



**NEW BARNET COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
COMMUNITY CENTRE  
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**Registered Charity No: 1070455**

**Registered Company No: 3564623**

**Public Meeting held at 7.30pm on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 in  
St James Church  
to consider proposals from  
ASDA and Tesco to redevelop New Barnet**

The meeting was convened by New Barnet Community Association and chaired by David Howard one of NBCA's trustees

### **History of the Association**

New Barnet Residents Association was set up in 1971. There were plans to drive a road through the middle of Victoria Recreation ground to give access to a new gas board office block. Residents formed an association to fight these proposals and suggested an alternative route which was eventually adopted and is now known as Albert Road. Since then the association has been active in commenting on proposed developments in the area. It was the key group in ensuring that Barnet council was the first Borough in London to adopt a UDP (Unitary Development Plan) and has been heavily involved in all subsequent revisions. The association reviews and comments on local planning applications and assists individuals and groups respond to local applications. They have also submitted written comments to Planning Inspectors and appeared at Public Inquiries

In 1983 New Barnet Community Centre was opened in response to an identified need for a base for local groups and a meeting place for social activities. NBCA became a registered charity and leased the former John Hampden school annexe from Barnet Council and undertook extensive works to make it fit for the purpose.

In 1998 NBCA changed its name to New Barnet Community Association to more accurately reflect the work that it was doing and to ensure that all sections of the community were included. It also enabled the Trustees to meet new legal and financial requirements as the organization grew. NBCA is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The lease payments to the borough and part of the running costs are met from a grant from Barnet Council. NBCA has to fundraise for the remainder.

The organization has no religious or political affiliations and works with individuals and groups from all sections of the community.

The building is the permanent base for the Victoria Luncheon club, Monday Social Club, Allsorts after school club, holiday play scheme and breakfast club, Allsorts inclusive youth club. It also provides affordable accommodation to a variety of local groups :- St Johns Ambulance, Alcoholics Anonymous, estate management companies for committee and annual meetings, Police Community Action Panel, Environmental groups, child minders, Yoga, meditation, dance classes, family parties, housing department and Housing Association meetings, Pentecostal church, Education classes, women's groups. Students have been placed on workplace experience and formal placement as part of their course. The variety of users reflects the changing needs of the community over the past 25 years.

As a Charitable Company limited by Guarantee NBCA is run by a Management Board made up of 7 trustees who normally meet three times a year and have overall legal responsibility for the proper management of the organization. The trustees are elected by rotation at the Annual General Meeting held in November. The operation of the day centre is overseen by a management committee and all other matters are covered by a general committee which is open to anybody to attend. From its inception up to this year the Council was represented by two Councillors, one on each committee and this provided yet another link between the Council and the community. The Council ended this arrangement earlier this year for all voluntary bodies. On the first Saturday of each month one of the Ward councillors holds a public surgery at the Centre.

NBCA is represented on the Barnet Community and Police Consultative Committee, Chipping Barnet Residents Forum and the Federation of Residents Associations in Barnet (FORAB)

## **The Meeting**

The meeting was attended by over 400 people. Some people were turned away for safety reasons or waited until space became available at the back of the Church.

## **ASDA**

A letter dated 20/03/08 from the Property Communications Manager was read out. (Posted on the website). This said that while ASDA had been in discussion with Barnet Council officers for some time over the gas works site their plans were at a very early stage and they have more work to do before they are finalized for presentation to the public. NB see Councillor Coleman's comments later.

## **Tesco Presentation**

James Wiggam (Tesco's corporate affairs manager) said that Tesco's wanted to invest in New Barnet and the Council was looking for private investment in the area. The starting point was general consultation in the area and they would listen to what the local residents were telling them. The comments would inform the plans for the final scheme. They had no specific proposals to table at this stage as it was an ongoing process.

