

Regeneration of St Giles Hill Park

Mike Biden

St. Giles Hill is home to the steep wooded escarpment that rises behind the statue of King Alfred to a large open grassy area across the summit. The views have attracted artists for hundreds of years and the popular viewpoint often features in visitors' social media posts as one of the top 10 best things to do in Winchester.



"It's all about the views" Kim Wilkie

Like many parks, it has been in genteel decline for many years due to the lack of funds for repairs and essential maintenance. Tree roots, weather and usage have over time resulted in broken paths, cracked and broken retaining walls, steps and drainage channels. The slope is

eroding and in places unstable. Self-sown and other trees have gradually blocked all but a few of the views whilst ash die back and the age of the original tree stock has given rise to the need for extensive tree works.

Above: Winchester from St Giles's Hill by George Shepherd, 1827 by kind permission of the Warden and Scholars of Winchester College



Left: St Catherine's Hill View 2003
(Neighbourhood Design Statement)



Right: View Lost April 2023
(courtesy of Mike Biden)

In March 2023, WCC produced a 5-year Management Plan which set out the maintenance and repair works that could be done within the available budget. The Friends of St. Giles Hill Park (FoSGHP) was established to lend a helping hand and volunteer gardeners meet regularly on the first Wednesday and last Saturday of each month.

In July 2025, WCC and FoSGHP signed a partnership agreement. Their first meeting heard that whilst progress overall is ahead of expectations there is still much to do. It was agreed that a long-term strategic plan providing a vision for the future regeneration of the park was needed.

With the encouragement of WCC, FoSGHP have set themselves the challenge to produce a Strategic Framework Plan. This will guide day to day decision making by officers and the efforts of volunteers as well as define

the major projects necessary to make the park fit for the 21stC.

Landscape architects, Ed and Abi Gant, of Lichen Studio have been selected to prepare the plan, and a goal set to publish it before the end of the year. A fund-raising campaign has been launched with financial support promised by WCC and FoSGHP sponsors Savills.

Chairman, Dr Harry Mycock said, "there has to be a Strategic Plan in order to



Above: Volunteers at work
(courtesy of Sheena Smith)

