

## Appendix A

### PRESENT

Kevin Jackson (Chair)	Town/District Councillor	Elaine Baddeley	Town/District Councillor
Rodger Deane	Biddulph Deputy Mayor	John Rushton	Town Councillor
Hilda Sheldon	Town/District Councillor/Biddulph in Bloom		
Linda Deaville	Town Councillor	Wayne Rogers	Town Councillor
Frank Harris	Town/District Councillor	Terry Gibson	Town Councillor
Andrew Hart	Town/District Councillor	Jeanette Walley	Town Councillor
Jim Davies	Town/District Councillor	Jean Gaunt	Town Officer
Tony Hall	Town/District Councillor	Kate Thacker	Town Chief Officer
Madelaine Lovatt	Town/District Councillor	John Robinson	Town Crier
John Jones	Biddulph Mayor	Jody Shaw	Town Councillor
Kim Corbishley	Biddulph Business Chamber	Carl Kisicki	Resident
Graeme Court	Biddulph Business Chamber	Louise Harley	Job Centre Plus
Mary Lomas	Resident	Stan Jukes	Resident
Alan Dale	Biddulph CAB	Ian Jones	Resident
Eileen Cox	Resident	Chinwe Akomah	Biddulph Chronicle
Michelle Wallace	SMDC	Ruth Reeves	SMDC
Ian Lawson	County Councillor	Amy Kershaw	Gough Bailey Wright
Harvey Jackson	Project Manager, Vinci	Nick Alston	Sainsbury's Project Manager
E Faulkner	Friends of Newpool Meadow		
H Barnett	Moorland Road	Mr and Mrs Bailey	Residents
J B McF ----	Friends of Newpool Meadow	B and G Dawson	Residents
Ian Dale	Gillow Heath Residents Association		
Mr and Mrs C (Scotland)	Residents	Sean	LGBT – Disability
Greg	LGBT - Disability	Louise Harley	Job Centre Plus
Zoe Holdcroft	Gay Life	Andrew Horton	Gay Life
Anita Harrison	ACL	Rob Jones	HPBC/SMDC
Mara Hargreaves	Leek College/Skillsbase	Louise Tunstall	Volunteer Bureau
Peter Turfrey	Leek College		

Apologies:  
Councillor Whilding

### Displays and Refreshments

There were displays by local groups and organisations about the services they provided in Biddulph focusing on town centre regeneration, and employment and skills.

## **NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN FORUM: ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY HELD ON TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2010**

*For attendance see appendix A*

### **44.09 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

Councillor Jackson welcomed all present to the meeting.

### **45. PRESENTATIONS**

- a Mara Hargreaves, Commercial Manager, Skillsbase training service gave a brief overview of the 'employer facing' end of Leek College. Their aim was to improve the productivity and profitability of a company. They offered apprenticeships, bespoke training covering a wide area and NVQs in a wide range of subjects.

Peter Turfrey, Head of communications in Leek College, talked about the Kingsfield Centre which had been in Biddulph since the 1980's. It was a Leek cell which was committed to working with any organisation or individual in Biddulph who needed it. Leek College was diverse and dynamic, and well placed to react quickly if the need arose.

Questions were invited

- i Q - People were having it rough at the moment, companies were struggling with cheap imports.  
A – this was a problem. Skillsbase offered business improvement technology to look at smarter more efficient ways to compete. In addition some parts of manufacturing just would not survive. There was a need to re equip those workers for other employment. Most jobs needed IT skills, and that was one area in which the Kingsfield Centre worked with the people and with JET
- ii Q – was there any possibility that the Leek cell could offer the PGCE course, as there were currently not enough places for those wanting to train?  
A - Government controlled the total number of places nationally. It was tough to get onto the training and tragic that many young people with degrees could not gain employment. Leek College would try their utmost to get funding and offer the courses to young people.
- iii Q - what percentage of degree students gained employment?  
A – the vast majority of degree foundation students at Leek College were older students and were doing the degree whilst working. There was a severe problem of graduate unemployment.
- iv Q – Were there any concerns for the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)?  
A – EMA had been a good thing, previously full time courses for youngsters were held over three days, to enable them to work on the other four. EMA had taken the barriers away. Mr Turfrey had not seen evidence that it would disappear, but had seen that it would be reduced in the following year.

- b Volunteer Centre: the proposed speaker, Tracy Ellis, had been delayed in Spain due to the eruption of the Eyjafjallajokull Volcano in Iceland and subsequent flight cancellations.
- c Graeme Court, Chair of Biddulph Business Chamber (BBC) gave a brief overview of the Chamber and what it did.

The BBC had recently realised a great increase in membership and had raised its profile and improved communications within the town. It was currently working on two initiatives: the Biddulph Business Directory which should be ready by autumn 2010; and a Biddulph Business Map to be completed before the end of 2010. The sale of advertising space would help to finance these projects. Several social fundraising events would be held throughout the year to raise the profile of the group. A proposal to hold a small market on the town hall frontage was mentioned. The Chamber had been involved with Biddulph Christmas Lights switch on for a number of years and was already starting to think about Christmas 2010.

