WOOTTON and EAST HUNSBURY PARISH COUNCIL
Wootton Community & Sports Centre, Curtlee Hill, Wootton, Northampton, NN4 6ED
Tel: 01604 705055 Fax: 01604 705777

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at Grangewood Park Residents Club, Wednesday 12th October 2011 at 19:00pm

Present: Cllr Nunn (Chair) Costello, Rayner, Penny, Collard, Hill, Patel, Savage, Bartley, Eldred, Gonzalez De Savage (joined the meeting at 19.17pm)

Also Present: Cllr Phil Larratt, Northampton Borough Council, Cllr Michael Hill Northampton Borough Council (part)

Martin Robeson: Martin Robeson Planning Practice
Joanna Jones: Martin Robeson Planning Practice
Phil Brogan: Martin Robeson Planning Practice
Ian Bryant (Highways) Martin Robeson Planning Practice

Approximately 70 members of the public

2011_55. Opening Procedures

Cllr Nunn (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed all those present. Cllr Nunn explained that the Parish Council had been in discussions with Tesco regarding the planned expansion of the store for over two years and gave a brief history of the application.

The planning application had originally been put before the West Northampton Development Corporation (WNDC) in September 2010 a revised application was submitted to the WNDC in February 2011; the application was then revised further and now falls within the remit of Northampton Borough Council. The Borough Council Planning Committee is expected to make the final decision on this application on 18th October 2011.

Northampton Borough Council first considered the application on the 13th September 2011 and the decision was deferred so that the Parish Council and Tesco's could further consider highways and access issues surrounding the Clannell Road junction and the proposed access via Sandhurst Close.

The Chair explained that when the application had first come before the Parish Council a number of local residents had been very vocal about a variety of issues, the location of the cash machines, litter, and recycling units. Some of these concerns had been alleviated during the revisions of the application. But the Parish Council still believe that 2 important areas hadn't been addressed, these

were the Clannell Road entrance and the proposed new entrance to the dot.com service yard via Sandhurst Close.

The Parish Council had therefore called this meeting to ensure that their response to the Borough Council would be in keeping with the views of residents.

2011_56. Public Session

The Chair opened the meeting for public comments:

A resident of Sandhurst Close raised the following issues: The entrance to the dot.com service yard from Sandhurst Close will affect families living in Sandhurst Close; the introduction of commercial traffic into a residential street will be a concern for parents. Parents are concerned that it will be too dangerous for children to play in the street.

If yellow lines are introduced at the end of Sandhurst close this will simply push parking problems further into Sandhurst Close and surrounding streets.

A resident of Sandhurst Close said that they had a huge problem with the Dot.com entrance. They felt that the introduction of yellow lines would create huge problems in Sandhurst Close and leave residents unable to park outside their own homes. The dot com business will mean that it won't be safe to cross the road. (Both for children who live locally and those from Abbeyfield School accessing the store before and after school) The resident also commented that it is not just the dot.com vans that will be entering through Sandhurst Close but also delivery vehicles for Chillies etc.

Another resident of Sandhurst Close commented that commercial traffic should not be going through Clannell Road this should be directed through the Mereway roundabout.

A resident of Falconers Rise commented that the introduction of Heavy Goods Vehicles along Clannell Road is wrong. Tesco is already serviced by the Mereway roundabout and all commercial traffic should enter through here.

A concern was raised that not only will commercial traffic go along Clannell Road to access the store but that traffic exiting Tesco will then drive through residential streets (East Hunsbury) to get to Wootton or the M1 as this is quicker than doubling back to the Mereway Roundabout.

A resident of Kentford Close said that the neighbourhood was already dangerous for children to play out because of Tesco's traffic. The resident also expressed concern that their property prices would drop.

(Cllr Gonzalez De Savage arrived at 19.17)

A resident of Sandhurst Close said that Tesco had not been a good neighbour in the past. Residents feel ignored by them.

