

General Comments from Respondents to Imperial Gardens Redesign Consultation

- As a compromise these plans could be a lot worse but damage caused by people and tents will not be avoidable Cheltenham is losing a valuable tourist attraction and place of peace and comfort for its own residents. It would have been better as it used to be.
- Railings - desirable but very expensive would need some form of sponsorship or grant - widening entrance - Remember Planning Permission I think the redesigning of the gardens to accommodate marquees is a complete waste of our money. The gardens which should be at their best May & June will be a sea of tents. Why cannot the festivals be at the Race Course? They have the room and parking space etc. and it is near enough to town for the general public to travel too. What is ornamental turf?. Artificial. The grass seed won't regenerate for ages and the whole gardens will look a mess for most of the summer. Any money should be spent on having the present flower beds looking lovely for all of the summer. I would be interested in Bob Shackell's view.
- Seems a good compromise
- Railings - removable sections for events
- Railings - Definitely agree long overdue!
- I understand their influence on tourism in Cheltenham. Railings will be in keeping with Montpellier Gardens (a welcomed long awaited return Thank You. The attraction to the Festivals is continuously increasing any improvements horticultural will take a year or two to bed in but the hard continuous work do the landscape Services is outstanding. I expect an increase in sales at the Gardens Bar with these improvements with increased interest. Good luck for the future.
- Planting - really good - Refurbishment - yes underused - railings - not sure
- This plan if implemented will really enhance the gardens and improve the whole area in the vicinity I hope it will go ahead.
- Please bring resurfacing forward of paths as they are disgrace at the moment and a hazard
- The new beds for annuals are too narrow to give an attractive display.
- Not sure about the new design of floral bedding area. It will always be in a state of repair after the last festival/event. Also I am sure when people queue for the marquees some of the beds will be trampled and used as dustbins. Can't more use be made of Montpellier and leave this area alone. The bedding areas in Imperial Gardens are famous and do attract visitors to Cheltenham.
- Would like widening of eastern entrance included in phase 1 also inc. minor earthwork.
- The beds could be replaceable beds bought in on low loaders and craned into place. This would also allow the plants to be planted at the nursery bed bought in flower perfect.
- Do not like suggested replacement building for Sillicorne Gardens
- Please be aware of the need for disabled access around the gardens
- Disabled access from west side parking areas replacing steps

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- Toilets need to improve lots!
- It would be super to be able to afford all the overleaf suggestions but cost is surely the deciding factor
- As long as the beds are re-instated. Trees - will they be nature trees or saplings, how quick will they grow?
- Please replant missing trees on the Broad walk
- Bully advertisers to put flowers on the roundabouts
- Open up skillicorne gardens
- As long as the trees are not too big
- More water features
- Replacing railings would be great
- Marquees raised floor to help grass re growth. Railings great idea. More shrubs not flowers beds that cost time & money to upkeep, giving colour & evergreens all year. Teenager proof shrubs.
- Trees - selection of type vital (life of tree size) consider planting style appropriate to period could be useful (18th/) Vermicular access @ East entrance
- At this point in time - money should be used for street cleaning in autumn (of leaves) pavements made safe.
- Perhaps thought can be given to "Sastro Turf" instead of reseeding
- What about an Art festival
- Great - fruit trees could be planted to be sold or given to people
- What about an art festival
- A great improvement on the current system of bald patches after festival events. Also Garden Bar could be re developed as a more family friendly outlet.
- Clarence Sq & Wellington Sq require up grading
- Personally I do not think that Roses are at all suitable for these gardens unless the Rose Rugova is used as a hedging plant. Perennials & shrubs will need to be carefully chosen. There are gaps on the Southern bank due to vandalism. If replanting and new planting is going to be made then the absence of MAINTENANCE will need to be rectified. There is absolutely NO POINT in replanting if the plants are then ignored as those that have been ignored - e.g. the plants paid for by the Horticultural Society on the Southern bank. 2. Trees should, in my opinion, not have a heavy canopy, or should be fastigiated, in form.
- I strongly disagree with the temporary marquees being erected over the flower beds. I can not see how this would work with the number of festivals being held and would mean that for a large percentage of time this area would look neglected and drab.
- Re public bar am concerned that vandalism will occur constantly from drunken youths as one used to happen with a bar (tented) facing the prom.
- I would like to see more flowerbeds on the grassed areas in the south east corner and on the eastern side. If the flowerbeds can be built over for the festivals, this

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should be feasible and would improve the overall colour content as well as being spread over all the gardens in a uniformed way.

