



Bristol Property Agents  
Association

[www.bpaa.net](http://www.bpaa.net)

Spring 2025

**BPAA  
President  
Julian  
Harbottle**

## Rising to the challenge of uncertain times

**L**ast year's BPAA newsletter led with how (largely) economic concerns had stalled new development and muted transactions, but that the strong fundamentals of the Bristol market had helped achieve a reasonable (if unexciting) level of business across the sectors.

Twelve months on and it appears like déjà vu all over again, although there are some important differences.

We now have a new government: potentially, an opportunity for fresh thinking. It's still early days to judge the wider impact this will have, but any hopes that this might swiftly lead to a much-needed, more pro-business environment to boost the economy were sadly dashed in the Budget. The impact of some of the measures are reflected in the sector reports.

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Newsletter



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The broader macro-economic situation is, critically, not encouraging new development: the residential, industrial and office sector reports all point to continuing high borrowing costs dissuading a lot of the expected new starts. Construction costs are playing their part too: Bristol, quite astonishingly, now has the 10th highest building costs of any city in the world, according to the Arcadis 2024 International Construction Costs report.

We have new faces in City Hall, with the Green Party replacing the City Mayor in a new Cabinet-led administration. How will this impact the property sector? You can find that out in our interview with Cllr Tony Dyer.

Disappointingly, the delays to development are not easing the city's long-term chronic shortage of homes, or the high cost of renting – which is adversely affecting its residents as well as the council's budgets. Quite how Bristol can play its part in achieving the Government's national target of 300,000 new homes a year when the sector is dogged by viability issues remains to be seen... but the interview with Cllr Dyer does hold one or two clues.

## Causes for optimism

All that said, the bigger picture is not entirely one of doom and gloom. The continuing growth in rental levels in both the office and industrial sectors, allied to low vacancy rates, should act as a spur to developers in the coming year – and, encouragingly, occupiers are continuing their "flight to quality" in order to recruit talented people.

There should be diggers on site at some major new housing projects around the city, while the 400-acre Brabazon development (featured in this edition) will be adding more towards its total end target of 6,500 new homes.

M&S is making a welcome return to Broadmead, and Bristol continues to be a location where innovative new leisure and retail offers take root, while the ambitious new Galleries mixed-use scheme has moved a step further forward.

We remain an attractive target for investors: as 2024 came to a close, Bristol saw one of the largest deals ever transacted in the city.

## Liaison activity

Against this backdrop of challenging circumstances, the role of the BPAA is more important than ever before.

We have continued to build on our relationships with the planning authorities in the sub-region, and are now seen as a

valued and trusted partner in informing their decision-making processes far more than ever before.

That does not mean we will not be critical of decisions or attitudes that we feel will be detrimental to the clients we represent or the interests of the city. But we need to recognise that, as hard as it is being a developer, running a local authority is not easy either – especially at a time of severe financial constraints.

We have continued to strengthen our ties with other organisations that share our interests and values – notably the Bristol Property Inclusion Charter and the Bristol Forum for Built Environment – and this year's inaugural property lecture marked a fruitful step forwards in that collaborative approach. Our shared outreach work to local schools is one way in which we can increase the diversity of our profession – starting at grassroots level.

We also held constructive meetings with the Department of Business and Trade as well as Invest in Bristol and Bath – including being part of an IBB briefing to some 40 local council officers.

The valuable partnership with UWE continues to play a key role in encouraging talented young property graduates to remain in the city – the report on that is to be found inside; and we made our voice heard at a major RSS Southwest event in 2024.

## Membership activities

Away from work, being a BPAA member has never been more sociable. Our committee and other members have worked incredibly hard this year to deliver a series of superb activities – including some new events – that have cemented the bonds between members as well as raised vital funds for my chosen charity of the year: Penny Brohn UK.

Finally, can I close with my heartfelt thanks to all of you who made my year as President possible as well as inspiring. As a relative newcomer to the city's property scene (a modest 21 years with Savills), I feel incredibly honoured and privileged to have been asked to lead such a brilliant organisation.

Everyone who takes on this role will attest that it's a demanding task... but incredibly rewarding. The whole year has been spent on a steep learning curve, but I have thoroughly enjoyed the journey and meeting the many other people in our city helping to shape its fortunes.

Julian Harbottle

## Investment

# £100m end-of-year deal puts a gloss on difficult year

With interest rates slow to drop and the financial markets unimpressed with the Budget, investment into the city's property assets has been slow. But industrial stock is still proving attractive and a £100m office deal meant a good quarter to end the year on.

"When things go backwards they do so quickly. Improving can take longer," was the analysis of one city investment specialist of how the local market has stood up to what has been a difficult year nationally for a market traditionally tied to gilts.

The total investment volume into the city of £227m across seven deals represents a notable decrease on 2023, when £292m was traded and well below the five-year average of £295m.

Interest rates not budging quite as quickly as had been expected, market jitters about the economy, and global issues have all played their part. The sale agreed of EQ for upwards of £100m closed out the year positively; but the yield of c7.25% for one of the jewels in Bristol's office market crown speaks volumes of how conservatively investors are currently feeling about commercial property.

Trading in office assets was decidedly thin during the year. The only other deal of major significance was the sale to the Greater Manchester Pension



Fund, managed by Schroeders, of Northwood's 50,000 sq ft, multi-let 10 Victoria Street. Refurbished to Grade A space in 2022, there were competitive bids and a final sale price agreed of £23.1m (sub 7.25% NIY).

There is now a distinct two-tier market for offices: some investors are starting to think that now might be a good time to be counter-cyclical on those buildings that can be refurbished, with the city set to have a distinct lack of quality product available in several years' time. Buildings that aren't financially viable for remodelling and brought up to the anticipated EPC targets may well end up being repurposed.

The prospects of any new builds for the city, as with all regional cities at the moment, seem distant as viability issues remain.

## Industrial

There's a slightly different story to tell in the industrial and logistics sector. Royal London Asset Management purchased Beeches Industrial Estate, a 331,000 sq ft development, from DTZ Investors for around £47.15 million (significantly over the asking price), reflecting a net initial yield of 5.54%. While the estate is ageing, it is 97% let and has a weighted average unexpired lease term of less than two years to break – and so scope to refurbish and re-let. It is also adjacent to Stover Trading Estate, which Royal London also owns.

LondonMetric bought Farmfoods' logistics warehouse in Avonmouth, paying £26.4m for the site through a sale and leaseback deal with the retailer, while Bristol City Council put Atlantic 18, a strategic 17-acre brownfield site, on the market at the end of the year and evinced considerable interest. The site was going to second bids as this newsletter went to press. The expectation is that the site is destined to be developed as a mix of different sized mid-box units, which are currently in demand.

## Retail

In a strong sign of investor confidence in Bristol's prime retail assets, M&G Real Estate acquired its joint venture partner's interest in The Mall for an undisclosed sum. The deal brings the Bristol shopping centre back under the ownership of its original investors – M&G Real Estate and Baylis Estates – which funded the centre's construction in 1998.

The Mall, anchored by John Lewis and M&S, is nearly 100% let and trading well, while M&S has invested heavily in a refurbishment.

Retail warehousing is also proving a popular as an asset, particularly those with bulky goods consents.

## 2025

There are reasonable grounds for optimism that 2025 will see a progression in confidence and activity, spurred by inflation coming under control and the Bank of England responding with gradual improvements in interest rates. This will lead to continued improvement across the sectors, rather than a bounce back.

Yields, accordingly, are expected to improve in the short term and that will encourage some development. There are also buyers out there looking at longer-term investments, including French and US funds.

One interesting investment to watch in the city will be the 8.5 acre Templegate site – currently used for industrial and logistics, but set for mixed-use redevelopment where there is a potential for higher returns.

Development of the city's PBSA sector has also still, in theory, some way to go as increases in student numbers continue to outstrip new beds. Investor demand is strong with capital being deployed in the city from the US, Malaysia and even Australia.

# Rents climb as pressure on top quality space continues

2024 proved to be a year of mixed fortunes for the office sector. While the overall city centre take-up (at 440,562 sq ft) was lower than the five-year average of 505,713 sq ft, it was still up on 2023, where 419,180 sq ft was transacted.

**M**acro-economic factors – not least the Budget – have dented business confidence somewhat, leading to a number of requirements which were active earlier in the year being reviewed. With lease events for some companies now edging closer, a number of tenants are talking to their existing landlords about lease extensions rather than commit to a move.