Another resident of Sandhurst close said that the litter was appalling. The litter runs all the way from Danes Camp to the School. The current litter picking in the area simply isn't good enough. It is even worse in winter when the greenery has gone from the trees and the litter stuck in the trees is never cleared.

A resident also commented that there is a rat problem in the area.

One resident asked "what class of use" is the "dot.com delivery service? Would this be classed as retail issue or was it warehousing and distribution.

At this point the Chair suggested that Martin Robeson answered the points raised so far in connection with the Sandhurst Road junction.

A resident asked if Martin Robeson lived in Northampton. Martin Robeson answered that he did not but that he had spent a substantial amount of time in Northampton whilst working on the application.

Martin Robeson thanked the Parish Council for allowing him to answer questions. He went on to say that the Mereway store trades very heavily and that Tesco wants to do better for its customers.

He understood that the Tesco Mereway store was at the heart of a community with a community centre, churches and library all within its immediate vicinity. He said that not much had happened since the store had opened in the way of better managing the space in which it worked.

He said that part of this plan was to join the place together better and included better transport links. Martin Robeson noted that no one had objected to any of these aspects of the plans.

A resident from Sandhurst close noted that no one had objected to these elements of the plans as Mr Robeson was referring to "fluffy stuff" which wasn't as important to local residents.

Martin Robeson said that they (as planning consultants) had seen and read letters that had been sent to the WNDC and NBC and comments had been incorporated.

Mr Robeson went on to explain how the scheme would work and referred to the site plan (Appendix A) when explaining how the traffic into the dot.com service yard would work.

He also noted the following

- *Signage will be placed at Danes Camp and the end of Sandhurst close which will state that all users of Danes Camp can park for 3 hours free of charge in the Tesco car park.*
- *Litter picking in the area will be stepped up and will include the Mereway underpass and the underpass on the pathway from Olympia close to Abbeyfield School.*
- *Granting a planning application gives NBC the opportunity to make certain things a "condition of planning" which NBC are then able to enforce, which they wouldn't have been able to do in the past.*
- *Tesco's are producing a landscape management plan which will form part of the planning application.*
- *Tesco are also introducing a Mereway Forum which is a user forum for all retailers on site, other stakeholder groups will be able to feed items back to the Forum.*

The chair noted that Tesco had publicly confirmed that they would be extending litter picking to the Mereway underpass and the pathway behind Olympia close.

A resident asked what sanctions can be imposed if Tesco don't carry out the litter picking as promised. The Chair said that he would ask Cllr Phil Larratt to comment on enforcement issues surrounding planning.

A resident of Barn owl Close said the state of litter through Falconers Rise and through the estate was poor, when she had collected empty aerosol cans from the park and taken them into the store, staff had just laughed. The resident appreciated that Tesco's can't be responsible for what people do with litter after they leave the store, but she had expected more support from the store.

The Chair asked Martin Robeson if Tesco would consider extending the litter picking further.

They answered that NBC could amend conditions on litter picking if they believed it to be appropriate.

A member of the public said the problem is that things just aren't enforced.

With regard to parking at Tesco for customers of Danes Camp a resident noted that this had been the agreement previously but that Tesco had reneged on the promise. What was to stop this happening again?

A resident said the people living in Sandhurst Close get little for "their money". *(Council tax*)

A resident said it was unbelievable that the application had got this far. He believed that all commercial traffic should go through the Mereway entrance (there was widespread support in the room for these comments)

A resident of Kentford Close commented that children often play Football in the service yard at the rear of Chillies.

A resident said that surely it would only take a logical mind to stop commercial traffic going along Clannell Road.

A resident said that it would be like living on an industrial estate. Children won't be safe with the volume of traffic that there will be going through Sandhurst Close.

The resident said she worked in logistics and believes that there will be 30 to 40 vehicles a day- It would be easy to move the dot.com entrance to Mereway.

