



THE WINCHESTER
BEACON

Lighting a way out
of homelessness

Annual Review 2024



Rebuilding Hope

Founded in 1988, we provide essential and transformative support to people experiencing homelessness in Hampshire.

Our roots trace back to a traditional winter Nightshelter established by Churches Together. Over the past 36 years, we have grown into a **24-hour service**, open every day of the year, offering **specialised support** and a path out of homelessness.

In 2021, our name changed from Winchester Churches Nightshelter to The Winchester Beacon, reflecting our **evolution and expansion**. Beyond offering a safe place to stay, we **light a path out of homelessness**, providing **hope and opportunities** for residents to rebuild their lives.

Our main building on Jewry Street in Winchester has 10 single bedrooms, and we have 3 additional four-bedroom properties, accommodating and supporting up to **22 people** at a time. Depending on their circumstances, some residents stay for a few weeks, while others stay for many months. In 2023-24, the **average stay at Jewry Street was 146 days**, up from 111 days in 2022-23.

We dedicate time to understanding the issues surrounding each individual's homelessness and focus on their **strengths and goals** to plan a way forward. Residents can explore accommodation options while having a safe base to live. They also have the opportunity to develop essential life skills and are encouraged to pursue their aspirations.

Our Mission

To help break the cycle of homelessness by enabling people to rebuild their lives through independent living.

Our Vision

To transform lives, inspire hope and end homelessness.

Our Values

Honest and open
Safe and supportive
Flexible and caring



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BEACON
Lighting a way out of homelessness

01962 862050

winchesterbeacon.org.uk

admin@winchesterbeacon.org.uk



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Chair's Welcome

It is with great pride that we reflect on another challenging and successful year at The Winchester Beacon. In January 2024, the Board welcomed a new Chief Executive, Mark Wakeling, and we are embarking upon a new era for the operation.

Homelessness continues to be a **growing issue** across the country, with many factors influencing this rise: the **cost of living**, the **increasing number of evictions**, **reducing government funding** and **political uncertainty**. This year, our work has been guided by a single, powerful force – **hope**. In times of change, this inspires us to continue our mission to help break the cycle of homelessness by enabling people to **rebuild their lives**.

At The Winchester Beacon we see **hope in the eyes of those we support**, in the **determination of our team of staff and volunteers**, and in the **unwavering support** that we receive from so many members of the local community.

Our annual report is a reflection of the hope that permeates our work. Here you will find stories of

resilience and transformation – stories that demonstrate the **profound impact of your support**.

As we move forward, we remain committed to being a **source of hope for those in need**. We believe that together we can continue to turn hope in to reality for so many lives. As always, **thank you for your continued generosity** and your **belief in our mission** - it is a lifeline to those that we support.



Tracy Jones
Chair of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TJ' followed by a horizontal line.

Chief Executive's Update



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As the new CEO of The Winchester Beacon, I'm thrilled to share our annual report with you. These first nine months have been a whirlwind of learning and immense gratitude for the incredible work done by Michèle Price and our amazing team.

Under Michèle's leadership, The Winchester Beacon has made huge strides in helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Thanks to her **dedication and the hard work** of our staff and volunteers, we have a solid foundation to build on. This has been strengthened by the **generosity of many supporters** whether individuals, statutory, corporate or charitable foundations. Here are some highlights from the past year:

- We provided **safe shelter and essential services** to **53 people**.
- **68% of our residents** moving on made positive moves to planned accommodation.
- We launched new programmes to help residents to sustain their tenancy.
- We **strengthened partnerships** with others to create a robust support network for our residents.

These achievements wouldn't have been possible without the **dedication and compassion** of our team and the generous support from all of you - our donors, volunteers, and partners. Your belief in our mission is what keeps us going.

Looking ahead, **our goals** are ambitious but rooted in our core values. We will review our organisational strategy and aim to:

- **Serve more people**, ensuring we reduce waiting lists and increase those supported into settled accommodation.
- **Enhance our programmes** to address both immediate needs and the root causes of homelessness.
- Join with others to **strengthen our advocacy efforts to influence policies** that promote affordable housing and social justice.
- **Foster a community of inclusion and empowerment**, where everyone feels valued and supported on their journey to stability and independence.