The biggest deal of the year was DAC Beachcroft taking 44,196 sq ft in the first quarter at the Welcome Building. The second biggest also took

place in Q1, with the NHS acquiring 30,196 sq ft in 100 Temple Street.

A further seven deals during the year surpassed the 10,000 sq ft mark: while this is a lower than average number of larger deals – reflecting the trend of “right sizing” for many occupiers – an average number of deals in the smaller size brackets have kept agents busy.

With top quality Grade A space still in relatively short supply, rents continued their march northwards: the highest rental achieved was £48 psf at EQ, well up on the £42.50 benchmark of 2023.

EQ Building

## Availability

- With the exception of One Friary, a whole building refurb due to PC in Spring 2026 and which still has 59,000 sq ft available, nothing has started on site for the last 18 months.
- This leaves a total current office vacancy at c4.8 – 5%.
- In particular, there is now an acute shortage of new or Grade A refurbished, with the new-build vacancy rate standing at 1% and overall Grade A vacancy representing just 2% of the market.
- There is limited development supply: approx. 250,000 sq ft is completed and 340,000 sq ft currently on site and available across new and high-quality refurbished buildings

## Rents

**The new Grade A rental benchmark of £48 puts Bristol nominally at the head of its regional rivals, although the city's prime developments do incorporate high levels of amenity space.**

Professional services – accountants, lawyers and (increasingly) engineering companies – are the tenants mainly prepared to pay the new level of rents in return for ESG compliance and wellbeing amenities for their staff, such as end-of-journey facilities. From their perspective, occupational costs do not represent the biggest part of their operation and a quality workplace acts as a crucial tool for recruitment in what remains a tight labour market.

With many businesses' growth strategies growing less certain in the current economic and geo-political climate, occupiers are also increasingly looking for flexibility on lease lengths – typically 10-year leases with a five-year break on Grade A space. Landlords are (in general) prepared to accommodate this in return for an additional one or two pounds a square foot, encouraged by the current trajectory of rental growth. Rent frees remain fairly stable at around two months per year.

## New starts

Bristol, in common with most other regional cities, is seeing very little new space coming forwards. With no new starts during 2024 and only a handful of

refurbishments underway, the balance between supply and demand is tightening. While some eight developments currently have planning consent (including The Soapworks, Portwall Place, Passage Street and St Mary Le Port) land, borrowing and construction costs continue to put the viability of new projects in the balance.

This puts into question whether there will be any spades going into the ground in 2025 – unless the developer has capital available or is prepared to take a contrarian approach. The greater likelihood is that one of the refurbishments pencilled in for the city will see this an opportunity to press the button.

A major pre-let might be the trigger to one of these, not least because there are lease events on the horizon from some of the city's larger occupiers, including Hargreaves Lansdowne, Burges Salmon and TLT.

## Market factors

Hybrid working may be here to stay, but the drift back towards office working progressed another notch in 2024. Most businesses are trying to be flexible – not least because it's difficult to recruit personnel without that offer. But if the recruitment market tightens, as it probably will in the next year or so, that trend may well continue.

One less welcome trend in the sector is the increasing time being taken to get deals through the legal process – adding to the cost for clients. There's also concern following several high-profile failures in the contractor sector.

The sheer level of major infrastructure work going on over the next five years is set to have an impact on the presentation and the efficiency of the city centre in terms of the way it works.

That said, there is still optimism that 2025 will be a positive year for the office market, not least because Bristol's mixed economy remains so resilient, and there is just about enough stock to give occupiers a choice of product – allowing a level of churn. However, a question mark hovers over 2026 and beyond if no new or refurbishment projects go ahead during the year.

## Out of town

While some 187,221 sq ft were transacted in the out of town market, down on 2023's 276,867 sq ft, there was a distinct uptick in the levels of agent activity towards the end of the year, some of which will be reflected in 2025's figures: several big deals were in solicitors' hands at the end of 2024. There are also a couple of big enquiries from existing out of town occupiers looking to move nearby.

Overall vacancy rates (at circa 15%/730,000 sq ft) are, in relative terms, still well above the city centre. 1000 Aztec West remains the one recent refurbishment with space available; and while rents here are showing a big increase on the average out of town figure, they are still not breaking through the £30 psf mark – making them low in relation to the city centre – and so the question of viability for new developments remains.

**The two biggest deals of the year both came in Q2, with Sirona taking 20,420 sq ft in the South Glos Council Offices in Yate and Citibase some 19,328 sq ft at The Aztec Centre.**

While the gradual flow from out of town to the city centre continues, driven by staff wanting to work close to amenities and have easy access to public transport, there continues to be demand from companies who need to be close to the motorway network, as has always been the case with the business parks. There has also been renewed demand from defence sector occupiers, as well as energy and green energy/environment-related companies.

## Tight market sees lettings lower but rents rise

After being the star performing sector in recent years, take-up by manufacturers and logistics operators dropped sharply in 2024 – not helped by flagging consumer and business confidence, as well as a lack of suitable stock in the sizes most in demand.



The BPA 2023 report on B2 and B8 take up and supply noted a “challenging year... with many occupiers stalling decisions”, and that sentiment continued into 2024 – although a number of deals (totalling 554,006 sq ft) came in during the last quarter to lift sentiment somewhat.

Take up for the year was 1,377,272 sq ft across 141 deals, down from 2023's 1,507,225 sq ft across 142 deals, and even further adrift from the five-year average of 2,042,000 sq ft. A further 37 acres of land deals were also transacted, an improvement on the 30 acres sold in 2023.

The nature of the sector means that one or two very big box deals can turn an otherwise underperforming year into a good one, and as 2024 was ending there were high hopes of Amazon taking 884,000 sq ft at Panattoni Park – but these were not realised.

Instead the biggest single deal of the year was the 170,896 sq ft former Tata Steel Warehouse at Steel Point, Yate changing hands in November.

The largest deal for new space was the 131,573 sq ft, including 6,655 sq ft of offices, taken by EVRI on a 10-year lease at Trebor Developments and Hillwood's Central Approach, Avonmouth.

### Supply

This leaves several large format boxes still available (884,000 sq ft and 440,000 sq ft at Panattoni Park, and a further 350,000 sq ft at Mountpark) which between them represent a large proportion of the total space available.

The lack of new units coming on stream meant that stock levels are still hovering at an historic low of around just 4%, with a subsequent shortage of options for companies moving at the end of lease events – discouraging churn, as well as driving up rents. In the city centre, these have typically moved up from around £8 psf to £16 psf over the last three years.

It's a similar story in North Bristol, where the 8 unit/62,000 sq ft Skyline development from Cubex/Fiera Real Estate represents the new benchmark

locally in terms of build quality and ESG. This is the first speculative institutional stock in North Bristol since the majority of Horizon 38 was completed. Headline rents here are £16 psf.

Good quality second-hand stock in Avonmouth is being quoted at £8-10 psf and new units at £12 psf.

Despite the rent rises, land, borrowing and construction costs continue to make viability an issue, exacerbated by the economic uncertainty following the Budget. Occupiers with a lease event on the horizon are finding very few options available to them, leading to many renegotiating their current lease, albeit at a considerably higher rent.

The availability of power, including from on-site solar panels and heat pumps, is becoming a big factor for some occupiers, and this is set to become even more significant – especially for businesses requiring large amounts to store and distribute chilled or frozen foods – as the pressure grows to move towards electric vehicles.

### City centre

The city centre continues to lose space to other uses (notably PBSA). The new university campus has already seen a large number of units being replaced, and this trend is likely to persist as major new developments take shape such as Templegate Park, where 8.5 acres are planned for conversion into a mix of uses; Willway Street and Whitehouse Street are also earmarked for redevelopment. Finding new homes locally for some of the current occupiers will not be easy: while Avonmouth might represent an option for some, it will not meet the needs of businesses such as just as last-mile logistics and those serving local customers. Additionally, the lack of public transport into Severnside for staff remains unresolved.

### M49 junction

In more positive news, South Gloucestershire are reported to (finally) be starting work on completing the long-awaited junction that will radically improve motorway access for many occupiers on Severnside. Works is scheduled to begin in Q2 of 2025, and the junction (which has become something of a planning white elephant over recent years) should be open by the following summer.

As well as opening up a significant slice of land for development nearby, businesses will benefit from the cost and time savings of easier access.

**A petrol station is already pencilled in for a site close to the junction, together with several drive-throughs.**



### Hybrid space

While demand continues for hybrid space to accommodate uses such as high-end engineering or life sciences, this subsector of the market is still in its early stages. That said, the current life sciences cluster in St Philips looks set to continue evolving, boosted by the prospect of the new university campus nearby: DX have recently taken a third unit comprising 18,000 sq ft in St Philips.



