

## 5 Social and community

### Key issues

- **Housing.** Wincanton has grown by nearly 50 per cent over the past 20 years and is forecast to grow by 50 per cent again over the next ten years. The challenge for Wincanton is to retain its distinctive character as described in Chapter 4 in the face of this rapid growth and to ensure that service provision keeps pace with the population growth. Affordability is a major housing issue. Planned new developments should provide a major boost to social/affordable housing.
- **Access to services.** Wincanton is well provided with services. Its importance to the surrounding settlements is underlined by the very limited range of services available in most of the villages.
- **Health needs and provision.** The older population of Wincanton seem to be in poorer health than elderly people generally in South Somerset. At all ages, there is a high incidence of mental health problems relative to the rest of the District. Wincanton is fortunate to be one of only three towns in Somerset with a Healthy Living Centre.
- **Social needs and provision.** There is a much higher incidence of domestic violence in Wincanton than in the rest of South Somerset. Teenage pregnancy rates are higher than the average for the District.
- **Public safety.** There is a high level of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists in Wincanton. Reclassification of Wincanton police station as a rural rather than urban unit may lead to longer response times. Criminal damage, violent crime and theft from motor vehicles are key problems in Wincanton. Overall crime detection rates for Wincanton fall short of the police's own targets. A high proportion of local residents are fearful of using the streets in the evenings and at night.
- **Local government and community organisations.** In general, public access to all tiers of local government is good. There is an extensive range of community organisations active in the area. They have the potential to involve most parts of the community and include key initiatives aimed at young people.
- **Recreation.** Wincanton has exceptional sports facilities for a community of its size. Remaining gaps are squash courts and an astro-turf pitch. The countryside provides good opportunities for walking and some opportunities for cycling and horse riding.

*Key issues continued overleaf*

***Key issues continued***

- **Culture and heritage.** For a small town, Wincanton has a diverse and active cultural sector offering a museum, library, film club, amateur dramatics, choral society, silver band, and more. The surrounding villages also stage their own musical and dramatic events. Wincanton has eight main venues for events plus its churches. Village halls are the usual venue in the outlying settlements. A range of cultural events take place throughout the year. However, there is a marked lack of culture and events specifically for the younger population. Although there are some minor cultural and heritage links (for example to Nathaniel Ireson, potter and architect), there are no major ones.

**5.1 Housing****Existing housing stock**

At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 2,040 households in Wincanton.<sup>1</sup> This compared with 1,778 in 1991 and 1,370 in 1981, indicating that Wincanton has already seen considerably growth over the previous two decades – see Table 5.1.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 5.1 Growth of Wincanton**

Year	Number of households	Change over decade	Cumulative growth since 1981
1981	1,370		
1991	1,778	29.8%	29.8%
2001	2,040	14.7%	48.9%
2011 projected	3,040	49.0%	121.9%

Source: National Statistics, *Census 2001*; South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2002, *South Somerset. A social, economic and environmental profile*, Yeovil: SSDC; projected figure from Tim Carroll, Somerest County Councillor and South Somerset District Councillor at Wincanton MCTi meeting on 7 September 2005.

There has been a steady increase in the number of dwellings since the 2001 Census with the development of, for example, sites at Westway Garage, Station Road (22 dwellings) , at the junction of Moor Lane and Southgate Road (13 dwellings), on the site of Balsam Gate (14 dwellings) and at St Luke's Priory (16 dwellings).

<sup>1</sup> National Statistics, *Census 2001*.

<sup>2</sup> South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2002, *South Somerset. A social, economic and environmental profile*, Yeovil: SSDC.

## Condition of existing housing stock

In Wincanton, one home in nine (11 per cent) does not have central heating compared with one house in ten (10 per cent) for South Somerset as a whole and 9 per cent for England.<sup>3</sup>

A tiny proportion of households (0.2 per cent) did not have sole use of a bath, shower or toilet compared with 0.2 per cent for South Somerset and 0.5 per cent for England & Wales.<sup>4</sup>

3.7 per cent of households in Wincanton are deemed to have inadequate space which is broadly the same as the South Somerset average of 3.5 per cent<sup>5</sup>.

Across South Somerset as a whole<sup>6</sup>:

- 2.1 per cent of private sector dwellings are deemed unfit for habitation
- 8 per cent of private sector dwellings are in substantial disrepair
- 26 per cent of private sector households are headed by someone over age 60. Of these, 70 per cent need immediate repair work to their homes. In the majority of cases, the work would cost under £5,000
- 20 per cent of unfit housing is occupied by households headed by someone aged over 74
- 7 per cent of private rented sector dwellings are deemed unfit. This is lower than the national average of 10.2 per cent
- energy efficiency of private sector dwellings is slightly better than the average for the UK
- 2.1 per cent of dwellings are vacant. Of these 10 per cent are unfit
- 90 per cent of the private sector housing stock has secure doors and windows
- 19 per cent of the private sector housing stock has a burglar alarm fitted.

Unfortunately, there is no breakdown of these figures by individual settlement, so it is not possible to draw any direct conclusions for Wincanton. However, bearing in mind Wincanton's relatively high proportion of elderly households, it is likely that a significant proportion of the Wincanton housing stock may be in some disrepair.

## Housing tenure

In Wincanton, 72 per cent of households own their home outright or are buying it with a mortgage. This is a higher proportion than for England (69 per cent) but slightly lower than for South Somerset (74 per cent) – see Table 5.2.

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<sup>3</sup> *South Somerset Ward Profiles* supplied by South Somerset District Council. Data from National Statistics Census 2001.

<sup>4</sup> National Statistics. Census 2001, retrieved from [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) on 4 July 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2004, *Housing and accommodation strategy 2004-2007. Balancing housing markets*, Yeovil, SSDC.

**Table 5.2: Housing tenure**

Type of tenure	Wincanton	South Somerset	England
Total households (number)	2,040	63,769	20,451,427
Privately owned	72%	74%	69%
Shared ownership	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%
Rented from local authority	5.0%	5.6%	19%
Rented from housing association	10.0%	8.3%	
Rented from private landlord	8.0%	7.1%	10%
Other	4.6%	4.4%	

Source: South Somerset District Council, 2005, *South Somerset Ward Profiles 2005* and Somerset County Council, 2005, *Somerset Interactive Area Profiles*. Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001*.

### Vacancy rates

Across Somerset as a whole, 2.1 per cent of dwelling are vacant.<sup>7</sup> There is no data for Wincanton in isolation.

### Planned changes to housing stock

In October 2004, it was estimated that there were applications to build some 615 dwellings in Wincanton, implying an increase in the population of about 1,200 people<sup>8</sup>. This would represent an increase in Wincanton's population of around 20 per cent and is consistent with South Somerset District Council's target of placing an additional 1,000 homes in Wincanton over the period 2001-2011<sup>9</sup>.

Table 5.3 lists the main housing developments planned or in progress for Wincanton as at September 2005. In addition, there is a steady stream of small-scale infill and redevelopment of existing sites.

<sup>7</sup> South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2004, *Housing and accommodation strategy 2004-2007. Balancing housing markets*, Yeovil, SSDC.

<sup>8</sup> 'Developing at Wincanton', 2004, *Blackmore Vale Magazine*, 22 October, p.35. Letter from Doug Castle, a former Mayor of Wincanton.

