

MARKET AND COASTAL TOWNS INITIATIVE

WINCANTON PEOPLE'S PLAN

WINCANTON

Healthcheck Report

January 2006

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Acknowledgements

Data was gathered by members of the Wincanton People's Plan Working Group during 2005 and reflects the state of Wincanton and its surrounding settlements as it could be determined at that time.

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Executive summary

The Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi) is a government programme which aims to help market and coastal towns and their surrounding communities to identify priorities and implement a plan to shape their future.

At the heart of the initiative is the preparation of an Action Plan covering social, economic, environmental and cultural themes. The Action Plan is drawn up through a process of strategic planning. A key step in this process is conducting a clear assessment of where the community is now in order to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats it faces and to provide a baseline against which future progress can be measured. This assessment is the 'Healthcheck'.

This report presents the findings of the Wincanton Healthcheck. It gives a snapshot of the community as it stood in 2005 and identifies a number of key themes and issues as follows.

Population issues

- The town of Wincanton has a population of around 4,600 but potentially it serves at least another 3,500 people in surrounding settlements.
- The population of Wincanton and its neighbouring parishes has grown by 8.5 per cent over the decade to 2001.
- Both Wincanton and South Somerset have proportionately more elderly people than England as a whole. Wincanton has a high proportion of pensioner households (30 per cent compared with 23 per cent for England). One household in five in Wincanton is a pensioner living alone.
- Ageing of the population is a national trend forecast to continue for the next few decades.
- Households with children account for 34 per cent of Wincanton households.

Economic issues

- **Economic deprivation.** Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation, parts of Wincanton are fairly deprived relative to the rest of South Somerset. Tower (the ward immediately to the north of Wincanton), which on most counts shows low levels of deprivation, exhibits the highest level of housing and service deprivation in the whole of South Somerset.
- **Employment.** Employment rates are good but earnings are relatively low. The local economy is not overly dependent on any one large employer. Nearly half the local labour force works away from Wincanton but there is a net migration of workers into the town.

- **Business.** Over 300 private sector businesses operate in and around Wincanton. A survey in 2001 found around a third thought their premises might become unsuitable over the following two years. A variety of grants and business rate relief may be available to local businesses. The nearest Business Link is located in Taunton, although considerable information is available by Internet. Wincanton has the benefit of Broadband.
- **Retail and town centre.** Wincanton town centre hosts 57 goods shops and 30 other commercial outlets. Vacancy rates were low at the time of the Healthcheck.
- **Tourism.** Wincanton itself does not have any significant natural or historic tourist attractions. However, there is potential for Wincanton to act as a holiday/short-break centre for visitors to attractions in the surrounding area. Wincanton hosts some significant events which draw visitors nationally, including racing at Wincanton Racecourse and Discworld® events. (Wincanton is home the only Discworld® Emporium and is officially twinned with Ankh Morpork, the fictional world created by Terry Pratchett in his Discworld® books.) There is insufficient visitor accommodation locally to meet demand from visitors to Discworld® events.
- **Training and education.** Wincanton has a lower proportion of working-age people with higher skills and educational attainment than South Somerset or England. There is probably a shortage of pre-school provision. In 2004, educational attainment of pupils at Wincanton Primary School is broadly in line with the averages for Somerset and England, but has been tending to decline over the last few years. The best performing local primary school was Abbas & Templecombe. Attainment by pupils at King Arthur's Community School was in line with England but lags behind other secondary schools in the area. Wincanton offers no post-16 education. Wincanton has a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than South Somerset or England but seems to lack adequate SEN funding.

Environmental issues

- **Character and vitality of Wincanton.** Residents particularly value the friendliness of the town and its people. So far, Wincanton has avoided becoming an urban sprawl and should guard against this in the face of rapid planned expansion.
- **The countryside around Wincanton.** The countryside is very scenic and rich with the evidence of previous settlement. The majority of the countryside continues to be farmed in traditional ways, but there is great uncertainty over the future, particularly of the dairy industry.
- **Links between Wincanton and its surroundings.** The visual links from the town over the Blackmore Vale are partially threatened by housing development.

A considerable number of footpaths link the town and its environ. Wincanton is also close to some important national trails and cycle routes.

Social and community

- **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.
- **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.

Transport and accessibility

- **Access to private transport.** One in five Wincanton households does not own a car or van. This is higher than the proportion for South Somerset as a whole.
- **Ease of travel to and from the area.** Good East-West road links ensure easy access by car. Road travel on the North-South axis is less good. Wincanton is within close reach of three railway stations offering three rail routes. Apart from a good bus link to London, commercial bus services are poor. Many of the gaps are filled by a Community Accessible Transport (CAT) bus scheme. However, restrictions on who can use the CAT bus mean that the bulk of the Wincanton population has little choice but to be dependent on the car.
- **Ease of access to services.** As noted in Chapter 5, most villages have few services, so travel to Wincanton is important. Access by car is easy. The CAT bus is helping to ensure access from the villages to Wincanton and the other towns nearby. However the CAT bus operates only on weekdays 8am to 6pm.
- **Ease of movement around the town.** Free car parking is viewed as an asset thought to facilitate access to services and to boost the town's trade. However, the District Council would like to introduce parking charges in Wincanton. Pedestrian safety could be enhanced through the provision of additional designated crossings. A very small minority of residents cycle and facilities for them are currently poor – the establishment of dedicated cycle routes might promote greater take-up of cycling.

SWOT analysis

From the key issues identified in each chapter of this report, it is possible to map out the main strengths and weaknesses of the community and the major threats and opportunities it faces. These are summarised below.

SWOT analysis

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High employment • Large base of businesses • No over-dependence on single sector or employer • Good range of shops • Friendly town • Past growth has avoided urban sprawl • Scenic countryside • Lot of footpaths • Good range of services in the town • Healthy Living Centre • Extensive range of community organisations including many aimed at young people • Excellent sports facilities • Wide range of cultural associations and events • Close proximity to national trails and cycle routes • Community accessible transport scheme 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high economic deprivation in Central Wincanton • Low earnings • Lack of suitable business premises • Low skills of working population • Shortage of pre-school provision • Declining attainment at primary school level • Poor attainment at secondary school level • No post-16 education • High proportion of SEN pupil and inadequate SEN funding • Poor range of services in villages • Poor health of older population • High incidence of mental health problems • High level of domestic violence • High level of teenage pregnancies • High level of pedestrian and bicycle accidents • High level of criminal damage, violent crime and theft from vehicles • Overall low crime detection rate • Many residents fearful of going out on foot in evenings and at night • Lack of culture and events for younger people • No direct link to national trails and cycle routes
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Extensive housing development taking place and planned • Increase in supply of social/affordable housing 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • Ageing population • Uncertain future for farming, especially dairy farming • Extensive housing development taking place and planned • Housing development threatens visual links from town to countryside • Service provision might not keep pace with population growth • Longer police response times if Wincanton reclassified as rural rather than urban unit

1 Introduction

The Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi) is a government programme which aims to *'help market and coastal towns and their surrounding communities to identify priorities for the future of their area, to gain the skills necessary to take action, and then to implement their plans. It will help co-ordinate activity of local and regional agencies and provide a gateway to funding programmes'*¹.

At the heart of the initiative is the preparation of an Action Plan for the town and surrounding communities covering social, economic, environmental and cultural themes. The Action Plan is drawn up through a process of strategic planning. A key step in this process is conducting a clear assessment of where the community is now in order to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats it faces and to provide a baseline against which future progress can be measured. This assessment is the 'Healthcheck'.

The Wincanton Healthcheck has been conducted using worksheets devised by the Countryside Agency, supplemented by further information from existing surveys and statistics about the town and its surrounding communities. The answers and information gathered have been collated into this report to provide a snapshot of the community as it stood in 2005.

The Healthcheck and the report focus on five broad themes:

- **Population** covering demographic and household data. These are the subject of Chapter 2
- **Economy** looking at employment, earnings and the main drivers for local economic well-being. See Chapter 3
- **Environment** considering the character and vitality of the town and surrounding countryside and the natural and manmade links between the two. See Chapter 4
- **Social and community** issues, such as housing, provision of healthcare, other essential services, recreation, and the cultural well-being of the area. See Chapter 5
- **Transport and accessibility** looking at the ease of movement to, from and within the area. These are covered in Chapter 6.

¹ Market and Coastal Towns website. Retrieved from www.southwesttowns.net on 22 September 2004.

2 The Wincanton area and its population

Key issues

- The town of Wincanton has a population of around 4,600 but potentially it serves at least another 3,500 people in surrounding settlements.
- The population of Wincanton and its neighbouring parishes has grown by 8.5 per cent over the decade to 2001.
- Both Wincanton and South Somerset have proportionately more elderly people than England as a whole. Wincanton has a high proportion of pensioner households (30 per cent compared with 23 per cent for England). One household in five in Wincanton is a pensioner living alone.
- Ageing of the population is a national trend forecast to continue for the next few decades.
- Households with children account for 34 per cent of Wincanton households.

2.1 The Wincanton area

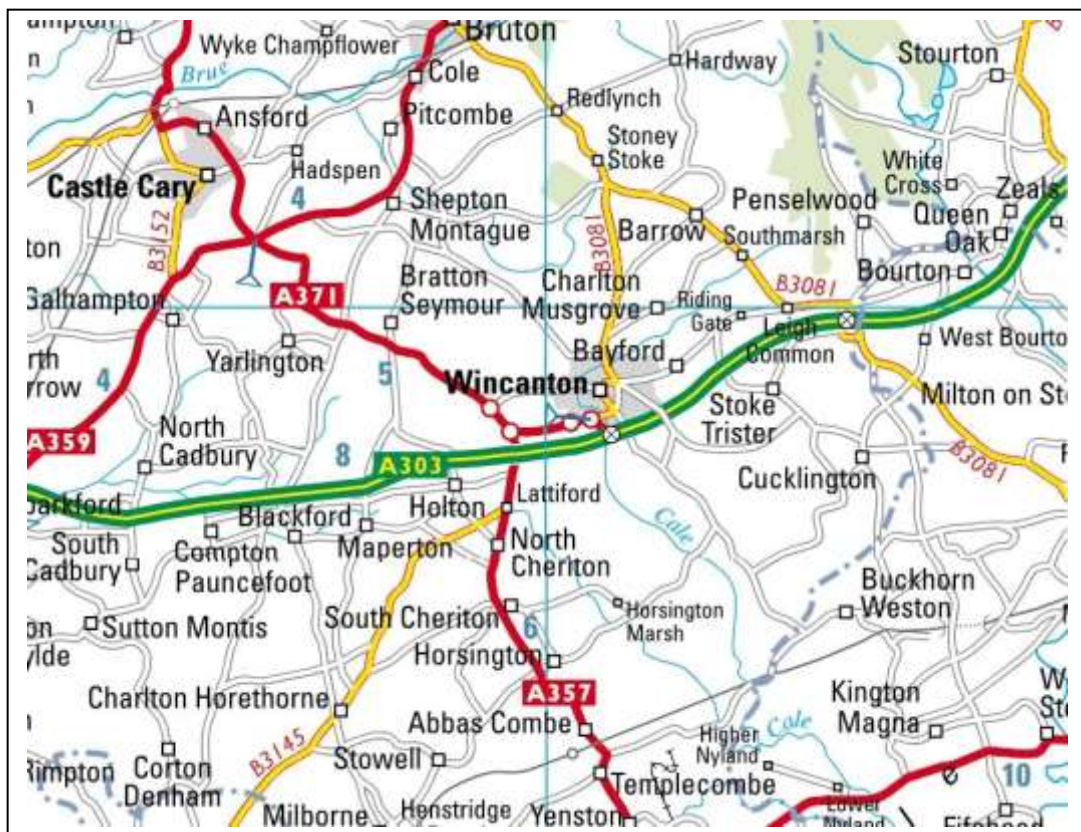
Wincanton is a former market town situated on a strategic road link from London to the West Country. The town's name is widely known, since it is home to part of a publicly quoted logistics company called Wincanton and also to a nationally renowned jump-racing course. Despite this fame, Wincanton itself is only a relatively small town though also a service centre for a wider community of settlements in the surrounding countryside, in particular, the neighbouring parishes of:

- Abbas and Templecombe
- Bayford
- Bratton Seymour
- Charlton Musgrove
- Cucklington
- Holton
- Horsington
- North Cheriton

- Penselwood
- South Cheriton
- Stoke Trister.

At the political and administrative level, most of these settlements fall with the Wincanton ward. But those lying to the North generally fall within the Tower ward

Figure 2.1 Wincanton and the surrounding settlements



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2.2 Population

Table 2.1 shows the population of Wincanton and its main satellite settlements as recorded in the 2001 census and the 1991 census. Wincanton and North Cheriton have both experienced marked growth in population over the last decade. Some of the smaller settlements have seen a small decline.

Wincanton and South Somerset as a whole both have extremely low ethnic diversity with 99 per cent of the population classified as white. The next largest groups – Asian and black – each account for less than ½ per cent of the Wincanton population.²

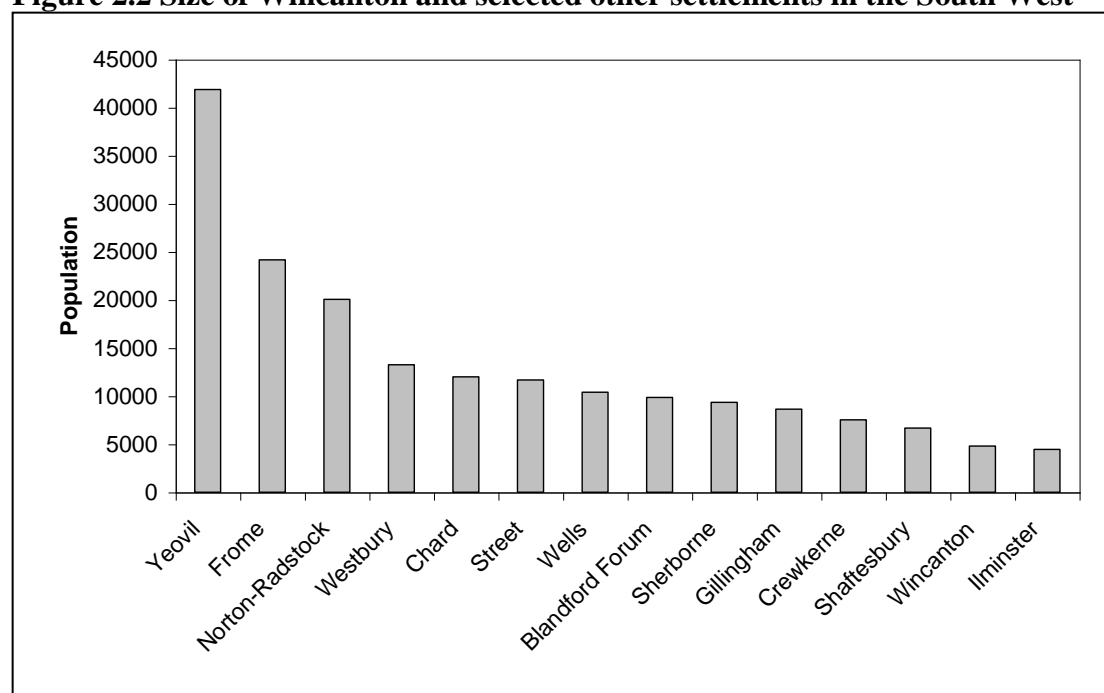
Table 2.1 Population of Wincanton and surrounding parishes

Parish	Population in 2001	Population in 1991	Growth over the decade
Wincanton	4,639	4,151	11.8%
Abbas and Templecombe	1,462	1,377	6.2%
Bratton Seymour	117	120	-2.5%
Charlton Musgrove	385	394	-2.3%
Cucklington	185	190	-2.6%
Holton	187	174	7.5%
Horsington (including South Cheriton)	572	536	6.7%
North Cheriton	243	203	19.7%
Stoke Trister (including Bayford)	300	312	-3.8%
Total	8,090	7,457	8.5%

Source: Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001* and supplied by South Somerset District Council

Although Wincanton acts as a retail and service centre for the surrounding communities, in terms of population it is a small town compared with other comparable centres in the South West – see Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Size of Wincanton and selected other settlements in the South West



Source: South West Regional Assembly, *Functional Analysis of Settlements*, Final Tables, April 2005.

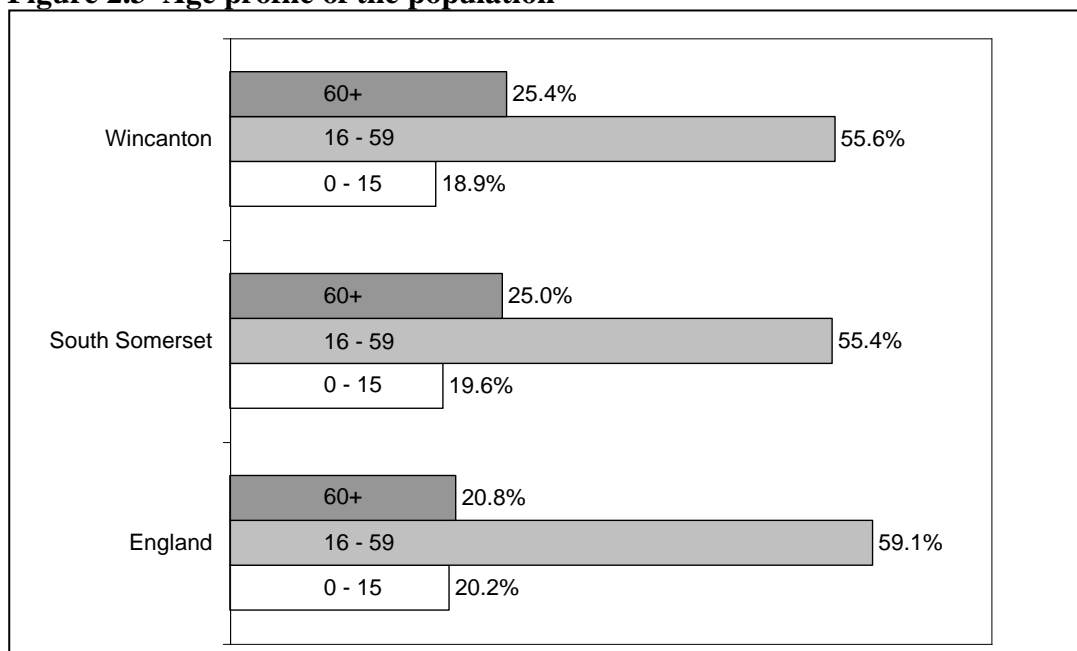
² Source: Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001* and supplied by South Somerset District Council

As Figure 2.3 shows, the age profile of Wincanton is slightly older than the average for South Somerset as a whole and significantly older than the average for England. This divergence from the national average is largely due to a higher proportion of people over age 60 and to a lesser extent a smaller proportion of under-16s.