### Supply and prospects for 2025

Agents are expressing cautious optimism that 2025 will prove to be a better year, not least because of the prospect of more new space becoming available, while several major requirements are currently outstanding. Yields are also outperforming those in the office sector, acting as a spur to investment.

Equation Properties are on-site at Matrix 49, a new industrial/distribution development located on Lanson Roberts Road, Severnside. The site, which extends to 65 acres, will offer a variety of unit sizes ranging up to 584,361 sq ft within three separate phases totalling over 1.1m sq ft.

Downscale from there, Link 49 is offering 15 new start-up industrial units totalling 26,000 sq ft situated within the Boscombe Business Park.

Indurent has pressed the button on their next phase at Access 18, which will comprise units of c30,000 sq ft, 55,000 sq ft and 83,000 sq ft; these units should be available in December 2025.

Two large speculative sheds (235,235 sq ft and 215,362 sq ft) are currently under construction at Matrix 49 and Indurent Access 18, both backed by American funds who take a longer-term view on the market than some of their UK counterparts. A UK developer is also rumoured to be about to construct 100,000 sq ft across six buildings in Avonmouth.

**Next in prospect will be “Atlantic 18”: the strategic 17-acre brownfield site next to Junction 18/18A was sold on behalf of the freeholder Bristol City Council and the undisclosed long leaseholder at the end of 2024.**

*Statistics courtesy of the Industrial Agents Society.*

## Conveyancing, confidence and viability concerns shape a slow but steady 2024

In contrast to some recent years, when agents were block viewing and homes regularly going above the asking price, the heat has now dissipated somewhat from the Bristol housing market, with transaction levels now returning to an average level.

The requirement for homes remains strong: the city still has a serious supply shortage. There are plenty of homes going on the market, but sales (and agents) are being frustrated by slow transaction times (typically between four and five months) while new developments are facing viability issues driven by high land, borrowing and construction costs – so very little new product is coming out of the ground, especially within a high-density urban setting.

House prices, meanwhile, held fairly steady during 2024 against a national backdrop of small increases.

As ever, there were some “hot spots” in the city, especially those areas with relatively easy access into the city centre such as Easton, St George, Redfield, Greenbank and the north side of Horfield – along with perennially popular Totterdown and Southville – while the “hot price” bracket was between £350,000 to £450,000.

Rental levels continue to rise above inflation: some PRS is coming forward, but many private landlords are shedding stock – putting further pressure on supply against a backdrop of increasing demand.

### New homes

Relatively few new homes came to the market during 2024, but the mood amongst those agents involved in development sales is that this part of the market is verging on the edge of being positive after a challenging year.

Developers are finding that the continuing high construction costs in particular, not helped by many suppliers finding more lucrative work available at Hinkley, are making it difficult to justify pressing ahead with new developments – especially larger ones – within the city centre. Bristol is now the 10th most expensive city to build in globally.

New home buyers, meanwhile, have been delaying committing to a purchase, especially off-plan, preferring to make the plunge once there is stock available. The General Election, inflation and interest rates all contributed to this. With developers having to accept discounts of anything up to 8% on some properties to sell off the last few units, and so recoup their investment, that has added to the reluctance to give the go-ahead on developments in the pipeline. With plenty of land already banked, developers are also becoming choosier about what land they buy, and becoming more risk averse to issues such as potential remediation.

In a more challenging market, those developments that have paid more attention to build quality and amenities, and have an attractive show home on site, have fared the best. Developers are also finding that being more creative with their approach and being prepared to build in customer requirements is helping to get sales over the line.

First time buyers fuel the entire market, and in the absence of government incentives, some developers are trying to offer ways of helping young buyers to get onto the housing ladder – including offering the opportunity to rent for the first six months.

### Build to Rent and PBSA

After several years when BTR was providing a large part of the city's new residential stock, viability issues have seen this sector slow significantly. Purpose built student accommodation, in contrast, is still forging ahead – with new starts on site in several locations including Temple Quarter, close to the new university campus, and at Brabazon in Filton.

### 2025

Looking forward, there is a recognition among prospective buyers that, while house prices are not likely to move dramatically, rents will continue to move sharply upwards and so making home ownership more attractive – leading to something of a resurgence towards the end of 2024 of people looking to make a decision.

The Bank of England base rate is dropping more tentatively than perhaps was previously anticipated, but more competitive rates are expected in the latter half of 2025.

Despite that, all the predictions from agents are for a good, steady year ahead, with the possibility of a slight increase in house prices.

## In the pipeline

Bristol reportedly has planning consents in place for 16,000 units, but there seems little chance of many more than 2,000 units coming out of the ground in the next 12 months – and so still not meet the council targets. That said, some exciting new schemes should get underway during 2025, along with new stages of the huge new development at Brabazon.

### Bristol Zoo

While the plans to develop 196 new homes on the site of a former zoo were put on hold during the summer, following an application for a judicial review of Bristol City Council's decision to approve the scheme, the prospects for the planned scheme on the former West Car Park site are going ahead this year. This will deliver 62 new homes (20 of which will be affordable) in a prime location.

### Ashton Gateway

Vistry Group is set to transform the former industrial, brownfield site on the old Ashton Rail Yard into 220 new homes, including 98 designated affordable properties. Once complete, it will play a role in the wider Western Harbour regeneration area.

### Longmoor

On an even larger scale, the Longmoor site (500m to the south west of Ashton Gate and next to the planned Sporting Quarter with its multi-purpose 5,000-seater arena) has consent to provide approximately 500 x 2, 3 and 4-bedroom units within an urban village environment. Both will be linked by the metrobus route and shared cycle/pedestrian paths.

### Flowers Hill

The former DWP offices and driving test centre in Brislington will be demolished to make way for new homes on a 160-unit development from Bellway, offering a mix of 1 and 2-bedroom apartments, as well as 2, 3, and 4-bedroom houses.

### Redcross Mews

This development on Redcross Street BS2 will be launching in Q2/Q3 of 2025, and comprises 34 one, two and three-bedroom flats, five of which will be shared ownership.

### Brabazon

Featured in more detail in another article, this marks the development of a new urban development within a suburban location, complete with excellent transport links into the city centre. A number of homes have already been successfully developed here out of a total of 6,500 new houses and apartments planned over the coming decades, helping to meet the demand for new homes in the north of the city. The developers are also looking to have a retirement village on the site.



Bristol Zoo

## Retail and Leisure

# Change is (finally) on the way

**M**acro-economic pressures on disposable incomes have continued to make life difficult for some retailers in the city this year, while others have exploited new niches. 2025, meanwhile, promises several major new store openings to keep footfalls up and the tills ringing, while leisure operators strive to stay on trend with what consumers want from their spare time.

A walk through Broadmead has not necessarily been the most uplifting of experiences in recent years, with several major store closures and a drift of some better-known national brands from the Galleries end towards Cabot Circus – leaving some parts looking distinctly unloved.

**But the promise of a new Marks & Spencer, itself a much-revitalised brand, to fill the 80,000 sq ft void left by the demise of House of Fraser is just one of the good news stories buoying retail agents' spirits as we enter 2025.**

Leisure operators, meanwhile, are increasingly making inroads into traditional retail territory and radically reshaping the traditional "night out" for Bristolians.

The Cinema de Lux at Cabot Circus that has stood empty for a year is to be replaced by a new Odeon cinema, while landlords Hammerson have also announced that King Pins Bowl will be adding to the leisure mix in 2025 with a 16,500 sq ft venue featuring bowling, gaming and leisure activities.

Meanwhile, the ground floor of the former Debenhams (at some point destined to be replaced by a major new housing development of 502 apartments) looks set to be converted into an "urban sports centre", which would include a skate park, roller derby rink and basketball courts – as well as a variety of other games which characterise the growing trend for "competitive socialising" among younger people.



Cabot Circus

## Mixed use development moves forward

May 2024 finally saw plans submitted for what has been described as a "once-in-a-generation" transformation of the Galleries site by Bristol developers Deeley Freed, backed by LaSalle Investment Management, who want to demolish the centre and adjoining car park and replace it with a huge, mixed-use development.

The c.£550m GDV development plans would see the 4.8-acre centre make way for: 450 homes; 100,000 sq ft of ground floor space of retail, leisure, food and beverage, health, and community uses; around 400,000 sq ft of employment space; a 250-room hotel "aparthotel"; up to 750 student beds; and 1.5 acres of public realm and green space.

