

THE FARGATE SPEAKER

THE REAL ISSUES, THE WHOLE STORY



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CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODS... WHAT'S THE SOLUTION...?

A TOUR OF CORPORATE SHEFFIELD



Cars lay abandoned in flood water in Sheffield

According to the government it's building more roads. The government have over 200 new road schemes on the cards at a cost of over £20 billion.

Road expansion has been shown to generate traffic which causes more pollution and worsens climate change. Concreting over more of the country also increases the risks of flooding, as there is more runoff and less earth to soak up the rain.

One of the roads planned for expansion is the M1. The government want to widen it to 4 lanes in both directions from Junctions 6a-13 (the M25 to Milton Keynes) and 21-42 (Leicester to Leeds). The predicted cost is over £5 billion.

Work at the southern end has already begun. Work began this year between Junctions 31 and 32. This section has been started ahead of the rest as the Highways Agency already owned the land, therefore no public consultation or Environmental Impact Assessment was required before work began.

The M1 has a huge impact on the lives of those who live near it.

“At Tinsley, near Meadowhall, the air quality is already worse than the level set by the EU to protect human health.”

At Tinsley, near Meadowhall, the air quality is already worse than the level set by the EU to protect human health. Rates of hospital admission for asthma are twice that as for Sheffield as a whole.

There is so much noise from the motorway traffic, that the schools have to leave their windows closed all year round or the children can't hear the teacher.

What about congestion? The Highways Agency's own studies have shown that the congestion will be worse after the widening because the increase in capacity will be outstripped by the growth in traffic.

There are far more effective ways of dealing with congestion. Better, cheaper public transport, slower speed limits, getting freight onto the railways and most importantly, reducing travel by encouraging communities where people can live and work using local goods and services.

The campaign has included banners drops, awareness raising, stunts and demonstrations. We need more people to get involved to stop this madness.

Contact Julie on 07759851073 or email info@nowideningm1.org.uk

By: Sophi Stansbey

WE'RE ALL GOING ON OUR SUMMER HOLIDAYS!

It wasn't just the good weather that decided to have summer off in Sheffield this year.

Sheffield City Council seemed to have decided to take the summer off too as they blundered their way through the flooding crisis.

The damage: millions of pounds worth of damage to our homes, our already overstretched fire service pushed to its limit and the council's own bureaucratic bungling in failing to cover paid-up residents fully.

And so to the council's response to this drama:

South Yorkshire Flood Victim Support! A relief fund financed by our own donations and no tax money whatsoever. Once again, we are all left to pick up the pieces from the council's mistakes.

By: A Walkley Couchsurfer

1. Sheffield Midland Rail Station:

Constant intrusion of "security" and "safety" announcements.

2. The Sheffield Inner Ring Road (newest section at Corporation Street):

Seating with stunning view of the back of an elongated grey industrial shed. And a gleaming litter bin positioned on an island surrounded by several lanes of traffic. This was presumably provided to offer pedestrians a rest whilst avoiding being knocked down. Or perhaps it's for those who no longer care what their surroundings are, when they're drinking/drugging themselves into oblivion.

3. "The Upper Don Valley Walk" Public Footpath (From Hillfoot Bridge along Club Mill Lane):

A major fly-tippers hotspot for decades leads through works until it becomes a dusty rutted track used by heavy demolition firm lorries. It turns into liquid mud after the slightest rainfall. Wardsend Bridge was swept away by the 25 June 2007 flood waters leaving Coopers Car Dismantlers and Guard Dogs.

4. The Sheaf Valley Walk Public Footpath. From Charlotte Road to Queens Road:

KFC immediately placed a "temporary" fence which stopped anyone wanting to walk alongside the newly opened river-side walk. KFC also attached several eyesore signs to the newly erected safety fence to warn people of "Danger".

5. Moorfoot. The British State Government office building, presently used by the DWP:

Built in the 1970s this blocked the natural route linking London road with the centre of Sheffield. It should be reopened. Fifty years is too long for the people of Sheffield to be denied ways through the streets they live and work in.

By: Phil Hutchinson



COMMUNITY VICTORY: NO NEW TESCO IN COMMONSIDE

After a well managed community campaign, Tesco's have been successfully prevented from building yet another mini-supermarket, this time in Commonside.

Sheffield Council blocked the proposal after receiving over 1000 signatures demanding the chain keep their greedy mitts out.

A Tesco's Too Far

The success of the campaign is a glimmer of hope for all us who are sick of seeing local shops run into the ground and replaced by identikit stores.

With a much larger Tesco's ready to be built on Spital Hill, this is a rallying call to all of us ready to say a loud "No" to bad food, bad jobs and all-out bad shopping.

Commonside's disapproval of Tesco's brought together businesses, residents and even our very own Fargate Speaker, with a "Kick Tesco's out of Crookes" special.

Successful strategies included shop adverts and letter writing, but the real successful strategy was community solidarity: pooling our resources together for a common cause.

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KICK TESCO OUT OF CROOKES!!!

