



PRESS RELEASE – 4 December 2017

## Winchester Radio gets National Lottery Funding boost

Local charity Winchester Radio gets £10,000 boost from the BIG Lottery Fund's "Awards For All" programme.

Winchester Radio has provided the hospital radio service at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital for over 30 years. Its new community radio service will offer local radio tailored for the over-50s in Winchester and the immediately surrounding villages, produced by local volunteers – Radio for Winchester, from Winchester, by Winchester.

Changes in the NHS, both locally and nationally, mean fewer inpatient beds, and more people being treated in the community rather than in hospital. A rapidly growing older local population together with NHS and social care budgetary constraints means that it is ever more important that people look after their health and wellbeing as they approach and enter older age. Winchester Radio wants to play a key role keeping the over-50s keeping active and engaged with local community life, as this is widely recognised in playing a key part in maintaining good mental and physical health. 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.

The £10,000 grant funded by the National Lottery, along with smaller grants from the national Hospital Broadcasting Association and Winchester City Council's Community Projects Fund, covers replacing the old computer systems that keep that charity's service "on air" 24 hours a day, and allow the volunteers to produce and edit programmes and features for later broadcast. As well as the computer systems, much of the charity's other studio equipment, home-built in the early 1990s, has become increasingly unreliable and also needs to be replaced, at a cost of around £18,000, and a transmitter and antenna need to be installed on the roof of the hospital (at a cost of about £11,000) before the community radio service can launch.

Since land was sold for student accommodation, it operates from a single small temporary studio at the hospital. The NHS Trust has identified alternative, larger, non-clinical space for the charity, more suitable for its needs, but significant fit-out works are required, costing approx. £110,000.

In total, to relocate to the new accommodation, install modern reliable equipment, and launch the community radio service will cost £163,000. Through fundraising and by using its existing reserves, the charity has already been able to allocate over £55,000 towards this project – by far the biggest in the station's history.

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.

Nigel Dallard, the charity's Treasurer said: "We'd like to thank the BIG Lottery Fund for their support, which has provided a significant boost to our fundraising efforts. However, we still have many more thousands to raise if our plans to return local radio to Winchester are to bear fruit. I hope the community will get behind us, and I'd encourage anyone living locally, as well as local businesses, to help us with a donation if they possibly can."

Donations can be made online via the website [www.winchesterradio.uk](http://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](mailto:donate@winchesterradio.uk).