The promise of significant amounts of additional homes, along with increasing amounts of unwanted retail space being converted into experiential leisure and other uses, should eventually help realise the long-held ambition to convert Broadmead into a 24-hour zone... but the wheels of major redevelopment schemes move slowly, and any changes will continue to be incremental over the next couple of years.

Cribbs Causeway has enjoyed yet another good year, and continues to remain popular with established big-name brands as well as up-and-coming ones. Some 28 retailers have renewed their leases there in the last 18 months, including several taking the opportunity to upsize, and there have been nine new lettings – including Mango, Sweaty Betty, Lego and Victoria's Secret.

## Flexibility keeping units open

**Rents in Broadmead have been topping out at £200 Zone A, matching those in Cribbs Causeway as well as our nearest retail rivals: Bath.**

The story on rents in our suburban high streets is a slightly different one. Covid led to rents being rebased in a number of locations, and this has acted as a spur to local independents to take space



The Galleries

as well as some regional operators. Gloucester Road and East Street continue to benefit from the shift towards more local shopping, while Clifton Village and Whiteladies Road also have few vacancies to fill.

Queen's Road, meanwhile, does have some vacant units, but there are rumours that big fast food operators including McDonalds, Greggs and Wingstop have some of these in their sights, as does one of the discount supermarkets – the local student population helping the location to move further on its journey away from being fashion focused.

## Leisure evolving

The leisure sector is having to come to terms with significant shifts in what consumers want to do in their social time, and new offers such as Sixes Cricket on Bordeaux Quay (effectively indoor cricket + drink) was one of the year's newcomers to the city. Putting, darts and myriad other activities are now what encourage punters to part with their pounds, while pubs, bars and night clubs are having to adapt to customers drinking less and earlier.

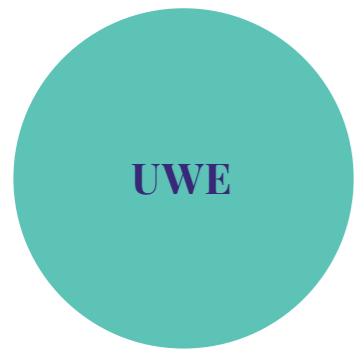
That said, there is strong demand from operators with a quality or innovative offer for smaller-scale, well-located restaurants and bars at the right rent. These are typified by small, independent chains like Fed café – who have just opened their fourth outlet in Westbury-on-Trym, and are succeeding by attracting discerning customers.

The perspective from the start of 2025 is that the persistent rumours over recent years of the imminent demise of the High Street, hastened by the rise of online shopping, have proved premature. But our traditional retail centres are changing to meet new customer expectations.

The challenge for retailers is to get the right mix of online offering and experiential shopping. Landlords, meanwhile, are often having to make compromises on rents and institutional leases to avoid paying business rates on void units: one of the lessons of Covid was that smaller, independent retailers are often more prepared to work through difficult times than some national operators.



The Galleries



## Building the future

It's been another productive year in the collaborative partnership between UWE and the BPAA, as Ytzen van der Werf, Programme Leader of UWE's Masters programmes describes.

The collaboration between UWE and the BPAA first began with the annual awards to celebrate students in the field of property education who have demonstrated "exceptional aptitude and outstanding performance". The 2024 winners were announced at the Annual Dinner in February: Tobias Jones received the BSc Undergraduate Award while the MSc Postgraduate Award went to Sam Horridge. We wish them both well in their future careers!

As this publication goes to press, the BPAA selection panel are making their choices for 2025 between the three students in each category nominated by UWE, and these will be announced at this year's Dinner.

Our collaboration now also extends to working to attract young people from more diverse backgrounds to study property at university; the Property Inclusion Charter, founded by Karl Brown, is playing its part in this initiative too. This means encouraging young people at an early enough stage to make a difference – while they are still looking at their 'A' level options – and information sessions were run during 2024 at Saint Bernadette's in Hengrove and Orchard Secondary School in Horfield to GCSE students.

The UWE Real Estate Alumni Society has gone from strength to strength this year, and several events were held to encourage connections between present and past UWE students. In April, JLL kindly hosted a gathering, while in June a visit was arranged to YTL's Brabazon development at Filton.

The boat trip around Bristol Harbour was its usual enjoyable and informative occasion, with Hannah Waterhouse providing a helpful and engaging commentary. And, also on a social level, this year saw the return of the BPAA annual Padel Tournament, held in partnership with UWE.

The linkages with BPAA have strengthened over the last year in other ways too: several companies opened their doors for students to see



what their working environment is like – an excellent introduction for the students to working life, but also a good way for companies to build a rapport and attract future applicants.

### Mentoring success

The mentor scheme set up several years ago continues to grow and play an increasingly important role – not only in encouraging and fostering talent, but in helping to build bonds between companies and potential future employees. Some 90 BPAA members have signed up, along (currently) with around 125 students.

Into the future, attracting talented young people into the profession – especially those from more diverse backgrounds – has to be a priority for both ourselves and BPAA members... not least because we are competing with professions like accountancy and law, which are better understood. Helping young people to recognise that this is a profession where a wide range of different skills and talents are well rewarded is one part of that. So too is conveying the narrative to a generation that often has ideals about pursuing a career with social purpose that the property sector plays a key role in the economy and in people's lives.

### Into the future...

Attracting the brightest and best minds into the industry also means bringing in graduates from other disciplines.

While BPAA members regularly recruit UWE students after graduating from their first degrees, we are also keen to encourage more to send their postgrads to us too. In particular, we run an online Masters course where students can attend lectures remotely in their own time from anywhere in the world, as well as engage in evening webinars.

And, finally, we are looking to find ways to encourage more of our students to become BPAA members – not least, by breaking down the nervousness that some young people have about attending events. Perhaps one way forward is for us to co-design events which are more student-led and so slightly less daunting... any suggestions on this from BPAA members would be most welcome!



## The Masterplan for Brabazon

February 2024 saw YTL Developments being granted approval for its ambitious masterplan to create a new neighbourhood on a 400-acre site at the former Filton Airfield.

The transformation over the next couple of decades of the largest area of brownfield land in the South West into a new urban destination includes:



Up to 6,500 new homes of every type and tenure – from rental apartments to flats for first-time buyers, open-market houses and properties for retirement living. 1,700 of these homes will be affordable



A cultural hub, alongside shops, cafes, restaurants and a health care facility



86 acres of new open space, including parks, public space and a lake set within Brabazon Park – the largest new urban public park in the South West for over 50 years



Three new schools and plans for a higher education or research campus



A new Arena for Bristol, with a capacity of up to 19,500



Up to 3.7 million square feet of commercial space, including creative working spaces, laboratories and advanced manufacturing facilities and retail space, supporting an estimated 30,000 jobs



A new transport hub linking the site to the centre of Bristol, Cribbs Causeway, UWE and Bristol Parkway



Up to 2,000 beds of student accommodation



Over three kilometres of new walking routes and cycle paths



Up to three new hotels



The development is forecast to create over £5 billion of added economic value for the local area

Brabazon



## Brabazon begins to take flight

2024 was a big year in the continuing evolution of Brabazon, YTL Developments's hugely ambitious regeneration of the former Filton Airfield. We talk to Seb Loyn, its Director of Planning & Development, on the progress to date... and what the future might look like.

As 2024 came to a close, the YTL Group, the major Malaysian corporation operating in 11 international territories and which sits behind the new city district at Brabazon, was valued at around £5bn. Which is a reassuring figure when you consider the scale of commitment involved in turning the largest brownfield site in the region into a sustainable new neighbourhood for Bristol... effectively a new town within the city.

Established in 1955 as a construction company, the YTL Group now has commercial interests spread around the world in a host of sectors, from AI and renewable energy through to telecoms and power generation. However, it's probably best known in the UK for owning Wessex Water.

YTL Developments was set up to manage and develop Brabazon, but YTL soon realised they would also need a separate construction business to deliver at the scale and consistency required for a project of this size. So YTL has also gone back to its roots and established a separate construction company – YTL Construction – which will serve Wessex Water and Brabazon, as well as supporting other clients, including at Hinkley Point.



So just how much land is being regenerated at the former Filton Airfield? "We initially secured 350 acres of the original airfield," says Seb, "and subsequently about 30 acres around the Brabazon Hangars. We also have an option agreement for a further 20. In total, that's about 400 acres – effectively all of BAE's historical assets."