Table 2.2, which ranks communities according to the proportion of population aged 65 or over, shows that the age pattern varies considerable across the surrounding villages with Shepton Montagu having the smallest population over 65 (11 per cent) and Penselwood the greatest (30 per cent).

Ageing of the population is a national trend occurring because of increasing longevity, the retiring of the post-war ‘baby boom’ generation and lower birth rates than in the past. The Government Actuary’s Department has forecast a fall in the support ratio in the UK from 3.4 at the start of this century to 2.4 by 2040. (The support ratio expresses the number of people of working age per person over state pension age.) There will be a particularly sharp increase in the number of pensioners over the period 2020 to 2030.³

Figure 2.3 Age profile of the population



Source: Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001* and supplied by South Somerset District Council

³ Department of Social Security, 1998, *A new contract for welfare: partnership in pensions*, Cm 4179, London, The Stationery Office.

Table 2.2 Age profile in Wincanton and surrounding villages

Settlement	Percentage of population		
	16 or under	17 to 64	65 or over
Penselwood	15%	55%	30%
Bayford	15%	56%	29%
Cucklington	12%	61%	27%
Lattiford	13%	62%	24%
North Cheriton	30%	47%	23%
Wincanton	20%	59%	21%
Horsington	14%	68%	18%
South Cheriton	21%	63%	16%
Bratton Seymour	25%	60%	15%
Stoke Trister	18%	67%	15%
Charlton Musgrove	21%	66%	13%
Yarlington	24%	64%	12%
Shepton Montagu	29%	60%	11%

Source: Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001* and supplied by South Somerset District Council

2.3 Household composition

Of the 2,010 households in Wincanton at the time of the 2001 census, 30 per cent were pensioner households (see Table 2.3). This is significantly higher than the proportion for England as a whole (23 per cent of households). In Wincanton, 19 per cent (379 households) comprised pensioners living alone, compared with 16 per cent for South Somerset and 14 per cent for England.

Just over one third (34 per cent) of Wincanton households have children, which is in line with South Somerset but a little lower than the average for England as a whole. Lone parents made up 6 per cent of Wincanton households compared with an average for England of 9 per cent.

Table 2.3 Household composition in 2001

Type of household	Percentage of all households		
	Wincanton	South Somerset	England
Single pensioner	19%	16%	14%
Single person, non-pensioner	14%	13%	16%
Lone parent	6%	7%	9%
Pensioner couple	11%	12%	9%
Married, no children	14%	16%	13%
Married with children	23%	24%	24%
Cohabiting, no children	5%	4%	5%
Cohabiting with children	3%	3%	4%
Other	2%	4%	7%
Total households (number)	2,010	63,769	20,451,427

Source: Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001* and supplied by South Somerset District Council

3 Economy

Key issues

- **Economic deprivation.** Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation, parts of Wincanton are fairly deprived relative to the rest of South Somerset. Tower (the ward immediately to the north of Wincanton), which on most counts shows low levels of deprivation, exhibits the highest level of housing and service deprivation in the whole of South Somerset.
- **Employment.** Employment rates are good but earnings are relatively low. The local economy is not overly dependent on any one large employer. Nearly half the local labour force works away from Wincanton but there is a net migration of workers into the town.
- **Business.** Over 300 private sector businesses operate in and around Wincanton. A survey in 2001 found around a third thought their premises might become unsuitable over the following two years. A variety of grants and business rate relief may be available to local businesses. The nearest Business Link is located in Taunton, although considerable information is available by Internet. Wincanton has the benefit of Broadband.
- **Retail and town centre.** Wincanton town centre hosts 57 goods shops and 30 other commercial outlets. Vacancy rates were low at the time of the Healthcheck.
- **Tourism.** Wincanton itself does not have any significant natural or historic tourist attractions. However, there is potential for Wincanton to act as a holiday/short-break centre for visitors to attractions in the surrounding area. Wincanton hosts some significant events which draw visitors nationally, including racing at Wincanton Racecourse and Discworld® events. (Wincanton is home the only Discworld® Emporium and is officially twinned with Ankh Morpork, the fictional world created by Terry Pratchett in his Discworld® books.) There is insufficient visitor accommodation locally to meet demand from visitors to Discworld® events.

Key issues continued overleaf

Key issues continued

- **Training and education.** Wincanton has a lower proportion of working-age people with higher skills and educational attainment than South Somerset or England. There is probably a shortage of pre-school provision. In 2004, educational attainment of pupils at Wincanton Primary School is broadly in line with the averages for Somerset and England, but has been tending to decline over the last few years. The best performing local primary school was Abbas & Templecombe. Attainment by pupils at King Arthur's Community School was in line with England but lags behind other secondary schools in the area. Wincanton offers no post-16 education. Wincanton has a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than South Somerset or England but seems to lack adequate SEN funding.

3.1 Economic deprivation

To gauge the extent to which people in a community are living below the standards generally accepted as customary or desirable, it is useful to look at its Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). In some respects, the IMD can be considered as a measure of poverty but its scope is much wider. In a single score or ranking, it describes these aspects of a community⁴:

- **Income deprivation** by measuring the proportion of households receiving means-tested state benefits
- **Employment deprivation** which includes the proportion of people claiming benefits due to unemployment or illness that prevents them from working
- **Health deprivation and disability** which measures the number of people dying prematurely or whose quality of life is reduced because of health problems or disability
- **Education, skills and training deprivation** considers the test and exam results children achieve in school, absence rates, proportion not staying on to sixth form and proportion not going into higher education. It also looks at the proportion of working age adults with no or only low qualifications
- **Barriers to housing and services.** This part of the index captures homelessness, household over-crowding, barriers to owner-occupation and

⁴ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), 2004, *The English Indices of Deprivation 2004 (revised)*, London, ODPM.

road distance to doctors' surgeries, schools, supermarket or convenience store and post office

- **Living environment deprivation.** This is split into two parts. The first looks at indoor deprivation in terms of poor-condition housing and lack of central heating. The second captures outdoor deprivation by looking at air quality and road traffic accidents
- **Crime** by looking at recorded statistics for burglary, theft, criminal damage and violence.

The different scores for each of the above aspects can be combined to arrive at an overall score. Each geographical region can then be ranked against all the others according to its score. IMDs measure deprivation for each 'Super Output Area' (SOA), a geographical region drawn up to contain between 1,000 and 1,500 residents. South Somerset is divided into 103 SOAs in total. Somerset contains 327 SOAs. Wincanton comprises three SOAs: Wincanton Centre, Wincanton South and Wincanton North. Tower ward just to the north of Wincanton is a single SOA.

Table 3.1 below shows how the position of the Wincanton and Tower SOAs when all 103 South Somerset SOAs are ranked in order of deprivation with the most deprived area being ranked as '1' and the least deprived as '103'.

With overall IMD rankings of 24 and 25, the central and southern areas of Wincanton are among the quarter most deprived SOAs in South Somerset, though there are variations between the four areas which make up the Wincanton town and district:

- **Wincanton centre.** Access to housing and services in the centre are comparatively good but, on all other aspects, central Wincanton has relatively high levels of deprivation compared with South Somerset as a whole
- **Wincanton South** suffers very high living environment deprivation and there are relatively high barriers to housing and services, but it has the least income deprivation of the three Wincanton areas
- **Wincanton North** is ranked relatively poorly for living environment but otherwise has much lower levels of deprivation than the rest of Wincanton and is ranked around middling looking at all the SOAs across South Somerset
- **Tower** is the least deprived of the four areas overall and on every count bar one. The exception is housing and services deprivation where Tower ranks as the most deprived area in the whole of South Somerset.

At the electoral level, South Somerset is divided into 39 wards. On the basis of its IMD, the Wincanton ward ranks as the 18th most deprived out of the 39. Tower ranks as 10th out of the 39.

Table 3.1 Index of multiple deprivation (IMD)

Aspect of deprivation	Ranking against the 103 SOAs in South Somerset			
	Wincanton Centre	Wincanton South	Wincanton North	Tower
Income deprivation	20	62	44	94
Employment deprivation	26	39	81	95
Health deprivation and disability	29	41	45	102
Education, skills and training deprivation	22	51	63	91
Barriers to housing and services	81	36	46	1
Living environment deprivation	27	5	24	94
Crime	26	54	50	77
Overall IMD	24	25	50	61

Source: South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2005, *South Somerset Ward Profiles 2005*, Somerset, SSDC

Table 3.2 shows how Wincanton and Tower SOAs fare when all 327 SOAs in Somerset are ranked. For comparison, Table 3.2 also includes the rankings for selected other Somerset towns (Bruton, Castle Cary, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport, Milborne Port) and the Blackmore Vale area. It highlights the following points:

- **overall deprivation.** In broad terms, Wincanton is less deprived than parts of Chard, Crewkerne and Castle Cary. Wincanton North and Tower have relatively low deprivation levels overall
- **income deprivation.** Only Wincanton Central shows any significant income deprivation relative to the rest of Somerset. Even then, it is not as badly off as parts of Chard, Crewkerne and Castle Cary
- **educational deprivation.** Wincanton Central ranks 78th out of 327, suggesting some relative deprivation but not as much as parts of Chard, Crewkerne, Castle Cary and Ilminster
- **employment and health.** In both these areas, Wincanton generally ranks towards the middle of the 327 SOAs. Tower exhibits low levels of relative deprivation
- **housing deprivation.** Tower stands out for its high level of deprivation in this area
- **crime.** The index suggests a moderate level of relative deprivation in Wincanton Centre but not the other areas of the town and definitely not in Tower which ranks 236 out of the 327 Somerset SOAs. However, on crime, both Chard and Crewkerne have relatively greater problems than Wincanton.

Table 3.2 Index of multiple deprivation IMD scores at Somerset level (327 SOAs)

SOA Name	Ward Name	Overall IMD ranking	Income ranking	Employment ranking	Health ranking	Education ranking	Environment ranking	Housing ranking	Crime ranking
Chard Avishayes (W)	Chard Avishayes	40	41	32	46	14	129	271	79
Chard Holyrood (N)	Chard Holyrood	45	26	35	60	27	287	296	28
Chard Jocelyn (W)	Chard Jocelyn	46	31	64	48	17	84	276	85
Chard Crimchard (E)	Chard Crimchard	61	135	227	148	47	5	102	291
Crewkerne (CN)	Crewkerne	103	65	99	107	59	194	244	63
Castle Cary Town	Cary	108	51	140	68	49	210	220	157
Wincanton (C)	Wincanton	121	90	150	141	78	70	256	83
Wincanton (S)	Wincanton	125	229	184	175	159	18	127	159
Crewkerne (CS)	Crewkerne	127	134	204	206	30	47	204	231
Langport	Langport and Huish	135	82	102	103	104	152	257	113
Chard Combe	Chard Combe	139	93	109	164	87	274	239	48
Chard Avishayes (E)	Chard Avishayes	146	260	162	213	86	30	283	91
Chard Jocelyn (E)	Chard Jocelyn	148	243	201	188	121	23	143	235
Blackmoor Vale (S)	Blackmoor Vale	175	98	161	167	132	140	139	211
Blackmoor Vale (C)	Blackmoor Vale	176	137	172	220	140	128	82	298
Bruton Town	Bruton	177	112	223	177	153	69	202	158
Ilminster (SW)	Ilminster	182	147	213	228	46	121	208	135
Chard Holyrood (S)	Chard Holyrood	186	160	173	191	54	113	231	182
Ilminster (E)	Ilminster	189	99	147	243	89	232	253	141
Wincanton (N)	Wincanton	195	171	280	190	189	64	154	152
Tower	Tower	212	303	314	320	274	284	9	236
Crewkerne (W)	Crewkerne	214	144	167	162	182	267	265	52
Chard Crimchard (W)	Chard Crimchard	216	309	296	319	177	20	180	196
Cary (S)	Cary	223	286	278	308	285	255	18	217
Crewkerne (S)	Crewkerne	242	232	256	237	150	62	158	302
Crewkerne (N)	Crewkerne	257	298	237	307	242	37	185	247
Blackmoor Vale (N)	Blackmoor Vale	260	245	294	272	269	226	45	320
Milborne Port (S)	Milborne Port	289	248	236	223	133	130	250	273
Cary (N)	Cary	300	320	253	296	223	103	221	119
Bruton Outer	Bruton	312	301	324	327	254	146	121	172
Milborne Port (N)	Milborne Port	321	294	309	278	310	117	209	266
Ilminster (NW)	Ilminster	322	280	318	309	173	311	186	263

Source: Somerset County Council, IMD scores ranking analysis, retrieved from www.somerset.gov.uk on 10 December 2005.

3.2 Employment

Labour market participation and earnings

The rate of employment in Wincanton is relatively high compared with the rate for England and Wales as a whole. Nearly 67 per cent of Wincanton adults aged 16 to 74 were in work at the time of the 2001 Census (against 61 per cent for England and Wales) – see Table 3.3.

In Wincanton, 62 per cent of working-age women and 79 per cent of working-age men were classified as ‘economically active’ (in work, unemployed or studying full-time). Almost a quarter of working-age women were in part-time work compared with only 3 per cent of men. One person in nine of working age was self-employed.

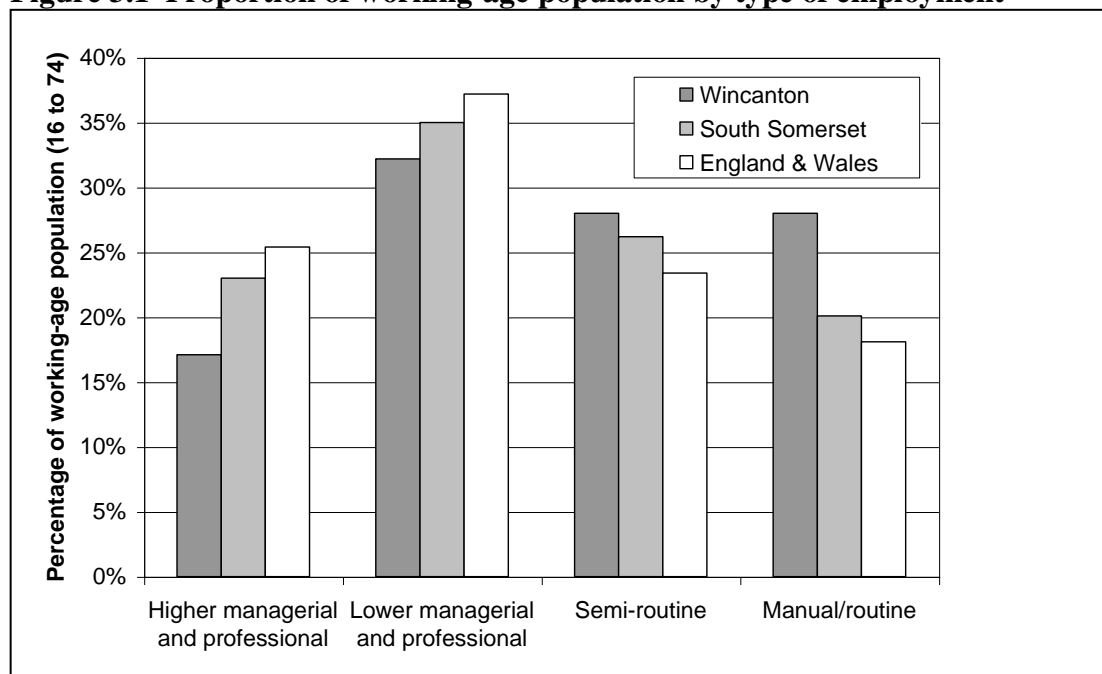
Table 3.3 Economic activity

Activity classification	Wincanton	Tower	South Somerset	England & Wales
Employed	66.8%	63%	64.9%	60.6%
Unemployed	1.8%	2%	2.1%	3.4%
Working student	1.7%	2%	1.9%	2.6%
Non-working student	2.1%	5%	2.8%	4.7%
Retired	15.4%	18%	18.6%	13.6%
Looking after home/family	5.8%	7%	6.0%	6.5%
Permanently sick/disabled	4.0%	2%	3.7%	5.5%
Other economically inactive	0.7%	0%	2.2%	3.1%

Source: SSDC, 2005, *South Somerset Ward Profiles 2005*. Census 2001 data.

As Figure 3.1 shows, Wincanton has a higher proportion of its workforce in manual, routine and semi-routine jobs than either South Somerset or England and Wales as a whole. The town has a lower proportion in professional and managerial work.

Since manual and semi-skilled work are usually lower paid than professional and managerial jobs, it is unsurprising to find that average household earnings in Wincanton are lower than the averages for either South Somerset or Great Britain – see Table 3.4. Women’s lower pay compared with men’s is a national phenomenon largely reflecting social factors, in particular the impact of part-time working, career breaks and other adjustments associated with women’s traditional roles as carers and homemakers.

Figure 3.1 Proportion of working-age population by type of employment

Source: Healthcheck worksheet, 2005, *Wincanton population statistics*. Data from Census 2001.

Table 3.4 Average earnings in 2004

	Average gross annual earnings		
	Wincanton	South Somerset	Great Britain
Men	£21,211	£24,231	£30,131
Women	£15,506	£19,180	£21,730

Source: NOMIS (New Earnings Survey).