A resident asked that the Clannell Road entrance be closed altogether.

Cllr Savage said that since the process started two years ago, he has been asking for information from Tesco which he hasn't received. Cllr Savage wanted to know what % increase in footfall was expected following the extension. Cllr Savage said he doesn't see how such a large increase in floor space would be being considered by Tesco if they weren't expecting a substantial increase in customers, which would also lead to an increase in traffic.

Cllr Eldred WEHPC (Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council) and East Hunsbury Ward Councillor for NBC expressed serious disappointment that Tesco's had not been able to fund play equipment in Grange Wood Park. Additionally Cllr Eldred said that he had been asking Tesco for information about their accident statistics for 3 years and that he had still not had been given any details.

The Chair gave Martin Robeson the opportunity to answer some of the points raised;

Martin Robeson stated that:

- Tesco's do take litter very seriously
- The signs for parking at Tesco would be at the end of Sandhurst Close and would not be adjacent to any properties.
- Chillies were a long lease tenant and Tesco were not able to control what they do
- Tesco's were not considering moving the Dot.com entrance as this was not an option as it would require re-planning the whole store.
- CCTV has been installed at the end of the car park and Tesco's have been speaking to the police liaison officer regarding anti-social behaviour in the store.
- There will be a maximum increase in trade and traffic of 10%. This has been subject to a complex retail assessment
- There has been a lot of consultation with the Parish Council and residents.
- Planning officers have already written a report which recommends that the application is passed.

Residents who were present were disappointed in the response from Martin Robeson.

One resident said he felt Tesco's didn't care

Another stated that Clannell Road wasn't big enough for four lanes as proposed in the new road layout.

Neal Prescott (former member of WEHPC and Chair of the Planning Committee) said he could see no significant changes in the application over the three years. He went on to say that the introduction of commercial vehicles into Sandhurst Close was going to produce a toxic mix of pedestrians and heavy goods vehicles. He said that he had personally spent a huge amount of time working on the application and would be very disappointed if it were approved.

Cllr Gonzalez De Savage WEHPC and member of Northamptonshire County Council for East Hunsbury said it was frustrating that Tesco's weren't listening. He said that Tesco's had never properly addressed any of the issues raised. And that residents and the Parish Council needed a response. He said it was impossible to believe that Tesco's weren't able to re-plan the store.

With regard to the Highways issues raised Cllr Gonzalez De Savage asked it be noted that when Martin Robeson says that NCC Highways have "approved" the application all this means is that they believe that the option presented is a legal option. They are not saying that this is the best option.

He went onto say that Tesco was a successful facility. But he called upon Tesco to withdraw the application.

Cllr Gonzalez De Savage said it was important that residents attended the Borough Council meeting being held on Tuesday 18th October 2011 at 6pm.

The Chair asked that the Clerk put details of the Planning Committee meeting on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Michael Hill NBC-Nene Valley Ward said that although he was the member for Nene Valley he lived in East Hunsbury.

Cllr Hill explained the process for speaking at a planning Committee meeting.

- He noted that only 2 members of the public can speak for an application and only 2 members of the public can speak against an application.
- In addition a Ward Councillors for the area, a representative of a Parish Council and the relevant member of parliament may also speak.
- You are only able to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes-so ensure your time is used well
- Get your facts right and make your representation on planning law.
- It is worth writing to individual members of the planning committee, the being Penny Flavell.
- If you wish to speak at the meeting then you should contact Fraser McGowan on 01604 837101
- Cllr Michael Hill wished residents luck with their representations.

The Chair asked the Clerk if details of membership of NBC planning committee and their contact details could be posted on the Parish Council website.

The Chair asked for any further comments on the Clannell Road Junction.

Residents of 37 and 36 Falconers Rise said they were also representing a 90 year old who lives in a Bungalow in Falconers Rise. They asked if the existing Clannell Road junction could be shut altogether and moved further west.

Martin Robeson said that moving the entrance wasn't a realistic option.