And "historical" is a key word here, as past glories figure large in the future being planned for Brabazon. "At the heart of the site are the famous hangars where 10 Concorde were built," says Seb, "and, where possible, we are obviously keen to reflect that in our vernacular architecture. The designs of the first homes we've built include more than a nod to that proud part of Brabazon's history."

**Brabazon's many historic buildings, meanwhile, are scheduled to be refurbished and retained, celebrating the legacy of the site and acting as a visitor attraction.**

### A sustainable community

The sheer scale of the new neighbourhood is apparent from the map that shows Brabazon overlaid onto central Bristol: if the site was picked up and planted here, it would extend all the way from Temple Meads through to Ashton Court.

And while a whole host of complementary components are factored into the final masterplan, between them designed to comprise a sustainable community, the first focus is on the element currently most in demand in North Bristol: houses. By the end of 2024, a total of 300 homes had been built – most already sold off-plan.

The emphasis, says Seb, has been on building homes to a high standard and which are bigger than the average house or apartment. The decision has paid off, with values in excess of £400 psf typically being achieved.

Those 300 homes would represent a sizeable housing development in the normal run of things... but this is just the start. A total of up to 6,500 is planned. But while Bristol is short of new homes, YTL Developments has given a lot of thought as to the best mix and density at Brabazon. "It felt like the wrong thing to just go and stick suburbia on the site," says Seb.

"The key to our vision is to deliver a mixed-use neighbourhood: the pandemic demonstrated that the most diverse neighbourhoods tended to be most resilient. And the local authority is as keen to support the world-leading engineering, aviation and technology cluster in North Bristol as it is to deliver new homes."

The 3.7m sq ft of commercial space planned is significant in terms of the Bristol property market, especially when so much of current office demand is in the city centre. Brabazon plans to focus on the technology and creative businesses that will want to be close to the aerospace sector, UWE and the MoD.

YTL are currently in the planning stages for two high quality, "city centre style" office buildings, with ground floor activation and high amenity. "The office buildings need to meet the rising demands of occupiers, so will be best in class from a sustainability and design perspective," Seb maintains.

### Homes for the ages

Providing student accommodation is another early way to generate value in the current market as well as bring footfall to Brabazon: 1,514 new units across four buildings are currently under construction and scheduled to be available in time for the start of the 2026/7 academic year. At the other end of the age scale, YTL Developments is already in talks with several specialist partners to deliver a 239-home retirement village. Consent was secured earlier in the year, tapping into the unmet demand for purpose-designed accommodation for our ageing society.

A transport hub, complete with a new railway station, is another essential ingredient. A new rail station will ferry commuters between Brabazon and Bristol Temple Meads in less than 15 minutes. The train service, alongside the new M4 Metrobus route, will also serve those looking to attend events and conferences at the planned Arena, which will be home to a new conference and exhibition space as well as being a leisure hub.

After years of debates, delays and deferred decisions, Bristol's badly-needed new entertainment arena finally (if controversially) was approved at Brabazon rather than the Temple Quarter site many campaigned for: proponents of the city centre location argued that being close

to the city's main railway station would mean easier and more sustainable access for audiences.

YTL Developments argues that the strength of the North Bristol location is that the Arena will be significantly bigger than the proposed city centre option, helping to attract bigger name acts. They also have capacity for the dozens of lorries that form a major touring artist's road crew, which the Temple Quarter location did not.

"All of the modelling we have undertaken demonstrates that we will easily cope with the sort of numbers being discussed," says Seb, highlighting the new transport hub that will serve the Arena. "And Bristol will finally have one of the largest capacity dedicated venues in the UK to host the sort of headline acts the city deserves to see."

### Head for heights

The masterplan for Brabazon is certainly not afraid of heights and includes two buildings with outline consent of up to 30 storeys. For their part, South Gloucestershire's planners have been quite happy to accommodate these higher densities, which are currently not on the horizon in Bristol city centre.

"The taller buildings could be residential and/or commercial," says Seb, "but I think the first tall building is likely to be a hotel."

Place making has been a critical component within the plans. "Because it's Bristol and we're looking at the vernacular of the city," says Seb, "we've introduced a lake to reflect what you have at Harbourside, complete with quayside dining, to act as a backdrop to the Arena. The lake will also manage our surface water... as you'd expect from an organization that owns a water company!"

And on that topic, sustainability and resilience have been the watchwords throughout the master planning, as well as the finer detail going into the individual building designs. Solar panels and heat pumps already feature in the

new homes and are being designed into the commercial buildings from the outset. The new neighbourhood is designed to encourage public transport usage and active travel whether by foot bicycle or e-scooter. This will be made even easier and safer with the construction of 3km of dedicated new walking routes and cycle paths.

### Powering the future

Regardless of how energy efficient the buildings promise to be, powering this many homes and this much commercial activity patently represents one of Brabazon's big challenges. That, insists Seb, has already been planned for. Energy – most obviously via solar panels – is being generated on-site, while new capacity from Hinkley Point is due to come on stream around the start of the next decade.

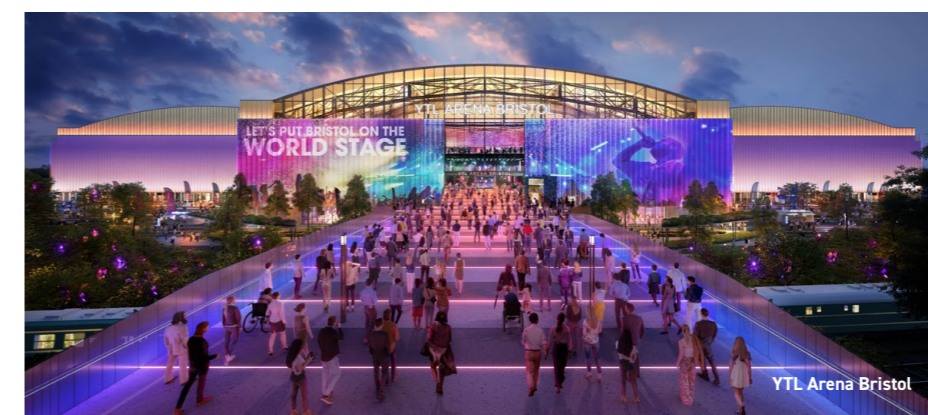
The next stage will be attracting commercial uses to Brabazon. The team at YTL Developments has already made a start by attracting Boxworks – the iconic container-based workspace solution – to bring 20 incubator units from Bristol Temple Meads to establish a nascent commercial quarter. "Already we've got everything from aerospace start-ups and an energy spin-out to a hairdresser," says Seb. "That's a great testament to the belief people already have in Brabazon."

Turning that trickle of new occupiers into a stream and then a river will not be achieved overnight, Seb concedes. "We are looking at a total of three million sq ft of commercial space and perhaps 700,000 sq ft of R&D. Yes, that's a lot when you look at typical take up in a year for Bristol. But we have a time horizon of 20 years for this site to fully evolve, perhaps longer."

It's worth reflecting that major regeneration schemes like Harbourside have similarly taken decades to fully flesh out, as did neighbouring ones like Cardiff Bay. And the predicted timescale will allow the YTL Group to fund infrastructure and allow flexibility so that Brabazon can adapt alongside the ever-shifting shapes of business and technology.

**Ambitious? Certainly. But overcrowded Bristol does now have an alternative place for families and businesses to stretch and grow.**

While this (and probably the next) generation of property agents will see a flow of work from those looking to make Brabazon their home.



YTL Arena Bristol





## We talk to Councillor Tony Dyer, the Green Party Leader of Bristol City Council, about his vision for the city, and what the recent change in administration might mean for the property sector.

**The Council has shifted from a cabinet system back to a committee one. How is that working out so far?**

In general, I'd say it's actually worked a lot better than most people were expecting. One of the biggest concerns was that the speed of decision making might be slowed down. We've actually found that the opposite is true.

Under the mayor model, almost all of the key decisions needed to be made by cabinet, which only met once a month, and had to go through 25 or more agenda items in a two-hour meeting. That was hardly ideal.

## Greens take the lead

**May 2024 saw a seismic shift of power within Bristol City Council. The role of Mayor was abandoned, while the Greens substantially increased their share of seats – although they do not have overall control.**

Now we have eight committees – the one that I run meets monthly and the others every other month – and we each might have just eight or nine agenda items to discuss in that time. So the decision making is more thematic and there's more time to discuss individual issues.