Dependence on particular industries and employers

The most important industry sector for Wincanton in terms of numbers employed is wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles (22 per cent of the economically active workforce) followed by manufacturing (17 per cent) – see Table 3.5.

Although accounting for fairly small proportions of the employed population, transport, storage and communications (8 per cent) and agriculture (4 per cent) are more important to Wincanton than to the other settlements covered in Table 3.5. This probably reflects Wincanton's continuing involvement in the milk industry and the presence of Wincanton plc in the town.

Table 3.5 Employment of by industry sector

Industry	Wincanton		% of economically active working-age population												
	Number employed	% of economically active working-age population	Blandford Forum	Chard	Crewkerne	Frome	Gillingham	Ilminster	Norton-Radstock	Shaftesbury	Sherborne	Street	Warminster	Wells	Yeovil
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles	496	22%	17%	20%	18%	18%	21%	17%	19%	16%	16%	25%	17%	17%	22%
Manufacturing	382	17%	18%	31%	27%	20%	19%	27%	24%	15%	14%	20%	12%	16%	23%
Real estate, renting and business activities	231	10%	10%	7%	10%	9%	9%	9%	10%	9%	10%	8%	9%	11%	9%
Health and social work	198	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%	10%	11%	9%	10%	11%	8%	8%	11%	10%
Construction	189	8%	7%	8%	8%	8%	11%	10%	8%	10%	7%	8%	6%	8%	6%
Transport, storage and communications	188	8%	5%	4%	4%	7%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Education	175	8%	10%	5%	7%	8%	6%	6%	7%	9%	16%	10%	7%	11%	6%
Public administration and defence, social security	104	5%	10%	3%	3%	6%	5%	4%	5%	6%	5%	4%	20%	5%	8%
Other community, social and personal services activities	92	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	6%	5%	4%	9%	6%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	79	4%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Hotels and restaurants	74	3%	5%	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	7%	6%	3%
Financial intermediation	26	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Electricity, gas and water supply	6	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	1%	1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	1%	Under 1%
Private households with employed persons	5	Under 1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mining and quarrying	3	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	2%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	Under 1%	1%	Under 1%
Extra-territorial organisations and bodies	3	Under 1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fishing	0	0%	Under 1%	0%	0%	Under 1%	Under 1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Under 1%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	2251	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sources: Healthcheck worksheet, 2005, Wincanton - local employment situation; South West Regional Assembly, *Functional Analysis of Settlements*, Final Tables, April 2005.

In 2005, the four largest employers in Wincanton were⁵:

- **Wincanton plc.** 180 employees
- **The Natural Selection Company Ltd.** 100 employees
- **Watchbell Co Ltd.** 51 employees
- **Bayford Builders.** 47 employees.

Given the fact that other companies in Wincanton have fewer than 50 employees and the relatively small size of Wincanton's largest employer, there is no over-dependence in the local economy on large employers.

Working away from Wincanton

Nearly half (49 per cent) of working Wincanton residents work either from home or within 2 kilometres of home – see Table 3.6. Slightly less (43 per cent) travel 5 kilometres or more to work and so can be assumed to be working outside the local economy. Surprisingly this is very little different to the average for South Somerset (42 per cent commuting 5 kilometres or more).

In the Tower ward, over a quarter of residents work from home which is significantly higher than for either Wincanton or South Somerset. Unsurprisingly given the rural nature of the ward, only a small proportion of working residents (10 per cent) other than those working from home are within 2 kilometres of their workplace.

Census 2001 data show that 3,037 people working in Wincanton compared with a resident working population of 2,248. This shows there is net migration into Wincanton for work and that the number of jobs available exceeds the number of resident workers.

⁵ Source: Healthcheck worksheet, 2005, *Employment*.

Table 3.6 Distance travelled to work by residents

Distance travelled	Wincanton		Tower		South Somerset
	Number travelling	Percentage of working residents	Number travelling	Percentage of working residents	
Work mainly at or from home	229	10%	295	27%	12%
Less than 2km	870	39%	116	10%	27%
2km but less than 5km	51	2%	124	11%	15%
5km but less than 10km	254	11%	124	11%	14%
10km but less than 20km	318	14%	120	11%	16%
20km but less than 30km	220	10%	78	7%	5%
30km but less than 40km	43	2%	32	3%	2%
40km but less than 60 km	75	3%	49	4%	2%
60km and over	63	3%	72	6%	3%
No fixed place of work	117	5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Working outside the UK	8	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	2248	100%	1108	90%	98%

Source: South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2004, *South Somerset Ward Profiles 2004*, Yeovil: SSDC. Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001*.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for Wincanton stood at 1.8 per cent in 2001 and had fallen further to 0.9 per cent (24 people) by the start of January 2005⁶. This is slightly lower than the January 2005 rate for South Somerset as a whole (1.0 per cent) and substantially lower than the rate for England and Wales (2.4 per cent).

Table 3.7 shows a breakdown of jobseekers allowance claimants by gender, age and duration of claim. It shows that very few claims lasted more than six months suggesting there is no long-term unemployment problem locally. This is generally in line South Somerset but indicative of a much healthier labour market than for Great Britain as a whole.

Turning back to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (see Table 3.1), on employment, Wincanton Centre and Wincanton South have rankings of 25 and 39, respectively, out of 103 indicating a relatively high level of unemployment compared with other areas of South Somerset but this should be interpreted within the context of the relatively low unemployment rate across the whole region. Wincanton North, with a ranking of 81, suffers less unemployment than most areas of South Somerset.

Wincanton Library and the Town Hall Community Office both keep an up-to-date list of employment vacancies which they receives from Jobcentre Plus and the Connexions service. The nearest Jobcentre Plus is located in Yeovil (16 miles). The nearest Connexions outlet is also in Yeovil.

⁶ Jobseekers allowance claimant count, January 2005. Supplied by South Somerset District Council.

Table 3.7 Jobseekers allowance claimants by age and duration of claim

	Percentage of all claimants		
	Wincanton	South Somerset	Great Britain
<i>Claimants by age</i>			
Aged 18 - 24	17.4%	29.2%	28.0%
Aged 25 - 49	56.5%	48.7%	53.8%
Aged 50 and over	21.7%	19.1%	16.8%
<i>Claimants by duration of claim</i>			
Up to 6 months	87.0%	85.9%	69.7%
Over 6 months up to 12 months	8.7%	8.6%	15.9%
Over 12 months	4.3%	5.5%	14.4%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Source: Jobseekers allowance claimant count, January 2005. Supplied by South Somerset District Council.

3.3 Business

Number of businesses

The *Wincanton Directory 2005* and the online business directory maintained by South Somerset District Council together list over 300 private sector businesses operating in and around Wincanton.

According to the 2001 Census, 11.1 per cent of Wincanton residents are self-employed which is similar to the proportion for South Somerset as a whole (10.6 per cent).

Business start-ups and closures

There is no information available on the level of business start-ups and closures for Wincanton in isolation. Looking at the whole of South Somerset, the total number of VAT-registered businesses has changed very little over the last three years (-0.2 per cent in 2004, +0.4 per cent in 2003 and -0.8 per cent in 2002) and this is in line with Great Britain as a whole.

In 2005-6, VAT registration is compulsory only for businesses with an annual turnover of £60,000 or more although smaller businesses may register voluntarily⁷. Therefore, the statistics for VAT-registered businesses do not capture start-ups and closures of micro businesses.

⁷ HM Customs & Excise (HMCE), 2005, *VAT: Increased turnover limits for registration and deregistration*, Press Release, 16 March, London, HMCE.

Business premises

In 2001, South Somerset District Council conducted a survey of local businesses to investigate current and future demand for workspace⁸. The results give an indication of the desire of existing forms to expand or relocate. The survey found:

- **Duration.** Over half (53 per cent) of firms in Wincanton had been in their existing premises for ten or more years. Around 16 per cent had been there for fewer than three years
- **Relocation.** 63 per cent had always been located in Wincanton either at their existing or previous premises. Around 20 per cent had come to Wincanton from a location outside Somerset, which is a higher proportion than for South Somerset as a whole (10 per cent) suggesting that, in the past, Wincanton has been more successful than the district as a whole in attracting inward investment. The remaining 20 per cent of Wincanton businesses had relocated to Wincanton from elsewhere in Somerset
- **Suitability of premises.** Around two-thirds of Wincanton businesses thought their existing premises would continue to be suitable over the next two years. The rest felt their premises would become difficult or unsuitable and, of these, about 40 per cent thought they would take steps to improve their premises
- **Likelihood of moving.** A quarter of Wincanton businesses thought a premises move was possible or probable within the next two years. This proportion rises to 46 per cent when looking at a five-year horizon. Most of those respondents thinking a move was probable expected to move locally
- **Views on availability of premises.** Only 4 per cent of Wincanton businesses surveyed thought the availability of premises in Wincanton was good (compared with 13 per cent for South Somerset as a whole) – see Table 3.8
- **Premises meeting business needs.** Four-fifths of Wincanton businesses surveyed said they wanted basic or value-for-money premises. Only one-fifth (19 per cent) wanted high-standard accommodation (for example, fully wired for IT and with a quality image) – this is slightly lower than the proportion for South Somerset as a whole (24 per cent).

⁸ South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2001, *Business perspective on property*, Yeovil, SSDC.

Table 3.8 Views on the availability of business premises

	Availability is good	A lot of premises available but not good quality	Very little business space available	No strong views
Wincanton	4%	8%	40%	47%
South Somerset	13%	6%	41%	40%

Source: Cousins, L, 2002, *Wincanton Area Economy. Update report*, Yeovil, South Somerset District Council

Table 3.9 Availability of commercial land and property in Wincanton

	1996	2002
Development sites		
Land in acres (Lawrence Hill Business Park was only area where available)	20	16
Industrial premises		
Total in square feet	35,600	c 20,000
Typical costs per square foot	£2.50 to £3.50	£3.50 to £6.00
Offices		
Total in square feet	c 5,000	Under 1,000
Typical costs	£3.30 to £5.50	n/a

Source: Cousins, L, 2002, *Wincanton Area Economy. Update report*, Yeovil, South Somerset District Council

In 1996 and again in 2002, South Somerset District Council reviewed the supply of commercial property available in Wincanton. The results are shown in Table 3.9 above. The review concluded:

*'A large number of businesses are thinking about moving and the majority want to move locally. Given the supply situation, there must be concerns that businesses which want to move are unable to do so and that future potential inward investors will not have sufficient choice of space.'*⁹

Table 3.10 provides data on the existence of business units (both occupied and available) in Wincanton and selected other towns in the South West. It suggests that:

- Wincanton has little scope to house businesses needing large premises, whereas several adjacent towns have greater scope
- Wincanton is in line with Crewkerne and Gillingham when it comes to hosting medium-sized businesses, but has less capacity for this sector than Blandford, Chard, Shaftesbury or Sherborne

⁹ Cousins, L, *Wincanton Area Economy. Update report*, Yeovil, South Somerset District Council, August 2002.

- the existence of premises for small businesses is broadly in line with that for other similar towns, such as Blandford, Chard, Gillingham, and Shaftesbury, but lags behind Sherborne
- overall Wincanton's business premises are skewed more heavily towards smaller businesses than is the case in most other towns in Table 3.10.

South Somerset District Council operates a commercial property search facility on its website (www.southsomerset.gov.uk) for use by businesses seeking land or premises. A search for property available in Wincanton in September 2005 revealed only three business premises and one area of employment land.

Table 3.10 Number of business units

	Number of large business units (200+ employees)	Number of medium business units (6-199 employees)	Number of small business units (1-5 employees)	Total	% Large business units	% Medium business units	% Small business units
Blandford Forum	4	153	324	481	0.83	31.81	67.36
Chard	5	154	262	421	1.19	36.58	62.23
Crewkerne	0	91	208	299	0.00	30.43	69.57
Frome	3	266	600	869	0.35	30.61	69.04
Gillingham	2	101	307	410	0.49	24.63	74.88
Ilminster	1	69	132	202	0.50	34.16	65.35
Norton-Radstock	6	252	540	798	0.75	31.58	67.67
Shaftesbury	2	146	291	439	0.46	33.26	66.29
Sherborne	2	186	344	532	0.38	34.96	64.66
Street	3	210	366	579	0.52	36.27	63.21
Westbury	1	129	293	423	0.24	30.50	69.27
Wincanton	1	104	294	399	0.25	26.07	73.68
Yeovil	16	677	978	1671	0.96	40.51	58.53

Source: South West Regional Assembly, 2005, *Functional Analysis of Settlements*, Final Tables. Data from Annual Business Inquiry workplace analysis 2003.

In 2002, a report¹⁰ was commissioned from Prism Research to study the commercial land and property market in Somerset. Most of the report considers the position at county and district levels, but some of the findings are pertinent to Wincanton:

- **Background.** Most businesses prefer not to relocate. If they do move, it usually reflects dissatisfaction with the current situation. Usually a move is

¹⁰ Prism Research Ltd, *Somerset Commercial Land and Property Market Study. A Final Report to the Somerset Strategic Partnership and the South West Regional Development Agency*, February 2002.

triggered by issues relating to premises, for example, lease expiry, rent increase, or business growth outstripping accommodation

- **Perceived advantages of locating in Somerset.** High quality of life, ease of access to key destinations (such as London and the South East, Midlands and so on) via the A303 and M5, lack of congestion in market towns, frequent and fast rail services to London, varied and attractive natural environment. Competitive land prices and wages, diverse employment base. Some of these factors apply specifically to Wincanton – for example, the key road link via the A303 – and could be used to market Wincanton as a good business location
- **Perceived disadvantages of locating in Somerset.** Poor internal road network, rural image, perceived to be an inaccessible county and not suitable advanced in ICT, lack of higher education provision, lack of grant aid, poor conference facilities. In marketing the town as a business location, Wincanton needs to consider how it can address these issues
- **Business enquiries.** In 2001, South Somerset District Council received 350 enquiries about land and premises. 30 per cent were from manufacturers, 45 per cent from service sector firms and 25 per cent from employers in other sectors. 10 per cent of these enquiries were directed at locating on the A303 corridor (which covers the towns of Ilminster and Martock as well as Wincanton). Table 3.11 summarises the main features of the 350 enquiries
- **Important issues when relocating.** 56 per cent of firms which had moved cited land and premises issues as being significant. One third stated that transport and infrastructure were key, especially good road links. Supply chain issues (especially proximity to customers) were important in attracting a firm to a location. Only a fifth cited lifestyle issues (of which quality of environment was the most important).

Prism Research used a forecasting model to estimate what might happen to the commercial property market over the next ten years. Overall, it expected an increased demand for floorspace mainly due to a projected rise in public sector services employment (particularly health, education, tourism and leisure). Demand for industrial floorspace was forecast to fall reflecting a general decline in manufacturing. Prism suggested this created opportunities to redevelop manufacturing sites to meet other commercial uses.

Table 3.11 Nature of enquiries received by South Somerset District Council in 2001 about commercial land and premises

Feature	Detail	Prospects
Existing premises or new?	Majority – existing. 1/5 th for development land but aversion to land where developer has option to design and build (businesses felt get poor deal from developers). Strong demand for freehold serviced development land of ½ acre or more, Very few enquiries for development land over 4 acres.	Wincanton deemed in 2001 to have reasonable supply of employment development land.
Industrial and warehousing	Most enquiries for units under 5,000 square feet are for pre-existing buildings. Usually looking for leasehold but demand for freehold increases with size. SSDC has waiting list for small units (size of a double garage). Generally private sector does not provide units of this size.	Demand in places like Wincanton was ‘warm’ (rather than strong) in 2001 and prices had risen sharply. Market was expected to flatten out.
Offices	Limited demand for offices. Demand usually locally driven.	
Retail	Centred on Yeovil. No comments specific to Wincanton.	Independent specialist retailers tended to favour Sherborne over Yeovil or other locations. Demand for retail units in South Somerset towns declining because of out-of-town shopping and inability of independent retailers to offer quality and accessibility customers expect (for example, because of closing for lunch and half-day closing).

Source: Prism Research Ltd, *Somerset Commercial Land and Property Market Study. A Final Report to the Somerset Strategic Partnership and the South West Regional Development Agency*, February 2002.

Business services

Business conference facilities are available for hire at Wincanton Racecourse (edge of town) and Holbrook House Hotel (edge of town).

Broadband is available throughout Wincanton.

Availability of business support and grants

As is the case throughout England, the main gateway for business support is Business Link. A range of online services are accessible through the national portal (www.businesslink.gov.uk). Further assistance is available through the local branch, Business Link Somerset, which is based in Taunton and also operates its own website (www.businesslinksomerset.co.uk).

Somerset is not designated as an Assisted Area (a designation which qualifies businesses in an area for a variety of government aid) nor does it is eligible for special assistance from the European Union.

However, the following locally-based schemes may be open to Wincanton businesses:

- **Rural Business Chest Grant Scheme.** This is a joint initiative between Somerset county Council and Somerset's district councils. It can provide small grants up to £750 on a matched funding basis to micro businesses (five employees or less) in rural areas in Somerset. Grants are typically used to purchase equipment, develop marketing materials, and so on. Grants are accessed through Business Link
- **Somerset Young Entrepreneurs Fund.** This is a pilot collaboration between Somerset County Council, The Prince's Trust and Wessex Reinvestment Trust with support from the Mackintosh foundation. It can provide loans up to £4,000 to 18- to 30-year olds newly starting in business and who have been unable to borrow from mainstream sources.

A search of the national Business Link online grant finder in September 2005 produced 246 grant schemes, 31 awards and 101 loan schemes that may be open to businesses starting up or operating in the Wincanton area. Eligibility for any particular scheme will depend on a variety of factors, for example, business sector, size of firm, purpose of grant or loan, and so on.

Wincanton Chamber of Trade acts as an information and lobbying group for local business members. Its interests focus particularly, though not exclusively, on the retail trade in the town.