<sup>9</sup> Tim Carroll, Somerest County Councillor and South Somerset District Councillor at Wincanton MCTi meeting on 7 September 2005.

**Table 5.3 Main housing development planned or in progress in Wincanton, 2005**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Status of application</b>
New Barn's Farm	250	Approved.
Land of Deansley Way (see below)	119	Approved
Coles Yard, South Street	24	Approved and development in progress.
Rochford's site, Station Road	24	Approved and development in progress.
Council Depot & Garage, Southgate Road	23	Land allocated in South Somerset Local Plan. Plan expected to be adopted in November 2005 <sup>10</sup> .
Land adjacent to Balsam House, Common Road	15	Permission granted, March 2005.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>455</b>	
<i>Land off Deansley Way</i>	<i>Additional 126</i>	<i>119 approved (see above). Application for 245 refused but subject to appeal</i>
<i>Long Close</i>	<i>82 plus 19 live/work units plus 19 employment units less demolition of 1 dwelling</i>	<i>Application withdrawn, August 2005</i>
<i>Railway Inn, Station Road</i>	<i>21 flats. Demolition of former public house</i>	<i>Application deferred. Due to be reconsidered September 2005.</i>

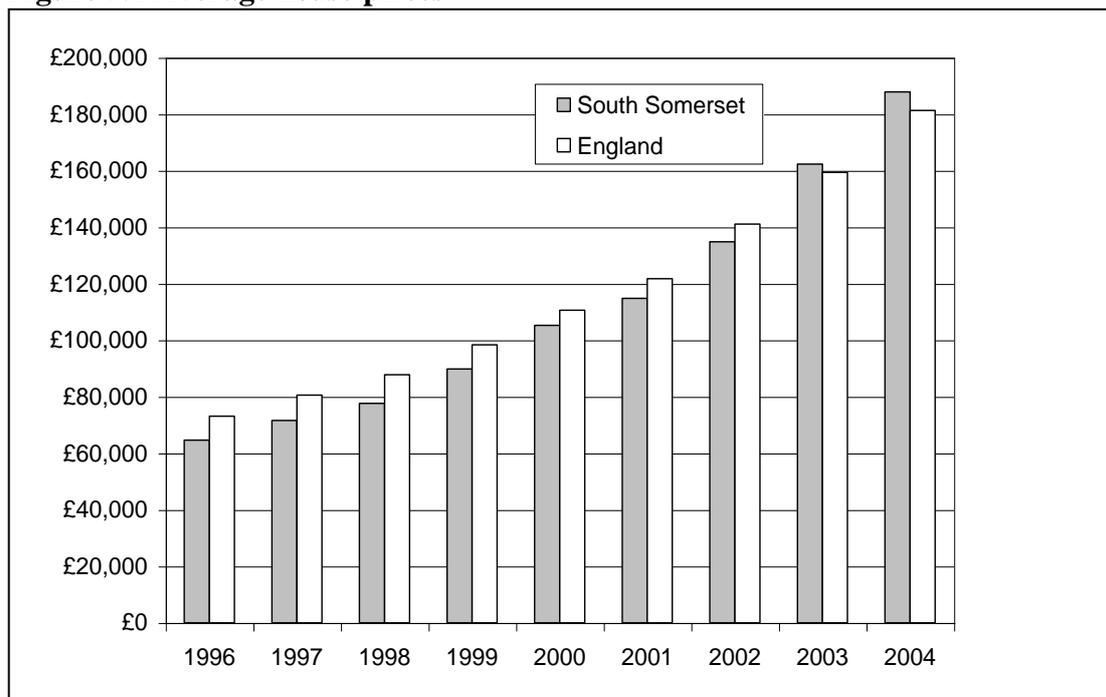
Source: *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector's Report*, Chapter 12, p. 156, retrieved from [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) on 12 September 2005; South Somerset District Council, Area East Committee, Minutes; Wincanton Town Council, Minutes.

## House prices

House prices in South Somerset have risen faster over the last few years than prices for England as a whole so that the average property in South Somerset (£187,880 in 2004) now costs more than the average for England (£181,330 in 2004) – see Figure 5.1.

<sup>10</sup> South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2005, *Local development scheme*, Yeovil: SSDC, March, p. 8, Table 1.

**Figure 5.1 Average house prices**



Source: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), based on Land Registry data. Retrieved from: [http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_housing/documents/page/odpm\\_house\\_609380.xls](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_609380.xls) on 6 September 2005, Table 585.

Table 5.4 compares average house prices to earnings in 2004. Because of the much lower earnings locally and slightly higher average house price, housing is far more expensive in Wincanton relative to earnings than in England generally. This makes it particularly difficult for local people to afford local housing.

**Table 5.4 House prices as a multiple of average earnings in 2004**

	<b>Wincanton</b>	<b>South Somerset</b>	<b>England</b>
Average house price	£187,880	£187,880	£181,330
Average male earnings	£21,211	£24,231	£30,131
House prices as multiple of average male earnings	8.9	7.8	6.0

Source: Data from NOMIS (New Earnings Survey) and retrieved from [http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_housing/documents/page/odpm\\_house\\_609380.xls](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_609380.xls) on 6 September 2005, Table 585. Wincanton average house price assumed to be the same as for South Somerset.

Table 5.5 compares the average selling price of different types of home over the period April-June 2005 for Somerset as a whole. As might be expected, houses are more expensive than flats and detached homes command a premium over semi-detached which are more expensive than terraced.

**Table 5.5 House prices in Somerset by type of dwelling in spring 2005**

Type of dwelling	Average selling price April-June 2005
Detached	£268,435
Semi-detached	£170,855
Terraced	£147,060
Flat/maisonette	£110,985
All types	£184,315

Source: Land registry, 2005. Retrieved from [www.landregistry.gov.uk/propertyprice/interactive](http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/propertyprice/interactive) on 26 September 2005

### Social/affordable housing

Low earnings and high house prices put buying a home out of the reach of many local people. There are various options for addressing this problem:

- **rented social housing.** People claiming certain state benefits, on a low income or satisfying other criteria may be eligible to rent housing either from the local authority or a local housing association, collectively referred to as 'registered social landlords'. Rents are typically lower than those charged by private sector landlords. At the time of the 2001 Census, 15 per cent of Wincanton households were renting from a registered social landlord, which was slightly higher than the proportion for South Somerset as a whole (13.9 per cent) – see Table 16 above
- **housing benefit.** Whether renting from a registered social landlord or a private landlord, households with low income and savings may be able to claim housing benefit to cover part or all of their rent. Data on housing benefit claimants has not been gathered for Wincanton, but in 2004 11.3 per cent of households were claiming income support (a benefit with similar means-testing criteria) against 10.8 per cent for South Somerset<sup>11</sup>
- **shared ownership.** Shared ownership schemes are typically offered by housing associations, but also some larger developers. The schemes involve the homeowner buying part of the property and renting the rest from the housing association. More flexible schemes allow the homeowner to increase the share they own and also to reduce the share if their financial circumstances become strained. In South Somerset, shared ownership is generally fixed in perpetuity so owners can never own the property outright. Shared ownership accounts for only 0.3 per cent of tenure in Wincanton, which is lower than for South Somerset (0.5 per cent) or England (0.7 per cent) – see Table 5.2 above.

<sup>11</sup> South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2004, *South Somerset Ward Profiles*, Yeovil: SSDC.