As we move forward, I'm inspired by the resilience of our residents, the dedication of our team, and the unwavering support of our community. **Together, we can make a future where homelessness is reduced, brief, and non-recurring.**



Thank you for standing with us. Your continued support is crucial as we strive to **increase our impact** and **create lasting change**. I'm excited to journey alongside all of you to make our vision a reality.

With gratitude and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Wakeling'.

Mark Wakeling
Chief Executive

A Foundation of Hope

Sarah stayed at The Beacon after losing her job and the accommodation that came with it. During her stay at The Beacon, Sarah accessed a wide range of tailored emotional and practical support to help her to repair and move on with her life.

“When I first came to The Beacon, I was feeling pretty low and uncertain about my future. The environment of support, combined with practical help and encouragement, gradually rekindled a sense of hope. Knowing that there were people who believed in me made it easier to start believing in myself. One-to-one therapy sessions truly helped mentally prepare me for what was to come and let go of what I had been, cultivating a fertile head space to plant the seed of hope.

Moving out of The Beacon was definitely a big step, and it came with a mix of emotions. There was a sense of excitement about starting a new chapter, but also some uncertainty about navigating life independently. I felt that the support I received from The Beacon during this transition was crucial. The staff made sure I had a solid plan in place and provided encouragement every step of the way, which made the move less daunting.

I feel more hopeful now than when I first arrived at The Beacon because I have a clearer vision of where I want to go and the steps I need to take to get there.

Hope, for me, has been the foundation for all the positive changes I've experienced since leaving The Beacon. It's what drives me to keep pushing forward, even when things get tough. I think that's why it's so important because without hope, it's hard to find the motivation to strive for a better future. ”





Transforming Lives

When a resident arrives at our door it is turning point in their life. We offer the opportunity of a path out of homelessness and a new beginning.

They may have been living on the streets, sofa surfing, sleeping in their car or be close to becoming homeless owing to circumstances beyond their control. They could be coping with mental health issues and many other challenges.

Our one-to-one support is tailored to meet the differing needs and goals of each resident. Wraparound care takes a person-centred approach with staff trained in supporting people affected by trauma. Our support can be life-changing as it enables residents to move towards a more stable future and follow their goals.

 The ongoing life coaching has been incredibly helpful in maintaining my focus and building my confidence. It has given me tools to set goals and work towards them systematically, which has made a big difference in how I view my future. 

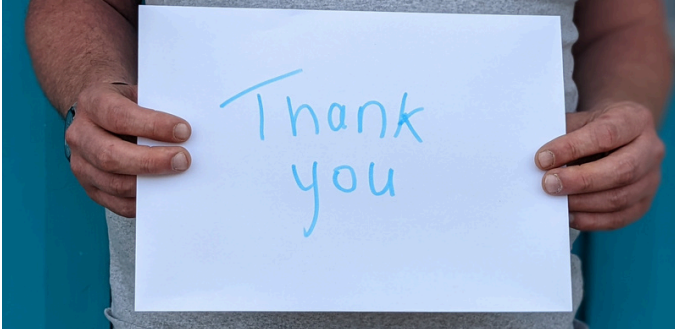
- resident

Our tailored support includes:

- **Counselling**
- **Psychotherapy**
- **Budgeting advice**
- **Substance misuse support**
- **Peer mentoring**
- **Wellbeing and coping skills**
- **Employment support**
- **Housing advice**
- **Tenancy training**
- **Life coaching**
- **Support after moving out**
- **Free fitness activities**

If you have a skill or opportunity you might like to offer to support our residents, please get in touch, admin@winchesterbeacon.org.uk

From Eviction to New Beginnings



Steve, age 71, and his teenage daughter became homeless when they were served a Section 21 no fault eviction on the property that they had been renting for three years. They had two months to try and find somewhere else to live.

👂👂 The landlords wanted their house back so that they could come and live in it for a while. It felt like the rug had been pulled out from under our feet. I have rented properties for many years so I am familiar with trying to find a property but on this occasion I couldn't secure one. I don't know if it was my age or my health issues but no one seemed to want to rent to me.