- I think trees are a big mistake in Imperial Gardens. All is well while they are small but when they grow they create shade & people like to take the sun in the gardens. They also need maintenance & create work if they shed their leaves. I prefer NO TREES, in addition to what is there currently. 3. I hope that the most important factor will be that of COLOUR I hope that the tradition of formal flower beds will continue. I do not want any extra shrubs roses etc. i.e. perennials in the flower bed areas. 4. I am delighted that there will be two new benches facing south. 5. Congratulations and thanks on trying to find a solution for all.
- We fully support the move of the Jazz Festival elsewhere, as this will take pressure off the flower beds and lawns. This will allow recovery between other festivals especially in the spring.
- Please could the plan include additional flowerbeds (covered over if necessary during festivals) on the south east side of the gardens. This would add considerably to the floral colour in the gardens and restore them to their appearance of a few years ago.
- We welcome the restoration and access to Skillicorne Gardens as part of the bar facility, but this should be closed to drinkers after 8.00 pm.
- The extension of decorative buff coloured bonded gravel paths should be part of Phase 1 some of the existing paths are a mess & restored with the wrong materials (colours etc.)
- The real key to the success of these proposals, is the punctual erection & take down of marquees & prompt restoration of flower beds & lawns to a high standard, after events
- The existing shrubs border above dry stone wall is too narrow and too dry.
- Grass will regroup for the 1st year or two but then the ground will become compacted & hard, sometimes boggy!
- Planting new trees should be very small or will change this from a square into woodland. We should be able to see across the square from the side roads - change ambience & historical appearance. Gravel agree if existing paths. Skillicorne Gardens - good to use this charming little area & to be lock it at night. Festival Tents - Should be at east end of square (gardens) nearest to Town Hall. Plus little ones for advertising on the wide pavement area below the trees at the side of the Promenade. Tented village appearance at EAST PART could have one hard standing, less grass, maybe no flowerbeds here. Grass at NW corner - should be re-instated after soil drainage work/sand underneath or whatever. Plus some flower beds? To enhance appearance of bar area behind & make it look lovely place to sit. Fountain area would look much nicer with this surrounding.
- Would like to see an assessment of wildlife around whole area. To find out how to improve habitat and what the impact of marquees has on wild life. Good to know marquees will not be on gardens for so long each year.
- Agree to all only if maintain regularly
- Agree with new trees but dependent type of trees
- I think the introduction of more permanent bedding would enhance the gardens. Personally I am not great fan of bedding plants
- Better signage for the toilets