When granting planning permissions, the planning authority can require a developer of a large site (one hectare/ 25 dwellings or more in the case of Wincanton<sup>12</sup>) to include within the development a specified number of affordable housing units. ‘Affordable housing’ can mean homes for rent or ownership and there are a variety of forms this can take. South Somerset District Council’s policy is that 90 per cent of affordable housing should be for social rent and 10 per cent for shared ownership.

Across South Somerset as a whole, it is estimated that 3,500 families are on the waiting list for affordable housing.<sup>13</sup>

Table 5.6 shows that very few affordable units have been built in Wincanton in recent years. However, three new large developments are planned for Wincanton, both of which are expected to include some social/affordable housing:

- **New Barns Farm (key site).** Following revisions made during the adoption of the South Somerset Local Plan, it is expected that 250 dwellings will be built on this site and the target is that 35 per cent (about 87 homes) should be affordable dwellings<sup>14</sup>
- **Council Depot and Garage, Southgate Road.** Site suitable for 23 dwellings (and part of an originally larger site) with 35 per cent (8 homes) expected to be affordable housing<sup>15</sup>.

In addition a proposed development on **land off Deansley Way** is expected to include 44 affordable housing units if permission is granted for 245 dwellings. But this application has been refused by the local planning authority and is subject to appeal<sup>16</sup>

**Table 5.6 New affordable housing built in and planned for Wincanton**

	2001-2	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	Planned for the future?
Total new dwellings built	20	7	47	20	455 or more – see Table 5.3 above
of which Social/affordable housing	0	0	1	0	95

Source (2001-2 to 2004-5 data): Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Social and community*.

<sup>12</sup> *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector’s Report*, Chapter 12, p. 156, retrieved from [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) on 12 September 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Area East Special Meeting, 2004, *Planning roadshow – affordable housing*, Agenda item 9, South Somerset District Council, 17 May.

<sup>14</sup> *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector’s Report*, Chapter 12, p. 154, retrieved from [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) on 12 September 2005.

<sup>15</sup> *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector’s Report*, Chapter 12, p. 156, retrieved from [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) on 12 September 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Area East Committee, 2005, *Agenda*, South Somerset District Council, 8 August 2005.

## Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing schemes for the elderly in South Somerset are operated by South Somerset Homes (SSH). In total, SSH manages 8,087 homes across the district. It has three schemes located in Wincanton:<sup>17</sup>

- **Balsam Close and Rodber Gardens.** Homes are linked to a community alarm system. Eligibility is mainly restricted to people aged 60 and over though younger, disabled applicants are also considered
- **Common Road.** This an ‘extra care’ scheme which provides a higher-than-normal level of support for residents. It offers 26 units (four one-bedroom flats, four 2-bedroom bungalows and 18 1-bedroom bungalows). Care workers are employed under contract to SSH to provide services on an individual basis according to tenants’ needs. Services, include for example, help with getting up, dressing, bathing, collecting prescriptions and so on. Eligibility for extra care housing is based on a comprehensive care assessment with a joint decision being reached in each case by SSH, a Supported Housing Officer and Social Services.

Table 5.7 shows the average rents for SSH properties including service charges. Tenants may be eligible for housing benefit.

**Table 5.7 Average rents for South Somerset Homes sheltered housing**

Size of property	Average weekly rent
Bedsits	£45.13
One bedroom	£48.89
Two bedroom	£54.91
Three bedroom	£56.70
Four or more bedrooms	£61.82
Overall	£55.13

Source: South Somerset Homes (SSH), 2005, *Annual report 2005/2006*, Yeovil, SSH.

## 5.2 Access to services

Table 5.8 lists key services available within Wincanton. As a service centre for surrounding communities, these facilities are important to the residents of surrounding villages as well as to Wincanton inhabitants. (For sports and recreational facilities, see Section 5.5 below).

<sup>17</sup> South Somerset Homes website. Retrieved from [www.ssh.co.uk](http://www.ssh.co.uk) on 18 December 2005.

**Table 5.8 Key services in Wincanton**

Type of service	Number available in Wincanton	Comments
Accountants	2	Centre of town. Also 1 at Charlton Musgrove
Ambulance station	0	Nearest is Castle Cary (6 miles). However ambulances often park locally while awaiting call out
Banks	3	Centre of town
Building society agencies	3	Centre of town
Cash points	7	4 in centre of town 3 at supermarket (edge of town)
Chiropodist	1	Central location
Chiropractor	1	Central location
Citizens Advice Bureau	0	Service ceased in 2004. Need still exists. Nearest is Yeovil (16 miles)
Community/ public hall	2	Memorial Hall (central location) Sports Hall at King Arthur's School, West Hill (edge of town)
Doctor's practice	1	NHS. Open weekends, Saturdays open for emergency appointments. Central location. Covers radius of approximately 7 miles.
Fire station	1	13 retained staff (called in only as required)
Healthy living centre	1	Central location
Hospital	1	Dancing Lane (edge of town). Minor injuries, elderly, mentally confused, recuperation, physiotherapy. Nearest A&E, surgery, maternity etc at Yeovil (16 miles)
Optician	2	Central location.
Places of worship	6	All Christian, various denominations
Police station	1	Central location. Open weekdays during office hours. Closed lunchtimes
Post office	1	Central location. Open weekdays and Saturday mornings. Closed lunchtimes
Public car parks	4	Memorial Hall (centre of town); Carrington Way (centre of town); Churchfields (slightly out of centre); Rickhayes recreation ground.
Public houses	8	6 in centre of town, 1 slightly out of centre, 1 in adjacent village of Bayford
Public library	1	Central location. Includes public access to the Internet
Public toilets	3	2 central, 1 near church. District Council has proposed demolishing one in centre <sup>18</sup> Opening times: 7am – 7pm
Registry Office	1	Located at Churchfields Community Office. Open two half-days and one full day per week.
Restaurants, cafes and takeaways	8 cafes 3 restaurants/ takeaways 4 other takeaways	1 café is at supermarket (edge of town) and 1 at local garden centre (Charlton Musgrove). The rest are centrally located.
Social club	1	Central location
Solicitors	2	Centre of town
Town Hall and community office	1	Central location

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Social and community*; Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Transport*.

<sup>18</sup> South Somerset District Council, 2005, Area East Committee minutes, July. Decision taken to close the public convenience at Carrington Way from 31 October 2005 or completion of new conveniences at Churchfields, whichever is sooner.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, since October 2004 if necessary reasonable physical adjustments must be made to most premises to which the public have access in order to enable access by people with a disability. Most such buildings in Wincanton comply. However, there are notable exceptions, such as the HSBC Bank, accessible only via several steps. There are three public toilets designed for disabled use: Memorial Hall car park, Carrington Way and Churchfields. At the time of writing the public toilets in Carrington Way had been closed down following withdrawal of support from South Somerset District Council but it was the intention of Wincanton Town Council to take over the running of the facility.

Table 5.9 shows the key services available in 14 of the villages in the area. Abbas & Templecombe and Henstridge are the two best served settlements with a reasonably wide range of facilities which would enable residents to be relatively self-sufficient in the short run. Most of the other villages are poorly serviced.

The most commonly found facility in the villages surveyed is a village hall followed by a local pub. None of the villages has a cash point and only three have a post office, so the majority of village residents must travel to obtain cash. Only two villages have a local food shop.

