

In last week's Hampshire Chronicle The editorial comment said

'The Hampshire Chronicle can seldom have reported in recent years such progress on so many public projects in one issue..... This is welcome news that the crippling icy paralysis of recent years in Winchester is finally melting away. Cities need to grow or else they decline.'

In the week of March 23rd the Chronicle headline read 'Joy as scheme is finally underway'

This front page article referred to the appointment of a top notch consortium formed as a development partnership, that includes design practices, public opinion consultants, archaeologists, landscape architects, engineers etc to work with the City Council to deliver the ideas envisioned in the Supplementary Planning Document. These include work and creative spaces, food and drink venues, an hotel and high quality public spaces. This is an opportunity to revitalise a wider and underused quarter of the city. The news of the appointment was welcomed by the Winchester City Trust, well know local architects and many others at a public event on Tuesday 21st March.

There is a real chance that curse of 'Silver Hill' that has brought to grief the last two attempts, has finally been vanquished.

The Hampshire Chronicle is a known for its critical comments, quite rightly, as it is the role of the media in democracies to hold administrations, political groups and individuals to account. Such praise as the Chronicle gives out should therefore be valued.

Your local councillors, Margot and Russell are very keen to see the old, culverted waterways below Middle Brook Street and Lower Brook Street opened up to the sky to create a blue infrastructure within the city. Kingfishers flashing through above the streams and white tailed crayfish. These can be more than just fantasy!

Other items such as the start of six new council house in Micheldever and the planning approval of the new cricket pavilion, the start of a new doctors surgery at Friarsgate and new work on Station Approach barely had a mention!

This newspaper front page is the result of a huge amount of background work over the last two years by councillors and officers plus some specialist consultants, brought in to augment in-house skills. Russell and Margot are profoundly appreciative of the work done by these and the advice and guidance given in making important decisions.

Other topics outside the city.....

And of course, there is still more work to be done in the district and in the city to deliver the outcomes people tell us they want.

Cart and Horses junction

The accident report from the recent death has still not appeared. Many will have rejoiced at the comparative safety when the traffic lights were in place to allow safe working on the footpath.

Sun Hill construction routes

At the time of writing no decision has been made by Hampshire Highways. Your councillors will continue to safeguard local interests.

West Street improvements

Further funding is required before this can move forward. The design from HCC in 2021 left much to be desired, including some very utilitarian railings; alternatively, an unfenced but stepped drop to the road. Given that one of the original design criteria was to allow two buggies to pass safely on the north side of West Street we feel this needs more work. In principle we are supportive of the necessary additional funds

to allow a revised proposal to be produced. This work was identified in 2010 as part of the justification for the developer surcharge levy, otherwise known as CIL.

CIL Money

There has been some uninformed comment that the City benefits to disproportionate degree from CIL fundings from developers. In answer to this we append a table of WCC retained CIL disbursed or committed. The questions arose at Council in February.

Alresford Memorial Garden

Russell is keen to re-vamp the Memorial Garden in Alresford, originally built by public subscription in 1947. There is an opportunity to develop a similar collective effort to create a site that brings as much delight and interest and community involvement as the original scheme.

Margot Power 01962 734167

Russell Gordon -Smith 01962 733219