5 THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT TESCO SUPERSTORE

1. **TESCO does not provide good jobs for local people.** TESCO supermarket jobs are low paying, have long hours and shop workers have reported trouble in getting workers on to company pension schemes. TESCO has categorically stated for post Sheffield developments that it does not intend to hire its 'high skilled' (and higher paying) labour from the local area.
2. **TESCO is bad for the environment.** TESCO transports millions of tonnes of produce around the world, contributing to climate change through transport emissions. A 2005 Friends of the Earth survey found that TESCO came lowest out of the supermarket chains for sourcing British apples. TESCO stores are also the most environmentally inefficient in the sector.
3. **TESCO exploits workers worldwide.** Workers in Bangladesh making clothes for TESCO and ASDA work 16 hours a day an hour working 14 hours a day. Workers in Costa Rica producing bananas for export to all major UK supermarkets earn 30p an hour - a wage so low that they cannot afford to take an hour off when dangerous pesticides are being sprayed on the crops. There are countless other examples of TESCO's negligence towards its workers: poverty wages, poor working conditions and supplier's union-busting campaigns.
4. **TESCO kills community life.** Despite its commitment towards "community sponsorship", TESCO has a poor record working with communities. TESCO creates narrow obdurate car environments. It removes the diversity of social life outside the asphalts and cinders the streets with waste and traffic. The corporation uses its disproportionate (and undesired) economic power to manipulate political influence and regional control to its own shareholders ends.
5. **TESCO already has three other stores within walking distance** - West Green, Halfway Road, Rainard Road, Southey and Ecclesall (not to mention other companies supermarkets - 30 within a two mile radius). This is not about free enterprise, this is about TESCO securing its stranglehold on the market place. (Please don't do it, occur in the window of your home or business)

COMMUNITY ACTION, COMMUNITY RESISTANCE

"TESCO Special" edition of Fargate

We can defeat big corporations' attempts to monopolise our lifestyles but only by acting together as a community.

Boycotting shops is a step in the right direction, but by this stage the store has already been built, local businesses have already been damaged and we have been forced into taking depressing, awfully paid jobs. Businesses that we do not want must be confronted before they have the opportunity to damage our workplace and lifestyles.

Tesco's and other stores have the power to do this only if we allow them. A small victory in Commonside can be turned into a bigger victory for Sheffield if we all continue to build upon it.

Whilst the council rejected the proposal as 'A Tesco's too far', it is not they who prevented it but us a community standing up for each other.

Sheffield Council has proven time and time again that it is on the side of big business and not our local shop keepers.

Local Action Can Defeat Corporate Power

Will small business be able to realistically afford the new city centre spaces, proposed to bring Sheffield into the 21st century? I think not.

Whilst the council has responded to pressure in Walkley, this will not stop the flow of multinationals onto our local high streets.

If we are to prevent Sheffield from losing all its identity and heritage we must take the struggle up ourselves by supporting our shopkeepers and giving supermarkets the boot.

Smile. If you're in Sheffield, you're probably on CCTV



Since February 2003, our friends at the Home Office have kindly invested £3,300,000 of our money on CCTV in Sheffield. Why?

Sheffield Council offer three reasons:

1. 'To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.'

However, according to Professor John Ditton from Sheffield University Criminology Department, there is 'no real evidence' that CCTV is an effective deterrent to criminals. 'We know, with the benefit of hindsight and experience, that they do not really have a significant impact on the crime rate,' said Professor Ditton.

2. 'To help reassure the public about their safety'

Evidently, making us feel as if we are safe is more important to Sheffield Council than actually making our city a safer place to live. In the past decade the Home Office has spent 78% of its crime budget on CCTV, making us the most watched nation in the world. Think back ten years. How much safer are you now?

3. 'To encourage investment'

Yes, the average Briton is caught on camera ten times day. Yes, this will be a much higher figure in an urban area like Sheffield. (The average Londoner is filmed 300 times a day.) Yes, there is not believed to be a single CCTV system in Britain to have registered under the Data Protection Act (which should provide some safeguards as to what can be done with CCTV footage of us). But worry not, our council reckon the supposed benefits brought by increased corporate investment in Sheffield will more than outweigh these massive encroachments on our civil liberties. CCTV simply gives further power to the state, allowing us to be watched and monitored often without us even knowing it. I for one ain't smiling.

By: Danny Carden

LETTERS TO FARGATE ...

Written in response to "Social Housing Crisis" (Fargate - Summer 2007)

Social Housing, with its connotations of authoritarian local councils and cliquey "we've always lived here" mentalities amongst tenants, does little to improve our quality of life.

Local Authority/Providers Groups being given the power to buy and convert buildings already in existence in different parts of the city would give us all chances to feel as though we are human beings too, not just those who have financial advantages.

The situation in Sheffield has got worse. Large scale developments are housing the salaried and certain classes of students (mainly those with salaried parents). But this hasn't meant a freeing up of older properties in areas such as Walkley, Hunter's Bar and Crookes. Instead the people who own these properties are renting them, often in poor condition, without self-contained facilities and at a cost which Housing Benefit will not cover. As property prices go up, the squeeze on dignity and privacy become greater.

Although I wouldn't want to be a Sheffield Homes tenant again, I know that the chances of getting a flat in a place I'd like to live are virtually zero. I've been through the Priority Needs scrutiny and like all aspects of Local Authority operations, we are treated systematically as a lesser species of humanity. It is no surprise that people get angry, but we need to present a dignified mass protest to counter these oppressions. Otherwise those with power over us can always justify their surveillance, monitoring, punitive and authoritarian attitudes and violence. -Phil Hutchinson

(this represents an abstract of full text - ed)

The Fargate Speaker is not produced, written, funded or supported by any politician, business, political party, religion or state-funded organisation ... WE DO NOT WANT YOUR MONEY! WE DO NOT WANT YOU TO SIGN UP TO A POLITICAL PARTY! ... The Fargate Speaker is a community based anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, libertarian publication designed to engage with the real issues that concern local people ... We welcome letters and contributions from readers -

Please contact - fargatespeaker@googlemail.com