

News from LOTS

Written by Save Ledbury

Friday, 05 August 2011 09:56 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 November 2011 13:56

Here's the latest news from the LOTS campaign and how you can help right now. The campaign is going really well and we're getting very positive feedback from a range of influential people around the county. From now on you'll be hearing from us regularly.

Current State of Play

Tesco have submitted an application but have not yet provided all the documentation to the satisfaction of the Council. As soon as they do, all the documentation needs to be checked by the Planning Dept, and if correct, it will be entered on the planning system and given a number. This usually takes about a week. We'll let you know as soon as we think this 'validation process' is in progress and give you detailed information on what to put in your objection letters.

Then the next big thing for us all to do is to flood the Herefordshire Council Planning department with objections and get an objection petition going around the town.

If you'd like some information on planning in advance see the attached document: The Planning Process written by the LOTS planning team. There are also planning guides in the right hand column of the LOTS website www.saveledbury.com if you want even more info!

What You Can Do Right Now

If you can do anything to help, however small, please contact the LOTS team on info@saveledbury.com or saveledbury@gmail.com

Meantime, we'd love to hear from you...

Does any fantastic person feel drawn to co-ordinating our wonderful volunteers doing things like getting the objection petition around the shops, checking up on addresses etc? The job will take a few hours per week during this busy stage of the campaign and would someone who's good with people, enjoys organizing things and would like to be make a big contribution.

The Planning team wants a group of people to undertake specific pieces of planning research i.e. measuring walking distances, monitoring traffic flow rates and Tesco deliveries, counting car parking spaces, etc. They also want people to read through the Tesco Planning application (TPA) when it's on the system 'with local eyes' to check that what they have written stands up.

Pass this newsletter onto anyone you know who may be interested and encourage people to

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join the campaign and send their details to info@saveledbury.com to get on our address list.

Some of the contact addresses left on the shop pledge lists by people who support our campaign are incomplete. We need people to fill in the blanks using either the phone directory or by ringing the people for their address/e-mail. Even if you can only do 10 it all helps and if you want to do more - or would anyone like to take it on as a project?

We need someone to send out about 20 newsletters to supporters not on e-mail. Enveloping, stamping and posting.

Letters need to be written to the local press. Do you fancy being part of a rota to ensure that letters get written to the local media each week?

If you have any other ideas of things you'd like to do – please get in touch info@saveledbury.com or call into Annette's shop Past and Present in the High Street.

Thanks to Fran Robinson and her team of volunteers have surveyed nearly all the Ledbury shops for the independent Ledbury Retail Survey. The data will be presented to the Planners and will be a valuable factual support in assessing the impact of the TPA.

The CPRE Local Food Webs report will have a preview launch on 21st September, 7pm at the Burgage Hall with local food to taste and a presentation on the report. Well done Ledbury Food Group.

We hear from the head of the Ledbury Town Council Planning Committee that he's been 'inundated' with letters about the Tesco proposal.

LOTS has called for Tesco to scrap its planning application until after the Localism Bill becomes law in December. Read the press coverage: http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/local/ledbury/9177475.Planners_say_Tesco_plan_for_bigger_Ledbury_store_is_not_valid

/ and

http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/9177349.Call_for_Tesco_to_hold_plans/

Bill Wiggin has come out against the proposal and raised the subject of Ledbury's struggle against an out of town superstore in Parliament. Read his statement here: <http://bwmp.wordpress.com/2011/07/22/bill-wiggin-mp-backs-vibrant-high-streets/>

We have over 300 new supporters names from the pledge forms that have been in local shops. Thanks to everyone who entered them on our database.

How to Contact LOTS

Annette Crowe's Shop Past and Present in the High Street will act as an information point for anyone wanting info on LOTS or anyone not on e-mail.

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By email, you can reply to this address or alternatively use the LOTS e-mail info@saveledbury.com to offer help or contact any of the LOTS team.

See www.saveledbury.com for the latest information - there is news, information and resources. You can also sign up to be notified of updates on the site as they are posted.

The Planning Process - What Happens and What We Have To Do To Object.

This is a quick 'heads up' for LOTS supporters so that you can get prepared for the forthcoming planning battle when Tesco's planning application is accepted by the Council. We will be expanding this advice as soon as the time comes, but, responding to requests from supporters have produced this summary of the main things involved. Any questions please get back to us.

1. Tesco have submitted an application but have not yet submitted all the documentation to the satisfaction of the Council. As soon as they do, all the documentation needs to be checked by the Planning Dept, and if correct, it will be entered on the planning system and given a number. This usually takes about a week. We'll let you know as soon as we think this 'validation process' is in progress.

2. Notices will be posted near the proposed site and comments/objections will be invited. The plans will be available for inspection at the Council Offices in the Market House or online (www.herefordshire.gov.uk)

3. From the date of lodging of the application, we have a formal 21 day public consultation period in which to send letters of objection.

4. Objection letters need to be personally written to carry maximum weight, although proforma letters are better than nothing.

5. In essence, the contents of the letter need to focus on the following aspects:

- The proposal is contrary to the policies set out in the Council's Unitary Development Plan and also Central Government Planning advice.
- There is no identified need for the planned store. It is vastly too large for a town of 10,000 population. Tesco could provide a better retail offer in Ledbury by improving the present store or developing another site within the town centre boundary.
- Ledbury is a thriving market town and tourist destination valued by many outside the region and recognised by the Civic Trust as a surviving jewel. The vitality and viability of Ledbury town centre would be threatened by a large supermarket on the far edge of town. This would lead to vacant premises and not only threaten trade but also lead to empty historic buildings.
- At present the existing store site means there can be linked trips to other town centre shops. The proposed out of town centre location would mean the loss of these linked trips
- Employment land will be lost - the proposed site is safeguarded for employment use, not retail use.

In addition , objectors may wish to give their own views on the traffic impacts, (and particularly the effect this may have on historic buildings), the loss of sense of community which the High Street currently supports, noise and pollution from delivery vehicles and incoming shopping traffic, the fact that the High St supports a local, sustainable, low carbon-footprint food supply chain. It would also be legitimate to point to the degradation of nearby Town Centres which have suffered due to large out of town and edge of town supermarket developments in Great Malvern and Ross on Wye. And any other reason why you feel the proposal is bad news for Ledbury.

Letters of objection can be addressed to the Council at:-

Planning Services, PO BOX 230, Hereford HR1 2ZB

This address is for the Council's Planning Officers. You should also make sure that Councillors are made directly aware of your objection by either copying the objection letter to them or writing separately.

6. Meantime, we will be organising a petition related specifically to the planning application. (We can't do this until the application is submitted). So we will need to pull all the stops out to get as many signatures as possible on this and will need many, many volunteers. We will also be organising an online petition to maximise impact.

7. Things will then go quiet for a period while the planners undertake research and analysis and write their report for the Committee. The target date for the application to be heard by the Planning Committee is thirteen weeks after it was entered onto the planning system but it may take longer than this.

8. Hopefully we'll then be cracking open the champagne!