They saw 400 people over the three days exhibition. The main points raised were:-

70% were in favour of investment. There had been no significant investment for over 20 years

- Public space was wanted
- Community facilities
- Retain existing facilities eg post office
- Reduce pollution in Victoria road. There is a possibility of a link with Victoria Park
- Access from East Barnet Road
- The store should be concealed
- There should be continuing retail choice
- Local shops kept and located on East Barnet Road to maintain existing street frontage
- Traffic was a big issue.

James Wiggam projected a map onto a screen to illustrate the target area of their proposed development and confirmed their ownership of the Optex site and some other adjacent parcels of land. Their plans were at an early stage but they hoped to continue with further consultation in May when initial drawings should be available. They hoped to submit a planning application later this summer

Tesco wanted to contribute to a vibrant town centre. They were listening and asked that residents continued to engage with them.

## Questions

The first series of questions concentrated on traffic associated with the development. One questioner felt that one supermarket just refurbished was adequate. What customer demand is there for another supermarket? The impact of lorries on narrow roads would bring the area to a standstill. Potter Bar is often grid locked with traffic to and from the 24 hour Tesco there! Some people resident in East Barnet Road felt that they were being ignored. They live in houses on this road, the road is not exclusively commercial and their views should be taken into consideration.

A vote was conducted and overwhelmingly those present felt that traffic would be a big issue if these development go ahead.

Tesco representatives responded saying that three supermarkets is not possible but they want to be the second. A High Barnet resident spoke about the similar development plans for High Barnet Town Centre. No-one listened to them and the result is the contraction of the High Street – loss of small shops and general malaise. He asked what right have Tesco to impose their plans on New Barnet?

Another resident asked about how children fit into Tesco's plan? James Wiggam replied that they will be asking what is needed in order to address this.

Another resident asked for detail about the housing element of the plans. How high will the buildings be? Any housing should in keeping with existing housing in Victoria Road.

James Wiggam said that the proposed buildings will be built to very high sustainable standards.

The provision of local food suppliers is being introduced across the country by Tesco

It was regretted that there was still no Planning brief for the Gas works site in Albert Road. Nor any area planning brief for New Barnet. No master plan was available against which these proposals could be judged.

## **Cllr Brian Coleman**

Cllr Coleman informed the meeting that Asda had been in talks with the Council about their proposals for the Gas Board site which included a eight storey glass covered block of flats. 283 housing units would be contained on the site in phase one. There were groans from the audience. Cllr Coleman was pleased that the Tesco Express proposed for Ballards Lane, Finchley was refused. He said he would oppose both the Asda and Tesco applications and lobby the Mayor of London when it was referred to them. He stated that Barnet would not allow compulsory purchase orders to be used to facilitate this development. Barnet council and councillors' policy was to preserve the unique suburban nature of the Borough

## **Theresa Villiers MP**

Ms Villiers view was that another supermarket was not needed in this area. The roads cannot cope with an increase in lorries and cars particularly with the sites proximity to the railway bridge which restricts road improvements. She also did not want to see high rise city scapes in a traditional Victorian suburb. She would not be able to support these applications.

## **Cllr Robert Rams, councillor for East Barnet Ward**

Cllr Rams agreed with his colleagues and said he was completely against these proposals particularly as Sainsbury's had just be refurbished and extended. He was concerned at the impact on existing small businesses. He pointed out that in Cuffley the local shop had closed down within six months of Tescos opening a new store.

Cllr Joanna Tambourides was present at the meeting but due to her membership of the local Planning Committee she was prevented from speaking publicly on this matter.

## **Nick Russell, prospective GLA member**

Mr Russell expressed concern at the proposals. There was an urgent need for a strategic plan for the area. The site required a lighter less intrusive approach with underground car parking. The council must listen to the people. The Liberal Democrats would put any proposals to a rigorous examination and hold the present administration to account for their actions

## **Stewart Murray, LBB Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration**

Mr Murray said that the council was adopting a positive role for town centres including New Barnet. There was a strategy paper going to the cabinet that evening and if it was adopted (post meeting note – it was adopted) there would be a framework for developing the Borough's town centres. In the case of New Barnet a Town centre framework/ masterplan would be prepared and consulted upon locally. There were also high standards laid down in the Borough's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) designed to protect town centres and the quality of the suburbs. All future planning applications in the area would be considered against this masterplan and the UDP. Only if they appeared to comply would they go before the Planning and Environment Committee for a

decision. If the council rejected the application the developer could appeal to the Secretary of State who would appoint a Government Inspector to decide the case.

