

Stokes Croft, say no to Tesco this Saturday – five are more than enough

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Do we really need another Tesco? Bristol City Council must think so. Tesco are on the brink of setting up shop on Stokes Croft. This fundamentally undermines the Council's stated intention to work towards a sustainable Bristol.

There are five Tesco stores already trading within one mile of the proposed site on Stokes Croft [1] - an area which is renowned for its strength of community spirit and local character. Bristol City Council has steamrollered over the wishes of local residents who want to keep it that way - by failing to consult and work with the community to find out if they want yet another clone store. [2]

Tomorrow the local community will gather on Stokes Croft at 2pm to conduct a real consultation of public opinion, discuss alternatives for the site and celebrate the diverse and unique community and spaces that make the area special [3].

Claire Milne, local resident representing the community group 'No Tesco in Stokes Croft' said,

"The Stokes Croft community feels entirely let down by Bristol City Council. We were totally unaware of Tesco's application to set up shop in our community and have been told we are completely powerless to do anything to stop them. Our efforts to create a vibrant and independent community are being undermined. This is our opportunity to show the world that we will not be disempowered by a system that is failing to listen and respond to the voices of local communities."

Stokes Croft is a melting pot of independent traders who would be wiped out by this profit-hungry multinational. An area like Stokes Croft needs more food shops brimming with affordable healthy, local food and that will reinvest profits into the local community [4] - not siphon them off to remote shareholders and drain local economy as Tesco does [5].

We are losing around 2000 independent retailers a year due to the aggressive policies of supermarkets. And as well as restricting consumer choice, this means our High Streets lose their character, their diversity - and can lead to a 'Ghost Town effect' as smaller shops, unable to compete, close down forever.

Bushra Randhawa Post Office owner and local resident for 24 years says,

"Having Tesco here would lead to a loss of local businesses. It's taken huge effort from local groups, traders and the community to regenerate this area and only now does it feel like a real community spirit is developing. This move will take us two steps backwards when we need to take two steps forward."

We call on Bristol City Council to support residents who want to build the local community and economy, protect the environment, people and farmers. We have invited Bristol City Council and Tesco to join in the discussion.[6]

The community group 'No Tesco in Stokes Croft', which counts over 2300 supporters, encourages everyone who cares about Stokes Croft to join the event this Saturday and make their voices heard.

As one resident wrote to Tesco,

"Locating a Tesco store here would be like placing an X-factor audition in the middle of an opera. Incongruous at best, deeply destructive at worst."

[ends]

For more information please contact:

Claire Mile 07824878904

Sam Allen 07775612215

Website: <http://notesco.wordpress.com#>

Facebook: Tescos at the former jesters site, Stokes croft! They must be joking.

Petitions:

http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition_core/community/petition/639

http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition_core/community/petition/647

Notes to editors:

[1] The former "Jesters" on Cheltenham Road, Stokes Croft Bristol

[2]

Bristol City Council have granted Change of Use planning permission on the basis that they consulted the local community by:

- a) Sending letters to 55 neighbouring residents (and received zero responses)
- b) Sticking one A4 notification on a nearby lamppost stipulating that Change of Use had been applied for (by an outside contractor)
- c) Publishing one line at the back of the Evening Post under Statutory Notifications

This is the minimum legal requirement for consultation.

[3] Celebratory Demonstration - Meeting at Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, at 1.30pm to walk up to the new proposed Tesco site for approximately 2pm.

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/event.php?eid=301738760123&index=1>

[4]

A study by nef (the new economics foundation) found that £1 spent in a local shop selling local produce puts twice as much money back into the local economy as £1 spent in a supermarket. see <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/ghost-town-britain>

[5]

Tesco currently open one Express store each working day in Britain (NEF report).

As they expand, small general stores close at the rate of around one per day.

Specialist stores, like butchers, bakers and fishmongers, are particularly hard hit - in the five years to 2002 50 specialist stores closed every week, and in 2005, the IGD revealed the loss of 2,157 specialist stores in one year alone.

[6] see attached letters