

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	Rob Whilding	Town Councillor
	Biddulph in Bloom	Wayne Rogers	Town Councillor
Frank Harris	Town/District Councillor	Terry Gibson	Town Councillor
Andrew Hart	Town/District Councillor	Jeanette Walley	Town Councillor
Tony Hall	Town/District Councillor	Kate Thacker	Town Chief Officer
Jean Gaunt	Town Officer	John Robinson	Town Crier
Kim Corbishley	Biddulph Business Chamber	Trevor Bromley	Resident
Graeme Court	Biddulph Business Chamber	Gina Bromley	Resident
Graham Swift	Chair, Brown Lees Residents	Madelaine Lovatt	District Councillor
Neil Porter	SCC Highways	Alan Burgess	Resident
Carol Nixon	Resident	Joan Mason	Resident
Louise Harley	Job Centre Plus	Karen Grattage	Job Centre Plus
Mary Lomas	Resident	E Swinnerton	Resident
Marianne Raftery	SCC Highways	Allan Forrister	Herbies, BBC
Linda Reeves	Resident	Val Belford	Resident
Veronica Brown	VeMedia	Alan Dale	Biddulph CAB
C Tittensor	ACNS	A Weetman	Moorlands Housing
Clare Filer	SMDC	Perry Wardle	SMDC
A Roberts	Biddulph in Bloom	H Roberts	Biddulph in Bloom
Sarah Hall	Resident	Wendy Gidman	Resident
Adam Gidman	Resident	Janet Rogers	Somerfield
Julie Cheetham	Resident	Louisa Allen	Resident
Adrian Lawton	Resident	A Mothershaw	Mothershaw
H Mothershaw	Mothershaw	Mr and Mrs Bailey	Residents
D Wain	Resident	C Dodds	The Swan
A Dodds	The Swan	D Barbour	Resident
R Barbour	Resident	S V Davies	Resident
Ian Jones	Resident	Carl Kisicki	Resident
Sue Chawner	Resident	Ray Lloyd	Resident
M Cox	Resident	E Cox	Resident
Nikki Critchlow	NHS	H Stevenson	NHS
Maggie Snook	Biddulph CAB	J McKechnie	Biddulph Pet Shop
N Kelsall	Bidd Park Comm Assoc	Eileen Cox	Resident
Mrs Webster	Resident	Mrs M Webster	Resident
Sandra Wilson	Resident	S Taylor	Resident
G Hancock	Resident	Rita McNulty	Biddulph Twinning
Brian McNulty	Biddulph Twinning	Chris Thomas	Resident
Hilary Kemp	Resident	Adrian Lawton	Resident
Claire O'Neill	Biddulph Chronicle	Hil Moss	PCT
Michelle Wallace	SMDC	Ruth Reeves	SMDC
Karen Stevenson	Staffordshire Police	Ian Lawson	County Councillor
John Liggins	Sainsbury's	Amy Kershaw	Sainsbury's
Helen Roberts	Chair, Biddulph Valley Community Association		
M Sanders	Knypersley and Brown Lees Residents Association		
I Sanders	Knypersley and Brown Lees Residents Association		
E Faulkner	The Friends of Newpool Meadows		
J B McF ----	The Friends of Newpool Meadows		
Jan Athis	Friends of Biddulph Valley Park – Resident		
Robert Bateman	Biddulph Times - Good News Publishing		
Leanne Porter	Biddulph Times - Good News Publishing		
Ian Dale	Gillow Heath Residents Association		

Apologies were received from:

John Jones	Biddulph Mayor
Jim Davies	Town/District Councillor
Jody Shaw	Town Councillor
Christina Jebb	County Councillor

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN FORUM: ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY HELD ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2009

For attendance see appendix A

22.09 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Councillor Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Forum.

23. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made.

24. PRESENTATIONS

- a Dr Perry Wardle, Head of Regeneration at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, gave a presentation explaining the history of the Area Action Plan (AAP). Biddulph had been a poorly performing town centre. Consultation began in January 2005, and a Public Examination was held in October 2006. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council adopted the AAP as the planning framework for the town. It was the first in the country to be examined and adopted. The aim was to put strategic policies in place to help make the town centre an attractive and vibrant place. It was hoped to achieve this by a reduction in the traffic flow through the town centre and improvement in the quality of design and environment. Several potential development sites had been identified in the town:-

DS1 Sainsbury's site – had been earmarked for a large high order supermarket, which would bring the most benefit to the existing businesses. Some important features would be retained, ie The Royal Oak, Brammers, the Millennium Garden and the green open space.