Business rate relief

In the Wincanton Survey 2003¹¹, around one respondent in seven (14 per cent) had at some stage started a business or seriously thought about starting one in Wincanton. This group was asked whether there were facilities or support lacking in Wincanton that would help new businesses. The most common response was that business rates were too high.

Since then, a number of new business rate relief schemes have been introduced:

- **transitional relief.** Following the revaluation of business properties with effect from 1 April 2005, if the revaluation resulted in a significant rise in its rates bill, a business may be able to claim transitional relief to spread the increase over up to four years
- **small business rate relief.** The rateable value of premises is multiplied by a 'multiplier' to arrive at the annual bill. A lower multiplier (41.5p instead of 42.2p) applies if the rateable value of the property (or combined value of more than one) is under £15,000. In addition, the ratepayer may qualify for a reduction of up to 50 per cent of the bill for the only or main premises if the rateable value is less than £5,000. The reduction decreases by roughly 1 per cent for each £100 of rateable value over £5,000. There is no reduction if the rateable value is over £10,000. With more than one property, the ratepayer is eligible for the reduction only if the additional properties each have a rateable value of less than £2,200 and the combined value of all the properties is less than £15,000. Ratepayers must apply for this relief each year within six months of the end of the financial year – for example, by 30 September 2006 for the year ending 31 March 2006
- **rural village with population under 3,000.** The ratepayer can claim a 50 per cent reduction in the bill (or more at the discretion of the local authority) if they run the only village store or post office and the rateable value is under £7,000, they run the only village pub or petrol station and the rateable value is less than £10,500, or they run a food shop with a rateable value under £7,000

A survey by the Federation of Small Businesses¹² has found that one in five of its members are failing to claim reliefs to which they are entitled. Some 15 per cent of retailers, 23 per cent of manufacturers and 27 per cent of construction companies were failing to claim. No comparable data exists for Wincanton but it is possible that similar results would apply.

¹¹ Lowe J, 2003, *Wincanton Survey 2003*, Wincanton, Wincanton Town Council.

¹² 'Small businesses miss rate relief', 2005, *Financial Times*, 5 September.

3.4 Retail and town centre

The main retail area of Wincanton comprises the High Street, Church Street, Market Place, South Street and Carrington Way. It hosts 57 goods shops, another 30 commercial outlets (including banks, solicitors, dental surgeries, cafes and public houses) and a post office which is combined with a retail outlet. A breakdown of the types of shop is given in Table 3.12.

At the time of the Healthcheck, four retail outlets were empty.

No new shops have been built in Wincanton centre during the last three years. However five have been granted change of use while remaining as retail/commercial outlets. Three have been converted from retail outlets to residential use.

Within the retail area, there is also a health centre, library, police station, museum, premises of the local Conservative Association and two public conveniences. Slightly away from the town centre, a third set of public conveniences is in the process of being rebuilt.

Wincanton has one supermarket (Coopers) and one convenience store (Alldays now owned by The Cooperative Group) within the town centre. It also has an edge-of-town supermarket (Morrison).

There is no regular general market in the area but a farmers' market is held in central Wincanton on the first Friday of each month (9am to 1pm) and a Women's Institute produce market takes place every Friday morning.

Table 3.12 Shops in Wincanton centre

Type of outlet	Number
Antiques	2
Bakery	1
Bank/ building society agency	6
Bookmaker	1
Butcher	1
Car spares	1
Dentist	2
Dry cleaner	1
Electrical	2
Estate agent	3
Greengrocer	1
Grocer/delicatessen (other than supermarket)	2
Hairdresser / beauty	6
Hardware	1
Newsagent	1
Off licence	1
Office services / computer services	4
Optician	2
Other health-related	2
Post office	1
Restaurant/café/ takeaway food	9
Shoes and clothes	4
Supermarket/ convenience store	2
Video/photographic	1
Other	31

Source: Healthcheck worksheet, *Economy*, Appendix one

3.5 Tourism

Tourist attractions and specialisms

Wincanton, while a pleasant town, has no natural or historic features that particularly attract tourists. Its main tourist strengths are events – see Table 3.13 – and its association with Discworld®.

Wincanton is home to the Cunning Artificer Discworld® Emporium which is a unique visitor attraction. It is the only Discworld® Emporium in the world and has a strong association with the creator of Discworld®, the author Terry Pratchett. Wincanton hosts two Discworld® events a year – in May and December – attracting hundreds of fans from across the country. Terry Pratchett usually attends, taking part in events and signing books and memorabilia. The Cunning Artificer creates objects that owe their inspiration to the writings of Terry Pratchett. The Cunning Artificer sells books, sculpture, pictures, T-shirts, strange objets d’art and all things Discworld®. In December 2002, Wincanton was officially twinned with Ankh Morpork, the fictitious place taken from the Discworld® books.

There is a wide range of attractions in the surrounding area (see Table 3.14) which gives Wincanton the opportunity to market itself as a centre – either for holidays or short breaks – for tourists drawn to these other attractions. By number of visitors, the top attractions are thought to be: Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, Haynes Motor Museum at Sparkford, Wincanton Racecourse and Stourhead house and gardens.

Table 3.13 Wincanton tourist attractions

Nature of attraction	Attraction	When takes place/ is open
Attractions/events likely to draw tourists from beyond local area	Discworld® Weekends	May/Dec
	Green Dragon Antiques	Open year round
	Wincanton Classic Car Show	Jun
	Wincanton Racecourse (15 racedays)	Oct - May
	Wincanton Racecourse (events)	Any time
Attractions/events likely to attract visitors from a fairly local area	Carols around Christmas tree	December
	Farmers' Market	Monthly (first Friday)
	Remembrance Day Parade	November
	Roundtable Fireworks	November
	WI Country Market	Weekly (Friday)
	Wincanton Amateur Dramatics – panto and play	Feb/Jul
	Wincanton Carnival	Oct
	Wincanton Choral Society concerts	Two/three times year
	Wincanton Flower Show	Aug/Sep
	Wincanton Horse Show	Summer
	Wincanton Scout & Guide Show ('Gang' Show)	October (alternate years)
Places which might not attract visitors but would be used by visitors already in the area	Wincanton Golf Course	Open year round
	Wincanton Museum	Apr-Sep
	Wincanton Sports Centre	Open year round
Other	Wincanton Twinings (week long visits by visitors from twin towns in France and Germany)	French – alternate years (often summer) German – alternate years (generally Easter or summer)

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet EC5, *Tourism and Visitor Services*, 2005.

Table 3.14 Tourist attractions in the area surrounding Wincanton

Attraction	Details
Bath & West Show	Shepton Mallet (June)
Blackmore Vale & Sparkford Hunt	
Bruton Dovecote	National Trust
Bruton Museum	Bruton
Cadbury Castle	South Cadbury
Castle Cary Carnival	Castle Cary
Castle Cary Museum	Castle Cary
Fleet Air Arm Museum	Yeovilton
Gants Mill and Garden	Bruton
Gartell Light Railway	Yenston
Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show	Gillingham (August)
Hadspen Gardens	Between Wincanton and Castle Cary
Haynes Motor Museum	Sparkford
Iron Man Event	Sherborne (June)
King Alfred's Tower	Brewham National Trust
Long Acre Plants	Charlton Musgrove
Moldram's Ground Nature Reserve	Pen Selwood
Point-to-Point races	Charlton Horethorne
Sherborne Abbey	Sherborne
Sherborne Castle (old and new)	Sherborne
Stourhead	Beyond Zeals National Trust house and gardens Events: Horse Event (August), Fête Champetre (July)
The Lockup	Castle Cary
Yeovilton Air Day	Yeovilton (September)

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet EC5, *Tourism and Visitor Services*, 2005.

Impact of tourism on the local economy

Table 3.15, shows that 3.4 per cent of Wincanton employees are employed in hotel and catering. This is generally in line with other similar towns in the area. The percentage is higher for towns with their own major tourist attractions, such as Sherborne.

According to the 2001 Census, in Somerset as a whole, 15 per cent of the employed workforce (full-time, part-time and seasonal) are in tourism-related work. 73 per cent of these jobs are directly supported by visitor spend.

Table 3.15 Employment in hotel and catering

	People aged 16 - 74 in employment working in: Hotels and catering	%
Chard	264	5.0
Crewkerne	129	3.6
Gillingham	124	3.2
Ilminster	71	3.6
Norton-Radstock	404	4.0
Shaftesbury	167	5.3
Sherborne	171	5.1
Warminster	617	7.1
Wincanton	78	3.4
Yeovil	721	3.5
South West Settlements' Average /Sum	2746	4.4

Source: South West Regional Assembly, *Functional Analysis of Settlements*, Final Tables, April 2005.
Data for 2001 from 2001 Census

Table 3.16 summarises the tourist accommodation available in Wincanton. Discworld® weekends are relatively new events for Wincanton but appear set to attract consistently large numbers of weekend visitors and accommodation in town has to date been insufficient.

Although the area around Wincanton receives many summer visitors, year-round activities such as Discworld® weekends means that there is a demand for accommodation throughout the year.

The Wincanton Twinning visits attract reasonably large numbers of visitors from the French and German twin towns, but this does not offer an opportunity for local hotels and inns because the visitors are hosted in the private homes of the members of the twinning associations.

Table 3.16 Accommodation available in and around Wincanton

Type of accommodation	Number	Comment
<i>Wincanton</i>		
Hotels/inns	5 hotels 49 beds	3 pubs in town, 1 pub in adjacent village of Bayford. Plus Holbrook House Hotel (edge of town) which is dedicated hotel with conference facilities etc. Listed in <i>Where to stay in Wincanton and District 2004</i>
Bed & Breakfast	11 beds	Listed in <i>Where to stay in Wincanton and District 2004</i>
Caravan/camping		At Wincanton Racecourse
TOTAL WINCANTON BEDS	60	
<i>Immediate surrounding area</i>		
Hotels/inns	10	Horsington
Bed & breakfast	22	Various locations
<i>Country breaks</i>		
Bed & Breakfast	5 double 2 twin 3 double/twin	Sparkford Inn
Caravan/camping	75 caravan pitches 75 camping pitches 3 static vans	Long Hazel, Sparkford
Self-catering	1	Charlton Musgrove
	5	Castle Cary
	1	Cucklington
	1	Horsington
	1	Shepton Montagu
	1	South Brewham

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet EC5, *Tourism and Visitor Services*, 2005.

Tourist information

Wincanton had a tourist information centre for many years located in the local library and run by Somerset County Council. This office was closed down and Wincanton Town Council (initially with some support from South Somerset District Council which was subsequently withdrawn) took over the provision of tourist information.

The Town Council operates the tourist information centre as part of its overall local information centre located at the Town Hall. Tourist enquiries are dealt with year round. Table 3.17 summarises the number of enquiries handled in the first two years of operation. Although there was a decline in the number of enquiries in 2004-5

compared with 2003-4, the centre has been operating too short a time to draw any conclusions about trends.

At the time of writing, there were no up-to-date visitor guides about Wincanton itself. Previous 'Wincanton – Queen of the Vale' and 'Wincanton Town Trail' leaflets were out of date. The local information centre was in the process of seeking quotes for reprinting a new leaflet which would update and amalgamate these earlier publications and include a larger, improved map of the town.

Signing within the town to its attractions and main resources (museum, tourist information, public conveniences, car parks, and so on) is adequate.

Table 3.17 Tourist enquiries handled by Wincanton local information centre

Type of enquiry	2003-4			2004-5		
	Apr-Sep	Oct-Mar	Full Year	Apr-Sep	Oct-Mar	Full Year
In person	1,226	n/a	n/a	1,025	479	n/a
By phone	318	n/a	n/a	154	120	n/a
Other	22	n/a	n/a	6	0	n/a
Total for period	1,566	615	2,181	1,185	599	1,784
% change on year ago				-24.3%	-2.6%	-18.2%

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet EC5, *Tourism and Visitor Services*, 2005.

3.6 Training and education

Qualifications of working age adults

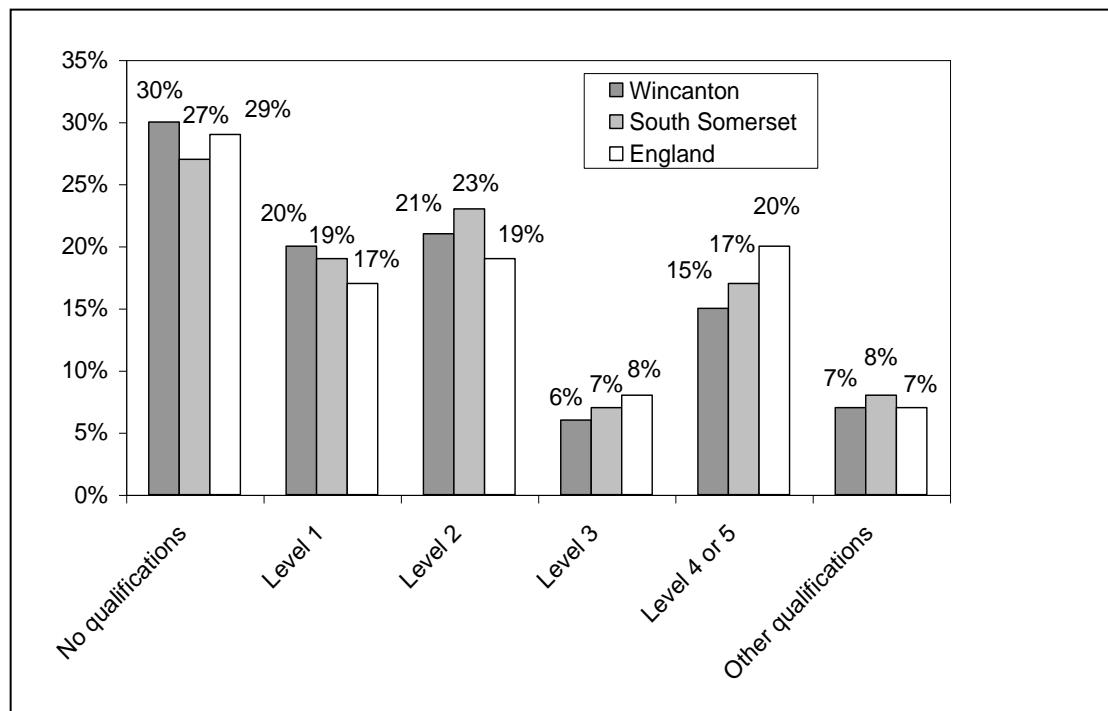
The 2001 Census found that just under a third (30 per cent) of the working-age population in Wincanton have no qualifications. This is a slightly higher proportion than for South Somerset (27 per cent) but broadly in line with England as a whole (29 per cent) – see Figure 3.2.

A fifth (20 per cent) of the Wincanton working-age population is qualified to Level 1 (equivalent to GCSE Grades D to G – see Box), which is slightly higher than for South Somerset (19 per cent) or England (17 per cent).

Fewer working-age Wincanton people (15 per cent) have qualifications at Levels 4 and 5 (equivalent to certificates of higher education and foundation degrees) than in South Somerset (17 per cent) or England as a whole (20 per cent).

The data on educational attainment and skills tends to reinforce the pattern of a community with a high incidence of unskilled or low-skilled work and lower-than-average wages.

Figure 3.2 Education and skills of working-age population



Source: Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001* and supplied by South Somerset District Council.

What the national qualification levels mean

Level 1	Basic knowledge and skills, ability to apply them with guidance or supervision. Equivalent to NVQ1 and GCSE grades D to G.
Level 2	Ability to gain and apply good knowledge and understanding and to perform tasks with some guidance or supervision. Equivalent to NVQ2 and GCSE grades A* to C.
Level 3	Involves obtaining detailed knowledge and skills. Equivalent to NVQ3 and A levels.
Level 4	Involve specialist learning and detailed analysis, appropriate for people working in technical and professional jobs and/or managing or developing other people. Equivalent to, for example, Diploma in Sport and Recreation, Certificate in Site Management and Certificate in Early Years Practice.
Level 5	Ability to increase depth of knowledge and understanding and enable formulation of solutions and responses to complex problems and situations. Appropriate for people working as higher grade technicians, professionals or managers. Equivalent to intermediate higher education qualifications and foundation degrees.
Level 6	Specialist high level knowledge enabling use of person's own ideas and research. Appropriate for work in knowledge-based professions or professional management. Equivalent to a Bachelors degree with honours, graduate certificates and graduate diplomas.
Level 7	Highly developed and complex levels of knowledge enabling development of in-depth and original responses to complicated and unpredictable problems and situations. Appropriate to senior professionals and managers. Equivalent to Masters degree, postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.
Level 8	Leading experts or practitioners developing new and creative approaches that extend or redefine existing knowledge or professional practice. Specialist awards.

Source: Based on information about the National Qualifications Framework from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website. Retrieved from www.qca.org.uk on 4 September 2005.

Pre-school provision

The 2001 Census records 281 Wincanton residents aged 0 to 4. Table 3.18 lists the pre-school provision available in the town. The compilers of the Healthcheck worksheet commented: *'It seems doubtful that the four play providers have sufficient capacity to cater for 281 infants. Therefore there is a need for increased pre-school/play provision'*.

Table 3.18 Pre-school provision in Wincanton

Type of provision	Number	Providers
Out-of-school care	0	
Parent and toddler group	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mums and Toddlers, Community Church • Wincanton Baby & Toddler Group, The Baptist Hall • Parent Toddler Group, Wincanton Sports Ground
Day nursery	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy Kids, The Balsam Centre
Maintained nursery school and classes	0	
Pre-school playgroup	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Ark Pre-School, Our Lady's Primary School • South Street Pre-School, Wincanton Primary School • Westhill Nursery, King Arthur's Community School
Private nursery school	0	

Source: Healthcheck worksheet, 2005, *Training and education* supplemented by entries from *Wincanton directory 2005* and Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Social and Community*.

Primary school provision

Wincanton has two primary schools: Wincanton Primary School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School. A few of the surrounding villages have their own primary schools. Nine primary schools in total are classified as partner schools of Wincanton's only secondary school and are the main source of the latter's pupils¹³.