### **Summary of Main Issues Raised**

Either at the meeting or through the questions submitted beforehand.

(A fuller version is given in appendix A)

Do we need regeneration at all or should we do nothing and carry on as at present?

No one supported do nothing as an option. There were a number of views of what form and extent regeneration should take but a large majority agreed that something should be done

The community does not need 3 supermarkets so close together.

A large majority supported this opinion.

Traffic overload.

The meeting was unanimous that this is a major concern.

Loss of small businesses.

A large majority were concerned at the loss.

Who will pay to renew the mains services?

Few people were aware of issues relating to this

Impact on carbon footprint, air pollution, quality of life.

About 66% were concerned at the impact on quality of life.

Impact of construction programmes.

Large majority concerned about this.

24 Hour operation will extend the opportunity for anti social behaviour.

Large majority concerned.

What sort of housing is proposed?

A majority feel that this is an area of concern.

What community facilities are proposed?

What would residents like to see in the wider area?

Emphasis on existing local community.

Ability to walk to school safely.

Preserve sense and atmosphere of local Victorian community.

Variety of shops and imaginative new businesses as well as preserving existing older businesses.

Keeping business in local or non supermarket ownership to main individuality.

Not 24 hour operation in supermarket (local traders provide 16 hr/7 day cover).

Garden centre

Community centre.

Sports centre.

Swimming pool.

Social life not profit focussed life.

Free bus from New Barnet to Tesco's store at Potters Bar.

Free bus to ASDA store at Southgate

## **What do we do next?**

To close the meeting David Howard again asked the question "What do we do now – is nothing an option?" The overwhelming answer was No.

So what can be done? Several suggestions were made. Keep in touch by using the website [www.newbarnet.org.uk](http://www.newbarnet.org.uk). Fill in the slips give out at the beginning of the meeting and place in the buckets at the back of the Church. Take an active part in the campaign by attending further meetings called either by NBCA or by a separate group taking up this issue. The future depended on how people responded to the meeting and what they had heard.

## **Post Meeting Feedback**

We now have 250 names on our mailing list. Thanks to all who responded

We received the following offers of help:-

Keep in contact with traders	8 people
Deliver leaflets in my road	90 people covering 42 roads
Analyse documents and websites	12 people.
Take active part in campaign	30 people
Collect signatures on petition	37 people
Press liaison	4 people
Other	14 people including writing letters, steward at meetings, IT support, copywriter, architect, landscape architect, urban designer

NB some people offered to do more than one task

## Appendix A

### Main issues raised either through pre-meeting questions or at the meeting

#### Do we need regeneration at all or should we do nothing and carry on as at present?

No one supported do nothing as an option. There were a number of views of what form and extent regeneration should take but a large majority agreed that something should be done

There appears to be no consideration for the needs of children and young people who are the residents of tomorrow.

Good transport to jobs elsewhere so no significant need for more local jobs was supported by a few people.

If Tesco only own 40% of site and other owners are refusing to sell how will they acquire all of the land? Will the council support developers through use of Council Compulsory Purchase powers?

What Planning gains (Section 106) will the council seek to get from any large developer?

A lot of talk but very little detail available to public. Why can public not see what Councillors have been shown?

General alarm at the scale, height and density of buildings being proposed on both sites.

What improvements would Tesco/ Barnet expect to see if they were to regenerate New Barnet? What benefits do they claim for the Colney Lane area after they built the large store in Friern Barnet?

How will the businesses and community be kept together during the period of the building works?

#### The community does not need 3 supermarkets so close together.

A large majority supported this opinion.

