

## **ALTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING - 18 NOVEMBER 2009**

### **Statement by Graham Hill**

The Anstey Residents Group (ARG) was set up recently to represent and give a voice to voice to Alton residents appalled by the total unsuitability of the Sports Ground as a supermarket site. ARG are not by any means an "anti-everything" group and we agree that Alton would benefit from another major-league supermarket to provide competition to Sainsbury's.

We would like to commend the Tesco supermarket application to you because not only does it provide the greatly desired competition to Sainsbury's, but it also offers the town of Alton - the people of Alton - not one, not two, but three important planning gains and we very much hope that, in your discussions tonight, you will give full consideration to the potential advantages offered by these three gains.

GAIN no.1. We do not think that anyone would dispute that, in recent years, there has been a steady build-up of traffic on Anstey Road/London Road, particularly at rush hour and school run times. A consequence of this is that many residents have been avoiding this main route in and out of Alton and have taken to using Mill Lane as an alternative route to an extent that this route is becoming established as a secondary route to enter or leave the town. This usage is not ideal as Mill Lane has a difficult junction on to Montecchio Way at one end and the dreaded Ashdell off-set crossroads at the other end. While the County may have little money to improve this road, help is at hand in that the Tesco application includes the provision of substantial improvements and road safety enhancements to Mill Lane and to the Ashdell crossroads - improvements that will undoubtedly cost a very significant amount of money to be paid by Tesco.

GAIN no.2. As it stands at the moment, the Tesco site has to be one of the worst planning blights on the fair face of Alton. Without question, this forlorn and derelict site cries out for re-development and, as explained in the application, the soil itself is contaminated from diesel oil leakage. If approved, the Tesco project would provide for the clean-up and sensible re-development of this brown field site. It seems possible to us that this neglected corner of Alton is in the 'Last Chance Saloon.' How else will it be re-developed?

GAIN no.3. For more than 10 years, efforts have been made to develop a useful joined-up Cycle Route across Alton and into Holybourne. Progress has been slow. A big stride forward was made when cycle lanes were established alongside Anstey Road, but these end at Mayfield Nursery. To proceed further, cyclists have to launch themselves into London Road unprotected by any cycle lanes or they can turn right down Anstey Mill Lane only to find that the route ends at the barrier at the bottom of the lane. Presumably, lack of County money has prevented the establishment of a joined-up Cycle Route, but some important help is now offered by Tesco in that their plans include the construction of a dedicated cycle lane from the bottom of Anstey Mill Lane to extend up to Montecchio Way. Of course, Gain no.3 is worth much less than Gains nos.1 & 2, but it is still a useful gain in its own right.

Thank you for listening to me and I hope you will reflect on the substantial planning gains

offered to Alton and inherent in the application before you.

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