

Vale Business Forum
Thursday 29 October 2009 - Kingshill House, Dursley
www.valebusinessforum.org.uk

Guest Speakers: Coryn Martin, Property Project Manager, J Sainsbury plc
Rachel Small, Regeneration Manager, Stroud District Council

Vale Business Forum Chairman Shirley Hill welcomed guests and opened the meeting with a reminder of the value of the Forum and the benefits of membership that include a web-site entry with the annual membership fee.

Next Forum Meeting:

Thursday 3 December PCT Hospital update and Christmas Buffet
See Forum website for details.

In addition there will be a skittles competition with Stroud Business Forum on Monday 16 November at the Fox & Hounds Inn, Coaley.

Update: The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update to the information provided at the Business Forum's meeting on 5 March 2009. The notes of that meeting can be found on www.valebusinessforum.org.uk

Detailed sheets relating to work on **both** projects were provided to attendees, see www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/regeneration/dursley_paving.asp

J Sainsbury plc:

Coryn Martin reiterated the difficulties that had been experienced on site after work had started. They also were disappointed not to be able to open the store in time for Christmas. He explained how this was topographically the most complex project Sainsbury has been involved in. The principal delay had arisen as a result of further work by Severn Trent Water, whose investigations had shown that the overflow area known as the lagoon was no longer acceptable and potentially might not cope with future adverse conditions. This brought about a requirement for a complete remodelling of the structural engineering, re-routing and much wider (1.8m) and deeper (9 metres) pipes for storm water. This added £¼ million to Sainsbury's costs.

The overall plan for the site was amended in consequence. The whole site is piled to a depth of 10 metres. The drop of 9½ metres on the drainage was accommodated. This was in addition to the DDA approved walkway diversion and service diversions for gas, water, electricity and telephony. The design was also amended to provide a separate entrance and exit for the swimming pool car park.

The tree line is protected and has not been affected. This is a conservation site. The old car park area has been extended in order to provide additional parking, with strengthening to 11 metres high cribblock walls protecting houses and gardens. Enormous amount of work undertaken, cubic metres of soil moved, stats to be supplied. All soil on site being re-used in retaining areas and the banking. Re-used soil was vibro-compacted to ensure it is sufficiently solid not to subsequently sink inside the steel walls.

Groundworks almost completed and the store framework being erected. The store is designated green, with maximum daylight through design incorporating sun pipes, rain water harvesting, gases used in fridges would be CO₂, which is a natural gas. The biomass boiler has a slow fuel burn, using compressed waste wood pellets from saw mills: anticipated fuel usage requiring no

more than one delivery truck per week. There had been issues with the previously proposed but unproven geo-thermal system so it would not be used for the Dursley store.

Main access to the store's internal layout will be from the car park entrance at the rear. The front entrance on Castle Street will have an internal walkway to that area. The service yard and deliveries access will be to the east of the building with the security gates being positioned well off Castle Street so that delivery lorries will not block the street. Administration services (domestics) will be principally underground with windows facing the service yard.

There will be seventeen checkouts, six of which will be self scan. It will be predominantly a food store, with a delicatessen. There will be a fresh bakery with a Genesis plant that uses raw ingredients that are not pre-mixed or part baked before delivery to the store.

It was confirmed that eight of the Foundation plaques were being re-sited on the wall of Sainsbury's.

Publicity for the store itself will be increased closer to the opening, scheduled for March.

A great deal of co-ordination and co-operation necessary between Sainsbury, SDC, County Council, Highways, technical sign-off, different departments all with different schedules. Plus issues with contractors of all parties.

Access: Please see previous meeting notes and revised plans on the www.stroud.gov.uk website shown above. The road and crossing have been amended by Highways: Sainsbury have spent a further £100,000 on the required enhancements. The road between the store and the Parsonage Street linkway will be an elevated table, narrowed and paved in co-ordination with the Dursley Paving Project. It was confirmed that both bus stops will be in lay-bys and will not inhibit traffic flow.

The plan shows the phasing of the roadworks and pavements working along the north side of Castle Street from west to east, and then the south side, also from west to east. Each bus stop will be temporarily moved closer to the Market Hall as its section is undertaken. Highways works begin 2 November up to 4 December. The traffic light management required for these works will stop for the Christmas period. Work recommences on 4 January through to 12 March.

The distance available for a double queue exiting the car park provides length for only two cars rather than the five or six indicated at the previous meeting. This is due to a Council requirement for a minimum pavement width and it was not possible to take further space either from the store positioning or the swimming pool car park.

Great concern was expressed by attendees about traffic congestion and difficulties exiting the swimming pool car park and separately onto Castle Street. Sainsbury are in discussions to try to get the pedestrian crossing lights and the May Lane traffic lights synchronised so that exit queuing can be kept to a minimum.

An attendee queried the safety of the proximity of the pedestrian crossing. This issue had been addressed by Highways department and their changes incorporated. The town's requested re-positioning of the pedestrian crossing to be directly across from the Parsonage Street linkway had been deemed crucial for the town traders and it is hoped that the redesign and the new paving will greatly enhance the whole area. It is unfortunate that difficulties are being experienced with owners of some of the land to the rear of the Parsonage Street shops that is not owned by the County Council. It was noted that the redesign retained two of the three CC disabled parking bays in that area and that there will be a large number specified in the store car park.

