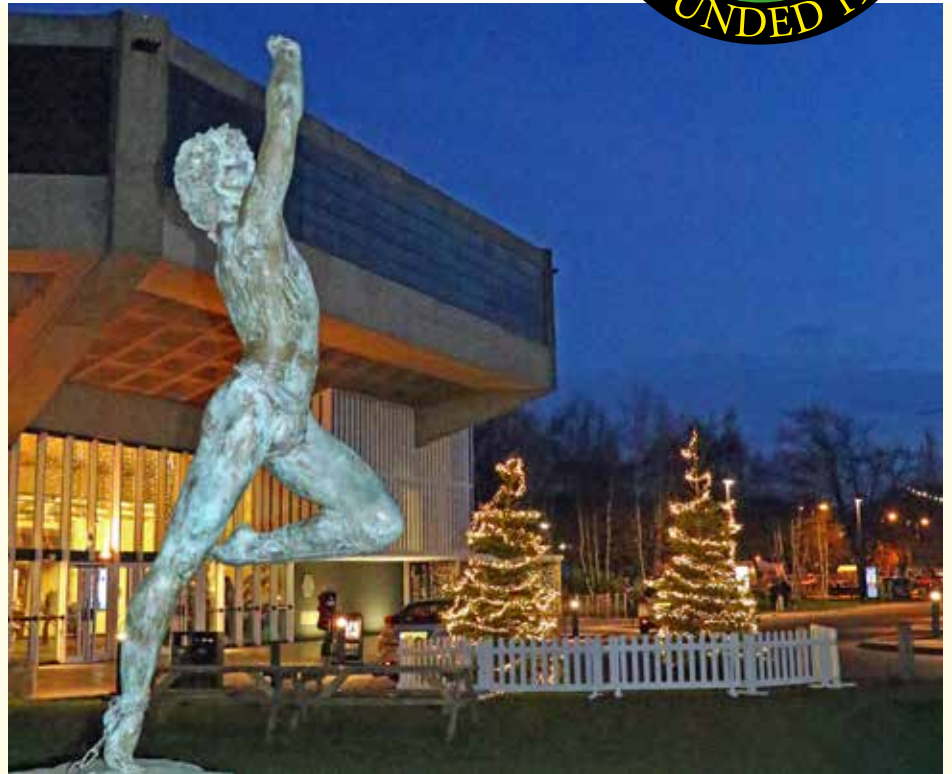


THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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A seasonal view of Chichester Festival Theatre.

Photo: Brian Henham

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS UNITED

When I arrived in Chichester a little over two years ago, I hadn't come across Residents Associations (RAs) or friends of various parks. A friend of a friend invited us to a welcoming party and someone I didn't then know, Robin Kidd, invited us to the Westgate AGM. During the years we spent in Liverpool, nothing like this had happened. Within moments, it seemed, we were welcomed by the people around us, a lovely welcome to our new life in this city.

As we settled in, we realised RAs are the glue for their locations. Aside from social events they both raise and solve, when they can, local issues. Why isn't more made of them? Could there be issues that are common and that ChiSoc could champion? And not only RAs; what about the various associations that already existed?

As you'll read from our AGM report, we are now on the brink of achieving a virtual RA link under our umbrella (as well as firm links with existing Chichester groups). We've already held our first forum with the help of CCDT (Chichester City Development Trust). Residents have a powerful voice, because they live in the houses that form the fabric of a local neighbourhood. Aside from 'Friends of' some of our parks, (Priory Park, Oaklands Park, and Bishops Palace Gardens), there are some 16 RAs in our city. In many ways, they are local civic societies, concerned about their immediate environment.

We felt that, as Chichester's Civic Society, bringing them together was an obvious task and would also help us lend our weight to local campaigns, a crossing on St. Paul's Road being an easy early choice. You'll be hearing more about this development.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Some members have not yet raised their subscriptions to the Chichester Society – as requested in recent months.

THIS IS THE LAST COPY OF THE MAGAZINE FOR THESE MEMBERS.

Review your bank statements and cheques/standing orders for payments due on 1 January!

For advice contact
John Halliday the
Membership Secretary at
Membership@
chichestersociety.org.uk



TWO OF THIS YEAR'S SOCIAL OCCASIONS: WERE YOU THERE?!

If you couldn't join us, we hope to see you in 2026 because several events are being planned
A JULY EVENING TO REMEMBER ON CHICHESTER CANAL



Pamela Kemp comments: on a sunny evening in July a group of the Society's members were on board the Richmond. Glasses in hand, aroma of fish and chips stirring our appetites, we slowly cruised up the canal. Water lapping against the hull, sun sparkling and casting dappled shade under the trees, we saw moorhens and coots, some mallards, the occasional swan; the splash of fish jumping. In the distance the cathedral's spire reminding us of JMW Turner's painting. A most enjoyable evening. Photo: Caroline Hutchings

VISITING CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE PROPS STORE IN OCTOBER

Finding out what lies behind a plain warehouse exterior - all sorts of things!



Anthony Quail reports: a general view from the first floor of an enormous variety of sofas, light fittings, chairs, tables and desks. We were aware of production personnel taking their pick for future plays. Chichester Festival Theatre operates one of very few property stores in the country and visitors come from a wide area to hire all sorts of things. (Photos by Anthony Quail)



Want a skeleton? It's synthetic, not real!

**MR CAWLEY'S ALMHOUSE:
 THE HOSPITAL OF ST BARTHOLOMEW, CHICHESTER**

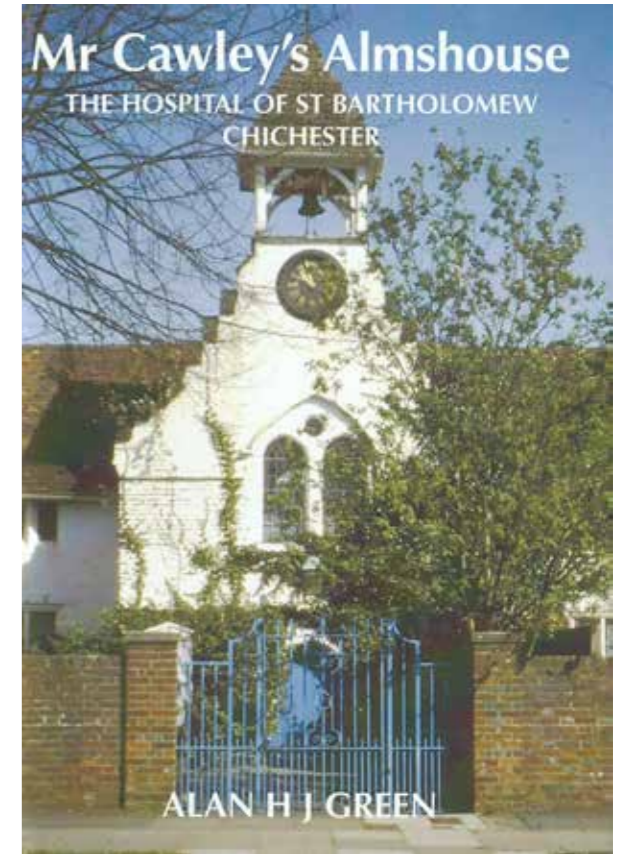
Richard Childs reviews the latest publication by Alan Green

To mark the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Cawley Almshouse, the distinguished local historian and author, Alan Green, has produced this charming, well-illustrated and informative monograph.

