

Granta Park Access including The Apiary

Summary

Bernie and Peter, chairmen of the Abington parish councils, met in January with both BioMed Realty and TWI, the landowners at Granta Park (GP), and then in February with Nuffield Health, who are managing the fitness and wellness centre at the Apiary¹. We also met with Bidwells, who are managing agents for the whole of Granta Park.

Our objective was to clarify the situation on access to the site by Abington residents. All village residents are welcome to visit but must collect a visitor pass from the main gate. Granta Park employees and some others, such as nursery customers, also have access via pedestrian entrances.

There is a new very high specification gym at the Apiary, which has very recently been opened to employee subscribers. The Discovery café has closed, and a new, larger dining facility has opened in the Apiary and remains open to all visitors.

We have kept in touch since these meetings and are still hoping for concessions on the pedestrian entrances for all village residents. We have also been in contact with Bancroft Park Farm and their agents Cheffins about re-opening the pedestrian entrance from Bourn Bridge Road.

Meeting with BioMed, 9 January 2017 – Bernie Talbot & Peter Brunning

We met with Doug Cuff, Granta Park site director for BioMed, on one of his regular visits from the USA.

We agreed that 'visitor' access to the Park for villagers is now working well but access via main gate only is inconvenient (over 1 mile from the village) and does not allow circular walks. Doug confirmed that Gym members will be 'customers' and therefore given access via pedestrian entrances.

The opening event for GP employees was to be in early March. They do not expect membership numbers to cause any capacity problems.

The old gym has closed, in the Cricket Pavilion, will be the Granta Park Estate Office.

Update phone calls on 26 March 2018

BioMed are keen to open up the Gym to the village and will do so as soon as possible. They are still working on a few issues that they wish to resolve first.

¹ The Apiary is the new building/amenity centre on Granta Park that houses both the fitness centre and the restaurant

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Meetings with TWI, 10 January 2017 – Bernie Talbot & Peter Brunning

We met with Mike Russell (and others for part of the meeting)

Review of status since public meeting.

- Urgent action was required after security breaches to satisfy insurers, customers etc. There are also some hidden dangers on the site, including construction sites. TWI covers a large area, with several buildings.
- It appears that intruders were very well briefed about security arrangements, which led to concerns about public access. In particular, the CCTV was avoided; as a result, there are now more cameras!
- Intrusions by small numbers of youths to potentially dangerous places, for activities such as skate-boarding, have dropped to zero. Complaints from park users relating to dog fouling have also dropped to zero.
- Visitor access via the main gate, to areas marked on a public map, has been agreed and implemented. *It was noted that this access is not very convenient for village residents and the arrangement does not permit circular walks.*

TWI feel they have worked hard to answer criticism, including making arrangements for, and sponsoring, the 10K run. They noted that they have made significant contributions to village causes over recent years.

Discussion about possible access around perimeter of Park

- Access to Cutting Road is still tricky due to the construction site; a good alternative route via Chalky Road is available for pedestrians wishing to walk from North Road to the village centre.
- Sluice Wood access has a few issues but could be investigated.

Other points

- Access for visitors / customers of park businesses is not a problem – this includes the nursery and the new gym.
- Access for Naturewatch was agreed. More regular access for David Farrant (and other specific people) might be possible.
- PB is following up access via ‘coach road’ from Bourn Bridge Road with Bancroft Park. This is less urgent until village residents are allowed access via pedestrian entrances.
- Abington Hall (listed building) repainting ran into issues with planning / conservation and needs to be revisited. Landscaping is also a commitment.
- It was acknowledged that timing of the closure so soon after the granting of Phase II outline planning permission was very unfortunate! It has led to some cynicism about TWI and Granta Park within the village. TWI commented that the timing of recent actions was based on the criminal activity experienced, and advice received relating to minimising the risk of reoccurrence.

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Meeting at the Apiary on Wednesday, February 21, 2018

We met with Danny Bellew (Nuffield Health) and Tracy Thomas (Bidwell) for about 90 minutes.

The building is owned by BioMed, with the gym being managed by Nuffield. The restaurant is managed to a different company ('TnS'). Bidwells is the managing agent for all parts of Granta Park and is sorting out and running the building. Any significant decisions regarding operation of the building will need to be agreed by TWI and BioMed in association with all the occupiers on the park.

There is additional equipment to install and commission and a lot of snagging to do. They were working hard towards an official opening in early March and hoped that most things would be sorted out by then! Gym members all have an induction, including health check, and sign disclaimers etc.

In view of the evolving usage patterns and completion status, they cannot yet commit to dates for village use – but they are keen as they want to make it a success!

A quick tour revealed a very pleasant and spacious gym, climbing wall, squash courts, spinning room, fitness rooms, sauna, (indoor) swimming pool, and tennis courts (outside). The café is open to all and it's hoped that employees will use it as their main eating place.

The café has moved to the new building so is much bigger. We understand that visitors can use it as before - but of course visitors have to use the main entrance.

Meeting with Granta Park Access Group on Monday, February 26, 2018

Peter & Bernie met with the 'Access Group' (some of those chosen to represent the village at the public meeting) and explained the situation as they understood it. There will be a further meeting in early April.