

WINCHESTER CITY GUIDES – TOUR ARRANGEMENTS UPDATED JANUARY 2025

ROTA TOURS

Morning and afternoon rota tours for 2025 will cost £12.00 for adults and children under 16 are free.

ROTA

Erica Wheeler produces the rota for regular tours on behalf of WATGA. The tours are allocated randomly. If you find your dates are inconvenient then please swap with other guides. Where possible, please arrange the swap by approaching another guide individually rather than sending a group email around to everyone, or use the WhatsApp group. The guides' contact details for all members are attached to an email from sueds100@gmail.com dated 01/02/2024, but another version will be circulated early in 2025 to include new guides joining. Once you have arranged a swap it is your responsibility to notify Erica at ericawheeler1815@googlemail.com. It helps her if you phrase your email like this:

Monday 3rd July at 11am was Dixon now Reid

Tuesday 11th July at 2pm was Reid now Dixon

Don't forget to copy in the person you have swapped with! Erica will then update the rota and notify the VIC. If the change is within a few days of the tour, please include the VIC in the distribution of the email you send to Erica.

Guides do occasionally give a rota tour to another guide without taking one in return. However, to remain a full member of WATGA, you must do at least 50% of the total number of tours allocated to you in the year unless the Committee decides that there are extenuating circumstances.

The updated version of the rota can be seen by clicking on:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1BLP966961ypU1MfnPrt-9R3oOYsTe6zpy-1qmmCE1EI/edit?usp=sharing>

You cannot change the rota online. Only Erica can do this.

CALL IN

Guides are required to phone the VIC by 9am on the day of their rota tour to confirm that they are doing the tour - 01962 840500 and you will need to leave an answerphone message. If a guide fails to call in, the VIC will initially contact that guide, but if for any reason the guide cannot be contacted the VIC will try to find a replacement. The call in system only applies to rota tours – it does not apply to the themed tours or private tours.

LAST MINUTE EMERGENCY

If you suffer a last-minute emergency and, as a result, are unable to do your allocated rota tour, please phone the VIC and the Chair and, if at all possible, make direct contact with any guide you think may be able to replace you. The guides' contact details for all members are attached to an email from sueds100@gmail.com dated 01/02/2024. You should also send a message to all active guides via WhatsApp.

WHATSAPP GROUP

The WhatsApp group is managed by Sally Peel. Her email is sbpeel2021@outlook.com. Please contact her if you wish to join or leave the group. The group is for active guides only and should only be used to post information and queries relevant to guiding and WATGA members.

WEATHER RELATED EMERGENCIES

If the weather forecast is giving a high risk of bad weather that could potentially endanger guides or visitors (e.g. exceptionally high winds or snow/ice making travel difficult), tours may have to be cancelled at short notice. We should consider cancelling if there is an amber or red Met weather warning for the Winchester area or wind/gusts forecast to be in excess of 40mph (i.e. qualifying as Gale Force 8). In these circumstances, the Chair, if available, and at least one other Committee member (or two Committee members if the Chair is not available) will decide whether cancellation is appropriate. Where this happens, the decision to cancel will be advertised via WhatsApp and individual guides who would have been leading cancelled tours notified. The VIC will also be informed so that they can refund any Eventbrite sales and not sell tickets at the counter. Where this happens within 24 hours of an anticipated tour, it will be treated as a no show for payment purposes. If the period is longer, the guide will be taken out for payment purposes and allocated an extra slot on the next rota. This only applies to rota tours. For themed tours, the guide leading should use their discretion as to whether to proceed. For private tours, the guide should liaise with the tour organiser.

CAR PARKING

Since April 2020 the VIC no longer reimburses car parking costs.

THEMED TOURS

At the end of each year we start to think about the programme of 'Themed Tours' which will appear on the WATGA website for the following year. Ideas are invited and members of the WATGA Executive Committee calendar a draft programme after which guides are asked to volunteer to lead the tours. Graham Reynolds keeps the master version of these tours including who is leading which tour. Go to: www.winchestertouristguides.com

Guides are not required to call or email the VIC to confirm that they are doing a themed tour. The responsibility rests with the guide. If you find that you can no longer lead the themed tour which you have taken on, it is your responsibility to find another guide to take it over. You then need to inform the VIC and Graham who will update the list and make the payments accordingly.

MEMBERS SECTION OF THE WEBSITE

This is where you will find the spreadsheet about themed tours and other important and useful information. To access it, go to the very bottom of the page and you will see the word 'members'.

Click on this and it will take you to the guide log-in page.

Enter watga in the Username box (lower case)

Enter guide in the Password box

This takes you to the Members Area.

TICKETS

Tour tickets can be bought either at the VIC or via Eventbrite. If the tour begins when the VIC is shut e.g. in the evening, the guide can sell tickets if it isn't sold out. If you are doing an evening tour, please contact the VIC before they close on the day of the tour to find out how many tickets have already been sold. Any monies collected on the evening should be handed in to the VIC within one week of the tour.

CARERS ON ROTA AND THEMED TOURS

Carers go free on guided walking tours but the VIC are able to use their discretion should they feel this is being abused.

DOGS ON ROTA AND THEMED TOURS

Dogs are welcome on guided tours but this is subject to the tour leader and group confirming they are happy. The Eventbrite platform indicates that dog owners wishing to bring their dog on a tour should contact the VIC first to check on arrangements. Visitors should be made aware that some places refuse admittance to dogs apart from guide dogs and assistance dogs. This currently includes the Great Hall. Some places e.g. Abbey House are not suitable for dogs. Well behaved dogs are now allowed inside Winchester Cathedral but they are not allowed to join a tour led by a cathedral guide.