We also have a leader and chairs meeting which identifies cross cutting areas, and that can lead to doing things in a more productive way. For example, we have a housing proposal that will produce savings for the adult social care committee, which will then come to my committee for us to approve a large amount of capital spend. At the moment, the gap in Housing Benefit costs that we can reclaim from Government is something like £17,000,000 a year. We are aiming to no longer have that gap.

**The Housing Benefits bill, in large part, is down to the severe housing shortage in Bristol and very high rents. How do you plan to square that particular circle?**

So the local plan just ending, from 2006 to 2026, identified the number of homes to be delivered as 36,000. We're already at about 35,800 and we've still got two years to go – and we'll probably deliver another 3,000 to 4,000 in that time. However, that's still well below the number of homes identified as needed.

Going forward, the local plan currently with the planning inspector has identified the capacity to deliver 2,000 homes per year – 1,000 homes per year less than what the government has identified as our target.

It's not going to be easy. It's not just about planning capacity, but also construction capacity, and that's a wider problem than just Bristol. The Government says it wants to deliver 300,000 new homes a year, but people can't live in a planning application.

So there's a few things we're working on. One is trying to work with other partners to see what they can do to increase the delivery of homes. Two is working with organizations like Homes England to use their grant funding on top of what is also going to be available via S106 agreements.

We're one of those councils that still has a housing revenue account (HRA). At the moment, the HRA is in difficulties for various reasons, including the fact that we had a regulatory judgment against us – which we're trying to get out from underneath. Once we've done that, the HRA can then make a more positive contribution to the delivery of council housing.

We have Goram Homes as a partner, making use of the fact that Bristol City Council owns a lot of land. If we provide

the land and the private sector partner provides the funding, then hopefully it's a win-win for everybody: we get a higher percentage of affordable housing and they're still able to deliver private market housing to make a return on.

Finally, we're looking at partnering with our registered provider partners, as well as having honest conversations with development partners. There are a few discussions going on behind the scenes around that, and we hope to be able to make announcements soon.

**Developers are saying that building new homes in Bristol, particularly in the centre, is currently not viable**

That's something we're very aware of, and we're working with Savills on this. One approach is broadening the understanding of viability. Councillors, but also other participants, sometimes can have a very simplistic understanding of what viability actually means and what contributes to viability. So, one of the things we're looking at is what contributions or enabling factors we can introduce – as a planning authority, landowner and local authority – to improve our viability structure.

Part of that is having a more honest and open relationship, identifying those developers who we recognize are trying to do the best thing, not just not seeing them as the enemy. For example, some of the investment funds and developers who are prepared to look at the longer term in terms of how their investment will pan out.

**Where does the sustainability agenda fit into all of this?**

You won't be surprised to know, as a Green-led council, that we also want to tackle climate change. At the same time, it's problematic because there's a cost.

We're looking at how can we turn that cost into something that's seen as more of an investment... solar panels and ground source heat pumps, for instance, are an opportunity to generate a revenue. Obviously, that doesn't work in all scenarios because, if you're building to sell, you lose that income; so that tends to be more attractive for registered providers or build-to-rent schemes.

**Many of the new developments are going to students. Have we got the balance right in the city at the moment?**

The business models for universities has changed drastically to the point where there's an incentive for them to increase the number of students. We want to move away from developments that are 100% PBSA and look wherever possible to get a mixture of tenures.

**Have we got enough employment land going forward in the right places, and is what we do have under threat in some instances?**

We don't have enough employment land; and, worse than that, we don't have enough of the right type of employment land.

We're seeing development with an emphasis on office-based jobs. My family members are plumbers or work on MOT testing sites, and people often forget quite how much of those industrial activities do take place in Bristol.

So I think there needs to be some clear thinking. If you look at an average industrial park, only a third of it is actually occupied. Increasing that to a half would essentially increase the amount of industrial space available by pretty much 50%. And that's one of the areas we're looking at... reducing frontages, for instance. In Barking and Dagenham, they've started to have multi-storey developments. At the moment, I suspect that for most of Bristol, the numbers don't quite add up yet, but I think we're not far away from that.

**How is the city doing now in processing planning applications?**

Simone Wilding and her team have done a tremendous job, and we're now actually processing applications quicker than they're coming in. But we're still not where we need to be. I suspect it'll probably be probably mid-next year before we finally get to the point where we feel that's a sustainable way to go forward.

**Is the relationship with the BPAA working for you?**

I'd say there's still a way to go. Very high in our manifesto was wanting to make the council more collaborative – not just working cross party, but with other partners and bodies too. We're now starting to look at what the "one city" process looks like for residents, and then what does that one city process look like for the commercial sector? For businesses? And included in that would be property agents, developers, and so on.

**What would success look like for you at the end of this term in office?**

This is probably going to sound very boring, but the first responsibility I have is to put the city on a sustainable financial footing. If we don't do that, we're not going to be able to do all the other things that we want to do.

The second thing is to provide the services that people need, and (for instance, with services like social care) increasingly turn them into preventative services. That means people's lives are better; and, if people have better lives, it's likely they're going to be able to contribute more to the city as a whole.

Three, is to deliver not just housing... but communities. Because if you build communities right, you take the strain off the other services that people currently need.



Nicolas  
Hamilton

## Driving the disability agenda

Nicolas Hamilton, this year's speaker at the BPAA Annual Dinner, has successfully moved out from the shadow of his world-famous brother and overcome huge odds to successfully compete in the tough and uncompromising world of motorsport.

**C**erebral palsy is a cruel disease affecting around 160,000 people in the UK – around 1 in 400 of the population. It can affect movement, co-ordination and muscle tone, and around half of those living with the condition will be reliant on a wheelchair to get about.

In the case of Nicolas Hamilton, his parents were warned that their baby son would never walk and that his eyesight was extremely poor – and would further deteriorate as he got older.

Fast forward to the age of 17 and, after years of hard work and determination, Nicolas had defied all the odds, and progressed from being wheelchair-bound to walking unaided. And, if that was not enough of an achievement, he had also persuaded his parents to allow him to follow his paternal half-brother Lewis onto the race track.

After demonstrating his ability, he was given the opportunity to race in the highly competitive Renault Clio Cup series in 2011... that first season becoming the subject of a BBC documentary entitled "Racing with the Hamiltons: Nic in the Driving Seat".

Nic survived this baptism of fire to progress to the British Touring Car Championship in 2015. In 2023, he scored a career best finish in Round 1 of the Championship at Donington Park of P6, further raising the bar for disabled drivers in the upper echelons of British motorsport.

At around that time, Nic discovered he had another talent: as a motivational speaker. That strand to his career portfolio has now expanded to the point where he is talking to over 40 audiences each year about the challenges he has faced down – not only as a driver with physical disabilities, but as one of the relatively few drivers from an ethnic minority background at this level of the sport.



## We catch up with him to find out what motivates him... and how he is now using his experiences and influence to improve the lives of others.

### How much time does that leave for the driving?

This year (2024) I wasn't racing because my team actually folded at the end of 2023, and I just took some time to myself to regain some sponsorship. But I do plan to be racing in 2025.

However, racing's not always going to be there forever, and I see public speaking – together with my ambassadorial and advocacy work around disability – as my future.

Public speaking has become a really fulfilling thing for me to do. I get to travel the world sharing my voice... trying to inspire and help people. So, if I could do that alongside my racing, then that's great.

### It's certainly not as dangerous an activity, is it?

That's not something I worry about much! Back in the day, motor racing was a dangerous sport – but we've since put in a lot of precautions as an industry to make sure the driver is protected, along with everybody else around the car. My mum says to me: "Nic, what will happen if your car rolls over?" But even if you do roll over, the car might look battered and awful on the outside but the driver's protected.

### What sort of speeds that you're driving at?

Our fastest circuit in the UK is Thruxton, and we're full throttle 90% of the time. At the end of the straight, we're up to 150, 155 miles an hour. We go through one of the corners at 135. That's not bad for a car that doesn't have downforce... it's just basically your average road-going saloon car, but with racing suspension and engine.

### Just how difficult is it to compete with the issues that you've got?

I like to class myself as a Paralympic competing in the Olympics, and I find that empowering.

I grew up around able-bodied people, I went to school with able-bodied people, and I always felt like I was the only disabled person there.

So, it just became a natural progression for me to be the only disabled person competing against able-bodied people. It's just how my life has been. I don't know any other way.

My goal was always to race cars, and I did everything I could physically to make sure I could do it. I have challenges every day that, I would say, are tougher and harder than the average able-bodied person, but I don't know anything else.

### So what got him into public speaking?

I pretty much fell into it. A guy contacted me and said, "Nic, would you come and do a 'fireside chat' for a company?" I'm used to being interviewed, so I felt very comfortable being interviewed on stage.