1625 was not only the year when William Cawley founded the almshouse, it was also the year that King Charles I ascended the throne. These two events are not without significance in Chichester's history. William was the son of John Cawley, a prosperous brewer and three times Mayor of Chichester. Upon his father's death, William inherited considerable wealth, which not only enabled him to become MP for Chichester, but to have the almshouse built on Broyle Road. If not for his almshouse then Cawley, a staunch Parliamentarian, is best known as one of the regicides who signed Charles I's death warrant. Upon the Restoration he fled for his life eventually dying in Switzerland.

During the Victorian period the almshouse was extensively enlarged, effectively becoming a workhouse for men, women and children. It closed as a workhouse in 1936, became a hospital laundry, and then the later buildings were demolished in 2002. Alan Green has captured the history of this remarkable 17th century building in his usual lively and entertaining style and I can recommend this booklet to you. It's available at the Novium Museum, St Olave's bookshop on North Street and West Sussex Record Office.

Richard Childs is a member of the Society's Executive Committee



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ASHLING PARK HAS A REPUTATION FOR FINE SPARKLING AND STILL WINE

Gail Gardner tells of a vineyard close to Chichester with a welcoming café

Just outside Chichester, among 50 acres of vines and woodland, lies Ashling Park an estate with nearly two centuries of history and one of the most inviting venues in Sussex. Wines are award-winning, lodges are luxurious, there's a very good restaurant but it's a new café on the edge of the vineyard that has quickly become the beating heart of the estate.

Ashling Park's story stretches back to the 1820s, when it was first laid out as a traditional English country estate. Its Georgian elegance and sweeping lawns made it a home for generations, but it also carries a unique piece of national history. After the Second World War, the estate was given as a gift from the nation to Charles Portal, 1st Viscount Portal of Hungerford. As Air Chief Marshal and Chief of the Air Staff, Lord Portal was second only to Winston Churchill in guiding the RAF during the War. For decades, Ashling Park stood as a quiet tribute to his service, until it eventually passed into new hands. The estate's modern rebirth was sparked by Gail Gardner's time living in Switzerland's Valais region, the country's largest wine-growing area. Immersed in the vineyard lifestyle there, she returned to Sussex with a dream: to create something similar on her own land. Ashling Park's chalky soils and gentle slopes provided the perfect foundation and so began its transformation into one of England's most acclaimed wine estates.

The café experience

While Ashling Park has built a reputation for its sparkling wines, it has also become a destination in its own right. The new café is central to that. Step inside and there's a space that feels different from the usual vineyard setting. Light pours through glass walls that frame uninterrupted views of the vines. The smell of freshly ground coffee drifts through the air, tempting you towards the counter where slices of indulgent cake, artisan pastries, and savoury treats await. It's the kind of place where visitors linger. Cyclists call for a flat-white, families treat themselves to tea and cake after a vineyard walk, or locals pop by to soak up the atmosphere. In summer, the café is breezy and bright, with the vineyard stretching endlessly outside. In winter, it becomes a cosy refuge, rain tapping against the windows while the coffee cups warm one's hands. Ashling Park has plenty to offer such



Lord Portal, at left, with Sir Winston Churchill and colleagues.



An aerial view of Ashling Park vineyard, Chichester Harbour and the sea in the distance

as cocktail classes, even Sunday lunches in the restaurant, yet the café is the most approachable entry point. There's no need to know a thing about wine to enjoy it. It's as much a community hub as it is a vineyard café, a place where everyone feels welcome. Ashling Park's other experiences include the Gin School to distil a unique bottle. Guests especially love the vineyard tours. After exploring the vines, there's the tasting room, where expert guides share stories behind how each drink is crafted. Guides are trained by the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, ensuring an experience that is informative and enjoyable.



Tours of the vineyard are popular with guides trained by the Wine & Spirit Trust

Seasonal dining

The restaurant has become known for its generous seasonal dishes and Sunday lunches a treat for locals and visitors alike. Its ethos is proudly field-to-fork: all meat is supplied by the local farm just across the road in Adsdean, while some of the vegetables and herbs are grown in Ashling Park's own greenhouse and kitchen garden. With grapes just three steps from the restaurant door, dining here is more than a meal — it's a local experience that reflects landscape on the plate. The vineyard lodges were designed by Will Hardie of Channel 4's *Amazing Spaces* and offer a luxurious retreat, complete with log burners, huge beds and roll-top baths. Waking up with vineyard views just outside your window makes a stay unforgettable.

Hard work, patience and time

Wine is the foundation of Ashling Park's success. Dermot Sugrue is the winemaker for our current sparkling wines, and he once remarked *'If you bring me good clean grapes, I'll make you world-class wines.'* And that's exactly what he did. This achievement has only been possible thanks to the dedicated and skilful vineyard team, who work tirelessly through wind, rain, hail, beating sun and even a global pandemic, to nurture the vines. Their hard work, combined with patience in the cellar, is what sets Ashling Park apart. The philosophy is simple: never rush the wines. Both the Rosé and the Blanc de Blancs are aged for over 11 years on the lees, one of the longest ageing periods in the English wine industry. This patience allows the wines to develop an intensity and depth rarely found elsewhere. The extended time imparts energy and complexity while preserving the freshness and finesse that make every sip feel vibrant yet elegant.

It's this dedication that explains why Ashling Park has collected six Wine GB trophies for Best in the UK and multiple Decanter Gold medals since their very first vintage. Alongside the sparkling wines, Ashling Park also produces still wines — crafted by Nick Lane, who spent 13 years as winemaker at Cloudy Bay in New Zealand. Still wines are only made when the summer is exceptional and sugar levels in the grapes are at their peak. The record-breaking warmth of summer 2025 created exactly those conditions, and anticipation is high for what promises to be some of the estate's most exciting still wines yet.



Lodges like these are offered to a high specification and can be hired for a weekend or more.

Gail Gardner founded Ashling Park as an award-winning vineyard. Readers interested in visiting this estate can do so at ashlingpark.co.uk

All illustrations are provided by Ashling Park

ACTIVE TRAVEL SHOULD NOT BE JUST AN ASPIRATION

John Templeton reviews an increasingly desperate situation here in Chichester

These thoughts are inspired by Alison Featherstone's article in our June 2025 Newsletter, *Why Chichester is a 15 minute city*. This refers to everything that our residents need is available within a short walk, cycle ride or bus journey. Chichester is indeed a 15-minute city for those living within or close to the city centre or near one of the high frequency bus services, notably the greatly improved Stagecoach 700 service between Portsmouth and Littlehampton. But this is not the case everywhere in Chichester.

In 2020 the previous Government set up a body named *Active Travel England* to help achieve its aspiration that by 2030 half of all journeys within towns and cities should be made by walking, cycling or public transport. This would reduce the need to use cars for short journeys and lead to a reduction in noise, congestion and pollution as well as enable people to lead healthier lives. Active Travel is already a reality for those living in or close to the city centre but not for those living on the outskirts and in particular the housing areas, both old and new, to the north of the city. Apart from the disadvantage of distance from the city centre, Parklands, East Broyle and Graylingwell Park have only an hourly bus service but none in the evenings or on Sundays. and the rapidly growing Minerva Heights has no bus service at all.