PAYMENTS FOR ROTA AND THEMED TOURS

Graham Reynolds deals with payments for rota and themed tours from a separate 'Payments Account'. Payments for rota and themed tours are made after the end of each calendar month. The VIC emails Graham to tell him how many tickets have been sold during the month and sends him the ticket money. Graham takes off the VIC commission as required and then pays the guides.

All the rota takings for the month are averaged between the guides who have taken tours during that month. If you have taken 3 tours you get 3 times more than someone who took only one tour regardless of how many people went on each tour (even the no-shows).

Information about who has taken which themed tour is on the WATGA website, and Graham will use this information to work out who should be paid for these tours so it is important that you tell him by email if there have been any changes. If you are unable to do a themed tour allocated to you, please check with Clare Dixon and Karen Dagwell as to who else is keen to do the tour in question. Once you have found a replacement, please tell Clare so that the information on the Website and with the VIC can be updated.

After deductions for back-markers and any partner organisations, if relevant that month, the remaining money is divided evenly between those who have taken the themed tour. There are sometimes exceptions to this rule.

Payment is made to the guides by BACS. Once he has paid everyone Graham will send an email which contains all the information about who has been paid what. Please check that the information about the number of tours you have led is correct.

PRIVATE AND GROUP TOURS

The VIC receives the initial query from the customer. The VIC staff will acknowledge receipt of the enquiry and find a guide or guides for the tour. They will confirm the name of the guide booked to the customer. They will then email the 'Guided Tour Booking Form' to the guide(s) who has/have been booked. If more than one guide is booked for a particular tour, one guide will be the lead guide. The VIC will tell all guides booked for a tour who is the lead guide. The VIC will be introducing a booking fee, payable to them by the customer, but to date this has not been set up. When this is introduced, it will have no direct impact on the guides.

It is then up to the guide/lead guide to contact the customer as soon as possible and to confirm with them the details of the tour e.g. meeting point, length of tour, type of group etc. If the group wishes to visit e.g. the Cathedral or Great Hall, the guide makes the booking. Having made the necessary bookings, the guide or lead guide completes the rest of the 'Guided Tour Booking Form' and emails it to the customer, with a copy to other guides booked for the tour.

Please contact the customer and deal with all their queries promptly so that the VIC is not bothered by customers seeking more information about their tours.

Guides are not required to ring or email the VIC to confirm they are doing the tour. If for any reason you are unable to do the tour having taken it on, it is your responsibility to find a replacement and to advise the customer, the VIC and the lead guide.

PAYMENT

The 'Guided Tour Booking Form' states that payment is due to the guide on the day by cash or cheque or in advance by BACS. You may want to draw this to the customer's attention! Take a receipt with you when you go to meet the group. Some customers may want a written invoice and/or the details with which to make a BACS transfer.

INFORMATION FROM THE BOOKING FORM RE CANCELLATION

'Please inform the named guide below of a cancellation as soon as possible. A cancellation charge of 50% of the cost of the guided tour is charged if the tour is cancelled 5-3 days before the tour. The full cost of the tour is payable if the tour is cancelled less than 3 days before the tour. If the group arrives after the agreed finishing time on the day of the tour, this counts as a cancellation and the full fee will be payable'.

INFORMATION FROM THE BOOKING FORM RE LATE ARRIVALS

'Please phone the guide on the mobile number given below **as soon as you know that you are delayed**. As long as they have heard from you, the guide will wait up to 30 minutes from the booked start time. After this the tour will be shortened accordingly. No tour will be possible if you arrive after the original finishing time. In either case, the full cost will still be payable'.

CONTACTS

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL:

Please pre book group visits through the Cathedral's Visitor Experience Team:

visits@winchester-cathedral.org.uk or phone: 01962 857275

The date can then be checked by a member of the Visits Team and any changes i.e. sudden closure of the Cathedral, the group can then be contacted. Groups taken into the Cathedral for a tour by a Blue or Green Badge Winchester City Guide receive discounted entry fees:

- £6 per person applies for a tour of circa 30 mins for groups of 10 or more.

NB The group must pay **as a group** not individually at the entrance desk. They do not get an annual tickets for this price.

- Under 16s in a family group go free.

To keep within the spirit of these concessionary charges, the group must be accompanied around the cathedral by the guide.

Please do not abuse this concessionary rate.

Group admission for visits longer than 30 minutes:

- £8 per person applies for groups of 10 or more but they do not get an annual ticket for this price.

When booking, ensure that you explain that you will be the guide taking the group around as you are not booking to use a Cathedral Guide.

Sundays: Groups now need to pay to visit the Cathedral which is open roughly between 12.30pm to 2.30pm, depending on service times. See above for group rates.

Young people: If you are taking a group of young people into the Cathedral, the booking should be made via: Emma Bourner who is Director of Learning: emma.bourner@winchester-cathedral.org.uk

Winchester Cathedral has indicated that these prices may be reviewed during the year.

The GREAT HALL

Rota tours do not currently include viewing inside the hall as part of the tour. By special arrangement with Hampshire Cultural Trust we can, however, tell visitors on our tours that if they can produce proof of a ticket for one of our tours for the same day, they can enter the Great Hall for the £6 group visitor price. This ticket now includes entry to the Westgate Museum.

Private groups wishing to visit the Great Hall will need to be pre booked by emailing info@historicwinchester.co.uk. Private groups should be booked in advance. Occasionally the Great Hall is closed for events, filming etc so it is best to check their website beforehand.

Pilgrims School

If you would like to take a group in to see the Pilgrims Hall, please book in advance. For visits during term time and holidays contact - Kirsty Dennett at: kdennett@pilgrims-school.co.uk or ring 01962 854189.

St Cross Hospital

For group bookings contact the Porter on 01962 851375 or email: porter@hospitalofstcross.co.uk