

WELCOME TO OUR SECOND UPDATE OF 2012.

The most welcome news is the exchange of contracts between Cheltenham Borough Council and Augur Buchler on the North Place & Portland Street sites. Whilst completion is conditional upon securing planning 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 their 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 further welcome development has been the start of the Gloucestershire County Council works on upgrading the Eastern promenade. Whilst these will be temporarily interrupted to allow for the Olympic Torch relay the works are scheduled to complete by mid summer.



Graham Garbutt – independent chair

MEET A BOARD MEMBER

David Oldham returned to Cheltenham from London in 1973 having practised as a shipping lawyer. Since then, he has worked as a property lawyer for over 30 years acting for local regional and national companies within the practice of BPE Solicitors based in Cheltenham. He was senior partner for 15 years.



He retired in 2005 to go on to manage a financial services offshoot of the practice which relied heavily on IT support. During that time he devised and designed three major software programs supporting the business which, through Ochresoft Technologies Limited of Swindon, is now also used by a large number of solicitor firms in England and Wales.

David is a lifelong sports enthusiast and played rugby and various racquet sports over the years. He has represented the County at squash and is a former captain of Cheltenham Squash Club. Retirement now permits not only frequent golf and visits to Kingsholm but more particularly the opportunity to take a keen interest in the support of good quality future development of the Town.

PROMENADE EAST

Works have begun by GCC on the East Promenade upgrade. The photos below depict the existing situation, plus the recently completed (and publicly well received) works at Imperial Gardens and works in progress.

The programme of works will take circa 12 weeks but will be suspended for the Olympic torch relay.



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NORTH PLACE & PORTLAND STREET



Cheltenham Borough Council and Augur Buchler have exchanged contracts for this site which essentially opens the door to the next phase which will be for the developers to secure a planning consent.

As the scheme evolved from that initially made public there have been some amendments but the key principles have remained constant. The hotel is no longer a feature of the scheme but the number of car spaces has grown with 338 proposed for the foodstore and 308 for the wider public.

Skanska remain the housing partner and it is anticipated that the developer will confirm the foodstore operator in the near future. Whilst they have board approval both parties have agreed to remain silent until contracts between themselves are finalised. Most importantly from the perspective of the town is that it will be a genuine foodstore with 80% of all products being food and secondly this proposal aligns with the Mary Portas Review, the principles of which have been accepted by Government, in that it will be a town centre rather than out of town development.

REGENT ARCADE

Works have begun on the upgrade to the frontage of this flagship retail centre. They will deliver an improved frontage and critically create the type of space that key retailers seek in Cheltenham but which is in short supply. A very welcome addition to the High

Street that should help anchor key retailers.

Computer generated images of finished works



GROSVENOR TERRACE



As North Place and Portland street continue to progress, plans have been prepared to improve the existing car park at Grosvenor Terrace which is the closest car park to the High Street and yet is little used.

A project with a range of potential outcomes is being finalised in preparation for tendering. There will be some standard repair and maintenance works, various technological upgrades eg CCTV and ticketing, and an opportunity to improve the environmental performance of the site as well as improving the connections between the car park site and the High Street, through Grosvenor Terrace and Highbury Lane, the two pedestrian routes.

Above: Existing car park and a sample image from elsewhere showing what could be achieved to "soften" the current harsh exterior.

HIGHWAYS



In addition to the standard traffic modelling for schemes such as North Place we await the outcomes of the GCC Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid, anticipated late May/early June which will determine the approach to be adopted towards the town centre traffic flows.

The junction efficiency trial on St. Margaret's Road will hopefully assist in understanding what alternatives might work instead of the existing signal controlled junctions, which are perceived as a source of frustration for vehicle users and pedestrians alike.

Although the trial has been delayed, following safety concerns raised by blind / partial sight groups, the proposals are being redesigned and the trial is now likely to take place in the summer.