This jumble of 'islands' at the south end of St Paul's Rd near the church isn't safe for families with buggies, children and dogs or for mobility scooters

Dangerous crossings

An additional problem is the danger of crossing the busy A286 Lavant Road to Midhurst. More serious is the increasingly busy and dangerous St Pauls Road (B2178 to Havant) where the only safe way to cross is at the light-controlled pedestrian crossing by the One Stop shop. As well as catering for local traffic, the B2178 has become a fast link between east Hampshire and the Sussex coast, avoiding the notorious A27 between Havant and Chichester and the Fishbourne roundabout. Elsewhere in West Sussex, major housing developments have been accompanied by relief roads or bypasses to cater not only for the traffic generated by the new housing but at the same time removing through traffic from the centre of towns and villages. At Haywards Heath the A272 now runs south of the town instead of through the centre, and at Billingshurst the A29 has been diverted on the west. The nearest example to us is at Bognor. Here, due to proactive negotiations between WSCC and Arun District Council, the A259 coast road which formerly passed through the centre of the town has been diverted to the north stage by stage. Despite involving a new flyover over the railway line, this road was apparently funded 100% by developers!

Gyratories

The Northgate Gyratory has become even more dangerous in recent months because of heavy traffic. Gyratories were widely built across the country in the 1960's to prioritise traffic flow and pedestrians were provided with subways or footbridges. The dualling of Orchard

Street never went ahead and the light-controlled pedestrian crossing on Orchard Street was the result of a short but successful campaign by local residents and parents of primary schoolchildren in 1976. This is inconvenient for pedestrians and many chance their luck by crossing close to the gyratory which many motorists treat as a racecourse and speed off onto Orchard Street or St Paul's Road often without indicating. Those not chancing their luck are corralled to the light-controlled crossing which can prioritise traffic flow over the needs of the waiting pedestrians. Elsewhere on the ring road there are locations where it is dangerous to cross. Examples are the roundabout junction of Spitalfield Lane and New Park Road and on the Eastgate gyratory at the junctions of St Pancras and The Hornet, where everyone must chance their luck!

In London and most towns and cities, pedestrian crossings are either light controlled or Zebra crossings, but in West Sussex there are very few Zebra crossings – WSCC's highway engineers don't seem to like them because they impede the flow of traffic! However, as all traffic must stop at the Zebra crossings at the new Westgate 'Dutch-style' roundabout, whenever a pedestrian steps out, it is illogical for Zebras not to be provided at the Northgate Gyratory and elsewhere on the Ring Road and on the busy A286 and B2178. They are cheap to install and with orange 'Belisha Beacons' are inexpensive to maintain. In the north of the city they would enable people to walk and to wheel buggies with children in tow, to reach shops, schools or other community facilities which would particularly benefit elderly people pushing shopping trolleys or using mobility scooters.

Zebra crossings

Regrettably there is no likelihood that the volume of through-traffic in the city can be reduced any time soon. However, the provision of Zebra crossings would greatly enhance the lives of the city's residents and enable short journeys to be made on foot or on wheels. The 37th edition of the Highway Code (first published in 1931) has been completely revised and updated. It only costs about £5 and its 160 pages are easy to navigate. It introduces new responsibilities towards vulnerable road users, especially the elderly and children. It should be essential reading for all road users.



A new Zebra crossing on Sherbourne Rd opposite the Parklands shopping parade. How ridiculous to provide this on a road with light traffic, but not respond to the need to help people safely cross St Paul's Rd, the B2178



What can be done! A new Zebra crossing on Avenue de Chartres close to Chichester College. Note the cycle route



What needs to be done! Leaving Jubilee Park to walk across New Park Road can be dangerous because there is no Zebra crossing

If the Government's proposals to replace County and District Councils by new Unitary Authorities are carried out, both West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council will soon be abolished, to be superseded by a Unitary Authority responsible for both planning and transport policies. In the meantime, Chichester District Council is currently updating children's play areas and public conveniences across the city - a welcome legacy of its 50 years of existence! Surely as a farewell gift to its county town, West Sussex County Council could leave us with Zebra crossings in the most dangerous locations to encourage Active Travel across the city? The whole of Chichester could then become a 15-minute city!

John Templeton is a member of the Society's Executive Committee and took the photos for this article.

CHICHESTER'S LOCAL PLAN: AN UPDATE AND THE IMPLICATIONS

Christopher Mead-Briggs has talked with CDC's planning people

In my March 2025 article, I reviewed the increase in our Housing Allocation brought about by the Angela Rayner proposals to build 1.5 million new homes across England during this Parliament. The output number for Chichester's new homes rises from 638 dwellings per annum (dpa) to 1,305 dpa, over twice the number in the approved Chichester Local Plan that was only finalised in August this year. What is new for us to consider is twofold:

- our Local Plan will need re-writing immediately to double the housing numbers
- we are at the start of the process of becoming a Unitary Authority with no firm guidance on the shape and size of what will be the outcome.

As part of the new Government's Planning changes there is a clear expectation that the time it takes to develop a Local Plan will reduce from 7 years to 2 ½ years. This means that despite having taken 8 years to gain approval to our new Local Plan we must start again without delay. If Chichester fails to do this its housing target will be increased by 20 percent by July 2026. One of the main consequences if we fail is that the Local Authority will be under more pressure to approve planning applications for new houses. Planning permissions are, after all, the main source of its housing land supply. We revert to planning by appeal. The pressure will then be on our Planning officers and our Planning Committee. Our Westminster Government will not be taking prisoners. Their slogan is to build, build, build. However, our two local government bodies, the District and the County, have yet to decide on the boundary of the new Unitary Authority. Whatever is decided locally will then need Government approval. How can we revise our Local Plan if we don't know its boundary?

Meanwhile?

Our historic city situated between the South Downs National Park and Chichester Harbour needs special consideration before new housing sites are proposed. We consider that enough damage has been done to the City's setting by development that is already approved in the Local Plan. To the west we have Whitehouse

Farm now called Minerva Heights with some 1,600 new dwellings; to the east we have sites at Shopwyke, Westhampnett and North East Chichester extending to 1,765 dwellings; and there are many more smaller sites already allocated in Harbour towns and villages.

In the period between 2020 and 2023 the Chichester Society joined with Civic Societies in 12 other English Historic Cathedral towns and cities to review how we can best balance the need for new housing and employment whilst saving the setting of our beautiful and ancient city at the foot of the South Downs. That study indicated a solution that has saved Worcester from further damage by creating a new town nearby with a railway station Worcester focused on a new railway station.



