



Talking shop: clockwise from bottom left, Paul Wray with Philip Evans; John Kelleher; the group limbers up; David Revill; and John Prestwich

focused on generating extra revenue. "Incentivise centre managers," he urged. "The upside for owners is huge. Managing agents take part in the schemes with centre managers receiving bonus opportunities."

"You're adding another tier of retailing," said Wray. "But you can't put carts just anywhere – the fire officer says, no you can't put it there, the walkway is too narrow."

"It's non-unit income, it's promotion enabling potential parties to advertise their brand with your brand – it's about brand partnerships."

"What they do offer is footfall, reaching a defined audience of shoppers as opposed to spending, say, £3,000 on an advertisement that doesn't necessarily reach the people you want to," said Kelleher.

Prestwich came in with the key points that retail merchandising units affect sightlines and pedestrian flows. While there was agreement, Pargma pointed out they add a uniqueness.

"Tenants ask whether carts contribute to the service charge – after all they are benefiting from heat, light, etc, to which the tenants are contributing, and they don't like it."

Revill remarked that in some cases people won't come into a centre where there's a proliferation of carts. "Some malls won't allow such trading," he said. "Car parks can be a

good source of revenue, as well as offering advertising potential."

Turner agreed, adding: "Managers can maximise car park revenues through promotional space, with positions on roofs, walls, even the floor as you walk from your car to the centre. It's not obtrusive and you can generate value for the building."

"It's about brand awareness," said Wray. "Have a marketing kiosk at the entrance advertising goods on sale in the centre. This kiosk can also sell products with a corporate logo, like pens, coasters, shopping list holders."

"What do you believe is the greatest challenge facing the shopping centre industry in 2004?" asked Pat Morgan.

Evans: churn. Centres are bought and sold regularly. Owners are in it for short-term gain/turnaround. It's to the detriment of shopping centres as a whole.

**"Car parks can be a good source of revenue, and offer advertising potential"**

Prestwich: the suggestion that every shopping centre looks the same and has the same content. How to make them stand out, or stand alone? The ability to differentiate. That's the challenge.

Turner: aspirations of centres and local authorities to have vibrant environments. Bringing in more entertainment and leisure activities, integrating with the environment while being an investment for everyone.

Kelleher: support from local authorities and the police. It has been reported an £80 fixed penalty fine is to be imposed on shoplifters at the end of the year. That's no deterrent.

Revill: owners to hold on to the benefits from churn. New ideas and retailers to drive them forward. Consider the wider issues.

Pargma: issues around planning and contracts – and the economy.

Burrows: the turnover in shopping centre ownership. I've had three landlords in four and a half years, each with a different strategy and focus. I have to adapt and change what I do, which affects my interaction with tenants, local authorities and other groups. Positives? In two and a half years we've gone from £47m to £72m. Negatives? Effects on retailers, tenants, customers, other business groups.



**Many thanks to ACR Commercial Property for providing the venue, facilities & refreshments for the debate**

Jones: to deliver best practice in markets, and build partnerships and relationships. Managing agents often have their own lists of preferred suppliers which we are not on. The cycles are moving too fast – keeping pace with everything is hard.

Wray: as a long-standing investor, the need to make acceptable level of total return. Big chains look for benefits from yield compression. Even with the economy and planning constraints as they are today, where do we get added value from? Asset management – which means working with centre management and retailers, etc. For retail growth the challenge is to make centres more attractive. There is a need to develop good ideas with teamwork.

Morgan: we've hardly mentioned the consumer. Knowing your consumer is vital and not enough work is going on in that area. That's the big challenge.