

## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST UPDATE OF 2012.

*Given the approval of Augur Buchler as preferred bidder for North Place, we look forward to an exchange of contracts in the near future. Whilst completion is conditional upon securing planning consent it is all extremely encouraging, demonstrating that Cheltenham is able to attract investment partners of this calibre.*

*A further significant piece of good news is the decision by NFUMutual to progress with a planning application for the second phase of the Brewery which will connect both the existing Brewery to the High Street in a more coherent manner and also link up with developments on North Place.*

*These two schemes alone will generate significant job opportunities in addition to supporting wider ambitions relating to town centre living and improving the connectivity of spaces through enhanced public realm.*

*A positive meeting was held in December with a representative of the Department for Transport in pursuit of the County Council Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid which affects Cheltenham, Gloucester and the Golden Valley corridor. The final bid is due to be submitted in February 2012 and a meeting has been arranged through the efforts of Martin Horwood MP with the relevant Minister to help promote our ambition. A successful bid would allow Boots Corner to be limited to public transport only and thus transform the centre of Cheltenham.*



Graham Garbutt – independent chair

## MEET A BOARD MEMBER

John Rawson studied modern history at St John's College, Oxford, before taking his first job as a copywriter



with Brann Direct Marketing in Cirencester. He worked in the direct marketing industry for various agencies as a writer and creative director before starting his own marketing consultancy in 1995. He has lived in Cheltenham since 1973 and is married with two grown-up daughters.

John has served on the Borough Council for 15 years, including a year as Mayor. He is currently Cabinet Member for Built Environment, having previously served in the Finance and Culture portfolios. He also served on the County Council for 20 years, including a year as Chairman of the Council and five years as Chairman of the Social Services Committee.

John has a record of activity in the voluntary sector, including three years as Chairman of Age Concern Gloucestershire (now Age UK Gloucestershire). He is a long-serving school governor and was a member of the project steering group for the new All Saints Academy.

John believes that every generation of Cheltonians has done its best to improve the town, and that the Taskforce presents the best opportunity for our generation to do this.

## PROMENADE EAST

After the successful upgrade to Imperial Square in 2011 the next phase will be the Eastern Promenade. Stretching from LKBennett at the South to Beards in the North the area will be transformed with the installation of new paving starting in March 2012. These works are part of an ongoing partnership between Gloucestershire Highways and Cheltenham Borough Council.

The paving will match the existing York Stone on the pedestrianised area outside Cavendish House, whilst the verge fronting the road dominated by the trees and their root structures will be finished in bonded resin.

New bus shelters will be installed in revised locations to improve the facilities for bus users.

It is hoped to undertake a similar upgrade to the Promenade west, fronting the Long Gardens next year as funding allows.

Additionally there are discussions taking place with the Regent Arcade concerning improving links from the Southern end of the arcade through Ormond Place to the Promenade East.

## NORTH PLACE & PORTLAND STREET



Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet conferred preferred bidder status to Augur Buchler on 19th October 2011 following recommendations from both full Council and the Task Force.

This was for a scheme that delivered 122 housing units, a 300 space public car park, a new bus node, public square and a foodstore with its own car parking provision and a hotel above the foodstore.

Having secured preferred bidder status the focus has been to finalise scheme design to reflect any challenges that had been identified through the public feedback to the scheme and also identify key issues such as the breadth of additional studies that will be necessary for the scheme to be considered at the next stage which it is hoped will be planning.

On 23rd December other bidders were advised of the intention of CBC to proceed with Augur Buchler, in line with OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) regulations. Such a process allows any unsuccessful bidders to challenge the decision should they feel that grounds exist for such a challenge.

Augur Buchler and their advisers (Mouchel, Alder King, CgMS) have now started the pre-application discussions with the planning department and hope to have completed all necessary studies such as a traffic impact assessment in readiness for an April 2012 planning application submission.

## THE BREWERY PHASE 2



NFUMutual as owners and operators of the brewery complex have long harboured ambitions to better connect the site to the High Street and hence rest of town. With the acquisition of the 1960's

retail block that separates the two, the opportunity moved a step closer and with the encouragement of the Task Force, the owners have been considering options.

We are aware from public feedback that there is general support for such a move and thus were delighted when the basis of a scheme emerged. However the need for commercial viability has never been more paramount and so it has been understandable that the investors have been cautious in light of the general economic environment.

The NFUMutual board have however sanctioned the funding for the next stage of development; the submission of a planning application, in light of the schemes emerging as a result of the creation of the Task Force.

Should the scheme achieve a planning consent then the NFUMutual will also wish to see improvements to Boots Corner before they invest as they see that as the single remaining obstacle to their proposed investment.

Whilst this is not an unreasonable position to hold given the scale of the investment required it further emphasises the importance of joined up decision making to achieve the improvements that we seek for our town – see Local Sustainable Transport Fund Bid below.





## Local Sustainable Transport Fund Bid

Whilst the County Council bid to the Department for Transport was not supported in the first round it was not rejected. GCC with partners have undertaken further work which it is hoped will improve the potential chances for success.

Key amongst these was the commissioning of an independent study by DCResearch to demonstrate the direct and indirect effects anticipated with the Dept for Transport investment. This along with further traffic modelling inputs were informally presented at a meeting in mid December preceded by a walkabout of the pedestrian/traffic challenges posed and the highlights of Boots Corner, the tortuous route to the Brewery and the pleasures of St. Margaret's Road were all included.

Any monies secured will be supported by funding from both GCC and CBC to undertake significant works at Boots Corner and elsewhere which will enable the removal of through traffic from the town centre. The Boots Corner scheme will clearly support the proposals for the Brewery Phase 2.

The independent case for the investment made compelling reading and cited both economic and qualitative measures associated with town centre enhancement schemes.

The Task Force is grateful to Martin Horwood MP who has arranged a meeting with Norman Baker, Under-Secretary of State for Transport, to enable the County Council and partners to rehearse the potential of the bid. Outcome of the bid will be known in June 2012.



## St Margaret's Road

The junction efficiency trial (JET) whereby sets of traffic lights will be turned off has now been scheduled to begin the week following the Cheltenham Festival potentially running from the 19th to 30th March 2012.

The objective of the trial is to establish whether fewer sets of lights improve the flow of traffic whilst at the same time maintaining safety for other road users.



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## Cheltenham Spa Station



The Task Force has been involved in the opportunity that is presented by the renewal of franchises and has had discussions with potential bidders on the one hand and assisted with the production of a concept statement that it is hoped will help inform potential franchise bidders of the aspirations for the town, especially in light of the growth in passenger numbers but limited investment in facilities over recent years.

### Key factors include:-

- A more comfortable waiting and interchange environment
- Opportunities to improve the operation of trains
- Improve pedestrian, cycle, taxi and bus access
- Increase on-site car parking and thus reduce impact on neighbouring streets
- Provide a basis for improving the historic (but not listed) station building
- Enhance the station setting in order to improve the approach to the site and sense of arrival to the town



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