My daughter went to stay with family. Unsure what to do next, I made contact with Winchester City Council, they put me in touch with The Winchester Beacon.

I was offered a place in one of the charity's shared four-bedroom houses. I settled in well, it was good to meet the other residents. I am a home-based IT engineer so having a roof over my head and working wif was crucial. The house gave me this as well as comfort and security.

My Support Worker at The Beacon, helped me to understand the system and explained that it would be a good idea for me to apply to the housing register. I followed her advice and three months later I moved into my own place. What's more, it's a life residency. I have also managed to help my daughter to find a place to live.

I am not a religious man but my Beacon Support Worker is the nearest thing I have met to an angel. She has the ability to listen and absorb. She has empathy and understands the problems people have, she does everything possible to help. 🗨️🗨️

Improving our Facilities

After several years of planning and fundraising, we were excited to complete the 10 new bathrooms for residents at our main site.

Before the refurbishments, male residents had access to just two curtained showers (see below) that lacked privacy for washing and dressing. With thanks to the support of **CRASH charity** and their Patrons, the **Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities** (Night Shelter Transformation Fund), **Hampshire County Council**, **The National Lottery Community Fund** and **The Fine and Country Foundation** each resident now has their own private bathroom. The bathrooms were opened by our Patron, Dean Catherine Ogle in December 2023.



Determined to Give Back

Matt, 21, grew up surrounded by addiction. His mother and siblings had substance misuse issues which meant an unstable and challenging home life. Bullying and an absent father only added to his difficulties.

👏👏 My childhood was a rough patch in life. My mother and siblings were addicted to drugs and alcohol. When I was seven, I made my first suicide attempt because I just didn't want to be with the family that I had.

I used to get bullied which had a massive impact on my life and I became involved in a lot of drugs. But I am now clean. I am so much happier as a person and I feel much better now I don't do drugs. The Beacon is a safe place, everyone here is free of drugs so it helps me to stay clean.

I have surprised myself with how much motivation and confidence I now have. I am proud of myself for that. I now have a job, I've met great people and love interacting with the customers.

I really value the advice I have been given by staff at The Beacon. They have taught me to put myself first more.

The support I have received here is ten out of ten.

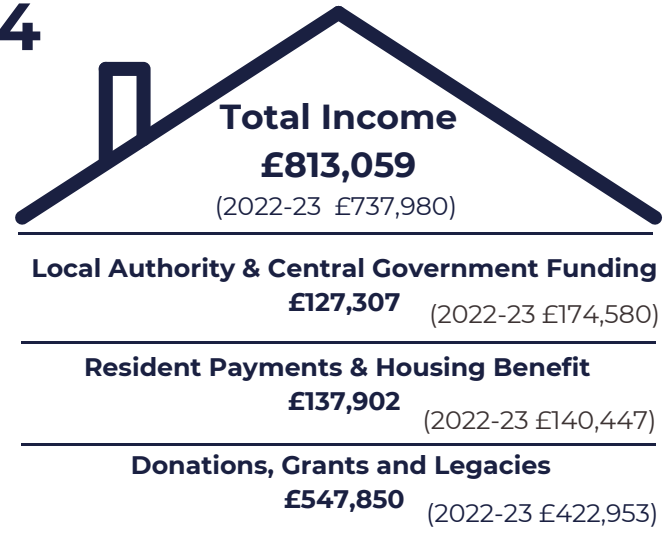
I've had the opportunity to get involved in things I love doing like going to the gym, thanks to the free passes we are given. Recently, we had a great fishing trip to Sparsholt College.