**Table 5.9 Services available within surrounding village**

Village	Is the following service available within the village:									Score [1]
	Separate or combined post office	Food shop	Public house	Doctor's surgery	Village hall	Youth group	Primary school	Petrol station	Cash point	
Abbas & Templecombe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	7
Henstridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	6
Stoke Trister	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	4
Holton	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	3
Horsington	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	3
Brewham	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	2
Charlton Musgrove	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	2
Shepton Montague	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	2
Yarlington	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	2
Compton Pauncefoot	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	1
Cucklington	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	1
North Cheriton	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	1
Penselwood	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	1
Bratton Seymour	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	

Source: *Rural Services Survey 2004* supplied by South Somerset District Council.

[1] **Score:** A score of 1 is given for each 'Yes' response. A simple summation of the scores across all services gives an indication of how well-served a community is.

## 5.3 Health needs and provision

### Health needs

Referring back to the Index of Multiple Deprivation discussed in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.1), on health deprivation Wincanton Centre ranks as 29 out of the 103 Super Output Areas (SOAs) in South Somerset. Wincanton South and Wincanton North rank 41 and 54, respectively. The relatively high level of deprivation in Wincanton Centre is a cause for concern.

Table 5.10 shows the incidence of limiting long-term illness in Wincanton. This data records self-assessment of whether the respondent has an illness or health problem which limits their daily activities or the work they can do.

Nearly a fifth of the Wincanton population reports some type of limiting condition which is slightly higher than for South Somerset as a whole. However, it must be borne in mind that this figure includes people of all ages and so covers health problems which are common with older age.

Looking just at people of working age (16 to 74), just 7 per cent of the Wincanton population report a limiting condition which is lower than for Somerset as a whole (9.7 per cent). Referring back to Chapter 3 (Table 3.2), only 4 per cent of the Wincanton population aged 16 to 74 was out of work because of permanent illness or disability.

**Table 5.10 Long-term illness and unpaid care**

	Wincanton		South Somerset	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All people with a limiting long-term illness	884	19.1%	26,238	17.4%
People of working age (16 to 74) with a limiting long-term illness	324	7.0%	10,375	9.7%
People providing unpaid care	410	8.8%	15,303	10.1%

Source: Somerset County Council, 2005, *Somerset Interactive Area Profiles*. Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001*.

Although Wincanton has a higher proportion of older residents than the average for South Somerset (see Chapter 2), the difference is small – see Table 5.11 – and unlikely to account fully for the higher incidence of limiting conditions in the Wincanton population. So it seems that Wincanton's elderly tend to be in poorer health than the average for South Somerset.

Indeed, statistics show that 15.7 per cent of Wincanton residents aged 65 or over are claiming attendance allowance (a tax-free, non-means-tested benefit for people who need care due to a severe physical or mental disability). This is above the South

Somerset average of 12.3 per cent and puts Wincanton among the five electoral wards in the district (out of 39) with the highest level of claims for this benefit.<sup>19</sup>

A further indication of the poor health of the town's elderly is that Wincanton is also among the worst five electoral wards in South Somerset for hospital admission rates for people aged 75 or over. At all ages, Wincanton also has a much higher rate of hospital admissions for depression/self-harm (104 cases between April 2001 and April 2004 against a South Somerset ward average of 69.7).<sup>20</sup> These statistics prompted the compiler of the Healthcheck responses to comment: '*This calls for increased support for people suffering from mental health issues*'. One of the local initiatives already targeting this area is the Balsam Project – see Box.

Despite the suggestion of poorer-than-average health in Wincanton, in the 2001 Census only 8.8 per cent of the Wincanton population described their health as 'not good' which is little different to the result for South Somerset (8.0 per cent) or England & Wales (9.2 per cent).<sup>21</sup>

**Table 5.11 Proportion of elderly and very elderly in the population**

Age	Wincanton	South Somerset
All aged 60 or over	25.6%	25.1%
All aged 65 or over	20.7%	19.7%
All aged 75 or over	10.3%	9.7%
All aged 85 or over	3.0%	2.6%
All aged 90 or over	0.8%	0.9%

Source: Somerset County Council, 2005, *Somerset Interactive Area Profiles*. Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001*.

Table 5.8 includes the provision of health services in Wincanton. The main facilities are one doctor's practice and a local hospital with limited facilities. The main hospital is located in Yeovil (16 miles). Wincanton also benefits from a Healthy Living Centre (The Balsam Project – see Box).

<sup>19</sup> Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> National Statistics, *Census 2001*, retrieved from [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) on 4 July 2003.

## The Balsam Project

This project exists to improve the health and quality of life of the people of Wincanton and the surrounding areas. It is located in a former hospital in the centre of Wincanton, known as The Balsam Centre. Its aims include encouraging social inclusion and providing opportunity for positive lifelong change. Initiatives offered by the Balsam Project include:

- **Community mental health.** Support for anyone living within 10 miles of Wincanton who would benefit from talking things through. Some of the issues that people might bring include stress at work or home, anxiety, depression, drug and alcohol problems, and so on
- **Volunteer project.** This aims to build social skills, help people make new contacts and foster participation in community life. To date, the project has recruited and placed over 100 volunteers
- **The Growing Space.** A community market garden being developed as a place to relax, meet others and learn more about gardening
- **Balsam Clinic.** A centre for complementary and holistic medicine with treatments available in relexology, therapeutic and holistic massage, Indian head, neck and shoulder massage and Reiki
- **Health walks.** Short organised walks in the local area
- **Toy library.** Toys can be borrowed by parents, grandparents and playgroups.

A range of other services delivering locally based social, health and community support and facilities have chosen to locate at the Balsam Centre:

Adult Learning & Leisure Courses	Linx Café (youth group and drop-in centre)
Busy Kids Pre-School	Reading Group
Community Accessible Transport (CAT) bus	Slimming World
Complementary Therapy	Social Services, Adult Team
Child Contact	Trilith Rural Media
Fibromyalgia Support Group	Yeovil College Learning Centre
Health Visitors/Midwives	Yoga.

## 5.4 Social needs and provision

Chapter 3 (Table 3.1) discussed the Indices of Multiple Deprivation for the three Wincanton SOAs. Wincanton Centre ranks among the third most deprived SOAs in South Somerset in most respects, including income and living environment. The rankings for the two other Wincanton SOAs are not such a cause for concern except for the very poor living environment ranking of 5 for Wincanton South.

South Somerset District Council carries out a Health and Social Needs Analysis (HSNA) for the district and its wards. This considers a wide range of indicators. The most significant findings for Wincanton from the 2004 HSNA include<sup>22</sup>:

- Wincanton has a much higher level of domestic violence (9.3 households per 1,000) than the average for the District (3.8 households)
- Wincanton has a higher proportion (24.8 per cent) of households in the lowest socio-economic group than the average for the District (19.7 per cent)
- Wincanton ranks 14<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of the 39 wards when considering the child indicators
- Wincanton has a high level of teenage pregnancies with 24.8 hospitalised teenage births per 1,000 population compared with 15.8 for the district as a whole
- referrals to social services for 0-17 year olds are only slightly higher (27.4 per 1,000 children) than the District average (26.8)
- on other child-related indicators, Wincanton scores better than the District average
- 11.3 per cent of Wincanton households were claiming income support in 2004 which is similar to the average for South Somerset (10.8 per cent)<sup>23</sup>.

