

CABINET

21 May 2003

WINCHESTER EXCAVATIONS COMMITTEE - FUNDING

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB154 - Winchester Excavations Committee - Funding - 21 March 2001

CAB177 - Winchester Excavations Committee - Funding - 10 July 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report brings Members up to date on the work of the Winchester Excavations Committee in relation to the programme for the publication of the "Winchester Studies", advises of the current funding situation of the Committee, and seeks a further payment of £10,000 to match the final portion of agreed funding from Hampshire County Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the sum of £10,000 be carried forward from managed savings in the 2002/03 Community Services Department's budget to be made available to provide a grant to the Winchester Excavations Committee to support the completion of the current programme of publication of the "Winchester Studies".

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Report of Chief Executive

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2001, the City Council and Hampshire County Council agreed to provide funding for the Winchester Excavations Committee to enable it to continue with the latest phase of publishing the internationally accredited "Winchester Studies".
- 1.2 The County Council agreed to provide funding of £10,000 a year for three years, subject to achieving progress with the publication programme. The City Council allocated £20,000 from underspends in 2000/2001 to provide a grant of £10,000 in each of 2001 and 2002, and at that time agreed to look at any future funding, also in the light of progress with completing volumes ready for publication.
- 1.3 This report brings Members up to date with the publication programme and the financial position of the Excavations Committee, and proposes that the City Council should make a payment of £10,000 in 2003 to assist with funding the project, and in recognition of the progress made with the publication programme.

2 Background

- 2.1 In the 1960's Winchester City Council set up an archaeological project to investigate the site which was being developed for the Wessex Hotel. Following this work over a series of summers the archaeology unit under the direction of Martin Biddle excavated much of the centre of Winchester including Castle Yard, major parts of the Castle site, the Old Minster and many other important sites in the City. The need was then to research this work, conserve the finds, relate the archaeology to written archives and publish the full details as the only comprehensive research of a British City from Roman times through to the nineteenth century.
- 2.2 The City Council, with the assistance of Hampshire County Council and funding from Government sources and charitable trusts, set up an independent research unit to carry out this task. By 1980 a number of important volumes had already been published in the form of the first part of the papers which are now known as the Winchester Studies. The published work by 2000 covered more than 4,000 pages and is internationally regarded as the definitive work of its type.
- 2.3 Also in the 1980's the City Council established a Historic Resources Centre which has provided the base for continuing research and conservation work.
- 2.4 Work on publishing the next phase of the Winchester Studies continued between 1980 and 2000, but sources of Government funding and donations from charities and the local authorities dried up in the early 1980s, and the work continued for many years on a voluntary basis, involving many leading academic contributors giving what time they could.
- 2.5 In part the gap in funding was due to changes in Government funding regimes, which caused delays in the publications programme, and the County Council and the City

Council took the view in the late 1980s that local authority grants should be suspended until the publications programme came back on track.

- 2.6 In the late 1990s, a good deal of progress was achieved with bringing forward the next phase of publications, and the Excavations Committee set up a small Executive Committee to raise new funding and supervise the implementation of the next phase of publications. The Executive Committee consists of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the main Committee, the Hon. Treasurer (Assistant Director of Finance – Accountancy), the Hon. Legal Adviser, a specialist publications editor, the Project Director (Professor Biddle) and the City Council Chief Executive. A target of raising a minimum of about £120,000 for the next phase was set, and, with the local authority grants agreed in 2001 and other funding, this was achieved. That funding programme has enabled the current phase of the work programme to be brought back on track.

3 The Status of the Project

- 3.1 As mentioned in previous reports, the work of the Winchester Excavations Committee has been regarded as so important that it was selected in The Times feature of 1 January 2000 as one of the top ten archaeological projects of the 20th century that are of world importance.
- 3.2 Martin Biddle's work, particularly that at Winchester, was also recognised by the provision of a specialist fellowship at Oxford University and the creation of a Chair of Medieval Archaeology, which he held until his retirement in 2002.

4 Progress since 2001

- 4.1 Since 2001, some of the most important volumes have been brought to the stage where they have been published or are lodged with the Oxford University Press for publication. Even if all the work were to be completed at the same time, publication requires to be phased, because of the need to fit in with the purchasing budgets of academic institutions, who could probably not afford to buy more than one volume at a time.
- 4.2 Volume 4.iii (240 pages) on Property and Piety in Medieval Winchester was published in 2002. Volume 4.ii (837 pages) on the Cult of St Swithun is currently being printed and due for launch on 9 July 2003. Volume 4.i on the Anglo Saxon Minsters is almost complete and planned for publication in 2004. Volume 8 on the Winchester Mint is also at an advanced stage and planned for publication also in 2004, after volume 4.i.
- 4.3 In addition, the Winchester volume of the Historic Towns Atlas series, which is also to be jointly 'badged' as part of Winchester Studies, is currently being proofed and is planned for publication in 2004.
- 4.4 Progress is now able to move at a faster pace on final editing, as Professor Biddle has now retired from his Chair at Oxford University, and has more time to devote to the project.

5 The Financial Status of the Project

- 5.1 The work of the Excavations Committee over the years has been affected by the funds available. Although most of the major contributors give their time and input free of charge, as has Professor Biddle in relation to both his own written contributions and the detailed editing of all volumes, there are costs for manuscript typing (including specialist script work), architectural and archaeological drawing,

professional photography, travel, some research and writing, and, most expensively, the Oxford Research office where most of the drawing, wider research and contact meetings take place, and where all the work in progress is housed.

- 5.2 All of the funding raised so far has been spent on the project, including the 2001 and 2002 grants of £10,000 per annum from both the City and County Councils, and further funding is now required. The County Council's third payment of £10,000 will be paid later in the year.
- 5.3 In addition to his professional input to the series, Professor Biddle has also made over to the Committee his royalty rights in the separately published, but jointly 'badged' as part of Winchester Studies, book on King Arthur's Round Table that was published in late 2000.
- 5.4 A number of approaches are currently lodged or being prepared for further charitable trust or national agency funding, but these take a lot of time. In addition, for a project such as this, if there is not evidence of local support, that can make the success of such applications less likely.
- 5.5 In 2001, the City Council committed to only 2 years of grant at £10,000 per annum, and deferred any decision on further funding until it saw that progress was being made with publication. As shown above, major progress has now been made, with one full volume published, a major volume currently being printed, and work now at a stage where it is confidently projected that a further 2 volumes should be published in 2004, as well as the Winchester volume of the Historic Towns Atlas.
- 5.6 Against this background, it is suggested that the City Council should make available a third payment of £10,000, which, taken with the County Council's payment this year, will maintain the project's day to day funding while other approaches for grants are being pursued.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 6.1 This project supports the environmental, heritage and cultural strategies of the Council.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 There is currently no specific budget provision for a payment of £10,000 for this project. The projected out-turn for the 2002/03 budget of the Community Services Department indicates that there will be a sufficient underspend to cover such a sum. It is therefore suggested that Cabinet approve the carry forward of £10,000 from the 2002/02 Community Services budget to fund a £10,000 grant to the Excavations Committee.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Papers held in the Excavations Committee files in the Chief Executive's, Director of Finance's and Director of Community Services' Departments.

APPENDICES:

Nil