I want to become a Mental Health Support Worker. I've tried to leave this world many times but something is keeping me here and I feel like it is because I need to help people. That's where I see myself in the future. I want to give back to the world. 🗨️🗨️



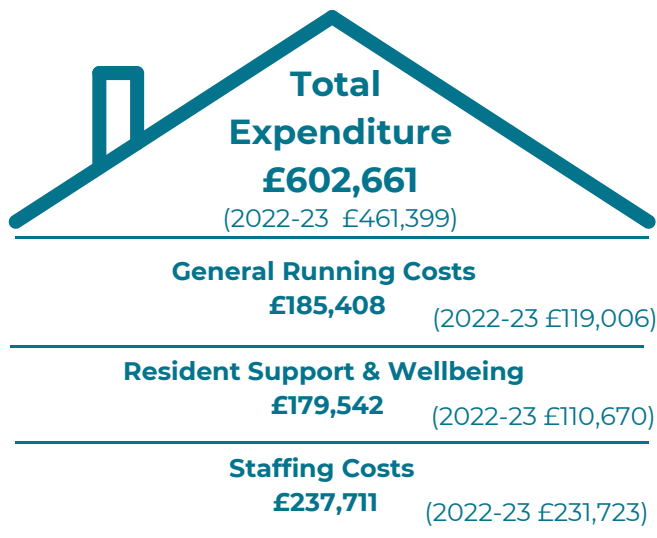
Our Finances 2023-24

We are pleased to report a significant **10% increase in total income compared to the previous year**. Our loyal donors have once again demonstrated their unwavering support, with **contributions from individuals, companies, trusts, and foundations comprising 53% of total income**. Additionally, we have seen an **increase in income from grants**, including capital grants specifically allocated for the refurbishment of our toilet and washing facilities. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed.



Our donors continue to use our website for one-off or regular donations, as well as text donations. This ensures we have various ways to give that suit every potential donor. We continue to collect Gift Aid and we are pleased that donations made with Gift Aid continue to rise.

Please note: The financial information for April 2023-March 2024 is shown in a simplified breakdown of income and expenditure. More details and the full report from the Independent Examiner are available from The Winchester Beacon office.



Total expenditure has increased by 31% (£141,262) compared to the previous year. The **rise in general running costs by 56%** (£66,402) is mainly due to increased utility bills, recruitment costs and other inflationary costs. **Resident support and wellbeing have increased by 62%** (£68,872) due to the additional support staff required for residents during the year.

We have supported **23 residents** over the year through our 3 move on houses. These shared houses are let at rates reflecting the most affordable end of the market offering significantly better value than commercial lettings. Rental rates have not increased this year. Any surplus income generated by these houses supports our ongoing work. We are undergoing renovation works at one of the houses, which we hope to complete by the end of the year.

We have generated a **surplus income of £210,398 (2022-23 £276,581)**. As well as funding the essential refurbishment at the move-on house, this surplus allows us to convey a strong commitment to addressing homelessness and supporting individuals in rebuilding their lives. As part of our **ongoing strategic review**, we are dedicated to **enhancing our services by increasing the availability of beds and providing comprehensive support to those in need**. We have allocated strategic resources to help towards the **expansion of our provision, ensuring we can serve both our current residents and those who may require our assistance in the future. Our commitment remains steadfast.**

Our Year in Images



World Homeless Day
Oct 23



Bathroom Opening
Dec 23



Winchester Cathedral
Christmas Market
Dec 23



Winchester Community
Choir Fundraiser
Dec 23



Volunteers from Twinings
Dec 23



Worthy Down Fundraiser
Dec 23



Christmas Day
Dec 23



Mark welcomed as CEO
Jan 24



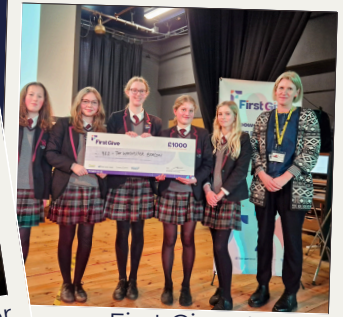
Winter donations
Jan 24



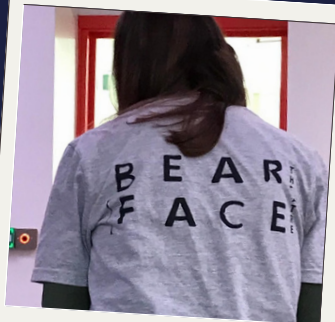
Pancake Race
Feb 24



University of Winchester
Fundraiser
Feb 24



First Give at
The Westgate School
March 24



Drama Project
March 24



Volunteers' Week Event
June 24



Kasbah Band Fundraiser
June 24



For more images
and stories follow us
[@winchesterbeacon](#)
(Instagram and
Facebook) and
[@WinBeacon](#) (X)

Volunteering

We are fortunate to have the support of volunteers helping behind the scenes to make our work possible. Their loyalty, goodwill and kindness bring a real sense of community to our work.