At least some people with limiting health conditions will be reliant on family, friends or neighbours for day-to-day help. Table 5.10 above shows that nearly one person in 11 (8.8 per cent) in Wincanton is providing unpaid care. This is lower than the proportion for South Somerset (10.1 per cent).

Wincanton is fortunate in being one of only three towns in Somerset to have a Healthy Living Centre<sup>24</sup> (known locally as the Balsam Centre) – see Box for details.

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<sup>22</sup> Healthcheck responses, 2005, *Wincanton population statistics*.

<sup>23</sup> Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

<sup>24</sup> Tim Carroll, Somerset County Councillor and South Somerset District Councillor at Wincanton MCTi meeting on 7 September 2005.

## **5.5 Public safety**

### **Pedestrian and road safety**

Between 1 June 2001 and 31 May 2004, there were an average of 17.7 people per year injured in accidents involving cyclists and an average of 44.3 people per year injured in accidents involving pedestrians<sup>25</sup>. This is a higher than the average for wards in South Somerset<sup>26</sup>.

### **Access to the police**

There is one police station for the area. It is located in the centre of Wincanton and is open to the public weekdays during office hours but closed at lunchtimes and weekends.

The station is classified for police purposes as an urban unit even though it covers 180 square miles of largely rural terrain. Its area of responsibility extends to Bruton, Castle Cary, Henstridge, Milborne Port and Templecombe as well as Wincanton. As an urban police station, its target is to respond to 75 per cent of calls within 10 minutes. The result for Wincanton Town (Beat 141) is 65.6 per cent. The classification was, at the time of the Healthcheck, under review. If the station were to be reclassified as a rural unit, the response target would be 90 per cent of calls within 20 minutes.

Over the 12 months to the date of the Healthcheck, the station has received an average of 7.3 Code 1 (the most urgent) call-outs per month and the average response time was 9.4 minutes.

### **Incidence of crime in Wincanton**

Table 5.12 summarises the incidence of recorded crime for the whole area covered by Wincanton police station. (Note that the figures supplied do not cover a full year but only the ten-month period April to January.) They show crime levels have been falling recently with the exception of theft from motor vehicles (up 11 per cent), violent crime (up 4 per cent) and other (up 2 per cent).

In the case of theft from motor vehicles and violent crime, the police failed to meet their own crime reduction targets.

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<sup>25</sup> Healthcheck worksheet responses, 2005, *Environment*.

<sup>26</sup> Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

**Table 5.12 Recorded crime in area served by Wincanton Police Station**

Type of crime	2003/4	2004/5	Year-on-year change	Target for crime reduction purposes	On or exceeded target?
Dwelling burglary	62	42	-32%	58	Yes
Other burglary	141	85	-40%	-	-
Theft of motor vehicle	36	23	-36%	33	Yes
Theft from motor vehicle	82	91	11%	76	No
Robbery	1	1	0%	105	Yes
Violent crime	225	233	4%	1	No
Other	527	535	2%	214	-
Total recorded crime	1,074	1,010	-6%	-	-

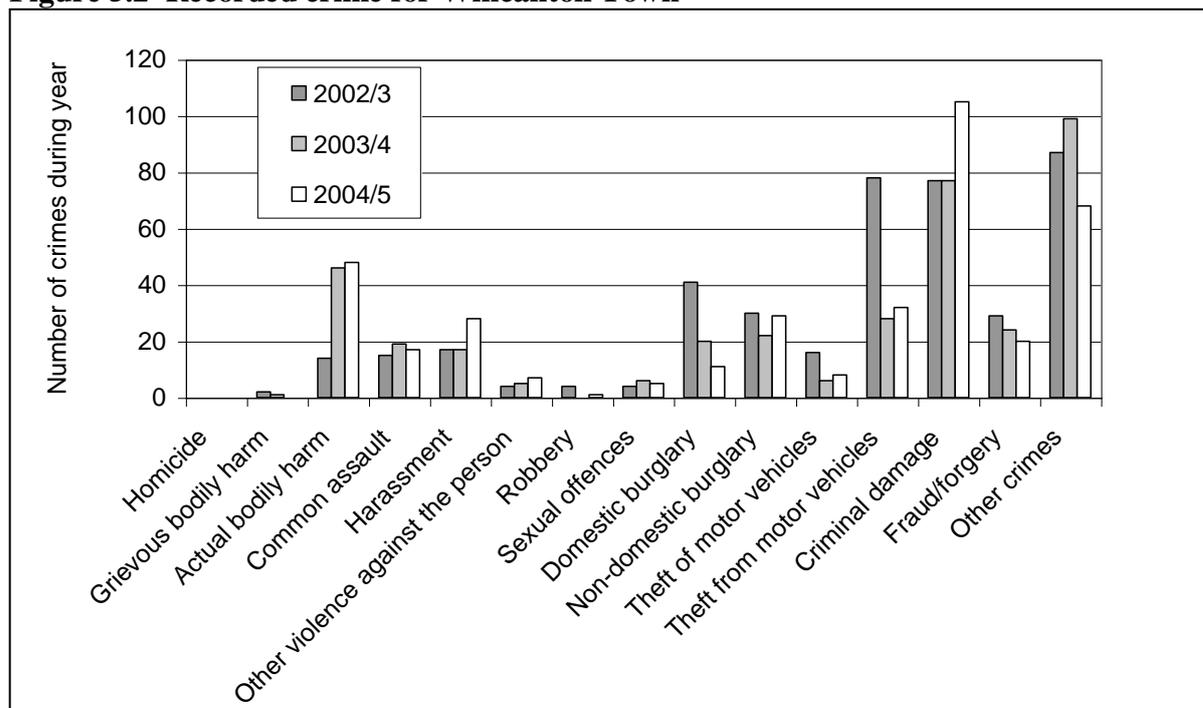
Source: Healthcheck Worksheet responses from Wincanton Police Station, 2005.

Figure 5.2 shows recorded crime for the Wincanton Town Beat for the last three complete years. Points to note are:

- **Criminal damage** is the most common crime and has increased significantly in the most recent year
- **Actual bodily harm** has also been increasing
- **Harassment** has risen in the most recent year
- **Domestic burglary** has declined markedly in the last two years
- **Theft from motor vehicles** is now much lower than it was two years ago.

Overall, recorded crime for the Wincanton Town Beat stood at 379 in 2004/5 compared with 370 in 2003/4 and down from 418 in 2002/3.

**Figure 5.2 Recorded crime for Wincanton Town**



Source: Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Beat crime statistics*, retrieved from [www.avonandsomerset.police.uk](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk) on 13 September 2005.

Using the 2001 Census figure for Wincanton's population of 4,639, the incidence of recorded crime in 2004/5 for Wincanton Town was  $379 / 4,639 = 81.7$  crimes per 1,000 population. Table 5.13 compares this with the rates for the Somerset East policing district and the whole Avon & Somerset policing area. Crime in Wincanton is slightly worse than for Somerset East but some 24 per cent lower than the rate for the whole Avon & Somerset area.

**Table 5.13 Crime rates per 1,000 population**

	Wincanton Town	Somerset East	Avon & Somerset
2002/3	90.1		
2003/4	79.8	78.8	110.7
2004/5	81.7	78.6	108.2

Source: Avon and Somerset Constabulary, *Beat crime statistics*, retrieved from [www.avonandsomerset.police.uk](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk) on 13 September 2005.