One of the more contentious issues which the BBC had been involved with was traffic flow in the town centre. The BBC had requested a further public consultation exercise. The BBC had begun to engage with Sainsbury's and recently had held a children's artwork competition; the prizes had kindly been donated by Sainsbury's. The BBC welcomed Sainsbury's to the High Street and wished them every success in Biddulph.

The Chair thanked Mr Court, adding that Biddulph needed to have a vibrant chamber in order to have a vibrant town centre

Questions were invited:

- i Q – Sainsbury's would bring a lot of people into town, what was the BBC going to do to keep people shopping in the High Street?  
A – We are all in this together, we all have to work together, it was not just down to the traders
- ii Q – there were 70,000 visitors to Biddulph Grange last year, only about 3,000 of them visited the town as Biddulph did not have a coach park  
A – The market idea was to encourage Sainsbury's shoppers onto the High Street, once they were there it would be up to the shops to draw them in. Sainsbury's had said that they would be providing coach parking spaces within the development. Councillor Hart, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, noted that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) had requested the removal of the height barriers on the Wharf Road car park as part of their proposed health centre scheme. This might enable the introduction of bespoke motor home spaces. Coaches would need a drop off/pick up point and an area for the coach and driver to wait.
- d Amy Kershaw of Gough, Bailey, Wright, gave an update on the Sainsbury's development, introducing Mr Harvey Jackson from the Vinci construction team. The build was going well and on target. The good weather had been a help. A lot of excavation had taken place; the steel works should be on site in early May and would take about 6 weeks to erect. Mr Jackson reported that Vinci had recently

been trying to recruit sub contractors via the Build Up north Staffordshire scheme and had successfully recruited a scaffolding firm.

Recruitment for general store workers had not begun, management would be put in place first. Positions would be advertised via the Sainsbury's website and Kidsgrove job centre. The marketing of the shop units would begin very soon; some interest had already been expressed so Sainsbury's was hopeful that the units would be fully occupied.

Questions were invited:

- i Q - what would be the level of rent for the units?  
A – Ms Kershaw advised that the query should be referred to the land agent, but that rents would be at the current market rate as Sainsbury's wanted to see them occupied.
- ii Q – had problems been encountered during the pile driving?  
A – no, it had been very straight forward.
- iii Q - what sort of business had been enquiring?  
A – retail; a gift shop and a travel agent had shown early interest.
- iv Q – would you be offering recycling facility as your competitors did?  
A – this had not been included in the current scheme, as recycling facilities were located nearby. Nectar points would not be given for recycling at present.
- v Q - why would Sainsbury's not be selling clothes and shoes?  
A – Sainsbury's would obviously like to provide everything that the customer wanted, but were limited by the size of store. They did not want to take trade away from existing shops within the town.
- vi Q – were there any plans to provide a petrol station?  
A – this had always been a wish, but the site was too small and they were looking around the town for possible sites.
- vii Q – there was an understanding that the gateway building on the roundabout would be in the second phase of the development. What was the start date of the second phase?  
A – There was no date for this. Sainsbury's would need to ascertain the demand prior to this and work with developers.
- viii Q - How would local people gain knowledge and skills to apply for the jobs?  
A – JobCentre Plus was working very closely with local people and with Sainsbury's both at Biddulph Resource and Information Centre (BRIC) and the Town Hall.
- ix Q – (Mr Court) Could the Business Chamber receive information to give out to people who make enquiries about applying for the jobs?  
A – (Ms Kershaw) Yes, this would be looked into; planning was still at an early stage, but more information would be available soon. There was a recruitment helpline for those having difficulties with the application forms. It was recognised as a huge thing for the town.
- x Q – were the delivery vehicles fitted with up to date navigation systems, otherwise they would find themselves directed along Congleton Road, or Tunstall Road rather than the Inner Relief Road – Meadows Way.  
A – Mr Jackson responded that a risk assessment would be carried out prior to the opening and any problems such as this would be picked up at that time.

- xi Q – Would those people wanting jobs be advised to upgrade their computer skills?  
A – Sainsbury’s had been discussing this will Skillsbase.
- xii Q - A lot off this work should have taken place by now, should it not?  
A – Ms Harley (Jobcentre Plus) responded that training had been going on for over 12 months; many of their clients had been sent to Leek College to improve their skills.
- xiii Q - how well would the landscaping around the store reflect Biddulph’s image as the Garden Town of Staffordshire?  
A - landscaping would be at the latter end of project and was a key element. Consultation with Biddulph in Bloom would take place.
- xiv Q – Biddulph held a very successful Festival throughout July, what would be the community involvement by Sainsbury’s?  
A – It would be difficult to access funding until the store had opened. The store manager would be key; this person would have access to the charity fund. A Charity of the Year would be nominated. Voluntary as well as monetary assistance would be available; along with opportunities for bag packing fund raising events. The store would get involved with local schools, preliminary contacts had already been made.
- xvi Q – Was it too late for local companies to get involved with the construction?  
A – Many specialised sub-contractors would be needed, but these would be the smaller contracts. They were being actively pursued, eg for painting the white lines in the car park, scaffolders.
- xvii Which type of café would be in the store?  
A – Sainsbury’s own café.

#### **46. CLOSE**

There were no more questions and Councillor Jackson drew the meeting to a close at 7.40pm.