It went down really well, there was an agent in the audience and it just snowballed from there.

### I didn't even know public speaking existed as an industry!

But within a few years, I found myself signed up with eight or nine agencies, and since then I've just been getting more and more work."





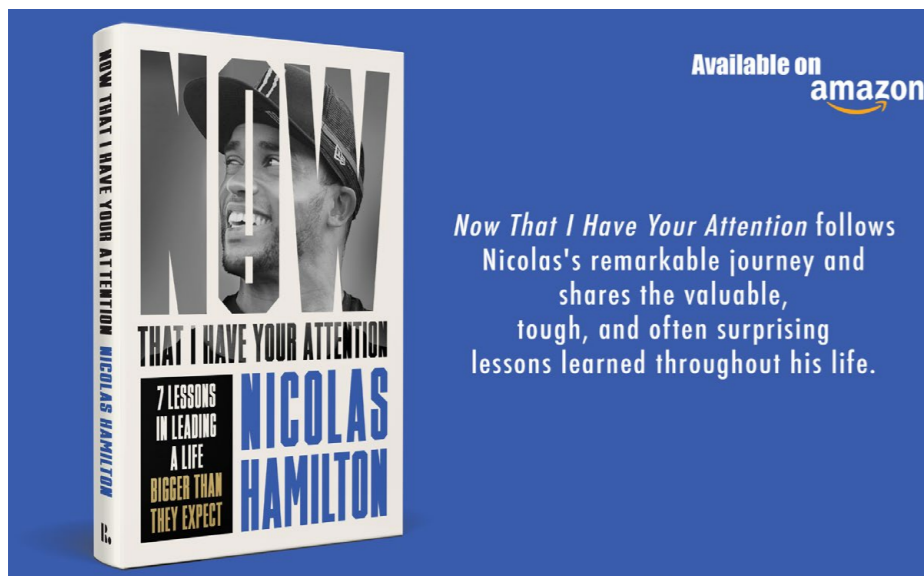
## Why motor racing?

**All I ever wanted to do was drive a car. I was with Lewis all the time, going to all of his races, and I just got addicted to it. I ate, slept and breathed motorsport.**

Yeah, something like fishing would certainly have been easier: you don't have to raise thousands of pounds to be able to do it! It's £500,000 a year to race in the British Tour Championship, and to get that money is not easy. Most people expect Lewis to just fund me, but I've never allowed that.

I go out and I get my sponsorship just like any other driver does. That means I have to think outside of the box and understand what my USP is and why brands might want to get involved and help me. But, you know, it's tough out there for anyone.

## Nicolas's book, "Now That I have Your Attention: 7 Lessons in Leading a Life" is available on Amazon



*Now That I Have Your Attention* follows Nicolas's remarkable journey and shares the valuable, tough, and often surprising lessons learned throughout his life.

### You've talked in the past about vulnerability being a strength or USP. Could you elaborate upon that?

I've only started really believing that in the last three years or so, and that's because I'm now very mentally open. I'm in therapy twice a week, just learning to deal with myself more and understand myself mentally, and I realized how vulnerable I was as a human. Having this disability hasn't been an easy task.

A lot of people shy away from vulnerability – especially men, because it means they're not "masculine". You know, men always have to be powerful and strong and they can't cry. But I feel everyone has a vulnerability inside themselves. I realize now that actually it's more masculine to be super vulnerable and open and realize who you are and realize you're struggling at certain things. And you end up getting people around you that understand who you are.

**And so, yeah, I now believe vulnerability is a strength, it's a power, and it allows me to be me more.**

Trying to be this strong, stoic human that can't break, you know there's a lot of men that struggle with that. They don't want to talk to anybody. They don't want to turn to their friends. They turn to suicide because of it. I want to help people understand that it's alright just to be you.

### As someone from a disability background, how do you feel about the modern built environment?

I'm not the greatest of disability role models, as I've worked hard and I've been very privileged to be able to walk upstairs and get over certain obstacles. But I can live in two different worlds because I was in a wheelchair for five and a half years, and I can see how inaccessible the world really is for many people, especially in their own homes.

You only need to look at the drop curbs before you even get on the driveway, let alone what happens when you get in the house. I've always said to able-bodied people, they're able-bodied at the moment, but you never know. At some point in life, 10 years down the road, five years, or whatever, you could end up being a disabled person, and then it's going to hit you in the face.

A lot more needs to be done. The world is run by able-bodied people making able-bodied people decisions for disabled people.

### Where does your life go from here?

At the moment, I feel like my purpose is to be a disabled person, to live how I live every day, learn more and more every day, and take that information to help people... through my public speaking and social media, as well as the book I wrote and which came out in 2024.

Racing is very important for me, and that all comes down to sponsorship. But if I don't continue racing, I've built a strong enough career through my public speaking to feel like I'm fulfilling my purpose, which is helping people, really.

### You're still one of the very few people from ethnic minorities in motorsport. Is this going to change?

You can see some people of colour now coming through... a couple of go-karters and a guy in Formula 3 that just won Macau, which is one of the most prestigious races. So, a lot still needs to be done. But it's also about bringing in more females, as well more people from minority backgrounds.

Because, at the end of the day, we want everyone to feel that motorsport is accessible and that everyone is accepted.

## Sports and social 2024

2024 turned out to be the BPAA's busiest ever year for sports and social events, with a host of exciting new activities organised alongside some of the more familiar ones – and all helping to raise vital funds for this year's President's nominated charity, Penny Brohn UK.

### BPAA 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner

As usual, the BPAA calendar ended and restarted with the Annual Dinner. Once again, it was held at Ashton Gate, with 693 BPAA members and guests enjoying the dining and company – as well as the after-dinner speech of veteran sports broadcaster John Inverdale.

Outgoing President Rob Russell was thanked by his successor Julian Harbottle for his sterling work steering the BPAA ship as well as raising £25,000 through events, holding numerous meetings with council bodies, overseeing a new website and (to top it off) raising £5,000 for his nominated charities by swimming from Wales to Clevedon.

A lot of hard work goes into making the event such a success, so thanks go to Finola Ingham and to the committee.



BPAA 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner

## CPD events

### Bristol Property & Construction Annual Lecture

2024 marked the inaugural Bristol Property & Construction Annual Lecture, hosted and organised collaboratively by the BPAA, Bristol Property Inclusion Charter and the Forum for the Built Environment.

The event provided an opportunity for members to network with local building and construction professionals as well as to hear presentations from speakers Fuad Mahamed, CEO at Ashley Community & Housing Ltd, and Ronny Popat, Development Director of Vistry Partnerships, who shared their insights and experiences on the topic of "Why Representation Matters".

The evening was held at EQ Bristol, so a big thank you to the team at CEG, and to BaxterStorey and Morgan for sponsoring.

## Bristol City Leap/ Bristol Heat Network

EQ was also the venue for a very successful CPD event giving members an insight on the progress being made by Bristol City Leap. This innovative decarbonisation project will become a key issue for city centre development over the next two decades and members had the opportunity to learn first-hand about the impacts, and also how Bristol City Leap intends to facilitate its implementation at a building level.

Informative presentations came from Jaime Blakeley-Glover at Bristol City Leap, Jon Sankey from Vattenfall and Julian Miller of Ameresco, and the event concluded with a Q&A panel session where the speakers were joined by Chris Grazier and Julian Harbottle.

Thank you to EQ for letting us use the building, and to Press for a magnificent breakfast.



## BPAA Boules

A combination of excellent weather and keen competition made for another memorable BPAA boules tournament in the splendid setting of Goldney Hall's grounds.

Over 200 property professionals came together to play throughout the afternoon, and it was PMP who were successful in taking home the cup, while Hartnell Taylor Cook were victorious in the final for the Plate.

Congratulations to everyone involved, with a special thanks going to Guy Mansfield for organising and to Beach Baker for their ongoing sponsorship, now into its 14th year.

## Football

This year, the BPAA joined forces with the Forum for the Built Environment, the local RICS Matrics, Construction Excellence South West, and Forum for Tomorrow for a five-a-side football event at The Imperial Sports Ground. It's hoped that this will be the first of many collaborative events between local property and construction professionals to raise money for the Lord Mayor of Bristol's Children's Appeal.



## BPAA Quiz Night

The annual BPAA quiz proved to be a great success and another sell out event, with Knights Solicitors taking the trophy home (yet again!). Our enormous appreciation goes to our sponsor Morgan Lovell, and of course to our quiz master Charlie Kershaw and score masters Julian Harbottle and Karyn Tomkins.



