

Improving our Market Place



Newsletter 08
23/02/18

Thank you to those who have been interacting to say how pleased you are to see the quality of the surfacing that is emerging along the Boots side of the site. We are now able to get a sense of what will be achieved; the area on the corner in front of Clarks is considerably more spacious than before and the footpath in front of Piccolo Arco and Timpsons is much wider which will help pedestrians better navigate the town and also allow the restaurant to flow out onto this area. The carriageway itself, whilst wide enough for all traffic, will have the effect of slowing down vehicles as they approach the area, this is being achieved by the tarmac being narrower but lined with granite setts. The granite sett loading bays and disabled spaces are also near to completion on the Boots side.



The installation of the main tree pits is now complete, this has been a huge engineering challenge; each pit is 16m³ and is then constructed with purpose designed structural cells to ensure that each tree has sufficient space and nutrients to thrive, whilst also ensuring that the surfacing is well protected from any future root damage. In addition



these systems also ensure the right level of structural support is given to each tree and root barriers are in place, where necessary, to protect any surrounding buildings. As previously indicated the trees are varieties of Hornbeam and all will be semi-mature at a planting height of approximately 5m, guards and grilles will be in place to offer protection in the first few years of growth. You will see trees arriving on site next week.



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The access to Broad Street will be open on March 23rd with Denmark Street re-closed the same day. This is a key milestone and we know that everyone will be very pleased and relieved; we would like to once again thank everyone for their support and forbearance as the difficulties underground have been resolved.

From this date everyone will be able to enjoy better access on the north side of the site, the pavement immediately in front of Piccolo Arco and Timpsons will be complete though the additional space adjacent to the road will still need to be laid with Yorkstone, the latter needs to follow from the main area in order for the pattern to align. Access to and around the Rose Street corner will be much easier with the temporary traffic management and barriers cleared. At this point there will still be work to complete the footways directly in front of the shops on the Boots side and the bridges will have to return; pedestrians will walk from the new paving adjacent to the road over the bridges into the shops. This area will be returned to for completion in early May.



Understandably we have been receiving questions about the overall completion date. At the moment Balfour Beatty's planned completion is July. Whilst this is later than envisaged and we know will be disappointing news it has proved impossible to recoup the delays that have been experienced in terms of the issues underground. It is the aim to claw some time back but we feel it is better to be open and honest with everyone about the current position. You will appreciate that the further into the construction the less problems are left to uncover but Denmark Street still has to be excavated and further problems may be revealed. We will keep you updated through our regular weekly updates and these newsletters.

This end date does not however mean that the whole site will remain closed off, there will be large areas completed between now and July and these will come back into pedestrian and business use as soon as they can be handed over. It is the intention to bring the market back as soon as possible, even if the project is not completely finished and we will be working with Balfour Beatty and our traders to make this happen.

Balfour Beatty are well underway with the final preparation on the west side in front of the Coop etc and the Yorkstone will start to go down in mid-March. Bridges will also need to return to the front of the shops on this side whilst surfacing is laid down the length of the walkway and Balfour Beatty will work with individual shops at that point.

Timeline:

- March 23rd - Access to Broad Street re-opened
- March 23rd - Denmark Street re-closed
- Main area of Market Place (where Market is usually sited) completed - Early April
- Broad Street shop fronts completed - Early May
- Denmark Street carriageway realignment - Mid June
- Denmark Street shop fronts completed - Mid-July
- Market Place shop fronts completed - Early July
- The use of the new benches and street furniture - Early April.

Throughout this period WBC Highways and Balfour Beatty will be continually assessing opportunities to recoup time and open up the site as soon as is feasible.

Upcoming events such as the May Fayre and International Street Concert will still be taking place.

Of Interest

The Wokingham Mosaics

As the Market Place opens up you will see a number of circular mosaics embedded in the surface. These have been commissioned to add cultural interest and colour and others will be sited in the newly regenerated spaces over the coming years.

Working with mosaic artist, Rosalind Wates, they will highlight historical connections and events in Wokingham.



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The first to be laid will be one in front of Boots commemorating the Heelas family and their original department store with others closely following to mark the annual firework display, the Market Charter of 1219 and a poppy for Remembrance. More information about them will be supported on an app.

Within Peach Place the Methodist Church is funding a larger wall mounted display of mosaic fish. All of the mosaics are being privately sponsored by local groups and individuals and we are delighted that they have embraced the vision and joined the project. We are sure that everyone will enjoy these additions to our town and find the background to them very interesting.



Publicity on the Hoardings

Working with The Wokingham Business Association Balfour Beatty has produced hoardings to promote local businesses within the town. We are delighted to be working with those businesses who responded to the invitation and continue to encourage everyone to “Shop Local”.

Elms Field

You will have seen that enabling works have begun on Elms Field this month, with the main construction works starting mid March. Both the Elms Field and Market Place project teams are working together to ensure that construction activities are coordinated, especially on the highway, to minimise impact on residents and businesses. This includes undertaking highway works in off-peak hours when there is less traffic and where works are closely located undertaking these in parallel to minimise the need for additional highway closures and restrictions.

Works update

This month has seen:

- 300m² of the new natural stone paving laid to the northern footpath along Broad Street
- Asphalt laid in the newly realigned road in Broad Street.
- In the Market Place the new tree pit systems have been installed ready for the new trees to be planted next week
- Progress has been made with the foundations for the new pavement in the main area of the Market Place.

In March:

- Completion of the works on Broad Street with the opening of the road on the 23rd March
- Completion of the foundations and starting to lay the new paving in the main area of the Market Place.



Registered site
www.ccscheme.org.uk

Next drop in session:

Town Hall

Friday 23rd March 10am - 12pm

Want to keep up to date?

The following will be regularly updated:

Wokingham Town Council website

www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk

Wokingham Borough Council website

www.wokingham.gov.uk

Wokingham Information Centre & Notice Boards at the Town Hall

Wokingham Town Council social media:

 /wokinghamtowncouncil  @wokingham_TC

Wokingham Borough Council social media:

 /wokinghamboroughcouncil  @wokinghamBC

For queries:

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@wokingham.gov.uk

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