Table 3.19 gives the key data for each partner school. Table 3.20 summarises the educational attainment of the pupils at Key Stage 2 (KS2), in other words of pupils aged 11.

The partnership schools have a much lower proportion of statemented pupils with special educational needs (SEN) than the average for Somerset or England. However, the two Wincanton primary schools and Henstridge have a higher incidence of SEN

¹³ King Arthur's Community School (KACS), 2004, *Prospectus 2004-5*, Wincanton, KACS.

pupils without statements than the average for Somerset of England. Both authorised and unauthorised absence at Our Lady of Mount Carmel were high in 2004 compared with other schools in the area and the averages for Somerset and England.

Table 3.19 Key data for Wincanton's partner primary schools

School	Total number of pupils	Percentage of pupils with special educational needs		Absences (Percentage of half days missed)	
		With statements	Without statements	Authorised	Unauthorised
Wincanton Primary School	336	0.6%	17.0%	5.0%	0.2%
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wincanton	101	0.0%	16.8%	7.5%	1.1%
Abbas & Templecombe	126	0.8%	12.7%	5.3%	Less than 0.05%
Bruton	314	0.3%	9.9%	4.3%	0.3%
Charlton Horethorne	56	0.0%	8.9%	4.6%	0.1%
Horsington	83	0.0%	15.7%	5.1%	Less than 0.05%
Milborne Port	173	0.0%	14.5%	4.6%	0.1%
St Nicholas, Henstridge	55	0.0%	18.2%	3.7%	0.2%
Upton Noble	144	0.0%	11.1%	5.9%	0.5%
Average for Somerset LEA	Not given	2.3%	12.8%	5.0%	0.3%
Average for England	Not given	3.2%	15.4%	5.1%	0.4%

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2004, *Performance tables*, Retrieved from www.dfes.gov.uk on 5 September 2005.

Key points to note from Table 3.20 are:

- **Average point score.** A score above 27 indicates that at least some pupils are achieving levels above those expected of most 11-year olds. Wincanton Primary School is in line with the average for Somerset and England. Abbas & Templecombe and Bruton primary schools are performing significantly above this level while Charlton Horethorne and Upton Noble are markedly below
- **Value added.** This is based on a score of 100. A higher score indicates that the school's pupils are progressing better than the national average for similar pupils. Abbas & Templecombe and Milborne Port both have scores above 100. Wincanton Primary School scores very slightly below 100 and is in line with the average for Somerset
- **Aggregate of test percentages.** These enable a year-on-year comparison of a school's performance but will be influenced by the ability of individual pupils in each year group so should be treated with care. The maximum possible

score is 300. Abbas & Templecombe comes out particularly well on this basis in both 2002 and 2004. The results for Wincanton Primary School show a declining trend. The trend for Somerset shows a slight rise.

Table 3.20 Educational attainment of pupils at Key Stage 2 (age 11)

School	Number of pupils eligible for KS2 testing	Average point score [1]	Value added [3]	Aggregate of test percentages [4]			
				2001	2002	2003	2004
Wincanton Primary School	50	27.4	99.9	264	251	227	224
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wincanton	8	[2]	[2]	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
Abbas & Templecombe	25	30.5	102.4	242	290	264	292
Bruton	53	29.2	99.7	240	273	275	266
Charlton Horethorne	11	24.5	98.4	200	227	n/a	173
Horsington	12	28.2	99.3	233	236	269	242
Milborne Port	25	28.4	101.2	251	216	267	256
St Nicholas, Henstridge	8	[2]	[2]	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
Upton Noble	18	24.9	97.5	257	247	273	183
Average for Somerset LEA	Not given	27.5	99.9	231	234	235	239
Average for England	Not given	27.5	Not given	234	234	234	237

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2004, *Performance tables*, Retrieved from www.dfes.gov.uk on 5 September 2005.

[1] **Average points score:** KS2 results in English, mathematics and science are assigned scores, added together and divided by the number of pupils tested. If all pupils attained the level expected of most 11-year olds in all three subjects, the average score would be 27. A higher score indicates that at least some pupils are performing above this level. A lower score indicates that at least some are performing below this level. An exact score of 27 could indicate a range of performance with individual results both above and below the average.

[2] Results not published because, with so few eligible pupils, there is a risk of individual pupils' results being identified.

[3] **Value added:** Measures the progress of pupils between Key Stage 1 (age seven) and KS2 and so allows for differing levels of ability in a school's intake. Based on a score of 100, a score above 100 indicates a school where pupils have on average made more progress than similar pupils nationally. A score below 100 indicates they have made less progress than the national average for similar pupils.

[4] **Aggregate of test percentages:** For each of the three subjects, English, mathematics and science, the percentage of pupils achieving the level expected of most 11-year olds or above is recorded. The three percentages are added together to give the aggregate of test percentage. Therefore the maximum possible score would be 300.

Wincanton Primary School was the subject of an Ofsted inspection in February 2004. The main conclusions of the report are set out in the box below and the grades achieved in the inspection are summarised in Table 3.21.

Main points from Ofsted report for Wincanton Primary School

‘OVERALL EVALUATION

Wincanton Primary School is a good school that provides good value for money. Good teaching helps pupils to attain standards that match national averages overall and this is good achievement in relation to their past attainment. The new headteacher’s very good leadership and management are major strengths. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high quality of education that fully meets their needs. The very good care and support that pupils receive are important aspects of the school’s overall effectiveness. The school’s main strengths and weaknesses are:

- *The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.*
- *Very good assessment is a significant feature of the good quality of teaching that is helping most pupils to achieve well.*
- *The good provision for pupils’ personal development results in pupils behaving well and having good attitudes and values.*
- *By the end of Year 2, standards in the fluency and range of vocabulary used in speaking are below average.*
- *The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs owes much to very good coordination and the high quality of the work of teaching assistants.*
- *The school provides very good care, support and guidance for all pupils.*
- *There is insufficient monitoring of pupils’ standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.*

...

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- *Raise the standard of pupils’ speaking skills by the end of Year 2 by increasing opportunities for them to organise what they say and extend the vocabulary used in all subjects.*
- *As finance permits, develop the outdoor facilities that can be used for children’s physical development in the Foundation Stage.*
- *Ensure that there is regular monitoring and evaluation of pupils’ standards in all subjects in order to identify the action needed to raise standards still further.’*

Source: Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), 2004, *Inspection Report. Wincanton Primary School*, Inspection number 258448, London, Ofsted.

Table 3.21 How the Ofsted inspectors graded Wincanton Primary School

Attribute	Grade [1]
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

[1] Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

Source: Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), 2004, *Inspection Report. Wincanton Primary School*, Inspection number 258448, London, Ofsted.

Secondary school provision

Wincanton has one secondary school, King Arthur's Community School, which provides education from age 11 to 16. Its intake is largely from the partner primary schools discussed above. The main competing state schools at secondary level are:

- Sexey's School, Bruton (boarders only), 5 miles
- Ansford Community School, Castle Cary, 7 miles
- Gillingham School, Dorset, 7 miles
- The Gryphon School, Sherborne, Dorset, 11 miles.

Table 3.21 shows key data for King Arthur's and its four competitors. King Arthur's has a relatively high level of unstatemented SEN pupils and a fairly high level of authorised absence, but is otherwise much in line with other schools in the group.

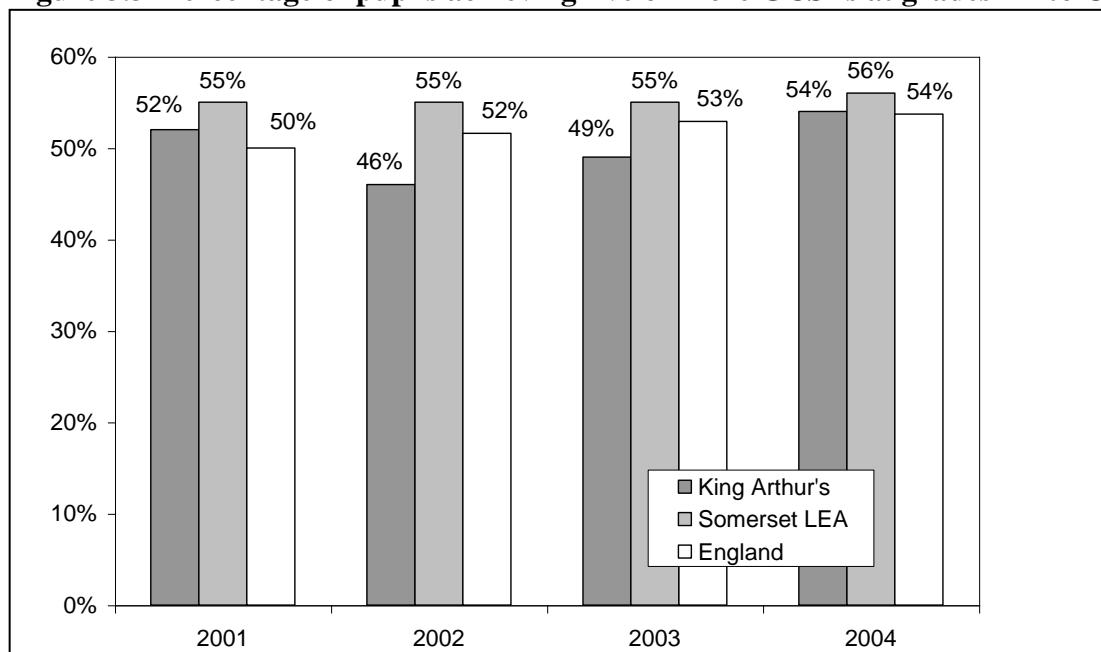
Neither King Arthur's nor Ansford schools have a sixth form and this is reflected in their relatively small size (in terms of total pupils) compared with the two Dorset schools both of which offer education through to sixth form.

Table 3.21: Key data for local state secondary schools

School	Total number of pupils	Percentage of pupils with special educational needs		Absences (Percentage of half days missed)	
		With statements	Without statements	Authorised	Unauthorised
King Arthur's Community School	772	1.9%	12.7%	8.0%	0.5%
Ansford Community School	727	0.8%	8.3%	5.5%	0.8%
Gillingham School	1,500	1.8%	10.6%	6.0%	0.2%
The Gryphon School, Sherborne	1,315	3.7%	11.6%	7.2%	0.3%
Somerset LEA average	Not given	3.3%	9.4%	6.9%	0.9%
England average	Not given	4.3%	12.7%	7.0%	1.2%

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2004, *Performance tables*, Retrieved from www.dfes.gov.uk on 5 September 2005.

Figure 3.3 Percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C



Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2004, *Performance tables*, Retrieved from www.dfes.gov.uk on 5 September 2005.

Table 3.22 summarises the educational attainment of pupils at King Arthur's Community School and its competitors. Key points to note are:

- **Pupils attaining Level 2 (five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C).** King Arthur's is in line with the national average but lags behind other secondary schools in the area. Figure 5 shows how this percentage has changed over the last four years. After a dip in 2002, King Arthur's results have been improving
- **Pupils attaining at least Level 1 (five or more GCSEs at grades A* to G).** King Arthur's lags slightly behind the national average and significantly behind other schools in the area
- **Average total point score per 15-year old.** This gives a measure of the average attainment of pupils in the school. The average for King Arthur's is slightly lower than the national average and significantly lower than for competing schools in the area
- **Value added.** As with primary schools (see above), a 'value-added' measure can be used to take account of the differing abilities of pupil intake. A score of 1,000 would indicate that pupil's in a school had progressed between Key Stage 2 (age 11) and age 15 in line with the national average for similar pupils. A lower score indicates that pupils have not progressed as much. The score for King Arthur's is significantly below 1,000 and lower than the average for the Somerset LEA. The competing state schools all attained scores above 1,000.

Table 3.22: Educational attainment of pupils at age 15

School	Number of students aged 15	Percentage obtaining equivalent of		Average total point score per 15-year old [1]	Value added [2]
		Level 2 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C	Level 1 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to G		
King Arthur's Community School	149	54%	87%	337.6	968.9
Ansford Community School	151	60%	95%	383.8	1,003.8
Gillingham School	262	68%	97%	391.4	1,027.6
The Gryphon School, Sherborne	226	61%	94%	379.6	1,002.2
Somerset LEA average	Not given	56%	90%	356.2	992.1
England average	Not given	54%	89%	340.4	Not given

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2004, *Performance tables*, Retrieved from www.dfes.gov.uk on 5 September 2005.

[1] **Average total point score:** GCSEs and equivalent qualifications are assigned points which vary according to the grade achieved, for example, GCSE grade A* = 58 points, GCSE grade C = 40 points, GCSE in vocational subjects (double award) grade B = 46 points. Total points for all pupils aged 15 are divided by the number of 15-year old pupils on roll to give the average score for the school.

[2] **Value added:** This measure takes account of the differing abilities of pupil intake. The measure based on a score of 1,000. A score of 1,000 would indicate that pupil's in a school had progressed between Key Stage 2 (age 11) and age 15 in line with the national average for similar pupils. A higher score indicates they have progressed by more than the average for similar pupils. A lower score indicates that pupils have not progressed as much.

Of the pupils leaving King Arthur's at the end of the 2003-4 academic year, 60 per cent went on to further education. This is slightly lower than the proportion for South Somerset as a whole. Table 3.23 shows the destinations they chose.

Table 3.23 Further education destinations for King Arthur's leavers in 2004

Destination	Number of pupils
Yeovil College	30
Sexey's School VI form	28
Strode College	17
Gillingham School VI form	4
The Gryphon School VI form	4
Other	6

Source: King Arthur's Community School (KACS), 2004, *Destinations report for King Arthur's 2004*, Wincanton, KACS.

The last Ofsted report for King Arthur’s Community School was carried out in 2002. As this was some time ago and the school can be expected to have made further progress since then, the report is not summarised here.

Post-16 education

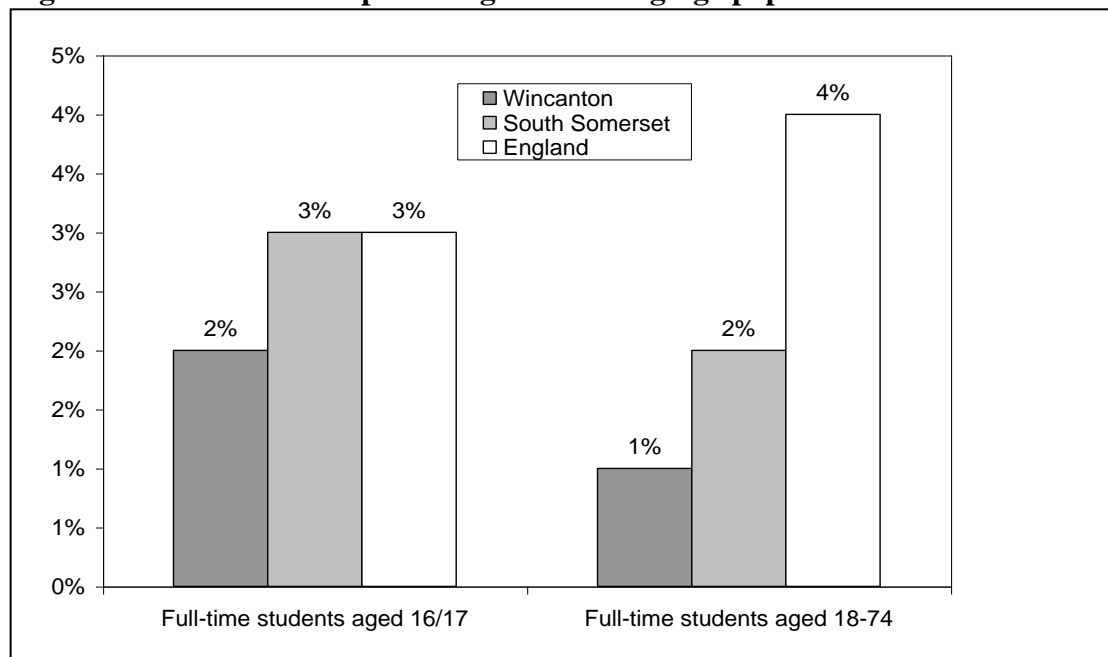
Wincanton offers no post-16 education. The nearest state facilities are:

- Sexey’s School (VI form), Bruton, Somerset, 5 miles
- Gillingham School (VI form), Gillingham, Dorset, 7 miles
- The Gryphon School (VI form), Sherborne, Dorset, 11 miles
- Yeovil College, Yeovil, Somerset, 16 miles
- Strode College, Street, Somerset, 34 miles.

Some pupils ‘go private’ at sixth form. The nearest private schools offering a sixth form are Bruton School for Girls (5 miles) and Kings School, Bruton, (5 miles). Other private schools are located in Sherborne (11 miles) and Street (34 miles).

Data from the 2001 Census shows that Wincanton and South Somerset have fewer full-time students, including mature students, than England as a proportion of working-age population – see Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Students as a percentage of working-age population



Source: Data from National Statistics, *Census 2001* and supplied by South Somerset District Council.

Access to Internet-based and other distance learning

All children and young people have access to the Internet through school. A growing number also have access from home.

Considering public access more generally, the Internet is available through schools and the local library. Computer courses are run by the Balsam Centre.

Local need for public provision of Internet access is unclear.

Provision of vocational training

The main source of vocational training is the University Centre Yeovil (UCY) based at Yeovil College (16 miles from Wincanton).

UCY offers a wide range of vocational foundation degrees. Foundation degrees are designed to be responsive to the needs of local industry and local employers are directly involved in the design of such programmes to ensure that the course content is tailored to their particular needs. An example is the foundation degrees in Aerospace Engineering designed with Westland Helicopters, GKN and Honeywell. Other foundation degrees include Business Management, Early Years Development and Sports Coaching and Development. All include vocational placements with local employers. See Box overleaf for a list of Wincanton companies working with UCY in 2005.

