

# WELCOME TO OUR FIRST UPDATE OF 2020

This month sees the tenth anniversary of the Task Force's first meeting. Our early ambitions have very largely been met and new projects have been initiated and completed as opportunities arose: for example the John Lewis store, the Brewery Quarter, Cheltenham Spa station upgrades, Lower High Street and a range of public realm improvements, the Quadrangle upgrade, new office development at Honeybourne Place offices, the mixed development at Regency Place, and a number of successful Growth Deal bids for large infrastructure projects. New mechanisms have been set up to take forward some of our initiatives, including the Cyber Park and the Municipal Offices.

It's timely now to review our role: we had anticipated that the Gloucestershire 2050 project might bring some clarity to this review but after some years it remains sketchy. We will continue to offer advice and constructive suggestions. Meanwhile Task Force members have themselves begun to conduct a structured debate and of course we welcome thoughts from colleagues and partners.

Recent good news included the Cheltenham Business Improvement District reporting in December a 7% increase in footfall over the previous year despite the challenges facing the retail sector nationally, which is clearly testament to the positive image that Cheltenham continues to present.

The county council's traffic regulation committee recommended on a majority vote that phase 4 of the Cheltenham Transport Plan (the 'Boots Corner trial') be scrapped and this was supported by GCC cabinet in December. The evidence had demonstrated significant modal shift with more people walking, cycling and using public transport, but this controversial decision will reintroduce several thousand vehicles a day into the town centre. These are seemingly difficult political choices but will perhaps become more straightforward as climate concerns take hold.

Local media took a [strong interest](#) in the matter.

Meanwhile wider trends internationally and in the UK [indicate similarly controversial moves to improve urban environments](#).

After the uncertainties of recent years we look forward to seeing how the new government will translate its commitments and aspirations into concrete actions, and how these can best support opportunities in the borough and the county.



Graham Garbutt – independent chair

## WEST CHELTENHAM

**Key developments include the publication of the Supplementary Planning Document for West Cheltenham, which is now available for public consultation.**

<https://cybercentral.commonplace.is/>

In parallel to this consultation, GCC are progressing the West Cheltenham Transport Infrastructure Project; this is the A40 upgrade from J11 of the M5 through to Arle Court, Telstar Way and finally the cycle connection to Lansdown Bridge and the railway station.

Phases 1 & 2 will focus upon the A40 widening from J11 and improving Arle Court roundabout, which includes access to the Park & Ride facility. Current ambition is for GCC to have a contractor mobilised by May 2020.



## CHELTENHAM TRANSPORT PLAN

Following significant public objection, the final phase of the 'Boots Corner' trial hasn't been taken forward. The county council's Traffic Regulation committee heard from objectors and supporters of the final phase of the scheme, before recommending that the road be reopened to traffic. Among concerns expressed by local residents was a perception that the closure had diverted traffic and pollution into residential streets.

The county council is, nonetheless, committed to investing more into the area in the next year – including replacing the obsolete pedestrian crossing, and narrowing the carriageway to a single lane, to keep traffic speeds down and help pedestrians. On the ring road by The Brewery traffic signals are being linked this spring to improve performance and later in the year the signals at North Place and Portland Street junctions will be replaced. Plans are being worked up to slow traffic on Rodney Road near the High Street and other public realm work is being progressed.

Both the county and borough councils are committed to working together to build on the progress made by the earlier parts of the Cheltenham Transport scheme, and to keep working to improve transport in the town.

# CHELTENHAM SPA STATION

The project upgrade continues and pleasing to report that the initial phase of works are approaching completion. The 300 bay bicycle rack has been installed and the new access steps completed.

Meanwhile phase 1 of the car park expansion is complete, phase 2 underway and the new short term drop-off zone retaining wall partially complete. Once these latter works are complete it will allow the Honeybourne Line cycle and pedestrian path to be re-opened with the extension to the Trimnasium.

The final element will be the cycle and pedestrian link connection to Lansdown Bridge, which in turn will connect to the cycle route upgrade works to be delivered by GCC around Arle Court, funded by GFirst LEP. We are awaiting a final programme for this Lansdown Bridge element from partners at Network Rail and GWR.



## OTHER PROJECT UPDATES



### The Quadrangle

Refurbishment is progressing (see photos to the left)

### 111-117 High Street

The hoardings have been removed and the mix of retail and office space is now available

### Public Realm

The next phase being targeted is Cambray Place and a design team has been appointed to progress technical drawings. It is hoped that works will be delivered by the end of 2020

## LATEST HEADLINES...

A quick round-up of some of the latest news stories

### NOVEMBER

[General Election delays decision on whether Boots Corner closure is made permanent in Cheltenham](#)

### DECEMBER

[OPINION: Short-sighted and environmentally dangerous - Why reopening Boots Corner is NOT the best thing for Cheltenham](#)

[OPEN AGAIN: Boots Corner closure scrapped by Gloucestershire County Council](#)

[Councillors unanimously vote to reopen Boots Corner to traffic](#)

[Boots Corner is back open - but bad news if you were fined during Cheltenham's most controversial road closure](#)

[Boots Corner in Cheltenham to reopen after 18 months of being shut off to traffic](#)

[Driving through Boots Corner in Cheltenham is about to change forever, again](#)

[FAILED: Boots Corner to be reopened after 18 month trial closure](#)

[How much will it cost to turn the clock back on Boots Corner? Key questions answered](#)

[Decision to abandon Boots Corner closure trial is not an open and shut case for people in Cheltenham](#)

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