Sainsbury expect to employ 140 full and part-time staff (colleagues). They plan to work on increasing local skill levels and reduce local unemployment by encouraging local applicants. There will not be a staff car park: colleagues will be encouraged to park away from the store.

Sainsbury generally experience traffic congestion at new stores during the first six days of opening and Dursley is not expected to differ in this respect.

Store parking: There will be 216 spaces at the store. Eight of these will be blue badge disabled.

Coryn Martin advised that the car park will not be “pay and display” and shoppers will have free access: there is no intention to exclude town centre shoppers. Although the car park is intended primarily for the store’s customers, Sainsbury would encourage people to make joint shopping trips into the town. Shoppers will have free access for 2 or 3 hours but how this will be monitored has not been decided. The store closes at 10.00pm: the car park will remain accessible 24/7.

It will not be possible to open the store car park in advance of the store opening. It was noted that the swimming pool car park is to be re-surfaced by SDC as part of the joint entrance works. Discussions are ongoing as to how that might be phased to cause least inconvenience. There were a number of contradictory views.

Sainsbury’s are providing much more parking than existed previously. However, there was again heated discussion about the loss of the town’s long term parking area for shoppers, traders and walkers. There has never been an obligation for Sainsbury to address this issue and it has always been something for the town/district/county councils to resolve.

Town Parking: Rachel Small advised that a Parking Focus Group has been established by the town centre manager and all traders had been invited to attend via the Town centre newsletter. The first meeting was held on 26 October, but was not well attended. The next consultation meeting is scheduled for 30 November, timing to suit those attending. Contact Vicky Hancock, Dursley Town Centre Manager on 01453 549 750 or e-mail: tcm@stroud.gov.uk before 23 November please.

Issues include the potential renewal of the lease for temporary car parking for 70 in Long Street. Other availability is currently Broadwell 16, May Lane 53, Swimming Pool 80 spaces. Although the town centre will have more parking spaces once Sainsbury opens than existed before the building work started, these do not address the longer-stay issues of parking for traders and walkers, who the town is attempting to attract.

Update on Dursley Market Place Paving Project: Please refer to the previous minutes and to the diagrams and notes on the Stroud DC website: www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/regeneration/dursley_paving.asp

Input from the public consultations and all other parties considered and incorporated. Traders concerns addressed. Loading bays specified. Delays due to various issues including changes made by Highways for example improving the view of the pedestrian crossing for vehicles from Silver Street. The District Council is waiting for County Council technical sign-off and progress can then start with contractors.

The primary paving will be Marshalls ‘Perfecta Natural’ with the surface in the immediate area of the market Hall comprised of York stone. The materials used for this project and by Sainsbury’s will be complementary, as specified on the plan. It is hoped that the work will start early in January. Nothing will be done before Christmas

The Market Hall is a listed building and as such the paving works will halt at its perimeter. Paving to be in alignment as far as is practicable bearing in mind the natural camber of the hill, standing water and cross falls. It is not possible to be flush on all sides. The paving will be cambered to the adjacent shops, not using steps. The heritage railings will be reinstated and extended.

As can be seen from the plan, attempts have been made to implement an uncluttered environment, combining signs and lights. Existing seating and notice boards will be adjusted. Existing trees to be retained, with additional seating and new planters looked after under contract. The old cobble stones will also be incorporated, with interpretation information on plaques.

All Lister bollards will be retained, with some being relocated within the area. Additional bollards incorporated to protect the area around the reduced width Parsonage Street exit. Currently liaising with Sainsbury's to agree uplift from the Castle Street bus stop to the Market Place paving area. The pavers on the opposite side of Castle Street in front of the Heritage Centre and Lloyds Bank will link up with the Sainsbury's pavers. The drop bollards at the confluence of Silver Street and the Market Place represent the furthest extent of new paving. These bollards will be removed as part of the project.

GCC had begun an investigation of traffic management in Silver Street. This will be progressed further when the current public realm works have been completed.

The great level of co-ordination was much appreciated. The phrase "no gain without pain" has been in regular use.

Shirley Hill thanked Coryn Martin and Rachel Small for their time and said there were occasions when she thought it was never going to happen. Appreciative of the degree of flexibility, co-ordination and tenacity shown by all those involved. Thank goodness Sainsbury's stuck with the project, having been presented with major difficulties at the height of the recession. Despite the many difficulties it was a great achievement for all concerned.



Shirley Hill went on to advise the meeting that Dursley's Breakheart Quarry Community Project (instigated by Vale Vision) www.breakheart-community-project.org.uk had entered the ITV's People's Millions funding competition and has won through to the ITV West region's competition taking place on 23 November 2009. The two entries will be shown on the 6.00pm regional news.

The People's Millions is a partnership between the Big Lottery Fund and ITV.

That day's regional winner will receive £50,000.

The opposition is Writhlington Sports Centre near Radstock which serves 15 schools and will be organising lots of voters.

The voting telephone number will be available on the website on Monday 23 November and in the Daily Mirror on that day.

***Voting is only open for one day from 9.00am to midnight.
Dursley can only win if you vote. Please support this local project by going on line to:
www.peoplesmillions.org.uk/regions/west And please use your telephone vote!***