DS2 Western by-pass site - a large site on the west of the Inner Relief Road adjacent to the telephone exchange, a development aiming to keep people in the town, it would comprise 7 non-food retail units. The site had been granted planning permission, but had not progressed due to the economic downturn. It was hoped that the Sainsbury's construction would make the proposition more attractive. It was noted that the District Council had purchased an area of land from the County Council to be used for employment purposes.

DS3 Library and Market site – had been earmarked for housing. To date 13 new houses had been constructed on the southern part of the site (the market) with the remainder of the area now to be the Health Care Centre.

DS4 Walley Street area - would be a mix of housing and employment

DS5 High Street refurbishment – The Redundant Building Grant scheme had been implemented with the support of Advantage West Midlands and had resulted in 23 improved properties over the past two years. It was expected that a total of 30 would be achieved by the end of the programme. The process was under way for the demolition and rebuilding of several eyesore sites in the area around the War Memorial.

Collectively, it was hoped that the above would deliver the revitalisation of the town centre. Progress had been made utilising the partnership approach with the Sainsbury's site the anchor to the whole proposal. It was anticipated that 350+ new jobs could be expected in Biddulph.

DS6 77 Tunstall Road refurbishment – still under negotiation.

During the Question and Answer session concerns were expressed about the possibility that the refurbished and newly constructed properties would remain empty.

- b Sainsbury's Site - Mr John Liggins of Sainsbury's gave an update on progress. He hoped that demolition would begin at the end of November 2009 when the site would be boarded out and a wave of Orange would appear! The current buildings would be stripped out and then

brought down. The Stopping Up Order for Craigsidewould be complete by the end of January 2010. It was expected that the store would open towards the end of November 2010 and Mr Liggins envisaged a very good, sound working relationship. The store would have a 25,000 sq ft food sales floor, with add-ons such as a café.

Mr Liggins felt that Biddulph was typical of many market towns which had suffered a loss of trade to nearby big towns. Sainsbury's would be at the heart of the town, and the store manager would become a part of the town. In due course the office and residential block would be built. Recruitment of staff would commence at the end of summer 2010, (when the store would look complete from the outside). The new store would generate additional activity for both existing and new retailers in the town. He ended by saying that Sainsbury's considered that they were good neighbours and he welcomed feedback.

During the Question and Answer session it was noted that:

- car parking would be free to shoppers for up to 2 hours to give time to visit the town centre as well as the store.
- Sainsbury's had not yet pursued take up of the separate retail units on the site.
- The site would not be large enough to include a petrol station, but it was hoped to site one nearby at a future date.
- The company would work closely with Job Centre Plus to employ local people if possible. They would also work with other local organisations and job opportunities would be advertised on the Sainsbury's web page.
- Sainsbury's would mainly sell stock items and the opportunity would be there for local butchers and bakers to specialise in the more premium items.
- The Somerfield supermarket would be closing due to the company takeover by the Co-op (they were not allowed to operate two main stores in one town), however the site could be utilised by one of the Aldi/Lidl type groups.

- c Library and Market Site - Mr Bob Smaylen, Development Director of Prime 200 Ltd, gave an update on the new Health Care Facility to be built on Wharf Road car park. It would be a North Staffs NHS/LIFT joint initiative. Biddulph had the highest priority for the NHS in North Staffordshire. The Staffordshire County Council had withdrawn the inclusion of the Library in the development. It was a difficult site to develop; sloping with a 4 metre drop and contained an underground culvert, an electricity substation and mine workings as well as being an awkward shape. The County Council's decision would also impact on the final design of the building.

The building would comprise 3,000 sq metres on three floors; the exact design had not been finalised but it was hoped to submit a planning application in December 2009. Construction teams would be on site in September 2010 and it was anticipated that the facility would be open and providing services in November 2011.