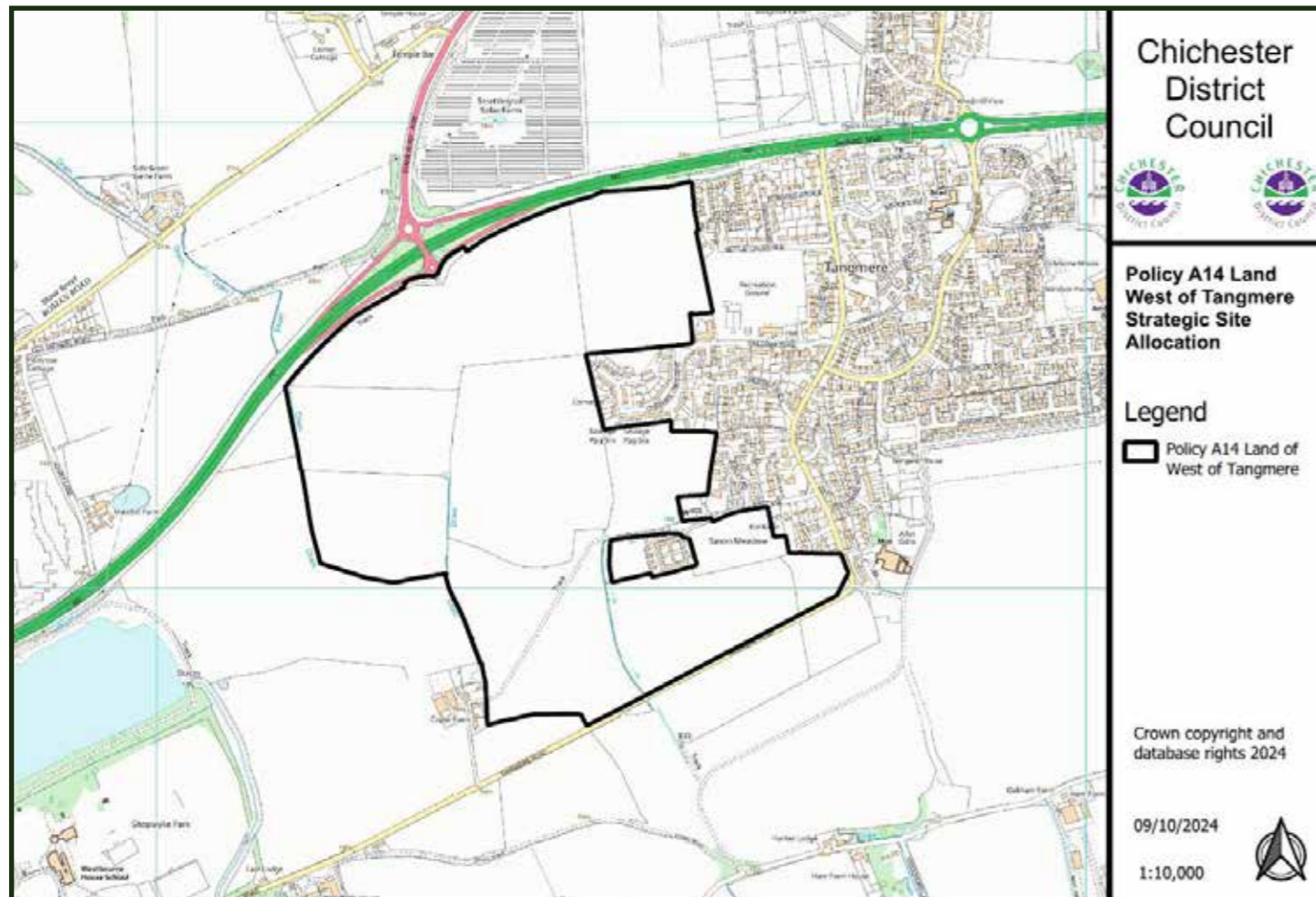
Worcester's decision is to construct a new town nearby with a railway station
Photo: Oliver Mallich for the report on English Historic Cathedral Towns and Cities

Tangmere?

Tangmere has no historic or landscape constraints. We have already included 1,300 new dwellings at Tangmere in our Local Plan, and this includes a new road connection directly onto the A27 at the junction of the A285. We could propose a new railway station to the south of Tangmere at Drayton Lane which lies on the Portsmouth/Brighton/Victoria line. Tangmere has a large disused airfield. With such good road and rail connections, could we allow Tangmere to develop as a new town taking all our new housing and employment in our Local Plan area for the years to come?

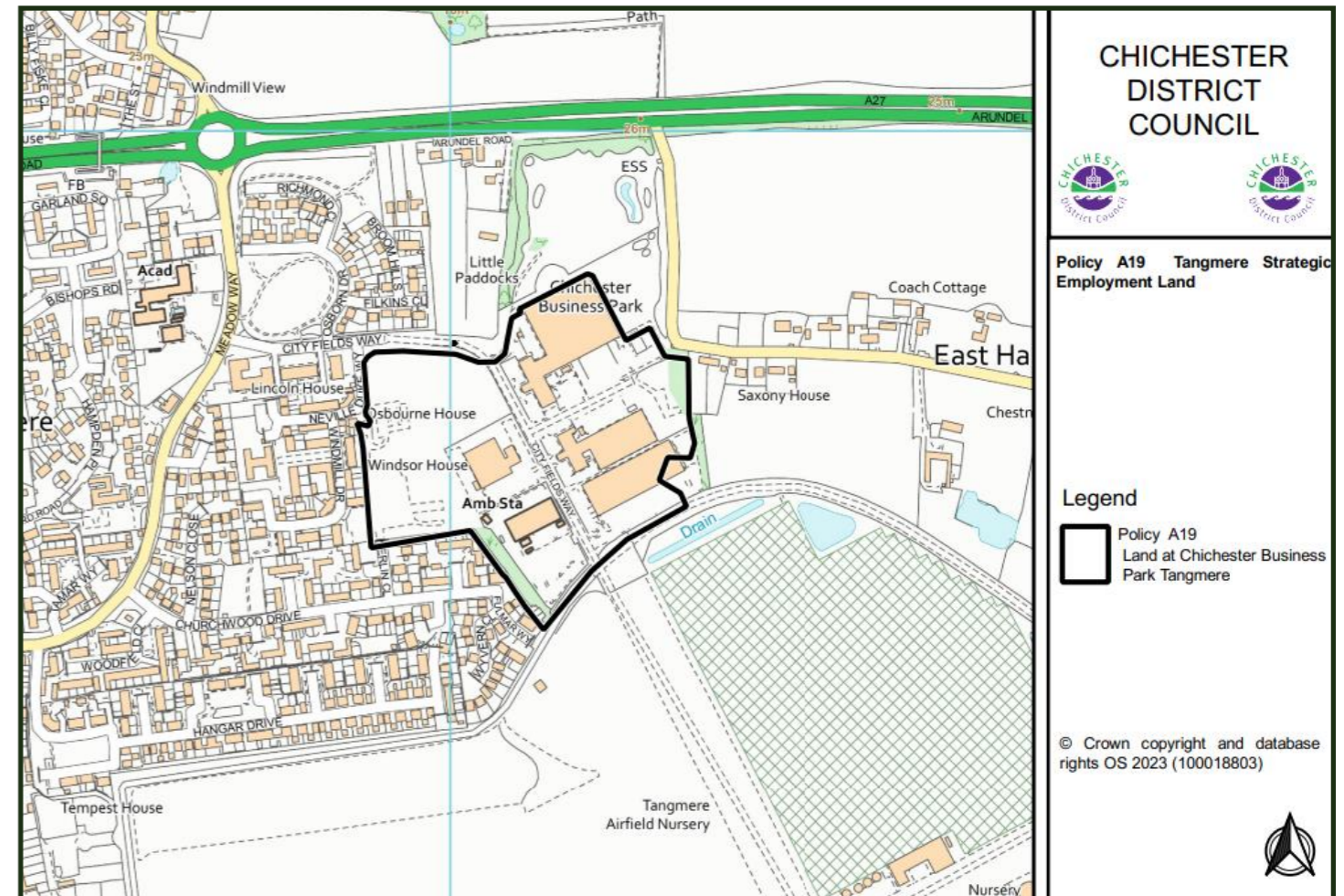
Christopher Mead-Briggs is a member of the Society's editorial team.