## Gin Tasting

Thank you to everyone who attended BPAA's newest event: gin tasting aboard 6 O'Clock Gin's boat. The event saw over 50 property professionals sample four delicious gins and learn more about gin's origins and the distilling process. The evening ended with a quiz, which was won by "Team Ginvincible".

We are enormously grateful to our sponsors, Orbis Protect, hosts 6 O'Clock Gin and to Hannah Waterhouse and Sophie Warrender for organising such a brilliant evening which (we hope) will become an annual fixture in the BPAA calendar.



## Wine Tasting

Our wine-tasting evening at Averys Wine Cellars proved yet another brilliant evening of networking, delicious food and learning about fine wines. Thank you to everyone who joined us on the night and a huge thank you to Roxi Foster for organising and to Interaction for sponsoring the evening.



## BPAA Cyclo sportive

Over 200 cyclists took to the road for this (now) massive annual event, made possible with input from the whole committee - but special mention must go to Julian Harbottle and Russell Crofts for leading the organising team and putting in so much time and effort.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to Bikefest, who were amazing at keeping everyone on the road, and of course to all of our generous sponsors: SLR Consulting, Sprague Gibbons, PMP, McFeggan Brown, Pegasus Group, Clarke Willmott and Savills. And, of course, our thanks to everyone who took part to ensure its success.



## Padel Tournament

This year saw the return of the BPAA Padel Tournament, held in partnership with UWE, with over 90 property professionals and students battling it out for trophies in the Advanced and Beginner sections.

The Advanced Winners were Will Chettle and Carlos Gil from UWE, who overcame David Wright and Thomas Short in the final, while Chris Thomas and Matthew Moody triumphed in the Beginners section over Ryan Spillane and Jordan Nicholls.

Huge thanks go to James Frost and Ytzen van der Werf for organising such a brilliant event and to Howell Commercial Limited for kindly sponsoring it.



## BPAA Cricket and Netball Tournaments

July marked the return of the annual BPAA Netball and Cricket tournaments at a sunny but blustery Coombe Dingle Sports Complex.

With over 300 runs scored in the match between Offices and Sheds, the cricket proved to be another success, and Offices retained the Kubiak Cup after posting an impressive 170/6 in their 20 overs the top scorers were: Rupert Elphick 30 not out; Ben Tothill 26 not out; Sam Williams 28 not out. With a six scored off the first ball, Sheds set off at pace, but despite



Kiran Naidoo, Eric Woollard Browning and Freddie Eyston all scoring runs, they fell short by finishing on 157/9 in their allotted overs.

The netball was also a great success, with eight teams signing up this year and more than 60 players taking part. After some close-fought matches to decide the two finalists, JLL and the "Individual Entries" team contested an end-to-end game, with the Individual Entries taking the lead in the last few minutes of play to come away victorious.

A big thank you to Chris Howell, Jack Michael Davies and Rachel Lillie for organising, to our sponsors Kubiak Creative - and to everyone who took part.

## BPAA/Women in Property Autumn Party

Hosted at MShed, this year's event followed a "musicals" theme, so as well as excellent entertainment from our generous sponsors there was a chance for participants to don their finest outfits as well as enjoy some tasty treats and delicious drinks. Our generous sponsors this year were: JLL, Ridge and Partners, Stride Treglown and FulkersBaileyRussell, and thanks must also go to Rachel Lillie and Rebecca Harries for organising.

## BPAA Golf Day

Having already been postponed due to thunderstorms in May, the rearranged BPAA Golf Day was a great success despite the torrential downpour the day before. The green keepers at Bristol & Clifton Golf Club did an amazing job to get the course open in time for a shotgun start at 9.00am.

We are enormously grateful to lesis Group Urban Spaces for being the main sponsor for the day and special thanks go to the other sponsors too: Russell Property Consultants, Morton Property Consultants, RWK Goodman, Kier Group, CBRE, Moose Studios Ltd, Savills and Hartnell Taylor Cook.

The first prize went to Sean Lewis at Savills and the Team prize went to CJ Hole. Various other prizes were won by Jack Davies, Tobias Jones, James Blundell and Tom Lowe.

Well played to all the participants, and special thanks to Bristol Golf for being great hosts - and of course to Rob Russell for taking on the mammoth task of organising such a brilliant day.

## Craft Beer Tasting and Brewery Tour

In a similar vein, an inaugural Beer Tour and Tasting event at the Moor Beer Company was greatly enjoyed by members.

Kindly sponsored by Kerr Office Group, the evening provided those taking part with an in-depth understanding of the magic behind the age-old art of brewing beer, a tour of the brewery and an opportunity to sample the products. Thanks go to Tom Dugay for adding this event to the BPAA calendar.

## BPAA's charity of the year

Each year, the incoming BPAA President nominates one or more good causes to benefit from the proceeds of the sports and social events run during their term in office.

Over the years, the total raised – thanks to the hard work of our organisers, the support of our members and guests, and the generosity of our sponsors – has now gone well past the £200,000 mark.



Penny Brohn UK

This year saw more events being held than ever before; and the beneficiary, chosen by outgoing President Julian Harbottle, has been Penny Brohn UK, the cancer health and wellbeing charity based at Ham Green. Their work has touched the lives of thousands of local people over the years, as well as many more nationwide.



Bristol Property Agents  
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256318 01/25

## Penny Brohn UK: Cancer wellbeing for everyone

Around one in two people in the UK will develop some form of cancer during their lifetime. Thanks to the continuing advances in detection and treatment, half of those diagnosed will survive that diagnosis for at least 10 years.

That statistic has improved dramatically since 1979, when founder Penny Brohn was living with her own cancer diagnosis. She instinctively knew that she needed more than medical treatment alone to support her health and wellbeing, and set about providing that to others.

The charity's services have changed a lot since that time, but their understanding that a cancer diagnosis affects every aspect of a person's life – from their physical, emotional and spiritual health to their work, family and relationships – remains at the heart of their approach.

"Everything we do," they say, "is designed to support people to live as well as they can with cancer. To give them a sense of control over their health and wellbeing, whatever matters most to them. Evidence increasingly shows that supporting physical and emotional resilience can improve the quality of life and clinical outcomes of people living with cancer. But most importantly, our clients tell us this too."

## The day Covid changed everything

The last couple of years have seen huge changes in the way the charity delivers its services, as Emma Gilmore, their Head of Corporate, Community & Events explains.

"Pre-Covid, all of our services were based at Ham Green. Then that Tuesday, we all went home for the evening and didn't come back in again for several months. Despite being a charity that was not technologically advanced in the slightest, almost overnight we moved as many services as we could online.

"We've always been available to anyone, anywhere in the country. But we began to see people who were maybe not well enough to leave their home or hospital bed accessing our counselling and nutrition sessions.

"We're now running both on-line and in-person services, and reaching more people for less money – and helping a more diverse range of people across different economic backgrounds."

## The challenges ahead

The impact of Covid, however, was not entirely beneficial. "We rely entirely on charitable giving," says Emma. "We receive no government funding. Around £1 million of the £2.2 million we need each year was coming from one funder and that dried up overnight. Like all charities our income continues to be impacted by Covid, the cost of living crisis and current economic climate. We rely heavily on donations on donations from the public and businesses to continue our work.

"We are hoping that will improve into the future, but there's a large hole to fill."

Penny Brohn UK is now appealing to businesses to help them do just that. "We already work with a range of corporate partners of all sizes," says Emma, "and we're keen to encourage more to get involved – by sponsoring events, through donations or making us their charity of the year. In return we welcome visits to our centre where we can give talks to staff.

"Some corporate sponsors encourage personnel to volunteer in our gardens, or provide other services in kind. And this year we're launching our "25 in 25" campaign: we have 25 bedrooms in desperate need of refurbishment, and we're looking for companies to sponsor individual rooms."

If you, as an individual or company, would like to know more about supporting the life-changing work of Penny Brohn UK, their website is: [www.pennybrohn.org.uk](http://www.pennybrohn.org.uk), or you can contact Emma directly at [emma.gilmore@pennybrohn.org.uk](mailto:emma.gilmore@pennybrohn.org.uk).

If you or a loved one are looking for support from Penny Brohn UK's services, visit their website or email [clientsupport@pennybrohn.org.uk](mailto:clientsupport@pennybrohn.org.uk).

 **Penny  
Brohn**<sup>UK</sup>  
Cancer wellbeing for everyone