The ground floor would be a walk-in centre and outpatients consulting rooms, the first floor would be all three doctors surgeries, the top floor would be administration and staff facilities. There would be two lifts on site, but it was noted that one corner of the first floor would be at ground level due to the sloping nature of the site and also - in extreme cases - a patient could be seen by their GP in one of the ground floor consulting rooms. Car parking had not been finalised.

During the Question and Answer session it was noted that the Well Street surgery building was owned by the GP's and that the clinic on Princess Street would be retained and used as at present.

- d Jobs, Enterprise and Training project (JET) - Joanne Elward, Manager for North Stoke on Trent and Biddulph, gave an update on the JET (Jobs, Enterprise and Training) project. It served those aged 19 and over who had been unemployed for 12 months or more in the Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Biddulph areas. There was an outreach group based in Biddulph, currently housed at the Kingsfield Centre. Advice and guidance was given and training of all kinds could be arranged led by employer demand. Voluntary work placement could also be arranged and JET might cover travel expenses and help with child care. Assistance was also available with other issues which prevented a person from

working. JET would be looking at retail and customer service training in Biddulph with Sainsbury's coming on board.

JET Business worked with employers in the local area to look at recruitment needs. They aimed to match local people with local vacancies also worked with small companies, Job Centre Plus and the District Council, among others.

During the Question and Answer session it was noted that funding was only available for those who had been unemployed for 12 months and over, but those who did not qualify could go to Job Centre Plus.

25. DISCUSSION GROUPS

Those attending were encouraged to discuss the following questions within their table groupings:

- 1 How can we minimise the disruption to local residents and traders during the development?
- 2 How can we maximise the opportunities presented by the development?

26. FEEDBACK

1 Minimise disruption:

- get rid of the bottlenecks on the High Street (better warden control)
- Free Car Parking during the works
- By being involved with what is being decided
- Protect the Wharf Road bus stops/shelters (physically)
- Development sites kept as tidy as possible - 'considerate construction'
- Prohibit construction traffic from the High Street
- Initiatives (street markets etc) in the town centre throughout the development period (and thereafter)
- Regular updates/information on both developments
- Ancillary parking
- Night time working
- Sainsbury's and PCT to work together with community representatives
- Keep traders informed at all times - a dedicated website or web page dedicated to the actual construction progress
- Concerns about the Sainsbury's and PCT developments at same time
- Be aware of Biddulph Festival (July) – noise/dust will detract from Festival
- Communicate the stages of development with key stakeholders, including - Town Council, Biddulph Business Chamber

2 Maximise opportunities:

- Sainsbury's need to start talking to small businesses re the shops in front of the development asap
- Shops need to look at what Sainsbury's sell and provide what they don't
- Events in the town to bring people nearer to the shops
- Ensure no overlap between Sainsbury's and PCT development
- Hold more frequent events – street markets = more footfall in the town before and during the development and once it has finished – Farmers Markets etc
- Better links with Biddulph Grange Gardens – coach parking for visitors to the NT property
- Incentive vouchers to encourage people to the town centre
- Stop half day/lunchtime closing
- Traders will benefit from workmen on site (food etc)
- Use local labour (where possible) with construction site and maintenance
- Ensure links are created between Sainsbury's and town centre via signage
- Sainsbury's has a good reputation for involvement in community projects
- Link Sainsbury's recruitment with JCP and JET

3 Other remarks

Bus services – mini buses to serve outlying communities
Some were concerned about the GP surgeries being on the first floor of the Health Centre
What hours would Sainsbury's open – not 24 hours
What happened with the Meadows site
What was affordable housing – was it the cost or the size?
All Biddulph's gateways were not attractive at all. What plans were there to improve them quickly before the demolition starts – ie the Co-op steps and former shop at Tunstall Road?
The traffic system was causing real problems and was considered dangerous
Question the redevelopment/refurbishment of poor quality buildings into homes and shops?
People would be forced to shop out of the town during development
Could Sainsbury's take one or two of the small shops for clothes and goods completely absent in the town? Also, was it possible to have a clothes selection in new store rather than have a café.

27. CLOSE

Councillor Jackson drew the meeting to a close at 8.05 pm noting that the developments would be a massive upheaval but would the result would be a far better town. He thanked everyone for attending. The next Forum would be held on Tuesday 19 January 2010 and the topic would be Children and Young People.