

ARG Meeting – Holybourne Theatre 7th February 2010

Introductions and Welcome

Graham Hill (GH) welcomed everybody and introduced the committee members and the planner who has been appointed by ARG to give professional advice on any plans that are submitted for the Coors site and Anstey Park.

GH reminded people of the Coor's objectives to sell their site to the highest bidder and this free up money to build the sports facilities on Anstey Park.

GH pointed out the congestion issues already on Anstey Road and the impact of the supermarket on Coor's ground. Plus the impact on the historic element of the town such as, Eggar's Square and Woodbine Cottages on either side of the current sports ground.

Planned supermarket shown on the slide taken from the Coor's Vale Retail website. Concerns over the picnic area as a potential petrol station; flow of lorries onto the site and potential tankers; home deliver vans etc.

Slide shown for football facilities on Anstey Park. Issue of the enclosure raised and the need for floodlights leading to both noise and light pollution. Licences to sell alcohol and play music.

Aerial view shown of the planned facilities and the loss of space and how it splits the park in two.

Alton has to have 60 hectares of open space which increases as the population increases and Alton is already below this and the development will lose 12-13% of the required space.

Question asked about the road and the capacity for parking (no provision in the plans). Q also about how to get to the top area to mow it and maintain it. Also felt it should logically be at the top of the park so as not to split it. Pointed out that this was rejected by ATC already.

Manor Estate cannot access the park from the top end, kids kick about on Diggers and none of it will be free space to walk your dog off the lead.

Current Status

- Tesco Application

Both applications refused and in the process of appealing. ARGs intention is to use the Tesco refusals against the Coors development e.g. business taken from town centre; traffic considerations are the two main issues.

Q raised that if we support Tesco it will stop Coors, James pointed out the appeal could take up to 9 months and there is no guarantee Coors would still be turned down.

- Coors Application

Intend to submit plans on 10th Feb and there will be three months before a decision is made

GH mentioned that we are supported by Save Anstey Park, the Manor Estate and Alton Society.

Q asked on green space legislation and Edward from Alton Society mentioned the Town strategy of 3.5 hectares of recreational space per 1,000 population. 17,200 estimated population which would require 60 hectares and actual provision is 55.5 hectares and with allotments it may be 56. If planning goes ahead on Coors ground we will have a 6 hectare deficit. It's therefore contrary to the town design statement. To allow Coors to go ahead without replacing the green space seems to be political suicide for the councillors.

Covenant also mentioned by GH. Building is limited to 12 houses under this on the site and the covenant would have to be terminated by Coors and EHDC. Aim is to make a big PR issue out of it.

Comment: Coors want to sell the land but are generation bad feeling in the town – is there any credence to the land being adopted by the council and sports and lottery funding maintaining it as recreational space; no one is championing this and it maybe viable. Goodwill with regard to Coors and their position in Alton.

Planning application issues and process

Public consultation in November – where are the results? They are not on the Coors Vale website and ARG got them last Monday.

TGB spoke about the exhibition and that it was a consultation as they had to comply with ATC's requirement that they would grant licences on the park on the condition that they had public consultation. Thus Coors were trying to move towards obtaining these licences.

Town Clerk's report states that revised outline proposals for sporting facilities were put forward and ATC asked if they would grant licences for these facilities. ATC therefore have worked on these outline proposals before the planning submission has been made. In principle ATC have agreed to grant the licences.

75% of people were opposed to Coors plans according to the ARG straw poll. The report will be on the ARG website. There are errors and a number of points are open to question. Out of 354 comments, 240 (67%) were opposed to the package.

Street surveys also carried out where 54% supported the supermarket on Anstey Road (82 people interviewed).

ARG is described as a 'Well marshalled pressure group' who distributed 'erroneous and misleading information.' Glossy pamphlet was given out in this meeting.

Kinetic PR pointed out the weather; it was cold and raining! Of the 240 objectors 80 were in the vicinity of the site.

ARG believes this leaves us in a good position for the meeting on 10th February. ARG has asked the councillors to withdraw their support from Coors.

James (planning consultant) spoke about the planning process.

EHDC determine it within 13 weeks with comments from public needed within 28 days of submission.

ATC's position is that it is a consultee to the planning authority with their recommendations going to EHDC but they are not bound by ATC's decision.

(INSERT TEXT FROM SLIDES)

Coors applications vastly exceeds the size deemed needed for Alton.