The long standing recently refurbished Sainsburys meets current needs together with the local Tescos at the Esso garage 500m away and Budgens plus the local shops in East Barnet Village.

What right have the two supermarkets have to impose themselves on the community?

Why does the council appear to be letting them do it?

Are Council area assessment and impact plans taking in account the effect that the proposals would have on East Barnet Village shops?

Sainsburys just refurbished and TESCO already on Esso garage site.  
ASDA 2 miles away at Southgate and TESCO two stores at Colney Hatch Lane and Potters Bar. 19 Tescos within 17 mile radius of site.

New large store(s) will bring more people into the area mainly by car.

Greed of big corporate companies putting profits for shareholders before the needs and wants of well established local communities.

What alternative sites have been considered and why was New Barnet chosen?

Why not go to Furnitureland in North Finchley?

### **Traffic overload.**

The meeting was unanimous that this is a major concern

Tescos bring Friern Barnet to a standstill with store traffic. How will they prevent this happening in New Barnet?

Gridlock at peak times already.

Gridlock when holes dug in main roads.

Gridlock when M25 closed and traffic diverts to local roads.

Parking problems widespread already and getting worse

Residents parking already a problem with insufficient off street parking.

Will the council impose CPZ to control parking/ raise more money for the council?

Damaged pavements Elderly, disabled, prams and wheelchairs.

Cost to community both financially and socially.

24 hour operation equals 24 hour traffic.

Sainsburys delivery lorries cause enough traffic delays and pollution already. Area can not cope with two more supermarkets especially over the next five years with the other major building sites.

How do Tesco/ASDA propose to sort out the traffic problems when Barnet and JCOSS have been unable to come up with any viable ideas?

There must be no increase in traffic in Victoria Road. Any access to the proposed site must be from East Barnet Road

### **Loss of small businesses.**

A large majority were concerned at the loss.

Keep local businesses in existing premises was widely supported.

Only big chains and expensive shops will be welcome then closed as in the Spires High Barnet. Promises made to traders were not honoured

Even if local businesses are relocated what security will they have and what will be the rent levels?

Is the Council happy to see local traders put out of business and the community impoverished by big multi national companies.

The community does not want to be the battlefield for a turf war between ASDA and TESCO. You will win either way and we will be the losers.

Go away we don't want either of you.

### **Who will pay to renew the mains services?**

Few people were aware of issues relating to this

Electric, water and drainage?

### **Impact on carbon foot print, air pollution, quality of life.**

About 66% were concerned at the impact on quality of life

Will the council support proposals to revalue the Council tax downwards to reflect the noise, disturbance and changed circumstances from a suburban life style to a 24 hour inner city environment?

Higher Carbon footprint and air pollution.

Businesses not a car park along the street frontage.

### **Impact of construction programme.**

Large majority concerned about this

Asda / Tesco / JCoSS / East Barnet School – Four major developments on site in the area at the same time

### **24 Hour operation will extend the opportunity for anti social behaviour.**

Large majority concerned.

### **What sort of housing is proposed?**

A majority feel that this is an area of concern

We need more affordable family homes.

We do not need one/two bed rabbit hutches which are empty for years.

## **What community facilities are proposed?**

### **Question for TESCO**

What are your long term plans for New Barnet?

What properties and sites do you own already in the area? Which ones are currently buying/have options on? Which ones would you like to buy?

What will happen to these properties if you do not get planning permission for a new store?

Will they continue to become ever more derelict? Is this part of a ploy to promote “regeneration”?

### **Same question to ASDA**

Will be posted to them

### **Question to Barnet.**

In light of the above what are Barnet’s Plans for New Barnet?

What is your timescale?

Post meeting note. Stewart Murray the Councils Head of Planning has written a letter setting out the council’s position. This is posted on the website

## **What would residents like to see in the wider area?**

Emphasis on existing local community.

Ability to walk to school safely.

Preserve sense and atmosphere of local Victorian community.

Variety of shops and imaginative new businesses as well as preserving existing older businesses.

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