We are open all day, all night and all year. Each week **24 people volunteer alongside our staff** to make this non-stop service possible. Last year alone, **our volunteers saved us over £147,000** by giving their time, and not charging, for their contribution.

Volunteer roles

Volunteers help with a range of tasks including cooking, cleaning, tidying and admin. We also have volunteers who choose to give a particular skill or experience that they have. For example, our life coach and psychotherapist both donate their time to help residents.

Regular volunteers work alongside a member of staff and it is up to you how often you help out. After completing an induction and training, volunteers simply log in online and book in for a shift when they are available.



Creative volunteering

One of our regular volunteers, Jo, comes onsite to help out but she wanted to do more. She offered to give her creative skills and spends her spare time making decorations that we can sell at the Christmas Market to raise essential funds. Over the years, she has helped to raise hundreds of pounds.

Become a volunteer

Are you interested in finding out more about volunteering with us? Head over to our website www.winchesterbeacon.org.uk for more details. To speak to a member of staff, please email or call admin@winchesterbeacon.org.uk 01962 862050.

Volunteers on site need to be age 18 or over. For anyone under this age, there are still lots of ways to be part of our vital work. Our younger supporters often opt to cook meals at home and deliver them to our main site or they find a way to fundraise.



“Volunteering here has made me realise that there are hundreds of reasons why someone can become homeless. The thought of someone not having a little corner they can call their home upsets me. That's why I wanted to volunteer and it has been a very good experience.”

- Catherine, Volunteer

Fundraising

We are grateful to our inspiring supporters who are so determined to find challenging and creative ways to raise funds to make our work possible.

Avington Park Golf Club committed to supporting us for a year and raised an impressive £4,130. **Hope Church** raised a brilliant £4,500 before Christmas.

Archie, Sam P, Sam W, Jack and Noah raised an amazing **£3,000** when they ran over 110km around the Isle of Wight which took 17 hours.

Event Management students at **The University of Winchester** hosted a cocktail-making fundraiser at South Downs Social raising £106.

Owen from **Holloway Health and Fitness**, challenged people to run 50 miles in January and donate to The Beacon. They raised £620!

Kasbah Swing Band raised over £300 when they treated music lovers to a gig at The Flowerpots Inn. The pub landlord kindly match-funded the money raised.





Become a fundraising champion

Fundraising is a rewarding and fun way for people of all ages to get involved in helping people who are experiencing homelessness.

From cake sales to hikes, sponsored silences to summer fetes - there are so many brilliant ways to raise funds.

Contact us with your ideas, questions and event details so we can raise awareness of your activities and give our support to help make them happen.
admin@winchesterbeacon.org.uk/01962 862050

Thank you

So many people and organisations are involved in helping us to light a way out of homelessness. We would like to **thank the organisations that have supported our vital work** and given **grants and funding** during the 2023-24 financial year.

Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust
CRASH Charity
DLUHC Nghtshelter Transformation Fund
Eastleigh Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Hampshire & IoW Community Foundation
James Tuttiett Charitable Trust
Oak Foundation
Sir James Scott Fund
The Emilienne Charitable Trust
The J Davy Foundation
The Jerusalem Trust
The National Lottery Community Fund
The Oliver Borthwick Memorial Trust
The Roger Brooke Charitable Trust
Thomas Roberts Trust
Winchester City Council

Donations

Donations of money, food and other much-needed items help to make our work possible. Thank you to everyone who has made a regular or one-off donation as well as those who have dropped by with food, Christmas gifts and essential items such as sleeping bags.



Elisha from **Selwood** kindly donated 27 brand new sleeping bags for us to give out to people sleeping rough.



Generous Troops

Armed forces at Worthy Down came together to raise awareness of The Winchester Beacon and collect essential food donations. Participants brought donations along to a festive physical training session.