UCY is a partner of Bournemouth university and the University of Exeter. After completing a two-year foundation degree programme, students can study for an additional year at Bournemouth, Exeter or another local university to achieve a full honours degree. Thus residents in Wincanton have the opportunity to study reasonably locally for a university-level qualification with valuable workplace experience. This may help to bridge the local skills gap and raise skill levels in local industry. It may also encourage young people to stay and work in the area rather than moving away to university towns.

In a recent survey of sixth form students at Yeovil College¹⁴, the most popular higher education course preference not currently offered by UCY was Journalism and Media Studies. At present, there is no state-of-the-art media studio available to deliver such a course and this is perceived to be a significant gap in current provision. However, students taking a foundation degree in Digital Media may have the opportunity to be placed at *The Western Gazette* offices.

Many existing Higher National Diplomas are in the process of being converted to foundation degrees.

¹⁴ Mentioned in Healthcheck worksheet, 2005, *Training and Education*.

Wincanton companies and organisations working with Yeovil College/ UCY in 2005

Anthony Barker (Packaging) Ltd	Park Healthcare Ltd
The Balsam Centre	Rochford Garden Machinery Ltd
The Beer Seller	Area Director, South Somerset District Council
Bradshaws	T/A Framing by Bayford House Gallery
Community Education, King Arthur's	Verrington Hospital
Computer Help	Watchbell Meat Company
Deverill Estates	White Horse Hotel
Elliscombe House	Wincanton plc
Dr C F Farrant & Partners Health Centre	Wincanton Primary School
The Growing Space (Wincanton) Ltd	Wincanton Sport Centre
G S Worrall	Wincanton Print
Stephen Hewett	Balsam Project (Wincanton Community Venture)
Holbrook House Hotel	Wincanton Tandoori
King Arthur's Community School	Wincanton Racecourse
Markus Products	WMJ & Son Ltd, The Red Lion
Mill Street Social Club	Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School
Myakka Ltd	
North Downs Dairy Company	Suddon House

Provision of non-vocational courses

There is a wide variety of courses available at local school sixth forms and Yeovil College, as well as adult learning classes at King Arthur's Community School.

However, the respondents to the Healthcheck Worksheet on *Youth* commented that '*more vocational courses [are needed] for less academic students - cost of such needs to be kept low – need for encouraging employers to take students*'.

Other aspects of education in the Wincanton area

3.1 per cent of pupils in Wincanton have a fixed exclusion from school compared with 4.3 per cent for South Somerset and 4.7 per cent for England.

In Wincanton Primary School, 17.5 per cent have special educational needs compared with 12.9 per cent for South Somerset and 13.3 per cent for England. The Healthcheck worksheet compilers comment that: '*there is a need for increased support for SEN pupils locally*'.

Returning to the Index of Multiple Deprivation discussed at the start of this Chapter, on education, skills and training, Wincanton Centre ranks 22 out of the 103 Super Output Areas in South Somerset indicating a relatively high level of deprivation. Wincanton South and Wincanton North rank 51 and 63, respectively.

4 Environment

Key issues

- **Character and vitality of Wincanton.** Residents particularly value the friendliness of the town and its people. So far, Wincanton has avoided becoming an urban sprawl and should guard against this in the face of rapid planned expansion.
- **The countryside around Wincanton.** The countryside is very scenic and rich with the evidence of previous settlement. The majority of the countryside continues to be farmed in traditional ways, but there is great uncertainty over the future, particularly of the dairy industry.
- **Links between Wincanton and its surroundings.** The visual links from the town over the Blackmore Vale are partially threatened by housing development. A considerable number of footpaths link the town and its environ. Wincanton is also close to some important national trails and cycle routes.

4.1 Character and vitality of Wincanton

Distinctive characteristics of the town

The name 'Wincanton' means 'pleasant town on the River Cale'.

So far, Wincanton has avoided becoming an urban sprawl. Its built limits are distinct and it sits snugly on the southern slope of a hillside overlooking the Vale. The ridge of these hills defines the northern boundary of the town. The A303 defines its southern edge apart from sports facilities which have spilled over this boundary. To the east lies the village of Bayford which virtually joins Wincanton but with open countryside beyond. To the west, open countryside marks the edge of the town, though this boundary will shift with the development of the 'key site' at New Barn's Farm – see Chapter 5.

The Wincanton Survey 2003 asked residents what they liked most and least about the town. The results are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 What Wincanton residents like most and least about the town

Characteristic	Number of households mentioning this
<i>Like most</i>	
Friendliness of town / its people	212
Shops – good range	53
Smallness/ compactness of town	52
Sports facilities	43
<i>Like least</i>	
Shops – lack of big name/ variety	78
Empty shops	57
Shabbiness/run down/ not smart	46

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

Focal points of the town and use of town centre

The main focal points of the town are the Market Place, library, car parks (favoured as a meeting place particularly by young people), Balsam Centre, pubs, Wincanton Racecourse, the skate park (used all year round). In the villages, a key focal point is their village halls.

Wincanton town centre has a good range of uses and consists of a mix of shops, houses, pubs and public services such as the library and police station.

Historical heritage

Wincanton is noted for its elegant Georgian houses and former coaching inns which remain as a reminder of the town's past as a busy staging post midway between London and Plymouth.

Many of the buildings in Wincanton date only from the 18th century due to the 'Great Fire of 1707'. The oldest building in the town is Prior's House, Nursery Lane off Church Street, parts of which are mediaeval. Prior's House is a Grade II* listed building. Wincanton has 109 listed buildings most of which are Grade II.

The central part of Wincanton is a conservation area and it is here that most of the listed buildings are clustered. The conservation area mainly covers the High Street, Mill Street, Market Place and part of Church Street.

Wincanton is an old market town and had a thriving cloth industry in the 18th century and some of the buildings still display evidence of this with their 'loom windows'.

To the West of the town lies the church of St Peter and St Paul dating from the 14th century although most of the current building is 19th century.

The original manor house is known as 'The Dogs'. It is believed that William of Orange lodged there during his journey from Brixham to London.

What the listing Grades mean

Grade I Building of exceptional interest.

Grade II* Important building of more than special interest.

Grade II Building of special interest warranting every effort to preserve it.

Source: Based on information retrieved from www.heritage.co.uk/apavilions/glstb.html on 6 September 2005.

The most significant of the historic and distinctive buildings in Wincanton are:

- The Dogs, South Street
- The Post Office, Market Place
- White Horse, High Street
- Dolphin Hotel, High Street
- Bear Inn, High Street
- Greyhound, High Street
- churches
- Town Hall
- Turnpike Cottage, Common Road/Bayford Hill
- Milk factory, Southgate Road, including the Cow and Gate stone relief sign (over the entrance to the Myakka store)
- Ireson House, Grants Lane
- Unicorn Inn, Bayford
- Prior's House, Church Street. (The oldest house in Wincanton dating from 1480)
- the whole of Mill Street
- Dial House, The Batch (dating from 1690)
- Shatterwell Shute, North Street.
- Clementina's, High Street (fascia)

- Masonic Hall, Church Street – this is a former silk mill. Although considered an eyesore currently, it could be made very attractive.

In the immediately surrounding area, further buildings of interest include:

- Moorhayes Farm
- Stavordale Priory
- manor houses at North Cheriton and Chalton Horethorne
- churches and farm houses at North Cheriton and Chalton Horethorne
- Roundhill Grange, Charlton Musgrove
- Charlton Horethorne church.

Condition of the town and concerns

Since 2001, Wincanton has benefited from the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS). This is an English Heritage scheme which offers assistance for building repairs and enhancements to improve the economic viability of conservation areas. The Wincanton HERS scheme was a three-year programme and all works approved during the three-year allocation period must be completed by March 2006.¹⁵

Under the HERS scheme, English Heritage offered 50 per cent grants towards the cost of repairs and 75 per cent towards reinstatement of original features and shop-front replacements in the conservation area. Overall English Heritage provided 61 per cent of the funding for the Wincanton scheme. The balance was provided by South Somerset District Council (24 per cent), Wincanton Town Council (8 per cent) and Somerset County Council (7 per cent).

Table 4.2 lists the buildings which have benefited under the HERS scheme. In addition, a scheme to enhance the entrance to Carrington Way with stone paving, rustic lighting and planters was approved in October 2005 and is due to be substantially completed by March 2006.¹⁶

¹⁵ Area East, South Somerset District Council, 2005, *Agenda October 2005*, Yeovil, SSDC. Retrieved from www.southsomerset.gov.uk on 19 December 2005.

¹⁶ Ibid and South Somerset District Council, 2005, *Executive Bulletin No 190*, Yeovil, SSDC.

Table 4.2 Buildings in Wincanton which have been repaired/renovated with help from The Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme

	Building
Grants already paid	The Post Office Uncle Tom's 7A Church Street 7 Church Street 21 High Street Greyhound 1 Market Place 23 High Street
Outstanding grants offered	17 High Street 17 Market Place Building adjacent to 23 High Street Green Dragon

Source: Area East, South Somerset District Council, 2005, *Agenda October 2005*, Yeovil, SSDC. Retrieved from www.southsomerset.gov.uk on 19 December 2005.

The compilers of the Healthcheck environment worksheet, noted the following concerns:

- huge local concern over the proposal to develop the southern slopes, of the twon (Deanesly Way development)
- too many road signs, confusion at entrance to town (particularly at Southgate end), old pavements in poor state of repair
- Eastern approach – inadequate signing
- Northern approach – congestion because of new housing developments and confusion at Market Place
- Castle Cary approach – too many signs and unattractive developments; Cheese factory, Long Close, and so on
- area around recycling bins in Memorial Hall car park is a no-go area at night
- street lighting – should be low level, but more needed (eg on footpaths to and from car parks).

The compilers also drew attention to the following areas of the twon which were deemed particularly unattractive:

- St James Shop opposite the Millers pub
- unsympathetic modern housing development particularly round Cavalier Way
- Cow & Gate site – run-down, unattractive, poor impression coming into town
- Morrisons

- overall: design of recent developments has been very poor. Deanesly Way development (two storey) will have serious impact on views from Bayford Hill.

On the environment element of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (see Chapter 3), Wincanton scores poorly with Wincanton South ranking only 5th out of the 103 SOAs in South Somerset and Wincanton North and Wincanton Centre ranking 24th and 27th, respectively. These low rankings, especially for Wincanton South, need to be addressed.

The environment element of the Index combines measures of the quality of both the indoor and the outdoor environment. Indoor covers housing condition and incidence of central heating while the outdoor aspect looks at air quality and road traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. This is a diverse collection of indicators and to address the low ranking it will be necessary to disaggregate the environment measure to find out which elements are contributing most to the poor ranking. For example, Wincanton South might be experiencing particularly low air quality due to its proximity to the A303. But Wincanton also has a higher incidence of pedestrian casualties than South Somerset as a whole (see Chapter 5).

Important trees

While planting in the town centre is somewhat lacking, Wincanton as a whole and its immediately surrounding area have some important trees which contribute significantly to the character of the town. They are listed in the Box below.

Important trees in and around Wincanton

Chestnut, limes and Scots pine in Churchfields
Groups of trees to right on West Hill
Trees behind old cinema
Beeches at Balsam House
Trees at Rickhayes and avenue on Rec towards cemetery
Trees off Common Road in Balsam Fields
Cedar at the back of Clementinas (and sweet chestnut)
Mulberry tree on Ruthvens land at Ash House
Cherry by library
Beech trees stand at Bayford hill past Eastfield
Trees in ground of Ireson House
Line of mainly beech on the ridge at Cucklington

Source: Healthcheck environment worksheet, 2005.

4.2 The countryside around Wincanton

Distinctive characteristics of the countryside¹⁷

The area comprises a distinctive crescent-shaped series of ridges and vales which form part of a much greater geological formation which begins at Lyme Regis Bay and extends hundreds of miles to the north. Parishes which lie in this region include, among others, Wincanton, Shepton Montague, Charlton Musgrove, Penselwood, Cucklington, Stoke Trister, Holton, North Cheriton, Horsington, Abbas and Templecombe and Henstridge.

The geology is a series of north-east and south-west aligned rock formations forming a succession of ridges or scarps, dip slopes and vales. To the north beyond a major fault line, the Mere Fault, coincident with the A303 at Leigh Common, the bands of rock become more complex in form, more convoluted and with a much more varied landform.

Land use is predominantly pastoral. Dairy herds are on the less well drained soils in the clay vales and sheep grazing takes place on the unimproved steeper slopes. Arable land can be found in most areas but is particularly concentrated on the easier slopes of the Yeovil sands and the oolitic limestone vale north of Charlton Horethorne to Yarlington.

There are some substantial blocks of woodland on the steeper slopes mostly mixed broadleaf and conifer. Commercial forestry takes place on the high ridge of the Greensand at Brewham and Penselwood.

Wincanton looks out over the Blackmore Vale. These landscapes are some of the best lowland pastoral landscapes outside the Somerset Levels. The vale is notable for the quality of its hedged landscape, its flower-filled droves and roadside verges and many aquatic habitats and marshy fields. There is a notable absence of settlement with few roads.

The A303 is an important highway situated on an east-west alignment which disrupts the continuity of the north-south geological and topographical 'grain' of the landscape as it slices through the ridges creating huge cuttings. The Mere to Wincanton stretch caused severe disruption to the landscape of a particularly sensitive location at the head of the Blackmore Vale, destroying part of an ancient common. Landscaping of the older lengths of the A303 improvements has led to some remarkably successful establishment of wildflower grassland, including cowslips and orchids.

¹⁷ Information in this section is taken from *The Landscape of South Somerset*, 1993.

Table 4.3 Nearby features of particular interest

Type of feature	Location
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Shepton Montague Railway Cutting
Important geological sites	Hadspen Quarry South Pitcombe Road Cutting Bayford Cutting Penselwood Landslip
Historic parks and gardens	Stourhead House and Estate, Stourton, Wiltshire Redlynch House and Park, Stoney Stoke Hazelgrove House, Sparkford Ven House, Milborne Port

Source: Maps supplied by South Somerset District Council.

Areas of historic importance¹⁸

The Wincanton area has been well populated since late prehistoric times. The survival record of archeological sites is quite good compared with the more heavily cultivated land to the west. But even here sites are concentrated on the hill tops and marginal land such as the Selwood Forest area.

Prehistoric sites include Cadbury Castle, a scheduled ancient monument, and bronze age tumuli on Corton Hill. The region was also favoured by Anglo-Saxon settlement and there is a 7th century pagan cemetery at Hicknoll Slaits, Compton Pouncefoot. There are important Anglo-Saxon sites at Bruton, Milborne Port and South Cadbury. Selwood Forest became a mediaeval royal hunting forest and this discouraged settlement. Neolithic remains are said to have been found at Henstridge¹⁹.

This area of South Somerset was one in which the mediaeval open field system of farming was firmly established and evidence in the form of strip lynchets form impressive earthworks on the steeper slopes of South Cadbury, Corton Denham, Bruton, Pitcombe and Shepton Montague.

There is evidence in the area of abandoned or shrunken settlements during the economic misfortunes of the late middle ages. Maperton and Stowell are good examples.

There are also a number of high status sites which remain. These include 12th century castle sites at Ballonds Castle Penselwood, Cockroad Wood Charlton Musgrove and Castle Cary. There is a moated manor house at Marsh Court, Cucklington, and several hunting parks such as Stoke Trister, Mohun's Park and Ferset. Stavordale Priory and Bruton Abbey are important ecclesiastical sites.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Source: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=18743> retrieved 18 December 2005.

Use and condition of the countryside and concerns

The local countryside, comprising grade 2 and 3 agricultural land, has been of vital importance for agriculture, particularly dairy farming. However, in 2005, farming is in a state of flux with many dairy farmers selling milk below the cost of production, so it is hard to predict how this aspect of the rural economy will develop in future.

The majority of the land around Wincanton is being managed by farmers in the traditional way. But large tracts were covered by a Nitrate Sensitive Area (see Box) and farmers who signed up to the scheme may well have needed to diversify, for example, into fuel crops, in order to survive commercially.

Nitrate Sensitive Area

Voluntary scheme offering farmers compensation for a five-year undertaking to significantly change their farming practices in order to help reduce leaching of nitrates into drinking water supplies. The scheme closed to new entrants in 1998 and last agreement terminated in September 2003

There is potential for communities to participate in the management of the countryside by, for example, maintaining footpaths and conservation areas. One such scheme is the management by volunteers of Moldram's Ground in Penselwood.

The 1993 report, *The Landscape of South Somerset*, made the following observations. It is unclear whether, in the intervening 12 years, the concerns have been addressed or remain as problems today:

'The most important elements in this landscape region are its high number of woods, remnant unimproved grassland and surviving historic landscapes and sites, all of which may be threatened.'

'The parish councils ... showed concern for the core features of the landscape. The lack of management, investment or insensitive management of hedges, woodlands and water courses was repeatedly mentioned. Overhead wires and ugly modern barns were another irritation.'

'All of these concerns are justified. Many woods and hedgerow trees are becoming senile ... trees are well overdue for re-pollarding. Similarly many lanes are lined with ancient hazel and field maple stools long overdue for re-coppicing ... Conifers need to be removed and replaced with broadleaves. In general, more planting needs to be done for the future and opportunities taken to enlarge or link isolated woods together.'

'... The geology of the region has resulted in many hollows, concavities and old quarries. The disposal of waste, both licensed and unlicensed, is a constant threat to such features which often contain significant wildlife ... Hillsides at Hadspen and elsewhere have become scarred by motorcycle scrambling.'

'Many of the area's historic and pre-historic monuments are in urgent need of protection, by legislation or by agreements, before they are lost.'

4.3 Links between Wincanton and its surroundings

Visual links and boundaries

Wincanton is set on a hillside looking southwards down the fertile Blackmore Vale. The town affords memorable views over the Vale particularly from Bayford Hill when approaching the town from the East. One short stretch of view is preserved for the town. Remaining stretches are under threat from proposed new housing development.

Historic commercial links

Wincanton retains its Market Place, the site of local fairs and markets following the dissolution of Stavordale Priory, formerly the main venue for trading.