If plan are just illustrative they can change them at a later date!

Sports application may come in at the same time as the supermarket application.

In the local plan the land is designated as a 'settlement gap' which means the local authority will resist development. This is also relevant to the Anstey Park development.

Police access to Anstey Park site also needs to be considered with regard to licences and questions over this area becoming a crime 'hot spot'. New floodlights on Anstey Lane will result into significant light spillage to the residential properties. Other issues include noise disturbance and increase in highway movements, a strong point which needs to be made. Loss of trees on the park is another issue to be considered which can lead to a refusal of the application.

Q. football ground and access: what is the seating capacity?

GH recommended visiting the ATC website.

Comment that there are rumours that EHDC will still approve it – what arguments can we give that EHDC is wrong?

A: Arguments can be made based on policies and planning based considerations.

Planning officer will make a recommendation which is usually followed by the councillors.

ARG have created a list of objections which will go on the website and can be used in writing letters to councillors.

Comment: Licensed premises and crime issues which will cost taxpayers. Anstey Park licences are currently members clubs. Five licences thought to be requested.

Comment: Traffic problems with supermarket and issue about cycle routes and the effect on the traffic flow.

Mention that Mark S is a traffic expert and Mark spoke about the plans and his experience and happy to lend his expertise to ARG. Dedicated right turn lane would

mean carriageway widening or taking out cycleway facilities. Any solution would generate particular problems.

What you can do to help

List of actions – full guidance given on ARG website.

Comment: Development of Focus was done to encourage more retailers onto Mill Lane, so surely this is a good argument for Tesco?

GH said this is true but it was still turned down.

Comment: Coors – non food goods will take business away from town. If Tesco doesn't stock non food goods this would protect the town businesses.

Comment: Further safety dimension, Treloar's school and Mayfield Nursery School who take under fives on recreational walks which would be a safety issue.

TGB: That point has been noted.

Comment: Alton House Hotel not allowed deliveries before 8am in the morning due to residential location.

Q. If we don't have a supermarket what alternatives do Coors have?

Still an option to have another application for housing.

Comment: Same objections to housing in terms of moving the football club with the lights onto Anstey Lane etc.

If we can stop the movement of football onto Anstey Park we can stop the supermarket on Coors.

We need therefore to fight one battle at a time.

Comment: Too many groups mean mixed messages and we need to be clearer.

Q. Advocating we write to EHDC and oppose outline planning permission; what are the grounds for objection?

James responded that they are asking in principle if it is outline planning permission being sought. ***(We need to update the site to take this into account and recommend what points of objection can be raised)***.

Comment: After meeting ATC have to print what has happened and we have to object.

Comment: Covenant – without it being trashed the land is worthless.

We are waiting for clarification on this from EHDC but it is thought this will only be assessed at the end of the planning process.

Website will include all the guidelines.

Comment re access to the sports facilities on the park; a gravel road will surely not take the lorries that are needed for delivery, you will need a proper road.

Comment: 860 supporters on petitions sites and many of these are younger people.

Q. If ATC don't give permission to use Anstey Park then sports facilities cannot go anywhere else so we need to persuade ATC that they cannot say yes?

Q. Could Coors say they tried their best and done due process so tough we will sell the land anyway?

James said that Coors have to overcome policies that state there will not be any loss of recreational space and it will be refused; they need to find replacement facilities.

Comment: Talk of rebuilding sports facilities at the other end of town – surely a football stadium could be built there?

Comment: Need to make more of the potential cost of maintenance and running costs of the new facilities on the park.

Jim M said the land would be leased to ATFC.

This is an issue which has been very difficult to get figures.

Q. How do we raise awareness and make our voice heard over a greater area?
Posters in our gardens and marches through town.

Jim M said if ATC don't vote for the licences then it would be pointless for Coors to apply for planning permission until they can find an alternative location for the facilities.

Comment: Why should we give Coors the land when they are going to make so much money?

ARG asked if ATFC are happy to stay where they are? Jim M said yes but we are happy if we were to be offered better facilities we would consider that. Telling ATC this would not make any difference.

Comment: ATC seem to be more for the park development than Coors.

Comment: First application from Coors in 2004 stated that there were no areas available and so asked for the Anstey Park land.

Comment: A thank you to the committee for all the work done.

ARG: We need to all do as much as we can.