addition to these projects, he was involved with many charitable societies, St Cross Hospital, the County Hospital, treasurer of Diocese of Winchester and the Mechanics Institute in the Square.

In 1856 he moved to King's Worthy, where he lived opposite the parish church of St Mary's. In 1858 he became a churchwarden and played a leading role in the second of three Victorian restorations of the church.

When he died in December 1870, all the shops in Winchester closed on the afternoon of his funeral. He was buried in his own cemetery at West Hill. In his obituary in the Hampshire Telegraph (24 December 1870), Charles Benny was recognised for his ability and business tact, that rendered him a valuable friend to leading charities and the poor, and was very much respected by all who knew him.

The author wishes to thank the Worthys Local History Group for providing access to their archive on Charles Benny.

Summer Walks Programme 2026 - TrustNews Dec 25

Jonathan Mardall



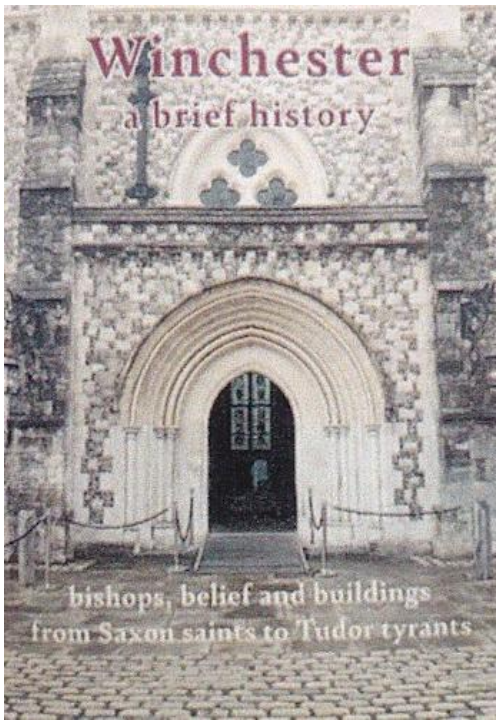
Walk from 2025 programme

We are preparing what we hope will be an attractive programme of walks for next summer.

This is just to let you know in advance that the cost will now be £10 per person, payable when you book, and that booking will be online, through TicketSource. We have put the price up both in response to the suggestion made by a number of walkers that we should do so and because £5 was less than half the price of other comparable walks. We hope that this acceptable to everyone. The programme will be in the March TrustNews and booking will be open from then.

Winchester - a brief history - TrustNews Dec 25

Gary Honey launches new Winchester guidebook



Local resident and amateur historian, Garry Honey, launched his latest book on Winchester at P&G Wells in College Street on Tuesday 4 November. He claims 'Winchester - a brief history' is a city guide like no other; it makes sense of ancient buildings to create a coherent story from the late Saxon to early Tudor period. There is a lot of history encased within a very small city, yet the story can often seem confused or disjointed to visitors.

The Cathedral, Alfred statue and Great Hall are important monuments but how are they linked? The author said: â€˜A city once known for 30 religious buildings now offers 30 coffee shops. Whatever happened to the saints, shrines and sanctity, the pilgrims and piety?'

Most of those who visit Winchester fail to appreciate that so much of what made it famous no longer exists. Saxon Minsters made way for Norman Abbeys, themselves

destroyed by the religious zeal of the Reformation. In Winchester, the story from 960 to 1539 is one of steady rise and sudden collapse. Knowing this is essential to appreciate what little remains today.

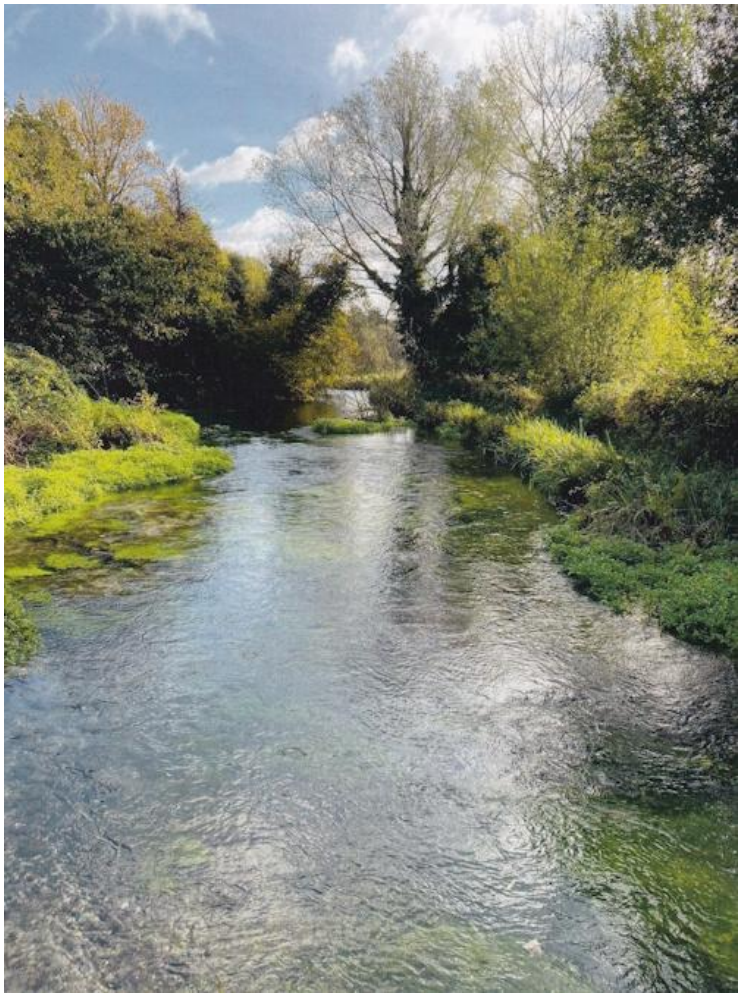
It is a story of a city built on religious belief that was ultimately destroyed by changing interpretations of it. A city once revered as a pilgrim destination was overnight reduced to a city devoid of saints, shrines and relics, left with just a cavernous cathedral. Henry VIII removed the importance of Winchester that Alfred and his great grandson Edgar intended.

'Winchester - a brief history' is available from the Cathedral gift shop, City Museum and Great Hall as well as P&G Wells in College Street.

For further information please contact: Garrv Honey gwh@chiron-risk.com

---

Water Meadows - TrustNews Dec 25



Water Meadows (photo courtesy of Tina Wallbridge)

Footer - TrustNews Dec 25

The content of TrustNews is copyright City of Winchester Trust Ltd unless otherwise noted. However, views expressed in articles are not necessarily the views of City of Winchester Trust Ltd. The Editor welcomes letters or other contributions: please contact editor@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk

The City of Winchester Trust Ltd, Winchester Heritage Centre, 32 Upper Brook Street, Winchester, SO23 8DG

Tel: 01962 851664 - e-mail: secretary@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk -- www.cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk

President: Professor Joy Carter CBE DL

Chairman: Bob Wallbridge Hon Treasurer: Margaret Lancaster Secretary: Emma Talbot-Willliams

Company registered in England No 609812 Registered Charity No 251798

TrustNews is printed by ADH Printing: www.adhprinting.co.uk