The town used also to have a cattle market and a town mill which would have been used by the wider community, but both of these are now gone.

Footpaths and bridleways

There are 52 footpaths in the Wincanton area, some within the town and others linking the town to its surrounding settlements. There are no bridleways in the immediate Wincanton area.

No National Trails pass through Wincanton but three pass reasonably close by:

- **The Monarch's Way.** This is a long distance footpath, 610 miles long, said to follow the route taken by King Charles II after his defeat at the Battle of Worcester in 1651 en route for Shoreham-on-Sea. The route enters Somerset near Chewton Mendip and crosses the Mendip Hills heading for Wells. It continues south to Yeovil, leaves Somerset en route to Charminster in Dorset and then reenters at Crewkerne from whence the trail runs eastwards
- **The Macmillan Way.** A 290-mile walking route that enters Somerset in the north-east and runs along the Frome Valley through the woodlands of the Stourhead Estate, continuing through Bruton, Castle Cary and North Cadbury. At Castle Cary, the route splits with the main route continuing into Dorset and a western spur running to Barnstaple in Devon
- **The Leland Trail.** A 28-mile footpath following in the steps of John Leland, Keeper of the Royal Libraries for Henry VIII, as he traversed the lowland landscapes of South Somerset sometime between 1535 and 1543. At Ham Hill, there are links to other trails including the Monarch's Way, The Liberty Trail and the Parrett Trail.

Wincanton has no designated cycle routes but the 80-mile South Somerset Cycle Route passes fairly close to the town. This is a 100-mile route around the South Somerset countryside from Yeovil eastwards to the hills and vales around Wincanton, across the low-lying Somerset Moors, then west towards Devon and Chard returning through the villages of South Somerset.

The 105-mile Somerset section of the National Byway (open to all traffic) is part of a 605-mile route through south-west England which starts and finishes in Winchester. The route passes through Penselwood then across to South Cheriton.

Several other national and county-wide cycle routes pass reasonably close to Wincanton. Local resident, Richard Nicholl has undertaken an analysis of cycling provision and proposed ways to link Wincanton to these national and county cycling routes – see Box below.

Routes to link Wincanton to existing national cycle routes

- **NCN26 and 80M at Sherborne:** Common Road/Moor Lane – Brains Corner – Battspool Bridge – Horsington – Stowell – Milborne Wick – Sherborne.
- **NCN26 and 80M at South Cadbury:** Lawrence Hill – Anchor Hill – Holton – Maperton – Blackford – Compton Pauncefoot – South Cadbury.
- **NCN26 and 80M at Castle Cary:** North Street – Verrington Lane – Shepton Montague – Pitcombe – Cole – Hadspen – Castle Cary.
- **NCN25 and WCW at Stourhead:** Bayford – Leigh Common – Penselwood – Aaron’s Hill – Gasper – Stourhead (through gates and past front of Stourhead House).
- **NCN25 at Gillingham (and NDC at Quarr):** Common Road – Shaftesbury Lane – Cucklington – Quarr – Gillingham.
- **NDC at Buckhorn Weston:** Common Road/Moor Lane – Rodgrove – Buckhorn Weston.
- **Former Somerset & Dorset Railway track at Sturminster Newton** – Wincanton – Rodgrove – Buckhorn Weston – Moormill Bridge – Park Lane Farm (existing bridle path would need tarmac) – Bellman’s Cross – Hemstridge Marsh – Gibbs Marsh – Stalbridge – Bagber Bridge – Sturminster Newton (requires new cycle path on a bridle path or old railway track).

NCN26 = National Cycle Network 26 from Clevedon to Dorchester

NCN25 = National Cycle Network 25 from Bath to Poole

NDC = North Dorset Cycleway

WCW = Wiltshire Cycleway

80M = 80 mile South Somerset Cycle Route.

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.²⁰ 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 5.1.²¹

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).

²⁰ National Statistics, *Census 2001*.

²¹ 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.²²

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.²³

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 cent²⁴.

Across South Somerset as a whole²⁵:

- 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.

²² *South Somerset Ward Profiles* supplied by South Somerset District Council. Data from National Statistics Census 2001.

²³ National Statistics. Census 2001, retrieved from www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk on 4 July 2003.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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 people²⁷. 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 2001-2011²⁸.

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.

²⁶ South Somerset District Council (SSDC), 2004, *Housing and accommodation strategy 2004-2007. Balancing housing markets*, Yeovil, SSDC.

²⁷ 'Developing at Wincanton', 2004, *Blackmore Vale Magazine*, 22 October, p.35. Letter from Doug Castle, a former Mayor of Wincanton.

²⁸ 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

Location	Number of dwellings	Status of application
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 ²⁹ .
Land adjacent to Balsam House, Common Road	15	Permission granted, March 2005.
TOTAL	455	
<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>

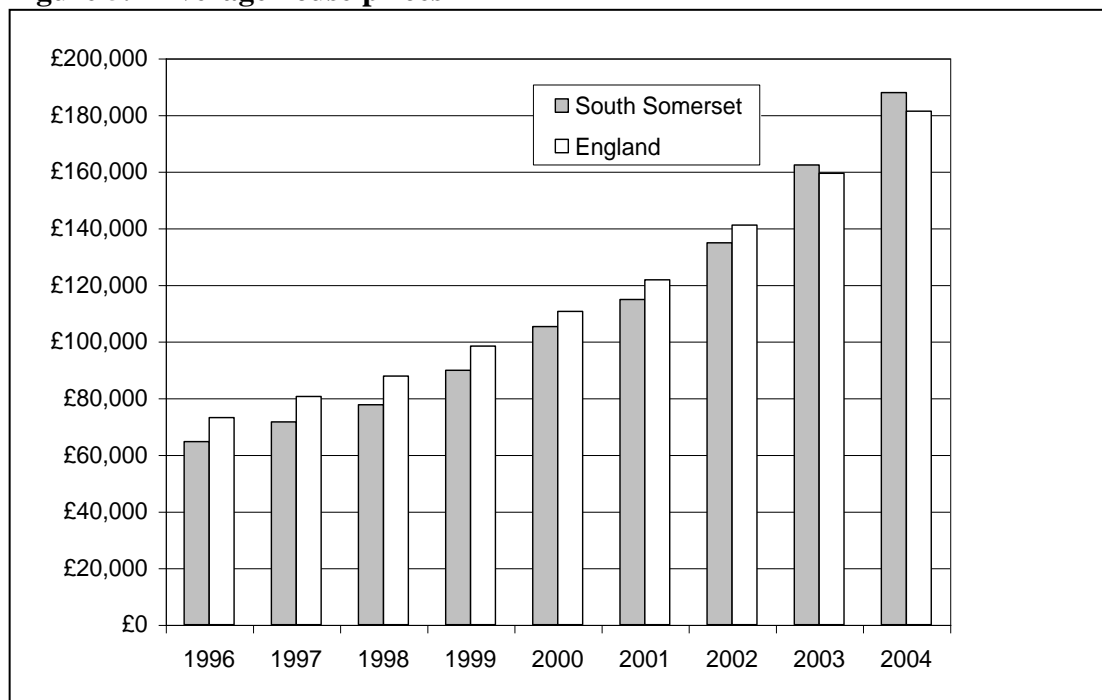
Source: *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector's Report*, Chapter 12, p. 156, retrieved from www.southsomerset.gov.uk on 12 September 2005; South Somerset District Council, Area East Committee, Minutes; Wincanton Town Council, Minutes.

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.

²⁹ 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 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

	Wincanton	South Somerset	England
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 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 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 Somerset³⁰
- **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.

³⁰ 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 Wincanton³¹) 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.³²

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 dwellings³³
- **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 housing³⁴.

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 appeal³⁵

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*.

³¹ *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector’s Report*, Chapter 12, p. 156, retrieved from www.southsomerset.gov.uk on 12 September 2005.

³² Area East Special Meeting, 2004, *Planning roadshow – affordable housing*, Agenda item 9, South Somerset District Council, 17 May.

³³ *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector’s Report*, Chapter 12, p. 154, retrieved from www.southsomerset.gov.uk on 12 September 2005.

³⁴ *South Somerset Local Plan. Inspector’s Report*, Chapter 12, p. 156, retrieved from www.southsomerset.gov.uk on 12 September 2005.

³⁵ 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:³⁶

- **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).

³⁶ South Somerset Homes website. Retrieved from 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 ³⁷ 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*.

³⁷ 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
TOTAL	3	2	9	2	13	1	3	3	0	

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.³⁸

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).³⁹ 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).⁴⁰

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).

³⁸ Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ National Statistics, *Census 2001*, retrieved from 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 include⁴¹:

- 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 14th 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)⁴².

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 Centre⁴³ (known locally as the Balsam Centre) – see Box for details.

⁴¹ Healthcheck responses, 2005, *Wincanton population statistics*.

⁴² Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

⁴³ 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 pedestrians⁴⁴. This is a higher than the average for wards in South Somerset⁴⁵.

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.

⁴⁴ Healthcheck worksheet responses, 2005, *Environment*.

⁴⁵ 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%	-	-

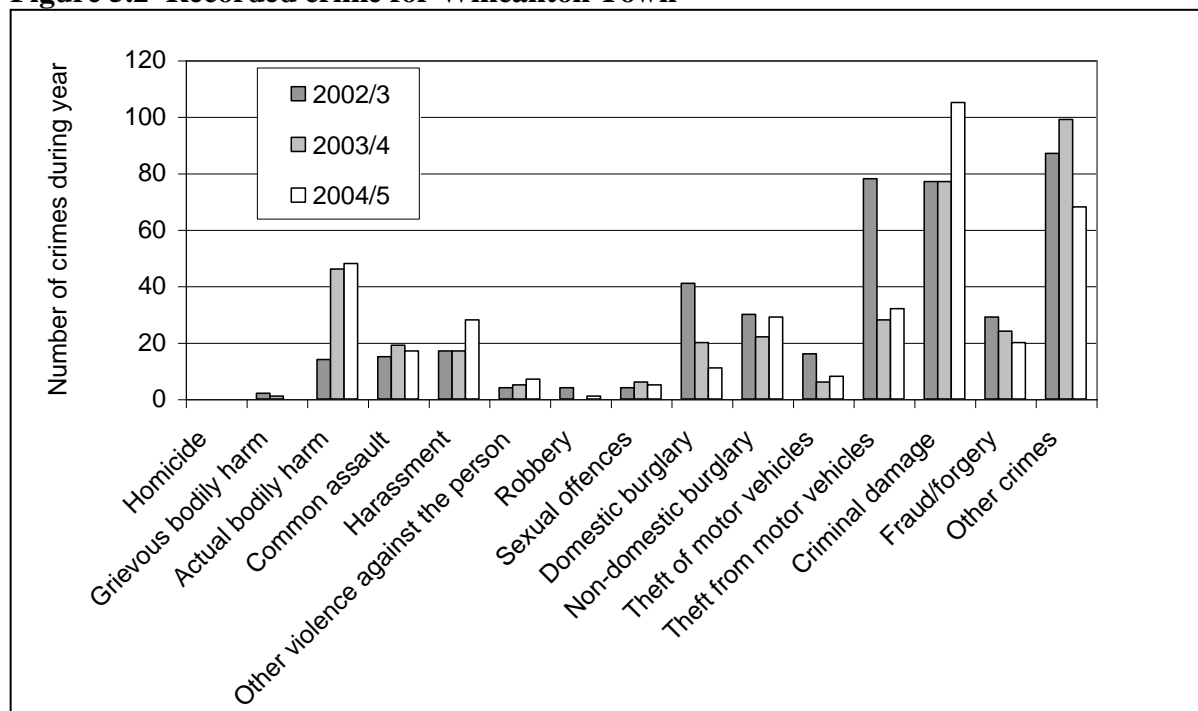
Source: Healthcheck Worksheet responses from Wincanton Police Station, 2005.

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 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 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 17.8⁴⁶
- 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 Somerset⁴⁷
- 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.⁴⁸

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 district⁴⁹.

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.

⁴⁶ Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Avon and Somerset Policing Authority, *How did we do in Somerset East?*, retrieved from www.aspola.org.uk on 13 September 2005.

Crime prevention measures⁵⁰

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.

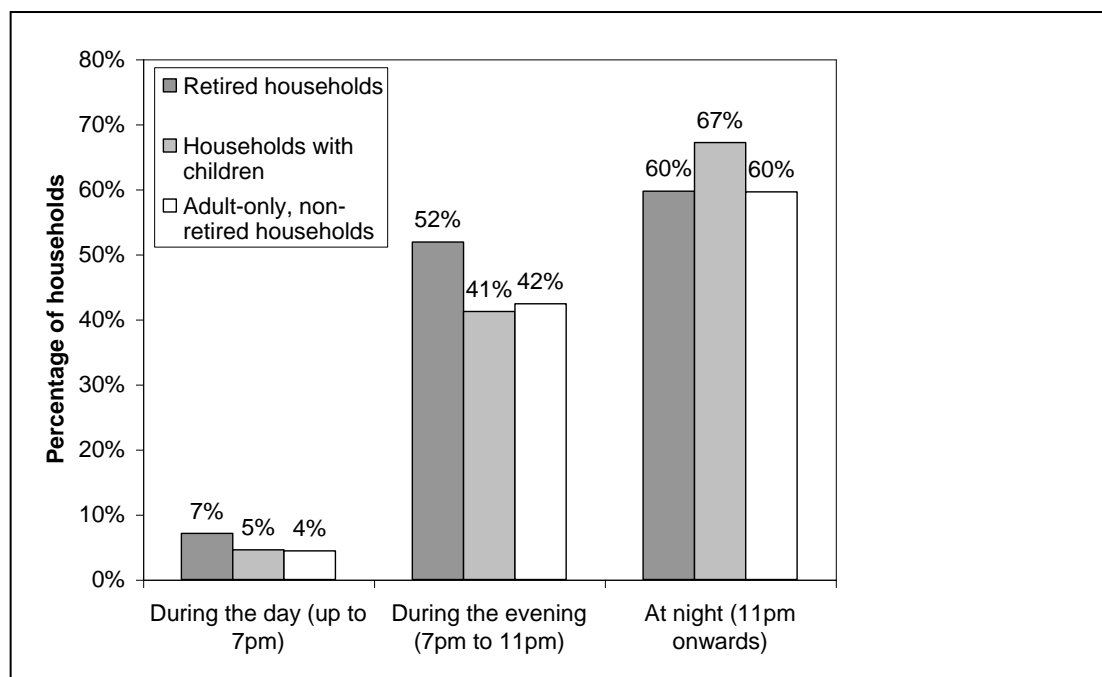
The provision of litter bins at the Rickhayes recreation ground has lessened the incidence of vandalism and litter at that location. The addition of a youth shelter would be beneficial.

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.

⁵⁰ 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).⁵¹

5.7 Recreation

Sport

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

⁵¹ 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"> • Public pool at Sports Centre, West Hill (edge of town) • Members-only pool at Holbrook House Hotel Spa Centre (edge of town)
Sports hall	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public facilities at Sports Centre, West Hill (edge of town) • School hall at King Arthur's, West Hill (edge of town) • Maddocks Pavilion at Community Sports Ground, Moor Lane (edge of town)
Outdoor sports pitches	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Ground, Moor Lane (edge of town) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 football - 1 rugby - 1 cricket - 4 tennis - 1 multi-use court - bowling green • Rickhayes Recreation Ground (in town) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 cricket
Sport and fitness centres	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Centre, West Hill (edge of town). Offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - badminton - gymnastics - hockey - trampolining - mini tennis - fitness centre • Members-only fitness centre at Holbrook House Hotel Spa Centre (edge of town)
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

Club	Location of usual facilities used
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) 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).

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 people⁵².

⁵² Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Youth*.

6 Transport and accessibility

Key issues

- **Access to private transport.** One in five Wincanton households does not own a car or van. This is higher than the proportion for South Somerset as a whole.
- **Ease of travel to and from the area.** Good East-West road links ensure easy access by car. Road travel on the North-South axis is less good. Wincanton is within close reach of three railway stations offering three rail routes. Apart from a good bus link to London, commercial bus services are poor. Many of the gaps are filled by a Community Accessible Transport (CAT) bus scheme. However, restrictions on who can use the CAT bus mean that the bulk of the Wincanton population has little choice but to be dependent on the car.
- **Ease of access to services.** As noted in Chapter 5, most villages have few services, so travel to Wincanton is important. Access by car is easy. The CAT bus is helping to ensure access from the villages to Wincanton and the other towns nearby. However the CAT bus operates only on weekdays 8am to 6pm.
- **Ease of movement around the town.** Free car parking is viewed as an asset thought to facilitate access to services and to boost the town's trade. However, the District Council would like to introduce parking charges in Wincanton. Pedestrian safety could be enhanced through the provision of additional designated crossings. A very small minority of residents cycle and facilities for them are currently poor – the establishment of dedicated cycle routes might promote greater take-up of cycling.

6.1 Access to private transport

Nearly one Wincanton household in five (18.5 per cent) does not own a car or van. This is slightly higher than the proportion for South Somerset as a whole – see Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Car/van ownership

	Wincanton		South Somerset	
	Number of households	Percentage	Number of households	Percentage
No car	378	18.5%	10,210	16.0%
1 car	1,008	49.4%	29,903	46.9%
2 cars	508	24.9%	18,330	28.7%
3 cars	100	4.9%	3,958	6.2%
4+ cars	46	2.3%	1,368	2.1%

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

6.2 Ease of travel to and from the local area⁵³

By car

Wincanton is situated on the A303 providing an excellent East-West road link connecting the town to routes to, for example, London, Basingstoke, Salisbury, Yeovil, Exeter and Plymouth.

Road travel on the North-South axis is less good. In particular the northern link to Bristol is particularly bad.

All the villages in the Wincanton hinterland can access the town by car. In general, traffic is light but the roads are often narrow and so must be negotiated with care.

The major retail centre for residents of Wincanton and the surrounding villages is Yeovil. This lies 16 miles away and takes approximately 30 minutes to reach by car.

