

## **Gunnersbury Station; Chiswick Tower**

### **December 2025: Ideas above our station**

Our Chair, Marie Rabouhans spoke at the meeting of Hounslow's Planning Committee on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> December on the Chiswick Tower development proposals.

Before the meeting we sought confirmation that certain key issues were adequately controlled, for example that the final designs for station entrance, plaza and associated areas of the public realm would take full account of the windy conditions experienced by users of the station and other pedestrians on Chiswick High Road

At the start of her presentation Marie made it clear that the society agreed with the planning officers as to the significant benefits of this scheme in comparison with the consented fall-back scheme and that we supported the recommendation to approve. She thanked the developer for recognising that land under their ownership is crucial to improving the station and for working with council officers to safeguard it.

She then raised an issue close to our hearts - our local environment Committee members were introduced to the society's honorary member Gunnersbury Gus who watches over our "Meanwhile Garden" which sits to the east of Chiswick Tower.



The Chiswick Tower development presents a not-to-be-missed opportunity to improve the public realm along this heavily used stretch of the high road. We believe that by working together with the developer we could realise a joined-up public realm from railway bridge to station. This would give a real uplift to the local environment.

We are pleased that such a collaborative approach was endorsed by the committee; the Society will, in due course, seek funding for our part of the scheme. We are aware that land

ownership of this corner of the high road is, like everything else associated with Gunnersbury Station, complex and we will seek help from the Council, Hounslow Highways, Network Rail and the developer to sort it out.

Marie then went on to say that what she really wanted to talk about was:

### **Gunnersbury Station.**

Since Chiswick Tower sits on top of the station, you cannot consider one without the other.

Here is what she said. [The proceedings can be watched on the Council's You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCTsdmGV6W8> ; Marie's presentation begins at approximately 51 minutes. There are also items on the Chiswick Calendar and Chiswick W4.]

“We are pleased that the land needed for expansion of the station has been identified and will be safeguarded within the Legal Agreement. It is good to have this long-term protection. But I ask you:

**are we expected to accept a wait of 50 years from the opening of the Chiswick Business Park?**

**are the Inspectors of the Local Plan likely to find this a sound approach to the provision of strategic infrastructure?**

**We are dismayed, that TfL and Network Rail suggest that 25 years is a realistic timescale for these vital improvements.** The Chiswick Business Park has already been in operation for 25 years and the obligation to improve the station stemmed from the outline planning permission for the park granted in 1991.

When some changes to the station were approved in January 2012 and partially delivered in 2018, it was recognised that they were inadequate to resolve the real problems of access and passenger safety at the station. How woefully inadequate the current facilities are - including when judged against TfL/NR specs – is shown in the Feasibility Study provided by the applicant.

*In January 2012 I asked:*

**As lowly Gunnersbury residents, is wanting to go “upstairs and downstairs” too much to ask? Are we getting ideas above our station?**

**Now it appears that waiting for a satisfactory upgrade to Gunnersbury is like waiting for Godot!**

*Back to the future* - we have examined the Feasibility Study – and we like what we see – especially the enhanced design ...if only it could be delivered.



Image from Feasibility Study

We recognise that amassing sufficient funding is the main impediment to delivering the necessary station improvements. We are aware from the report presented to the Cabinet in February 2025 by Councillor Tom Bruce that the large-scale developments that have taken place recently in the surrounding area have generated a significant amount of CIL.

Our plea is that the Council commit to allocating some of this CIL to augment the s106 funds already legally assigned to Gunnersbury Station. Such a combined sum could be leveraged against TFL and Network Rail investments to enable this unique opportunity to improve the station to be realised.

***Councillors - Please make a strong recommendation to the Cabinet to allocate a significant amount of CIL for Gunnersbury Station improvements without delay.”***

In replying to questions put to her, Marie agreed that this was the best deal in terms of what you can expect this developer to provide towards the station. She was able to elaborate on the reason why it was now or never - this was the first opportunity to do something because for the first time an owner of the tower had shown willing to give up any land. She finished by saying:

***We have a station, we have tracks, we have trains – we just need to access them!***

By the end of the meeting, when the Chiswick Tower development was unanimously approved, we believe that committee members were in no doubt as to the need for the Council to allocate some of its CIL to the station.