Readers who want to read the adopted Plan have two options: to download a pdf file from the CDC website (chichester.gov.uk/localplan2039), for which there is no charge; or pay £30.10 for a paper copy that includes the cost of postage (phone **01243 534734** to pay by card).



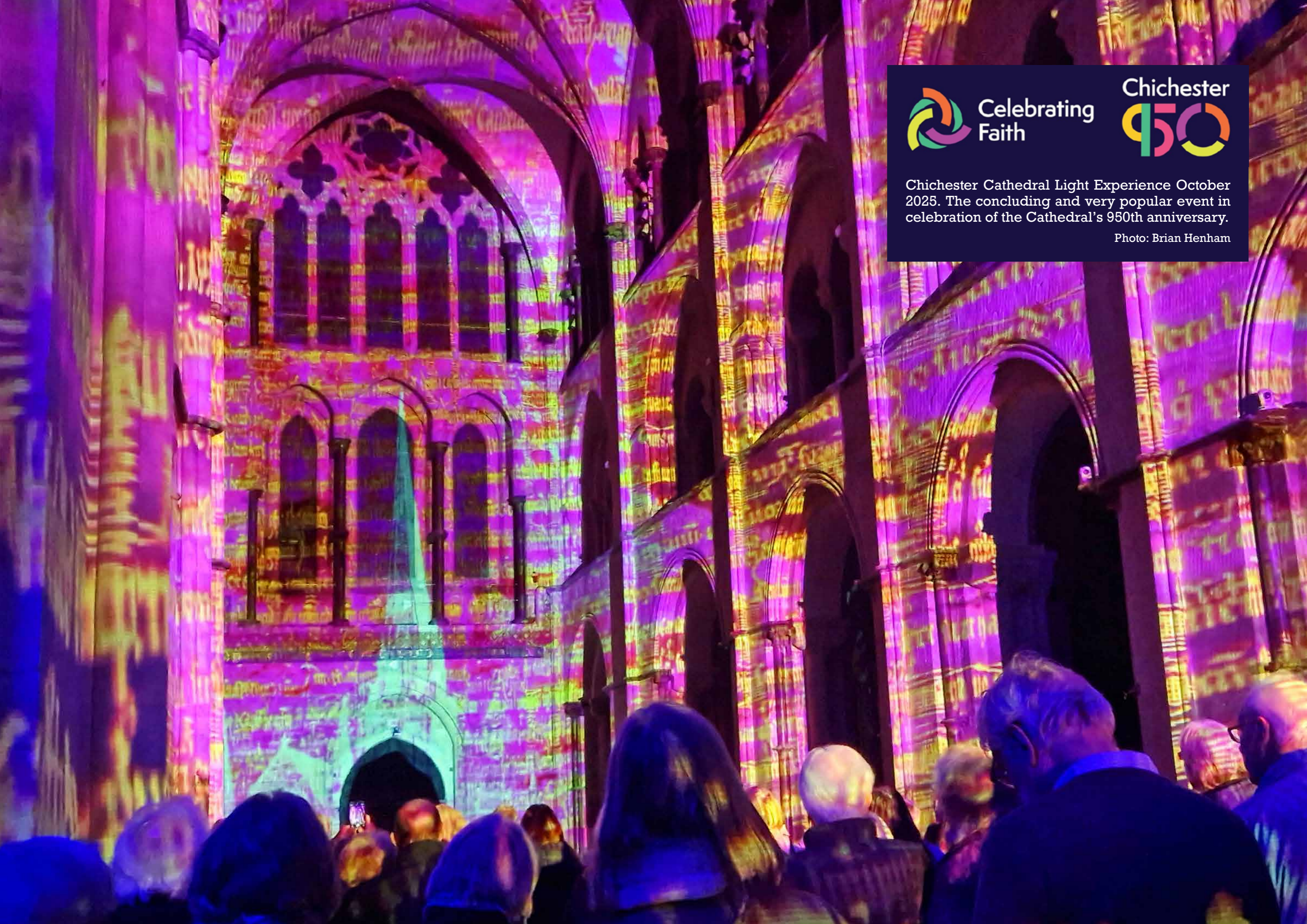
Local Plan Map 10.8, page 301 Land West of Tangmere

Image: CDC Local Plan



Local Plan Map 10.9, page 313 Tangmere Strategic Employment Land

Image: CDC Local Plan



Celebrating
Faith



Chichester Cathedral Light Experience October
2025. The concluding and very popular event in
celebration of the Cathedral's 950th anniversary.

Photo: Brian Henham

HISTORIC INFORMATION ON 17TH CENTURY CHICHESTER IS REDISCOVERED

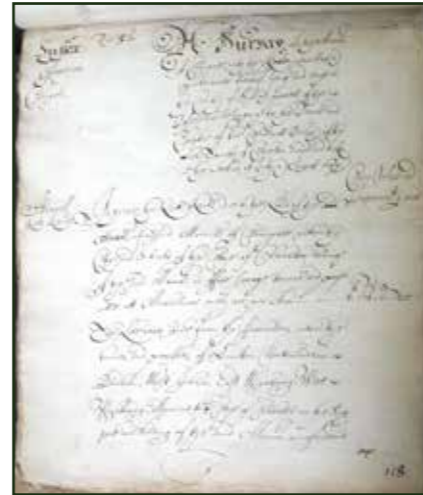
Danae Tankard has researched The Parliamentary Surveys of the City of Chichester 1649-1650

During the English Civil War (1642-1651) more than £5 million worth of land, just over a third of it belonging to the Church, was confiscated and sold by Parliament to repay its war debts. On 30 April 1649 Parliament passed an Act abolishing 'Deans, Deans and Chapters, Canons, Prebends and other officers and titles belonging to any Cathedral or Collegiate Church or Chapel within England and Wales'. Surveyors were appointed to hold local courts of survey, examining existing property records and interviewing tenants, manorial officials, and other interested parties prior to the property being sold off.

This is the background to the situation in Chichester. Parliamentary surveys for the City's Dean and Chapter and Vicars Choral were undertaken between 1649 and 1650. They are contained in three large volumes now held at the West Sussex Record Office (WSRO Cap/1/30/1-3). The Dean and Chapter and Vicars Choral were the largest institutional landlord in Chichester and the surveys contain detailed descriptions of housing, outbuildings, gardens and other 'green' spaces within the city walls and in its suburbs. It is this material that has been edited for the new Sussex Record Society publication. A detailed introduction to the volume provides an overview of the city in the seventeenth century, including its government, trades and shops, industry, poverty and welfare, schooling, drinking establishments and housing.

Parliamentary Surveys

The Parliamentary surveys for Chichester provide a unique insight into the city's buildings and topography. Individual entries record the name of the tenant, the property's location, the number of rooms, ancillary buildings such as stables, barns and malt houses, outside space (yards, gardens, orchards), sometimes with its size, and water supplies. The surveys also record some of the damage done to the city during the Civil War.



West Sussex Record Office Cap/1/30/2, p. 118, showing first page of the parliamentary survey of the manor of Canongate. By courtesy of the Very Revd. the Dean of Chichester, and with acknowledgements to the County Archivist, West Sussex Record Office.