There are several local taxi firms. Travel over short distance tends to be costly, but taxi fares to airports tend to be reasonably competitive with the cost of, say, rail travel especially if more than one person is travelling.

By bus

Wincanton has the benefit of a fast coach service (the 'Berry's bus') to London (Hammersmith). The bus starts in Taunton and also stops at Yeovil but then runs non-stop from Wincanton to London. The service runs only at limited times and is geared to London commuting and London weekending rather than local travel.

Two commercial bus firms operate in the area: First (part of a national company) and South West Coaches Ltd. The nearest large town to Wincanton is Yeovil (16 miles). A regular commercial bus service operates on this route. Travel time from Wincanton to Yeovil is approximately 60 minutes (compared with 30 minutes by car). Other local

⁵³ Healthcheck Worksheets, 2005, *Ease of travel to and from the local area* and *Transport and accessibility*.

destinations reasonably accessible by commercial bus services include: Bayford, Bruton, Castle Cary, Cucklington, Gillingham, Sherborne, Templecombe.

Wincanton has a Community Accessible Transport (CAT) bus scheme. This is a demand-responsive, 'dial-and-ride' minibus service now operating three buses. The main features of the service are⁵⁴:

- **scope.** Links 43 villages to the three towns of Wincanton, Bruton and Castle Cary. 27 of these have no commercial bus service at all or just one bus per day. The CAT service operates weekdays 8am to 6pm. The service is door-to-door
- **personal access.** The service is open to people within the villages. It is only open to people within the towns who are unable to use commercial services because of disability. Able-bodied people within the towns are expected to use conventional public transport (because the CAT scheme aims not to damage the viability of commercial services) but they may exceptionally be able to use the scheme if they need to travel to somewhere inaccessible by normal means
- **group access.** The service also provides lifts to members of 26 associations including groups from sheltered housing, youth groups, and so on
- **disabled access.** The minibuses are equipped to carry up to two wheelchairs. Drivers are trained to provide help
- **cost.** Normal fares range from £2 to £5.50 for a single journey and £3.00 to £8.00 for a return trip depending on the distance travelled. The service can be booked for out-of-area destinations in which case cost will depend on distance travelled and the length of time the bus is out of its normal operating area. Holders of local authority bus passes pay concessionary rates.

Wincanton also has a dedicated minibus service for elderly and/or disabled user groups, called the Winibus. This is run by a local charity with volunteer drivers. Typical services include taking people to health-related support groups, luncheon club, day centre, church services, and so on.

By rail

Wincanton no longer has its own station but lies reasonably close to three railway stations:

- **Templecombe** (4 miles). South West Train service on the London (Waterloo) to Exeter line. Some trains travel further West to Plymouth. Main stops on the line include Salisbury, Andover, Basingstoke and Woking. There is a bus link to Heathrow from Woking. For more local travel, intermediate stops include

⁵⁴ CAT bus leaflet, 2005, *Ring and ride South Somerset*.

Gillingham, Sherborne and Yeovil Junction. Trains generally every two hours and more frequent at peak times

- **Gillingham** (7 miles). Also on the London (Waterloo) to Exeter line
- **Castle Cary** (7 miles). First Great Western service on the London (Paddington) to Penzance line. Main intermediate stops include Plymouth, Exeter, Taunton, Newbury and Reading. Includes fast trains during peak commuting hours but off-peak may need to change trains. Also Heart of Wessex line linking Bath Spa, Bristol, Yeovil Penn Mill and Weymouth. Frequent trains to Bristol, less frequent direct service to Bath.

The train stations are too far to be reached by foot. Cycling is possible though there is no dedicated cycle route and the roads are fast and reasonably busy so safety is an issue.

Bus services do broadly link with the departure time for trains but return journeys are poorly served. For example:

- weekday, destination Templecombe. Bus arrives at station at 10.23am, train departs at 10.34. On return, train arrives 19.25, bus departs station at 20.50
- weekday, destination Castle Cary. Bus arrives at station 9.39, train departs 10.21. On return, train arrives 18.23 but last bus departed 16.38.

There are no buses to dovetail with early train departures, for example, where commuters wish to get to London before 9am.

Realistically, most rail users will therefore use a car to travel to and from the station. Parking at Templecombe is free. Parking charges are levied at Gillingham and Castle Cary.

6.3 Ease of access to services⁵⁵

Travel to school

Children living in Wincanton and attending schools in the town are generally within walking distance of their school though some do travel by car. Children from the outlying villages travel either by car or school bus.

Scheduled and/or school bus services are available at convenient times for Wincanton young people attending state schools and sixth form colleges in Gillingham, Bruton, Sherborne, Street and Yeovil.

Travel to work

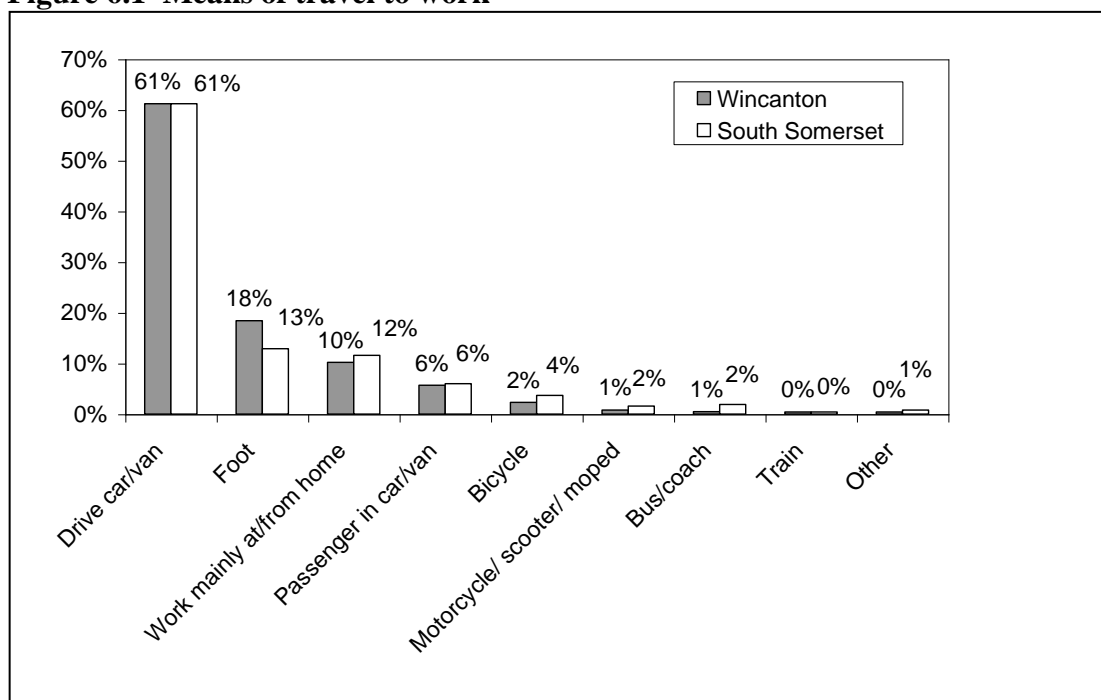
⁵⁵ Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Ease of access to services*.

Figures from Census 2001 show that more Wincanton residents than the proportion for the District as a whole are able to walk to work. In other respects, the means of travel to work are very similar as shown in Figure 6.1.

With 18 per cent of residents able to walk to work, 2 per cent using a bicycle and 10 per cent working from home, this means nearly a third of Wincanton’s working residents are able to access work by an environmentally-friendly means.

Figure 6.1 highlights that public transport plays very little part in getting people to and from work either in Wincanton or South Somerset as a whole. Only 11 of Wincanton’s working residents get to work by bus or coach. A further 10 use a train but will also have relied on some other means to get them to the station.

Figure 6.1 Means of travel to work



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

Alternative transport

As discussed above, the CAT bus and the Winibus services are available to people with mobility impairment.

The CAT bus also serves able-bodied people in the outlying villages on weekdays 8am to 6pm.

There are several local taxi firms. However, travel by taxi tends to be costly and it can be difficult to book a taxi at certain hours of the day when the firms have contracts to do ‘school runs’.

Access to information about public transport

Information about services and timetabling is available locally from the Tourist Information Centre at the Town Hall, public library, rail stations and bus stops. South West Coaches also has a depot within the town from which information about its own services can be obtained.

Information about First buses, the Berry's bus and the rail network is also available by Internet.

Details of the CAT bus services are available from the Town Hall, the Balsam Centre, the public library or by phone. Although the CAT service only started operating in 2002, by the time of the *Wincanton Survey 2003*, 55 per cent of households had heard of the CAT bus and awareness was even higher among retired households.

Access to services in Wincanton

Most of the key services in Wincanton – for example, post office, health centre, pharmacists, opticians, banks, building society agencies, public library, food shops, Town Hall – and the shops are centrally located.

Commercial bus services coming into town or from stops outside the town centre (for example, on Bayford Hill or Common Road) stop right in the centre of town close to shops and, for an able-bodied person, within 5 minutes walk of the health centre, library and post office. The CAT bus and Winibus are demand-responsive and will stop wherever customers request.

Some buses stop on West Hill which is convenient for the swimming pool and Sports Centre. This is also the closest stop for visitors to the hospital who would have a 10 to 15 minute walk.

There is no bus service to the Sports Ground at Moor Lane which is about 20 minutes walk from the town centre.

Last commercial buses leave Wincanton on Friday and Saturday nights at 11pm enabling visitors, for example, to visit pubs or restaurants in town. There is one night club in Wincanton which stays open considerably later than this and its late visitors would not be able to get home by public transport.

All Wincanton services are readily accessible by car. Residents in most of the local villages can reach Wincanton within 20 minutes or less by car. At the time of the Healthcheck, there was ample free parking in the town centre (see Section 6.4 below).

Relatively few local services are available by Internet but increasingly information about them is. This may reduce the number of physical journeys required.

6.4 Ease of movement around the town⁵⁶

Congestion

In general traffic flows reasonably freely through Wincanton. The main causes of congestion are:

- **race days at Wincanton Racecourse.** When traffic leaves the Racecourse there are considerable hold-ups at the junction of North Street and the Market Place
- **Friday morning refuse collection.** There is a bottleneck in the one-way system at south Street. When the collection lorry reaches this point, traffic is delayed for around a maximum of 10 minutes
- **School drop-off/ pick up times.** The two primary schools are both located in South Street/Tout Hill. Congestion is caused by parents seeking and leaving parking spaces and the operation of the school crossings.

Car parking

Table 6.2 lists the public car parking spaces available in central Wincanton. In addition, one of the local stores (Clementina) has a small customer car park. The main supermarket (Morrison) on the edge of town has an extensive customer car park. Although it is possible for people to walk from the supermarket into the town centre, it is unlikely that many do so.

At the time of the Healthcheck, all the public parking in Wincanton was free. However, there have been suggestions from South Somerset District Council which owns the main car park (at the Memorial Hall) that charges should be introduced. The suggestion met with considerable local opposition with large numbers of residents, town users and traders signing a petition against the move.

⁵⁶ Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Ease of movement around town.*

Table 6.2 Availability of public car parking in Wincanton

Type of parking	Location	Number of spaces
Long stay (car park)	Carrington Way	30
	Churchfields	38
	Memorial Hall	132
Short stay (car park)	Carrington Way	65
Short stay (on street)	High Street	58
	Post Office	4 [1]
Disabled parking	Carrington Way	5
	Churchfields	2
	High Street	1
	Memorial Hall	7
TOTAL SPACES		342

Source: Healthcheck Worksheets, 2005, *Ease of movement around the town and Transport and accessibility*.

[1] Technically there are two parking spaces outside the post office. In practice, cars also park on the small access road as well.

Free parking for coaches is available at the Memorial Hall Car Park.

As table 6.2 shows, there is good provision for disabled parking. However, it is not necessarily optimally distributed. In particular, there is no disabled parking bay close to the post office.

There is no parking at all in the immediate vicinity of the Town Hall.

Despite the ample free car parking in the town centre, many people park temporarily outside the Lloyds TSB and NatWest Banks in order to use the cash machines. This appears to be less of a problem at the HSBC Bank.

Conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and other road users

In Wincanton, 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 pedestrians⁵⁷. This is a higher than the average for wards in South Somerset⁵⁸.

A particular black-spot is Station Road at the point where pedestrians informally cross from the church over to Cemetery Lane.

In the *Wincanton Survey 2003*, 63 per cent of respondents wanted more pedestrian crossings. They identified seven locations where they would ideally like these to be:

- the Market Place – exact location not specified (77 respondents)
- Church Street to Market Place (76 respondents)

⁵⁷ Healthcheck worksheet responses, 2005, *Environment*.

⁵⁸ Healthcheck responses, 2005, headed *Wincanton MCTi – Social and Community*.

- High Street from Memorial Hall Car Park to Uncle Tom's Cabin (45 respondents)
- South Street from NatWest bank to Town Hall side of street (38 respondents)
- High Street from Lloyds TSB Bank to Bear Inn (36 respondents)
- Station Road from church to Cemetery Lane (36 respondents)
- Carrington Way (28 respondents).

However, 80 per cent of respondents in the survey said that traffic did not deter them from using local shops. Some expressed concern about speeding, the volume of traffic and large lorries navigating the town centre. A minority suggested the town centre should be pedestrianised. At present, no areas of the town centre give pedestrians priority.

At the time of the Healthcheck, traffic calming measures were in place in the Memorial Hall Car Park (speed humps), Dancing Lane (speed humps) and South Street/Tout Hill (speed humps and a chicane).

Getting round town on foot

There are a large number of footpaths within Wincanton. It is possible to use them for at least part of the way when going into town, to the supermarket, to the health centre, to schools, and so on.

However, the footpaths are mostly fairly short and in general it is difficult to move between locations in Wincanton without having to cross at least one road, so footpaths do not provide complete protection from traffic for pedestrians.

The footpaths are open to everyone, but in practice a few are steep or have steps which could be a problem for anyone with impaired mobility (either due to a health problem or because, say, they were pushing children in a pushchair).

There are a number of fingerposts in the town centre giving directions to pedestrians but none outside the central area. The fingerposts are not particularly prominent and vandals often swing them round to point the wrong way.

Pavements in Wincanton town centre are generally in reasonable condition. new pavement was laid in the region of the Town Hall during 2004 and there is a proposal to replace paving in the Carrington way entrance as part of a town centre enhancement scheme.

There are dropped kerbs at main crossing points. However, in the past, wheelchair users have had problems with the dropped kerbs in the Memorial Hall Car Park, where narrow pavements mean a sharp turn onto the dropped paving and the location of the dropped kerbs has left users having to negotiate speed humps in the road.

Tactile paving is present at several crossings. There is one pelican crossing in the town. It is equipped with an audible warning to aid users with impaired vision.

Table 6.3 describes typical routes which school children might take if walking to school.

Table 6.3 Walking routes to school

Route	Length	Duration	Description
Bayford – either primary school, South Street	1 ¼ miles	25 minutes	Choice of main road or main road plus footpaths. Footpaths unlit or poorly lit. Cross main roads twice - use pelican crossing and school crossing.
Bayford – King Arthur's, West Hill	1 ½ miles	30 minutes	Choice of main roads or main road plus footpaths. Footpaths unlit. Cross main road once.
West Hill – either primary school, South Street	½ mile	10 minutes	Choice of main road, main road plus footpaths. Footpaths unlit and route through recreation ground may be isolated. Cross main road – no designated crossing.
West Hill – King Arthur's, West Hill	¼ mile	5 minutes	Via main road. may need to cross main road, no designated crossing.

Source: Healthcheck Worksheet, 2005, *Ease of movement around town.*

Getting around town by bicycle

At the time of writing (early 2006), there are no dedicated cycle paths in Wincanton. The police have previously said that, in the interests of the safety of cyclists, they would not enforce no cycling along footpaths. Cyclist under 16 are also allowed to cycle along pavements. Cycle parking racks are located in Carrington Way.

However, a comprehensive analysis of potential cycling routes has been undertaken by local resident, Richard Nicholl, who has experience of establishing cycle routes elsewhere in the UK. A summary of his proposals for routes within Wincanton is given in the Box overleaf.

The *Wincanton Survey 2003* found that only 1 per cent of respondents travelled into town by bicycle. This could be due to the generally hilly terrain of Wincanton. However, Mr Nicholl points out that, in Radstock – a Somerset town which is much hillier than Wincanton – three cycle routes are well used for both transport and recreation. In his view, the provision of dedicated cycle routes would promote greater take-up of cycling in Wincanton.

Proposed cycle routes within Wincantron

- **Route 1:** Bayford - Devenish Lane – Deanesly Way proposed new development - Deanesly Way – Balsam Fields - South Street (cycle lane required) - Primary Schools.
- **Route 2:** New primary school site (New Barns Farm) – recreation ground – Station Road (crossing required and contraflow cycle path) – South Street junction (crossing required) – Moor Lane – Southgate Drive – Deanesly Way.
- **Route 3:** New primary school site – via New Barns Farm proposed development (zig-zag cycle route required to cope with gradient) – King Arthur’s School.
- **Route 4:** New primary school site – via New Barns Farm proposed development – Lawrence Hill (cycle way on verge of A371) – Anchor Hill roundabout – Lattiford.
- **Route 5:** King Arthur’s School - via New Barns Farm proposed development – Lawrence Hill – then as Route 4 to Lattiford.
- **Route 5 (alternative):** King Arthur’s School - via New Barns Farm proposed development to western edge – cross A371 between Anchor Hill and Holbrook roundabouts (using existing agricultural bridge) – Lattiford (cycle way on verge of A371).
- **Route 6:** Recreation ground – Cavalier Way – The Batch (improvement required to existing footpath) – Shadwell Lane – North Street – Verrington Lane – Verrington Hospital (via the very steep existing footpath) – Dancing Lane – King Arthur’s School.
- **Routes 7:** Sports Ground to parts of town via Moor Lane and Common Road (street lighting and shared pedestrian/cycle routes required on both).