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- NB 3rd Para introduction does not make it plain that the £140K is to spend on all the work to Imperial and Montpellier Gardens.
- We have no money for this! Spend my money on Libraries not plants
- This is a complete waste of money at a time when budget cuts are being made at the expense of current staff. Far too much money has already been wasted on restoring the gates at Pittville as well.
- No money
- Where will money come from?
- Don't agree with spending money when we're supposed to be cutting back! If there's "spare" money what about helping communities take over the libraries (i.e. Hesters Way) as for the marquee things people should fund their own marquees and also they should have to pay for any re-instatement of grass etc.
- As the gardens are an integral part of Cheltenham attraction, I see no reason to erect temporary buildings to the detriment of said gardens.
- Railings - Not sure
- Why when you are so short of Money! Sheer Madness
- No more expenditure
- Trees - variety to include oak English
- The Festivals should not take over the Gardens, leave the floral beds as they are. Injecting money into these gardens is needed, and agree with your outline plans for improvement.
- Why do you allow cars on grassed areas within the gardens when festival is on? Security cars/sponsor cars seem to be on grass areas which surely cannot be right, This was viewed on Monday 6th June, more damage to grass area could appear, adding even more problems other than marquees make!
- I reluctantly support the compromise that seems to have been achieved by these plans to support The festival to grow and to keep the Gardens for the public to enjoy. My main concern is when the marquees come down I hope that there will be no damage to the new corner half moon floral beds, the marquees look pretty close to these flowers. There must be a guarantee that reinstatement of any damage to plants and grass is adhered to with immediate effect, otherwise it will look an utter mess for us rate payers of the town and visitors!
- It all sounds 'too good to be true' can it all be achieved with the money that has been set aside for this? What happens if you run out of funds? Continuing maintenance is almost more important than the original work and to this end, it is vital that more permanent and experienced gardeners are employed by CBC. This is a huge job, but the rest of this Cheltenham's open spaces must not suffer whilst this is being developed. It will be a shame if smaller events are 'bullied out' because C.F. have taken up the permitted 75 days themselves. It will be a credit to all if it is successful.
- These designs appear to be a compromise which will allow the festivals to expand and thrive. It is good that Cheltenham Borough Council supports the Festivals and wishes their business to grow. It is great pity that this may be to the detriment of these well known and well used public gardens. I have grave reservations that the ground/grassed areas which will be covered up for temporary marquees will not be reinstated in time for the general public to admire as we have all been accustomed to in the past after the festivals have moved off. If the grass has huge yellow and brown patches all over the place along with any damage to floral beds and indeed floral

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beds that have to be planted up, what will this look like for our visitors to the town and park users? I fear that Cheltenham Town will not be in a good position to showcase this area in any future 'Bloom Campaign' as one of our 'jewel's in the Crown' in the months of June and July, I appreciate that 2012 will be a challenging time for gardeners to reinstate areas where marquees have been placed, I hope that I will be able to retract my concerns. When all the bedding plants, shrubs and trees has been planted, can CBC guarantee that you will have sufficient workforce to maintain Imperial Gardens to the standard that we have all come to expect and enjoy, please do not let the standard of our parks and gardens decline through lack of reinstating staff that have retired or left for other reasons, we need to employ experienced gardeners to maintain the towns floral image for the residents and visitors alike. With all the utilities that appear to be needed in Montpellier Gardens to accommodate the festivals in the future, this surely will make a large hole in the budget allocated for both these gardens makeover, what happens if you run out of funds before you get to complete the much needed cosmetics within Imperial gardens?

YOU HAVE DISPLAYED AND SOLD THESE DESIGNS ON VIEW TO THE GENERSL PUBLIC, THEY THINK THAT THIS IS WHAT WILL BE ACHIEVABLE WITH THE PRICE TAG THAT HASD BEEN SET IN THIS YEARS BEDGET, WAS IT EXPLAINED TO THE PUBLIC WHAT MAY HAPPEN IF AN OVERSPEND HAPPENS BEFORE ALL PHASES OF THE PLANS ARE COMPELTED? WOULD IMPERIAL GARDENS HAVE TO PUT UP WITH THE DIABLICIAL PATCHING OF TRAMAC IN THE PATHWAYS, SIMILAR AS TO THE WORK UNDETAKEN THIS YEAR?

Directors and Cabinet please note, you should allow emergency work in the footpaths to be made to a decent standard, you efforts this year were a disgrace, no officers at fault here, only the accountable folk who hold the purse strings. Do you have a written guarantee from The Festivals that any damage to grounds, hard surface and grassed areas will be fully covered by them. Why not take a 'Bond@ similar as you have done so in the past from Danter's Fun Fair etc for any damage that the Festivals may incur upfront, this rule should apply to all large event users. Enough said.