This is an entry for a property on West Street leased by Stephen Humphrey, a wealthy alderman and one of the leaders of the city's Parliamentary faction:

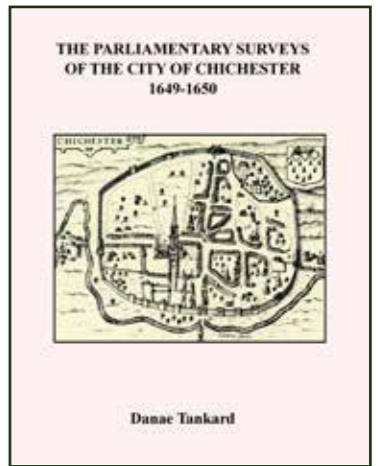
All that house and tenement situate and being on the south side of the West Street of the city of Chichester adjoining to the common well in the said West Street between the tenement in the tenure of Widow Violet or her assigns on the east part and the tenement in the tenure of Margaret Woodison or her assigns. All which tenement consists of a shop and three low rooms and three chambers over the aforesaid low rooms and a long narrow yard parted by a stone wall from the next house on the west ...

This modest property is unlikely to have been where Humphrey lived. Many Cicestrians leased or owned several properties, living in one and renting out the others. Like many houses in Chichester, this one had an integral 'shop'. The surveys do not record whether these were retail shops or workshops, but that can sometimes be established by looking at other documentary evidence. This house did not have a private water supply, so its occupants would have used the common well in West Street. The houses recorded in the surveys were of two storeys, but many also had a cellar and a garret. Building materials are seldom noted, nor are internal fixtures and fittings although in some instances the surveyors do record that rooms were 'wainscoted', such as the 'wainscoted' parlour in William Baldwin's large house on North Street. Baldwin's property had a 'coal house', suggesting that he was using coal, rather than wood, as fuel. It also had a 'large wash house with a well of water in it', so his house had an internal water supply.

Parliamentary surveys also include detailed descriptions of the property lying within the cathedral close, except the bishop's palace. This is an extract for the entry for Canongate on South Street:

... the said gate house is built of square stone and contains in length twenty foot of assize and in breadth fourteen foot of assize. On the south side of the said gate room is a porters lodge by which is a door giving entrance to stairs that lead up into one convenient ceiled chamber and two small rooms adjoining over the said porters lodge and gate room aforesaid, and to the said gate are a large and strong two-leaved gate giving entrance into the lane called Canongate Lane ...

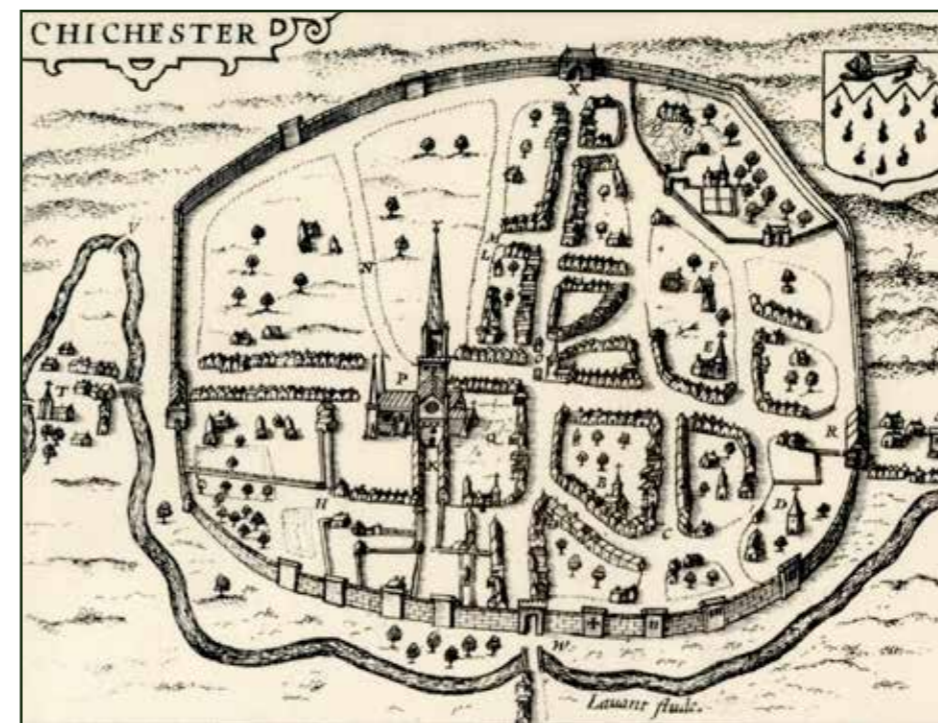
Surveys record that the occupants of houses that made up 'Little Cloisters' within the cathedral close shared a 'common pump' as well as 'common houses of office' – a row of twelve privies divided by partitions. This is the only reference to toilets in the survey.



Front cover of Chichester's Parliamentary Surveys 1649 – 50 Photo: Sussex Record Society



Canongate (Canon Lane today) by Charles Ingrej and GE Madley, early 19th century Image: with thanks to Alan Green



Chichester in 1610. Map by John Speed Image: West Sussex Record Office

Civil War damage

Surveys reveal some of the damage done to the city during the Civil War siege of December 1642, especially in the suburb of St Bartholomew's outside the city's west gate. Here 'the greatest number of the houses within the said parish were ... ruined and demolished', as was the church of St Bartholomew's, its parsonage and outbuildings and the substantial 'mansion house' belonging to Deanery Farm. Further damage was done to the city's buildings during its occupation by a parliamentary garrison (1642-1647). Widow Grace Staker's house on West Street was described as 'wholly ruined' after it was used as a guardhouse, and the former Dean's house in the cathedral close had all its window glass and brick paviers removed from the hall.

Dr Danae Tankard is a Reader in Social History at the University of Chichester. This article derives from *The Parliamentary Surveys of the City of Chichester 1649-1650*, edited by Danae and published by Sussex Record Society at £45. Readers may be interested in *Factionalism and Dissent in an English City: Chichester, 1678-1685* by Danae Tankard, published by Routledge.

CHILDRENS PLAY AREAS IN CHICHESTER GIVEN A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Brian Henham reports on a substantial restoration project and is impressed

At the beginning of last year, Chichester District Council (CDC) decided that it had become necessary to refurbish and upgrade the children's play areas in the city. Six sites were involved, namely Oaklands Park, Priory Park, Parklands, Amphitheatre, Florence Park and Whyke Oval. A budget of £800,000 was set aside, with additional support from the City Council.

Initial designs were drawn up and a video was created and made available for viewing, with artistic impressions of the plans for each site. A public consultation was arranged from 3 to 31 March 2024 when people were able to comment on the designs. Members of the Green Spaces teams then visited each site during the summer of 2024, asking people for their views and ideas. Other organisations were also offered the opportunity to comment, including local schools, sports clubs and the Festival Theatre, which is sited at the southern end of Oaklands Park. All this additional material then helped to shape the final plans.

Designs for play areas

Some of the sites clearly needed a complete upgrade, whilst others required less work. Care was taken to make sure that each play area catered for a range of ages and abilities. They needed to offer children an opportunity for physical and mental exercise, fun and enjoyment, all within a safe environment. Sand pits were ruled out on the grounds of the potential damage that sand causes to equipment and the area surface. Astro turf was also considered but it was decided that all the play area surfaces would be made up of a mixture of natural grass and a material known as *Wetpour*. This is a mixture of rubber crumbs (made entirely from recycled tyres) and resin, creating an impact-absorbent surface that is durable, quick-drying, wheelchair-friendly and available in several



A jolly tower adds to the fun of a good slide!

colours. It feels soft and spongy to walk on but is long-lasting and maintenance free. Play areas are strategically placed around Chichester but in very different environments. The opportunity was therefore taken to create different design themes for each area. A series of recent archaeological excavations in Priory Park have revealed extensive Norman remains and as the play area is located next to Castle Mound, a castle theme has been adopted with a castle climbing frame and slide as the centrepiece. In complete contrast, the theme at Parklands is coastal related and includes a dolphin play panel and an 'under-the-sea' tunnel. The play areas remained open for use whilst the work was being carried out but all have now been completed except Amphitheatre, where the plans have recently been approved by Historic England and work is expected to start shortly.