We had a lovely visit from local children who are being home-schooled. They delivered lots of delicious sweet and savoury meals for our residents to eat.



Led by Helen, the **Crawley community** took part in a Reverse Advent Calendar and donated essential food in time for Christmas. Mel from **Inwoods Small School** popped by with Christmas donations collected by pupils and staff.

The community team at **Tesco** in Winnall kindly gave Easter eggs for our residents.



How to donate

You can make a one-off or regular financial donation on **our website**. You can also donate **via text** by sending the word **BEACON** and any amount up to £20 to **70560**. Turn to page 27 to find out more.

Check the **most-needed items** list at **www.winchesterbeacon.org.uk**. Sadly, we have limited storage so we can often only accept the items we desperately need. Please email admin@winchesterbeacon.org.uk or complete the form on our website before dropping off your donation.

Our Partnerships

We are very grateful for the ongoing support of our community. This includes local agencies, businesses, churches, colleges, schools and universities that all give resources, time and expertise to help our charity.

Residents continue to benefit physically and mentally from access to a range of free exercise thanks to ongoing support from **Winchester Amateur Boxing, Sport in Mind, Winchester Sport and Leisure, Winchester Fit Club and Bespoke Biking.**

Savills Winchester gave their support with festive donations and help making decorations and gifts for us to sell at Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market.

Staff from **Osborne Property Services** gave their time and skills to create a breakfast bar area in our dining room for residents to use.

Staff from **Milestone Infrastructure** painted and decorated residents' bedrooms and worked with **MPM Graffiti Solutions** to clean the outside of the building. **Twinnings** employees helped us to prepare for Christmas, wrapping presents and putting up decorations.

Pupils at **The Westgate School** took part in the First Give initiative and thanks to their hard work they successfully won £1,000 for our charity.





With thanks

We would like to thank the fantastic organisations that have worked with us this year in so many different ways.

Aecom

Bear Face Theatre

Brewin Dolphin

Cabinet Rooms

Cheriton School

Christians Against Poverty

Computer Solutions

DSG Chartered Accountants

Gentian

Green Magpie

Hants Chamber of Commerce

Hampshire Constabulary

Hampshire County Council

Hampshire Fare

Hampshire Veg Box

Hope Church

Isode Ltd

Lottie Stevenson Film

Lighthouse Project

Lyndex Contractors

McAteer Psychotherapy

Milestone Infrastructure

Outsideln

Osborne Property Services

Peter Symonds College

Preston Candover School

Rapid Relief Team

Sarsen Press

Savills

Selborne School

Sparsholt College

Stowe Family Law

St Peter's Church

St Swithun's School

Tesco Winnall

The Arc

The Roebuck

The Salvation Army

The University of

Winchester

Trinity Winchester

Two Saints

Twyford School

UK Harvest

United Church

Warner Richardson LLP

Winchester Baptist Church

Winchester BID

Winchester Cathedral

Winchester City Council

Winchester College

Winchester Ladies Circle

Winchester Muslim Association

Winchester Rotary

Winchester Round Table

Winchester Scouts

Sadly, there isn't space to mention everyone, more details of our fabulous supporters are on our website.

Our Impact 2023-24



132

referrals were received



30

people stayed at our main site



23

people stayed at our move on houses



176

counselling sessions took place



180

psychotherapy sessions delivered



68%

of our residents moving on made positive moves to planned accommodation



133

non-residents reached out for support at night



26

residents engaged in our sporting opportunities



146

days was the average length of stay



133

volunteers supported our work



60%

homeless due to a relationship breakdown



12

people received Tenancy Support*

*Dec 2023-March 2024

Our People

We are a small charity making a big difference, this is thanks to our hard-working staff, directors and volunteers.



Our Staff

Mark Wakeling, CEO (from Jan 2024), **Edward Murray**, **Georgina Walker**, **Hayley Wood**, **Hilary Nutbeam**, **Ian Davies**, **Kay Lyons** (from Nov 2023) **Lee Hayes**, **Michèle Price** (CEO until Jan 2024), **Nancy Judge**, **Nicci Roberts**, **Nova Keating** (from Oct 23), **Paul Brathwaite**, **Peter Coles** (until Aug 24) and **Tracie Sheppard**.