- How soon after the marquees are down will gardens beds in re-instated. If most of the marquees are to be at Montpellier why widen entrances.
- Suggest that 'Flowering trees' are to be planted. Please use lots of imagination in choosing which species-please avoid more flowering cherries and seek out some really interesting species: not necessarily 'flowering'.
- I am not sure how you are going to manage the replanting of the flower beds once the marquees have been removed. From a tourist's prospective if you time your visit badly the gardens will not look as attractive. I am not sure why there is a need to cover the beautiful flower beds when there is plenty of space just around the corner at Montpellier Gardens.
- From the drawings I have seen too much space has been given over to the festivals and in a manner that will ruin any existing flower beds. The Festivals should be held at Cheltenham Racecourse and the gardens retained as all year gardens. I am wholly and vehemently opposed to this scheme!!
- I think in those times of cost cutting – CBC need to provide more information on the proposal before asking for comments. Apart from the capital costs of the work, what are the ongoing costs of maintaining the enhanced gardens in a good condition? A recent visit to imperial Gardens demonstrated how this is sometimes not the case. The Gustav Holst water feature was fifthly and full of rubbish. Also, look at the gardens in Sandford Park. The borders are full of dead flowers and clearly not being maintained. How can you commit these resources to this project when you cannot look after your existing ones. What are the projected revenues for the town as a result of this work? Will there be any pay-back as a result of it being completed. This is a lot of money – there are hundreds of other projects in the town that could benefit from this.
- Please make the replanting of the shrub beds interesting – and please ensure there is a regular maintenance plan throughout the year (witness the many planted shrub beds in park's and verges in the town which have been neglected in recent years).

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Please try to retain the best elements of the floral bedding as it is something you do very well.

- Stop 'chavs' gathering on their bikes and riding through the planting to impress their mates and girlfriends!
- Like the tress – but be careful over the correct species choice – not too ornamental please and correct scale is so important. Can Skillicorne gardens be opened up regularly through the main visitor season and made more interesting? Possibly through assistance from volunteers or through support from the Festivals? Go and look at Stratford upon Avon and the Bancroft Gardens as an example of how not to improve an important town centre garden!
- Public access to the park and bar from all areas should not be restricted by railings. The lack of enclosures creates access, freedom and openness which would be lost with railings. The park and bar should remain clear. Let clutter remain in the demise of highways not in parks.
- No railings give impression of excluding.
- I really resent the encroachment of so many tents! I'm a festival goer but think it's got to big and busy. FAR too many marquees ENOUGH enough!
- Refurbishment of Skillicorne Gardens – but not the fussy paving – leave it to the plants for interest.
- Would like to see shrubs. However more in keeping with Regency style. Victorian beds look so out of keeping with Regency Cheltenham. Colour schemes to strong and not harmonious. Softer colours and more emphasis on Regency style.
- I haven't, alas, time to consider the plan fully, but 2 minutes personally finds that the proposed paving for Skillicorne Gardens (existing) is glaringly multi-coloured adjacent to the stone colour paving for the Gardens submission. It surely would be best to have a continuity of paving colour, regardless of stone/paver scale. Furthermore, entrance to the gardens shows the ground plane surrounded by borders against the mellow, gold stone of the Town Hall façade. This cries out for the vertical and horizontal plans to be in unity!
- Not all that into parks but this is a really weak survey with rather leading questions (who would say 'no' to more plants in a park) if you can't do this right what chance does Imperial have! Get an expert in!
- Please roll out gorgeous mixed borders all over the park, along top wall and round quadrangle where there is already an apology for a border, get some actual decent plants in there.
- This is impractical, unsightly and the bed layout will not have the current visual impact.
- Don't fill up the space with too many trees (or tents for that matter) keep it open, that's the charm of a square the openness surrounded by buildings.
- A waste of time it's a home for drop-outs and even a few rose bushes won't keep them out. Open the area up – a secluded area in a public park will never work.
- Lovely idea so does some work in the beautiful Imperial gardens but it seems to be less of a garden now and the place only in favour of festival growth. The gardening aspect should be at the core of the new plans.
- New design of the floral beds – cannot see how this will work!
- Skillicorne gardens – Why bother for the tramps!

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- Could we not have paths across the park from corner to corner, this is where we really want to walk. Esp. do not want marquees blocking the ways across. There is no denying the festivals are taking over our park. Is this truly the best solution or not? Are you trying to make a nice park or a cheap festival?
- The new design of the floral bedding- too much work & mess
- Yes to planting of perennials/cottage garden style – less work, better for wildlife.
- Enhance shrub borders? The shrubberies up there are pretty poor rip them out and start again. Keep the flower beds because they look gorgeous and it needs a lot of them to give the same impression not a measly few here and there.
- Railings would be an unnecessary expense.
- Cost!!!