Oaklands Park

Of the six sites involved, emphasis has been placed on Oaklands Park to create what has been described as a 'destination' play area. The area allocated is larger than the others and is centrally placed on the high ground of the park, with views looking south towards the city and the spire of the cathedral. To quote the District Council the intention was 'to offer a wider range of creative pieces of play equipment to entertain people for a longer period of time.' The Council envisaged residents and visitors alike having a complete day out with their children, perhaps bringing a picnic lunch or visiting the Festival Theatre cafeteria which is just 250 metres away. The site is attractively fenced with gates at the south and north ends and contains equipment for all ages. Opened at the end of August, it has already attracted large numbers of visitors to the obvious enjoyment of both young and old alike! Well aware of the importance of their investment, CDC are visually inspecting the play areas three times a week, with a further more detailed inspection once a month. Any matters requiring attention are dealt with as necessary. A considerable amount of thought, research and consultation has clearly been given to this project. The District Council are confident that the resultant play areas will 'challenge all age groups, encourage creativity and provide a space for everyone to play and socialise together.' CDC is to be congratulated.



An unusual and fun way for young people to measure themselves

.....
 Brian Henham is a member of the Society's editorial team. All photos are by Brian.



Priory Park play area seen from the City Walls with the Bowls Club in the distance



Oaklands Park play area looking south towards the Cathedral, its spire peeping through the trees

A STATUE TO HONOUR MADGE TURNER

It's time to recognise Chichester's principal voice for women's suffrage. Carol Brinson explains

In the June 2022 issue of the Chichester Society Newsletter Nichola Court wrote an article about 'Madge' Turner (WOMENS' SUFFRAGE IN CHICHESTER). Since then, much progress has been made to honour Madge. To recap with a quote from Nichola's article:

Ethel Margaret Turner – always known as Madge - occupies a unique place in Chichester's history, in that she was the only Chichester-born suffragist imprisoned for her involvement with 'the cause'. Madge was born on 24 July 1884, the eldest child of Edwin and Minnie Turner, who ran a successful grocer's business at 27 South Street, Turner & Son.... Madge was a talented artist and enrolled at the new Chichester School of Art, located at the Butter Market in North Street.... it's not known when Madge first became involved in politics. A short report in the Chichester Observer of 7 June 1905 on 'the awakening of liberalism in Chichester' notes Madge has been elected Assistant Honorary Treasurer to a new 'organisation of ladies to assist the cause'. On 17 January 1906... the Bognor Observer labelled Madge 'the lively young Liberal orator of Chichester' and quotes her as saying, 'only a woman knows how nice it is to be a man'.

Madge became deeply involved in the suffrage movement and was arrested during a Women's Freedom League (WFL) march whilst carrying their banner to Downing Street in 1909 spending 14 days in Holloway Prison. Not deterred, probably perversely encouraged, she became a paid organiser for the WFL, working around the country. To quote Nichola again: *Although Madge appears to have distanced herself from the WFL by 1918, she spent the rest of her life fighting to improve the lives of women and children around the world through her work for the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.*

In 2023 the cause to recognise Madge Turner, taken up with drive and enthusiasm by Francesca Tambling, took a big step forward. Chichester City Council agreed to honour Madge with a blue plaque placed on the Butter Market in North Street. Then there was a plan to have a statue for Madge erected in West Street. The Madge Turner Statue Appeal and the Chichester Women's History Group (CWHG) were launched and developments have since been fast and lively to promote ideas that include:

- Exhibitions about Madge and her statue at New Park Centre, the University of Chichester, Bishop Luffa School, and Chichester College. Other venues are planned, including the West Sussex Record Office.
- A book by Nichola Court has been published by the Chichester Women's History Group with the title *Madge Turner – Chichester Suffragist*.
- Monthly talks by the CWHG from January 2026 at the Assembly Room.
- Another book is planned by CWHG, *Women Retrieved from the Shadows of History* containing essays by members.



The proposed statue, designed by sculptor Kate Viner and imagined in West Street, Chichester
Image: Kate Viner

Carol Brinson is Research Member of the Chichester Women's History Group. More can be discovered on the website, ChichesterWomensHistoryGroup.org

A maquette of the proposed bronze statue has been created by its sculptor, Kate Viner. Kate has been working with women from four local charity groups – Sanctuary in Chichester, Lifecentre, My Sisters' House Women's Centre and Stonepillow - to co-create the Madge Turner Flag, a textile flag that will go on display at The Novium Museum, celebrating women's voices, resilience and freedom.

The statue itself will need to be paid for. Hence the Madge Turner Statue Appeal, now a registered charity. Of the estimated £75,000 required, some £13,000 has been raised as of September 2025. Readers interested in donating are encouraged to visit the CWHG website.

VOLUNTEERS ARE VITAL AT PALLANT HOUSE GALLERY

Nearly 300 people help to make this artistic space exceptional. Liv Seater explains

Pallant House Gallery is one of the country's most distinctive public galleries, exploring new perspectives on modern art through critically acclaimed exhibitions, installations and displays of its collection. The Gallery aims to share and stimulate new thinking on British art and to play a pivotal role in the creative lives of the widest possible audience. At our heart are our 275 volunteers who dedicate their time, energy, and enthusiasm to making it welcoming, engaging, and accessible for all. Our team of volunteers, aged between 22 and 92, are critical members of the Gallery team, supporting a wide range of activities while strengthening our engagement with the public. Quite simply, we couldn't do it without them.

Volunteers bring their passion for art into many different aspects of our life. Gallery Assistants are the friendly faces that greet visitors and answer questions whilst visitors move round the exhibitions. Community Programme volunteers work directly with individuals and groups, supporting creative workshops and events that ensure everyone feels part of the Gallery. Learning volunteers assist with school visits, family activities, educational projects and adult events helping to inspire curiosity across the generations. Others support the Library, ensuring this valuable resource remains accessible for research, exploration, and inspiration. We also have a volunteer Guides team who deliver our tour programmes:



A volunteer guide explains to visitors about one of the artworks on display at Pallant House Gallery

Photo: Rewild Media

"I feel like I'm with my people! People who love art and want to be creative and this gives me confidence, new ideas and inspiration to create my own art. It also gives my week some structure and weekly contact with brilliant people, participants, staff and artist educators."

One of the most distinctive volunteer-led initiatives at the Gallery is the Partners in Art scheme, a unique strand of the Community Programme. It pairs volunteers with individuals who may need extra support, enabling them to explore their shared interest in art together. Over the years, this programme has fostered countless meaningful connections and demonstrated the power of art to bring people together. Projects like our Community Programme artwork *Handmade* highlight

how the Gallery operates as a collective - where staff, volunteers, and participant artists often collaborate to create something meaningful together. *Handmade* is a shining example of how volunteers help to nurture shared artistic efforts. Our Community Programme Ambassadors are themselves artists who offer their time to promote the programme and share their personal experiences at public events, including Gallery Private Views. Their commitment was recognised in 2023 when they received the Marsh Award for Volunteers in Museum Learning (South East Region). This accolade is a testament to their generosity, passion, and the transformative role they play in championing the value of inclusive art. From welcoming visitors to supporting inclusive programmes, our volunteers ensure that art remains accessible, engaging, and inspiring for all. We are currently seeking more Gallery Assistants and help with the Partners in Art scheme.

