

Vale Business Forum

Meeting held at Kingshill House, Dursley 05/03/09

Speakers: Coryn Martin, Property Project Manager, J. Sainsbury plc & Rachel Small - Regeneration Dept. Stroud District Council

Shirley Hill welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Coryn Martin to address the audience with an update on the progress of Sainsbury's supermarket development in Castle Street, Dursley.

Coryn advised that extensive ground works were underway but has now been suddenly hampered with issues with Severn Trent Water Authority. A water lagoon which has been on the site for 30 years apparently has never worked as intended and Severn Trent were looking to Sainsbury's to resolve the issue. Works could involve a storm water drain and divert sewers and foul water at the site. It was hoped that agreement to resolve the issues would be made quickly to avoid significant delays to the project.

Coryn advised that piling work was being carried out to support the car park and store, previous ground levels differed by 28 feet.

Sainsbury's had opened a new 'green' store in Dartmouth in 2008 for which it won an award. The Dursley store would follow on from that successful design but instead of a biomass boiler which Dartmouth has, Dursley's store will be powered by Geo-Thermal heating, utilising refrigeration plant energy making the store the first large retailer to use this method and be Sainsbury's 'greenest' store so far. Much natural day light will be achieved in the store by way of the design of the north facing lights and sun pipes, domes which will be unseen from around the ground area.

The footpath through the site linking the Knapp and Castle Street has now been officially temporarily diverted from the site whilst works are in progress. A drop of 12 feet is made over a length of 15/16 metres which will be reduced in the permanent diversion of the path; it will still be routed to Castle street, on the Swimming Pool side of the store, not the old College site side as it was originally (it will be a right of way, passing through the store's grounds).

Nine stone plaques removed from the College building will be utilised in the front facing wall of the store and 3 commemorative memory boards based on Lister's will also be featured. The store is to be 20,000 sq ft (it was noted that Tesco Cam is approx 16,000 sq ft), have two entrances – one from car park at rear and one on to Castle Street. There will not be a wet fish or meat counter or cafe but there is to be a delicatessen counter and an in-store bakery. Great disappointment was expressed in the meeting regarding the wet fish counter and Coryn advised that he would pass that on.

The store will include self scan check outs and have 2 ATM's.

Works in hand include levelling the car park area as Sainsbury's require a level area for trolleys with no slope greater than 1 in 60. The electrical sub station is being relocated in consultation with EON and Dursley Town Council and will be brick built with tiled roof near the Methodist Church.

Car parking and road junction lay out issues prompted a lot of questions and discussion. Coryn advised that car parking could be 'pay on foot' but the mechanism for car park charges for shoppers or non-shoppers have not yet been decided upon. Overall there would be about 30 more car parking spaces than previously available on the Rack field long stay car park. Queuing to exit the car park was discussed with some concern from Dursley Traders. It was noted that the pelican crossing is to be relocated further down Castle Street close to the store entrance, new bus stops would be recessed and good access for delivery lorries (anticipated to be 3 or 4 a day after the initial set up of the store) would alleviate traffic queuing in Castle Street. It is not known if the District Council will be adding a yellow-boxed area at the car park exit. Coryn estimated that the double queuing area for left and right turning exit traffic may be 5 or 6 car lengths but a query on the Swimming Pool car park exit would be taken back to Sainsbury's, the current entrance and exit being separate but the Sainsbury plans show exit from the entrance lane. Coryn would make enquiries regarding the accessibility of the car park outside of trading hours.

Once the Fire Station has relocated the area will be cleared and underground tanks and pipes removed before the store is built. Coryn advised that asbestos had been removed from the youth centre building but there had not been much to remove from the College building. All site clearance material would be recycled including the College bell.

It is expected that the store's trading hours will be 8 am until 9 pm for the beginning of the week; 8 am until 10 pm at the end of the week and 10 am until 4 pm on Sundays.

Coryn said he would arrange for up to date plans to be made available if possible.

Shirley Hill thanked Coryn for addressing the Forum and answering questions. Shirley then introduced Rachel Small who was making a presentation of the proposed Dursley Market Place Paving Project. Whilst Rachel set up the presentation, Shirley gave an update on Vale Business Forum. A successful Business Breakfast had been held at the Tudor Arms, Slimbridge with a good attendance resulted in successful networking. Shirley gave notice that the next Business Forum speakers would be: Rupert Joseland, St Modwen and James Watt South West Regional Development Agency for an update on the Littlecombe development project, on 23rd April. Shirley advised that Peter Jones was available to photograph member's businesses for the website (which is overdue for renewal). For the website to continue and prosper for everyone it was important for members to pay the £25 subscription.

Shirley informed everyone that they could sponsor sculptures/art work for Sculpture Trail which is to be relaunched in July. All age groups are involved with making the sculptures (known age range 6 to 90) and a plaque is added alongside the sculptures which includes the name of the sponsor. Shirley then handed over to Rachel. Note: full detail of the presentation is available on the Vale Business Forum website: www.valebusinessforum.org.uk

Rachel informed the Forum that the Paving Project was being delivered by Dursley Town Council, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Dursley Town Trust and Vale Vision. The aim of the project was to complement the historic features of the site; clearly direct traffic exiting from Parsonage Street through to Castle Street; Inhibit illegal access through the No Entry where Parsonage Street meets Castle Street; Suitable for pedestrian movement i.e. does not create a slip or trip hazard; Suitable for vehicle purpose i.e. vehicle weight and manoeuvring.

The phase reached now is stakeholder and public consultation which has been published in the press and on radio and local posters and is arranged for: Tuesday 10th 4pm; Tuesday 10th 7.30pm; and Wednesday 18th 7pm – all at Dursley Methodist Church Hall. The consultation will involve choices, preferences and comments on:
2 Overall Concept Drawings; 4 Paving Suite Options; Wider or Narrower (squared-off) York Stone width around the Old Town Hall;

- inclusion or exclusion of a bike parking facility;
- what range of street furniture;
- planting (A tree in a raised planter, also acts as seating, close to the Silver Street loading bay, or a planting bed is included close to the Silver Street loading bay, or no new tree planting in that area;
- retention or removal of planting bed at base of wall of existing brick wall.

Rachel has spoken with Traders in the vicinity of Market Place to gauge their requirements and access arrangements for the regular wet fish van and the Farmers Market are being considered. Concerns raised at the meeting included vehicular access to Parsonage Street and deliveries during the works and ownership of the planting bed at base of wall of existing brick wall to be clarified.

All funding is available for this project and if all stages progress to plan work could commence in September and could see that side of Castle Street enhanced at the same time as Sainsbury's new store is completed.

Shirley thanked Rachel for her presentation and closed the meeting with thanks to everyone for attending.