

# Jericho Wharf: council vows action after years of delay

**Madeleine Evans**

maddy.evans@newsquest.co.uk

**“PATIENCE is at an end” with the lack of development on the city’s Jericho Wharf as progress is now being promised on the long-fought scheme.**

Oxford City Council has taken a crucial step forward in the two-decade long scheme to redevelop the derelict boatyard beside the Oxford Canal.

Planning permission granted to Cheer Team Corporation, a Hong Kong-based company, to bring forward a mixed-use residential and community development including homes, a boatyard, community centre and piazza, lapsed in February this year, two years after it was given at appeal.

It opened a ‘window of opportunity’ for the council to ‘take back control’ of the site - something which groups like the Jericho Wharf Trust have been campaigning for.

At the meeting, the cabinet resolved to seek a new development partner with a viable business plan to try and acquire the site by agreement or, if no agreement can be made, to consider the use of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to take control of it.

It was also noted that if a CPO was pursued, a further report for a detailed scheme for redevelopment which demonstrated the legal tests had been met for the order, would need to be approved by cabinet.

Councillor Ed Turner, deputy leader and cabinet member for finance and asset management, said he ‘welcomed’ the support from the redevelopment and thanked the campaigners, councillors and officers who had given huge amounts of their time to try and bring it forward.



Jericho boatyard piazz. Image: Image: Cornerstone Land



He said the council would ‘leave no stone unturned’ to secure a deliverable development, and added: “We should not be in a position, after so very many years, of being absolutely nowhere.

“And I have to say, and this in-

cludes some recent interactions with the owner of the site, my patience is at an end. We simply have to crack on.”

Several members of the public spoke at the cabinet meeting, all of them in support of the resolution for a ‘last resort’ CPO.

One of them was Peter Stalker, speaking as treasurer of the Jericho Community Association which was set up in the early 1980s at the same time as the community centre in the old St Barnabas Church Institute.

Mr Stalker said: “Since those early days, the community centre has remained a focal point in the heart of Jericho.”

A huge range of activities and groups are provided for in the centre, but the building was declared ‘not fit for purpose’ by the council more than a decade ago, but all the changes promised ‘never materialised’.

## Pub company’s price rise pledge



The Four Candles pub in George Street

**THE owner of eight Oxfordshire pubs has made a price pledge amid, what it says, is a rise in stealth taxes.**

Tim Martin, the chair of Wetherspoon, has said the company’s profits may be slightly below current market expectations but has vowed to keep price rises “to a minimum”.

He made the statement in the major pub brand’s interim report, published on Friday morning.

Wetherspoon owns eight pubs in Oxfordshire including The Four Candles, The Swan & Castle and The William Morris in Oxford, as well as The Exchange and The Penny Black in Banbury and Bicester.

In Abingdon it operates The Narrows, in Witney it runs The

Company of Weavers and in Henley it has The Catherine Wheel.

In his statement, within the report, Mr Martin said a “plethora of stealth taxes” including non-domestic electricity charges and packaging charges have not helped the company’s outlook.

He added: “As previously indicated, increases in National Insurance and labour rates will result in cost increases of approximately £60 million per annum, and noncommodity energy costs will add £7 million.”

Even so, he stressed that he hoped to keep any prices increases very small. He said Wetherspoon “will endeavour to keep price increases to a minimum”.

## Tech firm goes into liquidation

AN Oxfordshire tech firm has collapsed into liquidation, leaving creditors to pick over its finances.

Heimdal Limited, which had been trading from the West Oxfordshire Business Park in Carterton, passed a resolution to wind up voluntarily on Friday, March 13.

The company, incorporated in January 2020, was most recently classified under “other professional, scientific and technical activities not elsewhere classified”, covering specialist advisory and technical work. Heimdal’s Oxfordshire links stretch back several years, with earlier Companies House filings showing a registered office in Oxford before the address was moved to the Carterton business park.

Later, the firm shifted its registered office on paper to Uxbridge and then to an address at City View Apartments in north London, but continued to list the West Oxfordshire unit as its principal trading address in the insolvency notices.

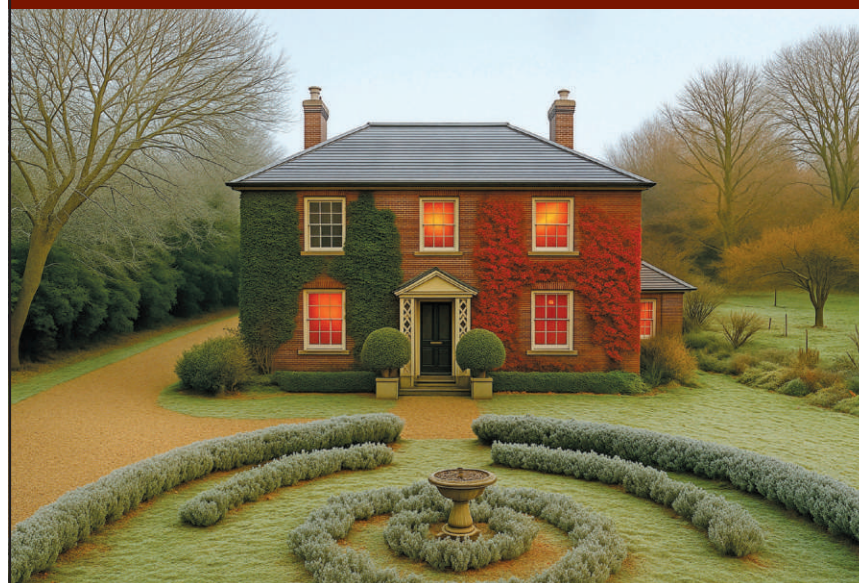
A notice convening a virtual meeting of creditors under section 100 of the Insolvency Act was issued on February 28, ahead of the liquidation decision.

At that meeting on March 13, insolvency practitioner Brendan P. Hogan, of Cromwell & Co Insolvency Practitioners in Coventry, was appointed as liquidator to handle the creditors’ voluntary liquidation.

This newspaper has approached Cromwell & Co Insolvency Practitioners for comment on the liquidation.



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