Figures for Somerset assume population of 4,639 taken from National Statistics, *Census 2001*.

South Somerset District Council has commented that:

- the incidence of criminal damage in Wincanton is lower than for South Somerset: 16.6 incidents per 1,000 population in Wincanton versus the District average of 17.8<sup>27</sup>
- youth justice referrals are significantly lower for Wincanton than for the District as a whole: 15.6 referrals per 1,000 10- to 17-year olds in Wincanton against 24.9 for South Somerset<sup>28</sup>
- the incidence of domestic violence is much higher in Wincanton (9.3 incidents per 1,000 households) than for South Somerset as a whole (3.8 incidents per 1,000 households). This is a serious cause for concern.<sup>29</sup>

### Detection of crime

Table 5.14 records the detection rates for the area and compares them with the police's own targets. In the most recent year, Wincanton police have exceeded their targets for solving violent crime and non-dwelling burglary but failed to reach the detection targets for other types of crime. This was similar to the outcome for the Somerset East policing district<sup>30</sup>.

**Table 5.14 Detection of crimes by Wincanton Police**

Type of crime	2003/4 (April to Jan)	2004/5 (April to Jan)	Number of crimes detected in 2004/5	Target detection number for 2004/5	On or exceeded target?
Dwelling burglary	44%	5%	2	6	No
Other burglary	5%	5%	4	0	Yes
Theft of motor vehicle	8%	4%	1	3	No
Theft from motor vehicle	5%	4%	4	5	No
Robbery	100%	0%	0	0	Not applicable
Violent crime	18%	24%	55	40	Yes
Total recorded crime	13%	14%	145	162	No

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet responses from Wincanton Police Station, 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Avon and Somerset Policing Authority, *How did we do in Somerset East?*, retrieved from [www.aspola.org.uk](http://www.aspola.org.uk) on 13 September 2005.

## **Crime prevention measures<sup>31</sup>**

Wincanton Town has a dedicated Beat Manager and a Police Community Support Officer.

Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) covers areas in the town centre. Local traders participate in Shop Watch and Pub Watch schemes. Neighbourhood Watch schemes are in place in several areas of the town.

In an effort to curb nuisance, damage and other crimes in the town centre and Rickayes recreation ground, Wincanton has had a designated no-drinking zone from 2003 onwards. At the time of the Healthcheck, one Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) on a prolific offender was in the system.

At the time of the Healthcheck, the Police Crime Reduction Officer was looking at issues around the memorial hall car park in the centre of town with regard to the possible introduction of a Safe Parking Scheme to reduce instances of vehicle crime. This would need support from Wincanton Town Council and South Somerset District Council.

The skate park (opened in 2004 on the edge of town) has in the police view been a huge success. It has resulted in a large drop in complaints of disorder and minor damage in the town centre. The lighting around the skate park could be improved.

The provision of litter bins at the Rickhayes recreation ground has lessened the incidence of vandalism and litter at that location. The addition of a youth shelter would be beneficial.

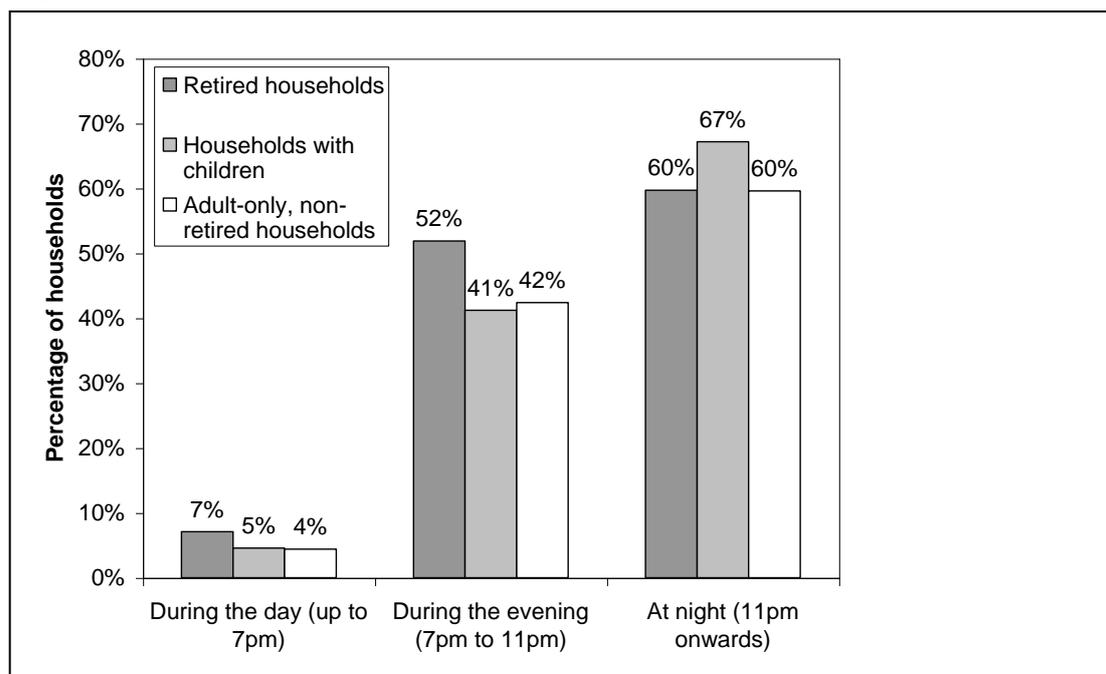
## **Perception of crime**

Wincanton Survey 2003 investigated the fear of street crime by asking respondents whether they were deterred from walking through Wincanton at various times. The results are shown in Figure 5.3. There was little problem using the town during the day. However, a high percentage of households were fearful of walking through the town in the evenings and an even higher proportion (around two-thirds) at night.

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<sup>31</sup> Healthcheck Worksheet responses from Wincanton Police Station, 2005.

**Figure 5.3 Fear of street crime**



Source: Lowe, J, 2003, *Wincanton Survey 2003*, Wincanton: Wincanton Town Council.

### Access to the legal system

There are no courts in the immediate area. The nearest magistrates court is in Yeovil (16 miles) and the nearest Crown court is in Taunton (39 miles).

Two firms of solicitors have offices in the area, both in central Wincanton.

## 5.6 Local government and community organisations

### Access to local government

Wincanton has had a Town Council since 1986 (and for a couple of years prior to that a Parish Council). The Council normally holds four meetings a month and these are all open to the public. The public may address any of these meetings during public question time (maximum 20 minutes) at the start of each meeting. Agendas for forthcoming meetings are posted on the Town Hall notice board. In theory, agendas are also available on the Town Council website but, while an archive of previous agendas is included, on checking several times the Healthcheck researchers found that agendas for immediately forthcoming meetings had not been posted.

Wincanton Town Council has an office and council chamber at the Town Hall in the centre of Wincanton. The council chamber is on the first floor but is served by a stair lift to enable disabled access. There is no parking provision at the town hall.

The council employs a Clerk and an Assistant Clerk who can be contacted at the Town Hall every weekday (9am to 1pm and 2 to 4pm). The home telephone number of the Clerk is publicised for out-of-hours contact.