Liv Seater is Marketing Manager at the Gallery and talked with many people to tell their stories. If readers want to be part of a supportive art community contact Lucija O'Donnell at l.odonnell@pallant.org.uk regarding the Gallery Assistant team; and Lucy Padley regarding Partners in Art at l.padley@pallant.org.uk; or phone 01243 770833.

THE SOCIETY'S 52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Mayor, Councillor Sean McHale, presided

Below are summaries of reports by the Chair Mark Featherstone-Witty and Treasurer Peter Bickley. After AGM business was completed, there was a presentation by Clare de Bathe who leads the Weald and Downland Living Museum. The evening ended socially, with glasses of Prosecco.

The following members were appointed: **Chair** Mark Featherstone-Witty
Vice Chair Pamela Kemp **Secretary** Anthony Quail **Treasurer** Peter Bickley
Executive Committee members: Andrew Bain, Mary Ann Bart, Richard Childs, Tony Dignum, Mark Elliott, John Halliday, Jane Langford, Cedric Mitchell, Bob Mousley, John Templeton

CHAIR'S REPORT BY MARK FEATHERSTONE-WITTY

We have taken several actions and I'll outline seven:

Annual public meetings: your Society has decided to hold annual meetings to air items of local concern. This year's topic was public transport when we heard about operational realities from Southern Rail, National Rail and Stagecoach, as well as WSCC.

The area we serve: we think 'Chichester and its environs', as stated in the Constitution, is too vague. The area we serve is within the City boundary as defined by a CDC ward map revised in 2023.

Active links with existing organisations: your Society is building links with existing organisations. So far, we have active links with:

- Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CCAAC)
- Chichester Development Trust (CDT)
- Chichester Business Improvement District (BID)
- Residents' Associations + Friends of various parks.

Reviving local powers: we have encouraged the District Council to exercise their powers which has resulted in:

- A city-wide *Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)*.
- Attention to The Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Section 215 Notice; this is to ensure landlords maintain their properties and keep the city smart.

A brief and successful campaign: with others we successfully prevented an attack on democracy by CDC's Planning Department to cut public speaking times at Planning Committee meetings from 3 minutes to 2. The usual limit was retained!

Participation: members of your Executive Committee participate in a variety of local issues, for example: *development issues* at Minerva Heights (Whitehouse Farm), the Tannery, the House of Fraser site, plus regular commentary on planning applications; *Other issues* such as Brandy Hole Copse; City centre proposals for resurfacing North & East Streets.

Community Action Group: CAG's current focus is how best to support existing creative industries in Chichester, with the aim of attracting more businesses.

I'm looking forward to meeting you in a year's time to deliver the Society's purpose: to preserve and enhance Chichester.

TREASURER'S REPORT BY PETER BICKLEY

I have been asked to say a word or two about myself. I am a recently retired Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser. I've also been Treasurer of Summersdale Residents' Association for around 20 years. I shall now provide a brief commentary on the accounts.

Looking at the Receipts & Payments account you will see the Society had a net surplus for the year of £1,033 compared with a surplus of £1,518 in 2024. The main reason for this was a fall in member subscriptions.

Income

Subscriptions decreased to £5,259 from £6,239 in 2024. Gift Aid tax refunds decreased in line with the decline in subscriptions to £1,026 compared with £1,506 in 2024. There are still some members who have not yet responded to our requests to increase their standing orders to the new level.

Income from newsletter advertising dropped this year.

Donations income: a contribution of £1,000 from Chichester District Council to help restore the graffiti-damaged murals in Via Ravenna pedestrian subway.

Expenditure

The Society's main expenditure relates to the production and postage of our quarterly newsletter, which totalled £3,966, down slightly from the previous year.

Balance Sheet

The Society continues to have a strong balance sheet, with net assets totalling £19,603. These reserves are intended to act as a fighting fund should the Society need to take prompt action for the benefit of the city.

Finally

I'd like to thank my colleagues on the Committee for continually keeping their eyes on finance.



Our speaker this year talked about the Weald and Downland Living Museum and its immediate challenges.

Clare de Bathe is the Museum's Director and is planning its 55th anniversary in 2026.

SEEKING A SOLUTION TO NOISE AT EVENTS ON WESTGATE FIELDS

The Society's Chair Mark Featherstone Witty reports

Residents near Chichester College's fields facing the Avenue de Chartres endured six days of noise pollution last August. There were two festivals lasting three days each often ending at 2300 at night. The first was put on by Sarah Collins, who founded the excellent *Jazz Café* and equally excellent *Creative Beatz*. It was a charming and well managed event, quickly relocated from Priory Park through no fault of their own, that combined music, poetry, picture making and children's games. There was, however, a sound stage that backed onto the entrance to the College, which meant sound was directed towards the Cathedral. The second event was huge in comparison, and with a different theme each day, thousands attended. Once again there was a sound stage backed onto the entrance to the College with the same sound direction.

More festivals on the same site are planned for 2026: *Junior Rugby* (2nd & 3rd May); *Chichester Pride* (23rd May); *Beatz Festival* (19th-21 June); *Live Tour Festival* (23rd-25 July) and the *Back Then Festival* (8th August). It seems that Chichester College is going to host many big events, so that it will become a regular event site. Our society prompted an initial meeting with Chichester College attended by both West Walls and Westgate Residents Associations (RAs). It was convivial and constructive. The college were going to attend to resident's concerns by holding quarterly meetings that brought local RAs, the college, the event organisers and CDC together. The first of the quarterly meetings was held on Monday the 20th October with those representatives. The aim was to achieve a less intrusive sound experience for those living nearby. Lessons have been learned. The sound stages will be repositioned facing Waitrose and the industrial estate. One may be placed with its back to the Avenue de Chartres. Sound Management Plans will be available. Different fields may be used. Your Society has had to lodge a Freedom of Information (FOI) request with CDC to find out what the permitted sound levels were for the previous events and a response is awaited at the time of writing.

So, this is a situation under review. It is hard to find a suitable outdoor space for large events with easy access to transport. We want to achieve a reasonable compromise between holding large noisy music events in our city and modest sound pollution for nearby residents.



Some of the events planned for Westgate Fields in 2026 will be hugely popular. Effective noise control is needed to ensure all residents are content, a topic for discussion by your Society with Chichester College

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Richard Childs*, Tony Dignum,
Mark Elliott, John Halliday, Marcia Knight,
Helen Marshall, Cedric Mitchell,
Bob Mousley, John Templeton*,
Ben Williams

*Member, Newsletter Editorial
Committee who include Brian Henham
& Christopher Mead-Briggs.

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership:
£16 by standing order or £22
by cheque payable to the
Chichester Society.

Joint membership:
£25 by standing order or £30 by cheque.

Life membership
(60 years and over):
£250 single and £350 joint.

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Published by
the Chichester Society
Registered Charity No 268055

ISSN 0307-1421 (paper)
ISSN 2397-1010 (electronic)

Design, typesetting and printing
arranged by

