



PRESS RELEASE – 14 November 2017

Local radio returning to Winchester

Local charity Winchester Radio launches a public fundraising campaign – Radio for Winchester, from Winchester, by Winchester. Its new service will offer local radio tailored for the over-50s in Winchester and the immediately-surrounding villages.

Winchester Radio is based at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital and, since land was sold for student accommodation, operates from a single small temporary studio. The NHS Trust has identified an alternative, larger space for the charity, more suitable for its needs, but significant fit-out works are required, costing approx. £117,000. Much of the charity's existing equipment, home-built in the early 1990s, has become increasingly unreliable. New studio technical equipment will cost £18,000, and new computer systems and software (used to playout music, features and pre-recorded programmes) another £17,000. Installing the transmitter and antenna will cost £11,000. In total, the project will cost £163,000.

£55,000 has already been raised through fundraising and donations, including a £10,000 grant from the BIG Lottery Fund's "Awards for All" programme, and smaller grants from the national Hospital Broadcasting Association and Winchester City Council's Community Projects Fund.

As well as making grant applications to charitable foundations, the charity is now asking the people of Winchester, and local businesses, for help. Anyone who makes a donation of £100 or more will be recognised via a broadcast on-air list of donors. Anyone donating £1,000 or more will have the opportunity to have a personalised message of recognition recorded for regular broadcast. Further sponsorship and naming opportunities are also available for those making significant donations.

Anna O'Brien, Chairman of Winchester Radio said: "Winchester has a large and growing older population. Within our predicted coverage area, there are approximately 56,000 people; of these, 20,000 are aged over 50. Our team of volunteers are really passionate about providing a hyper-local radio station based in Winchester to meet the needs of older people. We hope the community will get behind us and help make radio for Winchester, from Winchester, by Winchester a reality."

Donations can be made online via the website www.winchesterradio.uk, where further details of the charity's plans are available. Alternatively, the charity can be contacted by phone on 01962 250143, or by email via donate@winchesterradio.uk.

Winchester Radio will play a wide variety of pop, rock, jazz, easy listening, country and classical music, covering the 1950s through to today. Requests and dedications will form a major part of the schedule. Alongside the music will be educational, heart-warming, entertaining, and thought-provoking features – voices from the local community talking about subjects close to their heart. By providing a hyper-local radio service, the station will be able to highlight local volunteering opportunities, offer a platform for grass-roots community groups to highlight activities they run, and be able to help raise awareness of local sources of support for the older generation should they need it. And where people, because of ill-health, have limited ability to participate in local activities in person, Winchester Radio will help keep them informed about what is happening and, where possible, allow them to get involved from home.

The charity expects to grow a loyal audience, who actively engage with the station, participating in the programming (be that by sending music requests, or taking part in on-air discussions and quizzes). From its current status as being "a friend at the bedside" to those in hospital, it hopes to become both a good friend in the living room, and a trusted source of useful, helpful, local information.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Winchester Radio is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered with the Charity Commission for England & Wales, no. 1160752.
2. The charity is run entirely by an intergenerational team of volunteers, aged from 18 to 70+. A number of them are former patients who joined the charity on their recovery to help make a difference to others.
3. The £117,000 cost of fit-out works includes over £26,000 for electrical works, and over £21,00 for heating, ventilation, and cooling of the equipment/server room.
4. Winchester Radio expects to launch the new service in the summer of 2018.
5. Winchester Radio will broadcast across the city on the FM band. The exact frequency is subject to allocation by Ofcom, the communications regulator.
6. Winchester Radio's community radio licence covers a notional 5km radius, and is for an initial 5 years, renewable for further 5 year periods.
7. Population figures are Winchester Radio's estimates, based on coverage predictions and the Hampshire County Council Small Area Population Forecasts.
8. BBC Director-General Tony Hall announced last week that BBC Local Radio should no-longer focus its programmes solely on the over-50s.
9. The charity is not looking to recruit volunteer on-air presenters at this time – further information about volunteer opportunities will be announced in the New Year.