The Town Council comprises 15 councillors. At the time of the Healthcheck, there were no vacancies. The contact details for councillors are publicised in *The Wincanton Directory* (a privately published local directory to business and services), on the Town Hall noticeboard and on the Council website. Councillors generally welcome contact from the public at any time and also hold a two-hour surgery at the Town Hall on the first Saturday morning of every month. The surgery is published on the Town Hall noticeboard and the Town Council website.

South Somerset District Council (SSDC) operates a community office just on the edge of the town centre which enables local residents to conduct business with the council locally rather than attending the main office in Yeovil. SSDC also operates a website.

SSDC is divided into four areas. Wincanton is served by Area East which holds a meeting once a month to decide on business including planning applications. Many of these meetings are held in Wincanton but may also be held in Yeovil or villages in the Area East region. Meetings are open to the public. Early in each agenda there is an item, *Public Participation*, during which members of the public can address the council. In addition, the public can address comments on specific planning applications at the time the application is considered.

There are two District Councillors for Wincanton Town and one for the wider Wincanton area (Tower ward). The contact details of councillors are published in *The Wincanton Directory*, on the SSDC website and are available from the SSDC by phone or by calling in person.

Somerset County Council is based in Taunton (39 miles) though some business can be conducted locally through the SSDC community office. The County Council also operates a website.

County Council meetings are held at the council chambers in Taunton and are open to the public.

There is one County Councillor for the Wincanton area. Contact details are published in *The Wincanton Directory*, on the County Council website and are available from the council by phone or by calling in person.

### **Community organisations**

There is a diverse range of community organisations operating in the Wincanton area. This includes 15 sports clubs (see Section 5.7 below) as well as the organisations listed in Table 5.15.

**Table 5.15 Community organisations (other than sports clubs)**

Type of organisation	Organisation
Hobbies and local events	Bellringing at Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul
	Wincanton Amateur Dramatics Society
	Wincanton & District Gardeners Association
	Wincanton Camera Club
	Wincanton Carnival Committee
	Wincanton Chess Club
	Wincanton Choral Society
	Wincanton Community Choir
	Wincanton Falcons Model Flying Club
	Wincanton Film Society
	Wincanton Scrabble Club
	Wincanton Silver Band
	Wincanton Theatre Group
Political groups	Liberal Democratic Party
	Wincanton Conservative Association
Support groups and community services	Diabetes Group
	Red Cross Medical Loans
	Slimming World
	Weight Watchers
	Wincanton Carers
	Wincanton Heart Support Group
	Wincanton Live at Home Scheme
	Wincanton Red Cross
Wincanton Winibus	
Twinning groups	Wincanton/France Friendship Society
	Wincanton/Lahnau Twinning Association
Youth groups and services	Baptist Church Sunday School
	Girl Guides
	Linx Project
	Ranger Guides
	Wincanton Area Youth Project
	Wincanton Beavers
	Wincanton Brownies
	Wincanton Cubs
	Wincanton Fire Cadets
	Wincanton Girl Guide Association
	Wincanton Rainbows
	Wincanton Scouts
	Wincanton Young Farmers (age 11 to 26)
Other	Wincanton & District Lions Group
	Wincanton & District Round Table
	Wincanton & District Wives Group
	Wincanton Chamber of Trade
	Wincanton Mothers Union
	Wincanton Royal British Legion
	Wincanton Women's Institute
	Wincanton Young Farmers

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet responses, 2005, *Social and community*; FWB, 2005, *Wincanton Directory 2005*, Wincanton: FWB.

Thirteen of the organisations listed in Table 5.15 specifically cater for children and young people in Wincanton. The 2001 Census found that almost one-fifth of the Wincanton population are people under age 16.

The Linx Project is an important local initiative which comprises several projects under one roof, including:

- a youth club in Wincanton and another in Templecombe
- a faith-based discovery group
- six uniformed clubs, such as ATC (at Castle Cary) and majorettes (Castle Cary),
- the Young Farmers Club
- young person's support group and one-to-one counselling, and
- Linx Café – drop-in centre at the Balsam Centre.

Young people in and around Wincanton also have access to a good range of sports facilities and sports clubs (see Section 5.7 below). However, getting to the various clubs, events and facilities is a problem. Young people are typically reliant on their parents or guardians to provide lifts since public transport is not available at the required times (see Chapter 6 for more about transport issues).<sup>32</sup>

## **5.7 Recreation**

### **Sport**

Wincanton benefits from excellent sports facilities – see Table 5.16 - which are relatively new and well-maintained.

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<sup>32</sup> Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Youth*.

**Table 5.16 Sports facilities in Wincanton**

Type of facility	Number	Comments
Swimming pool	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public pool at Sports Centre, West Hill (edge of town)</li> <li>• Members-only pool at Holbrook House Hotel Spa Centre (edge of town)</li> </ul>
Sports hall	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public facilities at Sports Centre, West Hill (edge of town)</li> <li>• School hall at King Arthur's, West Hill (edge of town)</li> <li>• Maddocks Pavilion at Community Sports Ground, Moor Lane (edge of town)</li> </ul>
Outdoor sports pitches	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports Ground, Moor Lane (edge of town) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 football</li> <li>- 1 rugby</li> <li>- 1 cricket</li> <li>- 4 tennis</li> <li>- 1 multi-use court</li> <li>- bowling green</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rickhayes Recreation Ground (in town) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 cricket</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Sport and fitness centres	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports Centre, West Hill (edge of town). Offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- badminton</li> <li>- gymnastics</li> <li>- hockey</li> <li>- trampolining</li> <li>- mini tennis</li> <li>- fitness centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Members-only fitness centre at Holbrook House Hotel Spa Centre (edge of town)</li> </ul>
Racecourse	1	Wincanton Racecourse (edge of town). National Hunt, October to May. Voted Best Small Racecourse in the South West by Racegoers Club
Golf course	1	9-hole course at Wincanton Racecourse (edge of town). Open to non-members
Skate park	1	Located at edge of town

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Sport, leisure and open space*.

The provision of pitches and open space is above the National Playing Fields Association standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population.

The main problems identified by the Healthcheck respondents were:

- **squash courts.** There is a lack of public courts and residents travel out of town to use facilities elsewhere eg Gillingham (7 miles), Sherborne (11 miles), Yeovil (16 miles) and Frome (27 miles)
- **astro-turf surface.** There is no such surface which is required for hockey, football and for all-year training for other pitch-based sports
- **Moor Lane football pitches.** Drainage is a problem. Particularly for winter training, a floodlit astro-turf area or floodlit well-drained grass area is required
- **cost.** The Wincanton Wanderers Football Club commented that it pays more for a pitch at the Moor Lane Sports Ground than anyone in the Yeovil and District Leagues.

The Healthcheck respondents estimated that possibly 25 per cent of the eligible Wincanton population belong to a sports club. It was thought that club membership tended to be highest among young families with older residents more likely to participate in casual sport. Some clubs – for example, Wincanton Wanderers with over 300 members aims specifically to provide sporting opportunity to every child in and around Wincanton.

Table 5.17 lists the sports clubs active in Wincanton.

