

The Apiary is buzzing at a revitalised Granta Park

BEN COMBER visits an impressive new £23million facility for the biotech community.

A £23million facility, called The Apiary, is creating a buzz at Granta Park. As you might expect, Granta Park honey will be one of the offerings at the Great Abington science park's new facility (once the bees move in), but there's much more than that on offer, all aimed at pushing Cambridge further to the forefront of the world's biotech scene.

It's a new health facility/sports complex/restaurant that already boasts a 25-metre swimming pool, squash courts, climbing wall, tennis courts, restaurant and juice press, as well as offering GP services.

A nursery is on its way, planned to open later in the year, and with dry cleaning services and Amazon lockers on the way: The Apiary promises to become a hive of activity for the science park.

Doug Cuff, senior director of development of park managers BioMed Realty, said: "We are expecting lots of change at the park; Gilead have a brand new building on the other side of the park, Illumina in an amazing building next door. We think there's going to be an increased velocity of leasing.

"On an international level, when someone is looking at where to go next, this facility gives people a pause and makes them think about taking a deeper dive and really

considering Cambridge.

"It's trying to attract that next AstraZeneca that wants to come here. It's helped us cement the Illumina transaction, but looking forward it's really raising the bar and putting Cambridge on the map to compete with Boston, San Francisco, San Diego and Seattle.

"On a local level, what you're going to see is that the new workforce coming out of the university is a different type of individual. They don't own cars. They want flexibility. What drew us to Granta Park initially, outside of the amazing investment value, is that it had a really robust amenity offering. The key amenity was the bus service that we have.

"I moved here in 2012 and the bus had three runs in the morning and four in the evening, now we're up to eight, so we're bringing in a lot more recent graduates who live in the centre of town.

"I don't think there's anywhere in the UK that has this level of quality, from the canteen to the pool, tennis courts, squash courts; everything that's in here, and I've looked all over the UK and there's nothing like this as a total package.

"We're not at CB1. You can't just walk out and go to Costa, so we need to provide that for people. And that's we're trying to do. I think we're at the beginning of a curve and, going forward, Cambridge is

From left at The Apiary on Granta Park are Jack Sturdy, operations manager, TnS Catering; Chris Blackwell-Frost, chief customer officer, Nuffield Health and Douglass Cuff, senior director of development at BioMed Realty
Pictures: Richard Marsham



only going to go one way."

The Apiary is expected to create 27 new full-time jobs and cater for all employees of Granta Park and the residents of Great and Little Abington.

Architects Gensler designed the building to have no corridors, opening up the building to create a sense of connection in the busy science park environment.

The facility has been designed to

accommodate 2,500 members. Already about a quarter of the park's 2,000-strong workforce have signed up for membership.

■ Find more at grantapark.co.uk.

The facilities

- 25-metre swimming pool
- Two squash courts
- Tennis courts
- Spinning studio
- Fully equipped gym floor with £750,000 of equipment
- Multiple studios with 64 classes a week
- Rock climbing wall with four automatic belays
- Three health consultation rooms