Sadly, two of our members of staff passed away this year due to illness. **Lesley Cunnea** gave her time as a volunteer before becoming a part-time member of staff. She will be remembered for the commitment she showed to supporting residents to believe in their goals. **Debby Hughson** helped hundreds of people to escape homelessness during her nine years at The Beacon, through her dedication to her role and our residents she helped many people to rebuild their lives.

Our Board of Directors

Behind the scenes, a team of volunteer Directors give their time, skills, experience and expertise to guide our charity. We would like to thank **Tracy Jones** (Chair), **Vince Kerr** (Secretary), **Fiona Gibbon** (Treasurer), **Anthony Arkwright**, **David Close**, **Julian Gerry**, **Patrick Fowler** and **Vicky Hemmings** for their commitment to our mission. Our thanks also go to **Alexis Colfer** and **Sarah Watts** who were involved in the board before stepping down during 2023-24.

Our Patrons

Our thanks to The Very Reverend Catherine Ogle, Dean of Winchester and Baroness Thomas of Winchester

A Legacy of Hope

We offer shelter, support and hope to our residents but we cannot do this alone. We need your help to ensure our support continues for future generations.

By leaving a gift in your will, you can create a **Legacy of Hope**. Your generosity will ensure that we can continue to offer **life-changing services** to the most vulnerable members of our community for years to come. Your donation could be **the key to someone's future**, providing essential support and the opportunity to rebuild lives.

How your legacy can help:

- **Safe shelter:** Ensuring we can provide emergency accommodation and long-term housing solutions.
- **Vital support services:** Offering guidance, counselling and support to help people to get back on their feet.
- **Community integration:** Helping individuals re-establish themselves in the community through employment, education and social support.

A gift of any size makes a difference

No matter the size of your gift, it will go directly towards making a **positive change** in someone's life. Even the smallest contribution can provide a warm meal, a night's shelter, or a step towards a more secure future.

How to leave a legacy of hope

Including a gift in your will is a simple process and can be done when writing or updating your will. Your solicitor will guide you through the process, and we are here to answer any questions you might have. If you do decide to include us, please let us know as we would like to say thank you, admin@winchesterbeacon.org.uk / 01962 862050.

👏👏 Knowing that there were people who believed in me made it easier to start believing in myself 🗨️🗨️

- former resident



Financial donations

Our work is only possible thanks to the donations we receive. Whether you can help with a one-off donation or choose to become a regular donor, **you will be helping to bring hope and a new beginning to people experiencing homelessness in Hampshire.** There are lots of ways you can give:

- You can make a one-off or regular donation online via our website **www.winchesterbeacon.org.uk**
- Text **BEACON** and any amount up to £20 to **70560**
Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard text message
- Opt into **payroll giving**
- Shop via **Easyfundraising** and raise money for us as you shop, visit easyfundraising.org.uk
- Select to support our charity when you use **ebay** and **PayPal**
- **Leave a legacy** or **in memory gift**
- Scan the QR code to go through to our donations platform



Support us

Donate food and goods

Donated food, clothes and other household items help to **save in the region of £60,000 every year.** Visit our website for a list of our most-needed items. Please get in touch before dropping your items off to check that we have space to accept your donation.

Gift Aid Did you know that if you are a UK tax payer we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 donated via Gift Aid? There is no additional cost to the person donating.



www.winchesterbeacon.org.uk

20B Jewry Street, Winchester, SO23 8RZ

admin@winchesterbeacon.org.uk

01962 862050



Under the Charities Act 2006, charities are required to demonstrate their aims are for the public benefit. The vision and mission of the charity are stated in this Annual Review. The purpose of the charity is beneficial in a way that is identifiable and evidenced in this Annual Review. The Annual Review also identifies that the charity benefits a sufficient section of the public. The Board of Directors regularly monitors and reviews the success of the organisation in meeting its goals and can confirm that all the activities of the charity are undertaken in pursuit of its aims.

The Winchester Beacon is the working name of Winchester Churches Nightshelter, registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Registered charity number: 1080443. Company number: 03928334. Registered address: 20B Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RZ.