**Table 5.17 Sports clubs in Wincanton**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Location of usual facilities used</b>
Wincanton Badminton Club	Sports Centre, West Hill
Wincanton & District Bowls Club	Sports Ground, Moor Lane
Wincanton Short Mat Bowls	Memorial Hall
Wincanton Cricket Club	Rickhayes recreation ground
Wincanton Golf Club	Wincanton Racecourse
Wincanton Gym Club	Sports Centre, West Hill
Wincanton Hockey Club (Ladies)	Sports Centre, West Hill
Wincanton Karate Club	Sports Centre, West Hill
Wincanton Netball Club	Sports Ground, Moor Lane
Wincanton Rugby Club (including Mini's)	Sports Ground, Moor Lane
Wincanton Swimming Club	Sports Centre, West Hill
Wincanton Tae Kwon Do	Sports Centre, West Hill
Wincanton Tennis Club	Sports Ground, Moor Lane
Wincanton Town Football Club	Sports Ground, Moor Lane
Wincanton Wanderers Football Club (under 9s to under 16s)	Sports Ground, Moor Lane

*Source: Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, Social and Community*

## **Open spaces for leisure and recreation**

Wincanton has two main recreation areas: Rickhayes Recreation Ground on the western side of town and Penn View Recreation ground on the north-eastern edge.

The Penn View ground has only limited play facilities but offers a useful open space for ball games, informal running around, and so on.

Rickhayes is well equipped with play equipment for a wide age range from toddlers upwards and is adjacent to a large space equipped with a cricket square. The local river runs through the ground. There are footpaths crossing the ground and leading to the adjacent cemetery. This ground offers scope for a wide range of leisure activities, including informal play and walking.

It is planning policy locally for larger housing developments to include some area of open space for informal play.

Apart from the recreation grounds, there are several other areas of public open space, in particular: Coneygore (rough parkland and nature area on a steep slope crossed by a footpath), Waterside (a grassy area adjacent to the river), Locks Lane (a small field owned by the Town Council) and Carrington Way (grassy picnic area on a steep slope leased to the Town Council).

Wincanton United Charities owns two areas of open space: South Street, behind the Davies Homes (a grass patch which is leased to Somerset County Council for use by Wincanton Primary School) and Bayford Hill (a field, leased to a farmer for grazing, left to the town in order to preserve for its inhabitants the view over the Blackmore Vale).

As discussed in Chapter 4, there are 52 footpaths around the town and linking the town to the countryside. In particular, there are good, easily accessible walks over the fields running along the northern edge of the town. Wincanton is also reasonably close to sections of The Monarch's Way, The Macmillan Way and The Leland Trail. The Balsam Centre organises a number of group walks in the area as part of its promotion of healthy living.

Stourhead is the nearest historic house and grounds (9 miles) and a favourite destination for Wincanton residents wanting to walk or take out visitors. However, there is no public transport between Wincanton and this destination.

There are no dedicated cycle routes within the town but, as noted in Chapter 4, Wincanton is fairly close to sections of the South Somerset Cycle Route and various national cycle routes. Generally once a year a sponsored charity cycle from Wincanton is organised which typically covers some 50 miles. There are a number of reasonably safe informal cycle routes, for example, to Stoke Trister, across Horsington Marsh, along the old A303 to Bourton and Zeals, and through the woods around Penselwood to Stourhead. As Wincanton is located on a hillside, cycling in this area is a fairly energetic pastime. There are no bike hire facilities in the area.

There are two riding stables in the immediate area: at Penselwood and at Horsington.

An outdoor activity centre for children and young people is located reasonably close by at Bruton (6 miles).

## 5.8 Culture and heritage

### Cultural Facilities

The cultural facilities of the town include a museum, library, film society, amateur dramatic groups, school drama and music, Wincanton Choral Society, small commercial gallery, Wincanton Silver Band, theatre-goers group, camera club, dance school.

Music and amateur drama also take place in village halls (including Cucklington, and Penselwood). In addition, there are Take Art events at Charlton Horethorne. The Trilith video and film group based at Bourton has a wide range of local archive film

**Table 5.18 Mainstream cultural facilities available in Wincanton**

Facility	Number	Comments
Museum	1	Central location. Open Saturday mornings April – October and occasional other days.
Cinema	0	Nearest is at Yeovil (16 miles). However, local film club started in 2004, uses Performing Arts Centre at King Arthur's (edge of town). Shows 10 films per season (September – June. Over 200 members.
Theatre	0	Nearest is at Yeovil (16 miles). But local theatre group organises trips eg to theatres in Bath, Bristol, Salisbury, London.

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet responses, 2005, *Social and community*.

### Regular cultural events

The main events which take place regularly in the town and surrounding villages are:

- Wincanton Carnival (revived 2005)
- Pantomime
- Discworld® events and weekends
- Wincanton Racecourse (steeplechase programme and allied events)
- fashion shows (organised by local fashion retailer)

- charity quizzes in village halls and town pubs
- flower shows
- harvest festivals.

## **Publicity and information**

The main facilities available to organisers for publicising their events are:

- **notice boards and shop windows.** Many retailers in Wincanton High Street are willing to put notices in their windows on request and some also participate in selling tickets. The Town Hall runs a diary in which organisers can write in their events. The current week of the diary is then displayed in the Town Hall window. However, the Town Hall diary is not widely used by organisers – whether from ignorance of its existence or choice is not clear
- **print.** Contact (community magazine) and similar community newsletters/parish magazines in the villages, Blackmore Vale Magazine, Western Gazette, The Visitor, South Somerset Journal. Of these Contact is probably the most effective way to advertise to Wincanton, while the Blackmore Vale Magazine is generally the most effective at addressing a wider catchment
- **radio and TV.** Vale FM, Orchard FM, BBC Somerset Sound, BBC Bristol Sound, BBC TV at Bristol, HTV at Bristol
- **internet.** The South Somerset District Council website ([www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)) has a What's On section where organisers can post details of forthcoming events. At present there is no similar facility on the Wincanton Town Council website ([www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk)).

## **Venues**

In Wincanton, the main venues for events are the Memorial Hall, Town Hall, King Arthur's School (which offers an excellent performance centre as well as a school hall), Wincanton Sports Centre, the Maddocks Pavilion at Wincanton Sports Ground, the Balsam Centre, Sweetman Hall at the Bear Inn, Mill Street Social Club and the churches.

The following villages have village halls which are key venues for events: Bayford, Cucklington, Penselwood, Horsington, Charlton Musgrove, Charlton Horethorne, Blackford (Reading Room), North Cadbury.

## **Cultural associations with Wincanton**

The main cultural themes associated with the town are:

- Nathaniel Ireson, potter and architect
- Cow & Gate powdered milk started in High Street
- Keen's Cheddar Cheese (world-famous)
- Wincanton Racecourse (one of country's oldest)
- Wincanton Transport
- Napoleonic prisoners of war, worked at silk factory (now Masonic Hall), and officers at The Dogs (wall painting)
- Coaching history (at one time 80 people a night stayed in the town)
- Cameron Mackintosh, Arthur Bliss and Georgie Fame.

There are also associations with St Aldhelm, particularly at Cucklington, where he is said to have baptised people at Babwell, but there is no actual evidence.

## **Historic associations and significant buildings**

- King Alfred
- Cadbury Castle (thought by some to be Camelot)
- The feoffees (local trustees of land and other charitable bequests to the town)
- Penn Pits and the battle of Penselwood in the seventh century
- Stavordale Priory
- The Dogs, and William (of William and Mary) staying at The Dogs
- Physicwell House
- Moldram's Ground (associations with 19th century German weavers)
- Old Faithful (American bomber crashed at Wincanton in 1944).

### **Entertainment for young people**

There is no entertainment in and around Wincanton specifically for young people<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Youth*.