



THE TOWN COMMON

WHERE WINCHESTER COMES TOGETHER

The **Town Common** is a non-partisan, community based initiative whose sole mission is to be of service to Winchester in building a caring and inclusive community. Grounded in respect for all, our primary focus is to come together in actual and virtual gathering spaces to:

- Promote respectful listening, critical thinking, and constructive conversation
- Inspire community action and engagement
- Facilitate connection, collaboration, and individual and organizational initiative

We hope to strengthen Winchester by addressing the alienation, social isolation, and hostility that often challenge our country. Our aspiration is to increase a radius of trust, drawing people together and to the center of local community life.

How the **Town Common began: An Actual Gathering Space**

In response to Winchester residents expressing concern about the coarsening of national political rhetoric and its effect on the respect, safety, and well-being accorded individuals, the Winchester Multicultural Network's former director Aba Taylor and community advisor Tom Howley led an open meeting at the Library in November 2016. Over 120 people came to share experiences, listen, and support each other. A strong consensus emerged to meet again to identify initiatives, remind ourselves of Winchester's best values of inclusive respect, and strengthen the active, non-partisan civic engagement that has long been our Town's tradition.

Civic Gathering #2, at the Jenks Center, built on that consensus and saw the Select Board and the School Committee joining in partnership with the Network. Passionate, enthusiastic participation marked further Civic Gatherings, each drawing over 80 people. These actual gatherings began to be facilitated by an informal group working under the name of Town Common Task Force (TCTF).

Next CIVIC GATHERING #6 is set for October 17, 2018, at the Jenks Center, 7 p.m.

Find your seat at this welcoming table of Winchester residents—whether you have attended none, one, or all.

The single biggest opportunity for the **Town Common: A Virtual Gathering Space for Winchester's Civic Life**

While we strongly believe that there is no substitute for actual civic gatherings, participants also said that the missing link for strong, sustained, and collaborative civic engagement--and the resource that Winchester could no longer be without--is a truly accessible website that would link users, in one place, to information on municipal, school, and community organizations and activities. Such a website--that would facilitate active coordination and planning among community organizations, promote volunteerism and activism, amplify rather than duplicate efforts, as well as foster constructive dialogue across differences--is a compelling vision for our community.

- The TCTF has expanded to include several people with technical expertise, website development and management. We are beginning to construct a website, <https://towncommon.weebly.com>

And have invited residents (who had signed up at a prior civic gathering) to participate in an initial google email planning list. Get on the list today!