The Chair asked how many car journeys a 10% increase in footfall would equate to.

They answered that there are currently 10,000 car trips to the store each day. The extension is expected to equate to an additional 2,000 car trips (1,000 extra cars driving to the store and then from the store)

The dot.com business will have 12 vans each making 3 trips a day (So 72 journeys to and from the store)

They were asked how many extra car parking spaces were being provided.

Before: 753 spaces

After: 896 spaces

Analysis showed that peak times in store are from 5pm-6pm

The yellow lines at Sandhurst Close will be for quite a limited area south of the dotcom entrance.

A member of the public asked if "the council" had approved the highways scheme.

Cllr Larratt explained that NCC Highways department are asked to comment on the technical aspects of the Highways scheme. It is not their job to assess the amenity of the highways scheme.

The actual planning application would be decided upon by NBC at the meeting on the 18th October 2011.

A resident from Falconers Rise said that traffic lights outside Falconers Rise would cause more problems than they solve.

A resident said that given that the tills are being moved forward it should be possible to reconfigure the store to allow the dot.com entrance to be moved to Mereway.

Cllr Larratt-summarised the position as there being very strong opposition to the application

- **Commercial traffic in Clannell Road is most unwelcome**
- **Residents of Sandhurst Close are extremely concerned about there being commercial traffic in a residential area.**
- **Residents of Falconers Rise will have problems with cars waiting at the traffic lights.**

Cllr Larratt will be writing to the planning committee and will be speaking in person at the meeting. He urged people to write to NBC and to write to members of the planning committee.

The Clerk will put all of this information on the website. And if any representations are sent to the Parish Office the Clerk will ensure that these are passed on.

The chair then reminded all those present that this was a formal council meeting and asked all members of the Parish Council to join the Council table. And asked that the council now formally consider the application.

2011_56 To consider the following planning application:

Tesco Superstore Mereway:

N/2011/0323- Extension to the Existing Food Store, Erection of a New Non-Food Retail Unit (as replacement for the loss of an existing unit), New Bus Waiting Facility, Provision of New Pedestrian

Footpaths, Landscape Works, Lighting Works and Revisions to the Car Park Layout at Tesco, Mereway

The Chair then asked members to make any final comments that they had.

Cllr Savage said that the numbers just don't make sense, given the large increase in store size the relatively small increase in footfall just doesn't add up.

Cllr Margaret Hill thinks that the volume of traffic will be greater than anticipated.

Cllr Collard said he was surprised that the application had even reached this stage. The application in its current form was unacceptable.

Cllr Rayner – echoed those concerns.

Cllr Costello said that there had been a number of incremental increases in the store over the years and this application now meant that the site was being overdeveloped.

This application included a 38% increase in floor space, a 20% increase in car parking, and yet only a 10% increase in trade was expected. Cllr Costello said that the number just don't add up.

It would he added be possible for the dot com business to operate from another facility elsewhere in the town. The dot.com facility is a distribution facility and not a retail facility.

Cllr Costello said that he had serious concerns about this application.

Cllr Costello then proposed that "the Parish Council reject the application entirely as overdevelopment of the site"

Cllr Nunn said he was happy to second that motion.

Cllr Eldred said he was happy to support the motion the application providing that the Parish Council continued to support all the concerns raised by residents both previously and at this evenings meeting.

Cllr Costello agreed that this was his intention.

It was therefore unanimously resolved to reject the application in its entirety. And to support the objections raised by residents, namely:

- That Clannell Road **should not** be used by commercial vehicles
- That access to the proposed new service yard for dot.com business **should not** be through Sandhurst Close
- Concerns regarding the safety of children crossing Sandhurst Close.
- The ongoing parking issues for the residents of Sandhurst Close.
- The proposed redevelopment of the entrance in Clannell Road including the introduction of traffic lights at this junction
- Litter in the immediate and surrounding area of the Tesco store.