

Volume **2** Issue **1**

Saturday 29 March 2008
The WHAG Weekly Update

Don't let Sainsbury's rip the heart out of it.

WHITE LANE

Support the **White Hart Action Group** www.savetheheartofwhitehartlane.co.uk

SAINSBURY'S DEMAND £1MILLION TO LEAVE WHITE HART LANE ALONE

In August last year, a meeting took place between **Justin King, CEO of Sainsbury's**, three members of the **WHAG, Susan Kramer, MP** and **Zac Goldsmith**, Tory Parliamentary Candidate.

It followed a local referendum in which **85%** of residents resoundingly voted **NO** to proposed plans for a Sainsbury's store on White Hart Lane.

The meeting was notable for three statements from Justin King, CEO of Sainsbury's.

1. "We would never have wanted to find ourselves in the situation we are in, in Barnes."
2. "It's all about the wallet."
3. "If someone were to make a viable commercial offer for the lease, I would seriously consider it."

Whilst nobody doubts the sincerity of the first two statements, events in the last two weeks have cast huge doubts over the last.

All present at the meeting took that last statement to mean that if a company were to make an offer allowing Sainsbury's to walk away with no financial loss, Mr. King would seriously consider accepting it. Nothing Mr. King said afterwards has denied that interpretation.

In the months since the meeting, the **WHAG** and its friends suspended their public campaign and have done their utmost to find a company willing to make an offer to Sainsbury's which matches the description above.

After many false starts, this January we found a company who seemed able to do just that and whose presence we felt would be welcomed by the residents.

This company duly made an offer which would have allowed Sainsbury's to walk away without any financial loss and with the thanks and goodwill of the neighbourhood.

Justin King's response was stunning and revealing :

Instead of the £32 per square foot the property was valued at, he has put a "key money" value of £250 p.s.f, arguing that this is compensation for "loss of business opportunity". So instead of paying £128,000 pa for the lease, the cost would rocket to a ludicrous £1 million.



Cont. overleaf

Naturally, the company concerned is unable to meet this demand.

Very, very few companies could – except perhaps a Tesco's or a Sainsbury's.

Despite a flurry of e-mails from the WHAG and its supporters, urging Mr. King to re-consider, he remains adamant.

This week, the WHAG contacted every member of the Sainsbury's board, setting out the situation and urging them to bring pressure to bear on Mr. King to re-think.(You can read this letter below.)

On their behalf, Justin King replied on Thursday to the effect that his attitude remains the same.

This leaves the WHAG with no other alternative but to re-start the campaign to stop the heart being ripped out of White Hart Lane.

The new campaign begins now and we ask all the 4089 people who voted NO last year –and those who were unable to but are opposed to the store - to support us over the coming months.

Full details will be published shortly ; on our web site, via email and in this newsletter.

Letter to Sainsbury's Board members

You will be aware of the controversy surrounding the proposed Sainsbury's local store in White Hart Lane, Barnes. However, you may not be aware of the strength of continuing opposition to the development, nor of the understanding reached in August 2007 between Justin King and local MP, Susan Kramer, Conservative candidate Zac Goldsmith and members of the White Hart Action Group.

We believed this understanding was entered into in good faith by all parties. Justin King's rejection of *****'s offer for the White Hart Lane lease is therefore as surprising as it is disappointing, and will no doubt be of considerable interest to the national media.

You may wish to consider the following facts:

There has been strong opposition to the development in White Hart Lane from the outset.

Opposition intensified when it became known that the 4,000sq ft of available retail space would be occupied by a single Sainsbury's convenience store.

In a postal ballot of households in the store's catchment area (approximately half a mile's walking distance) an overwhelming 85.6% voted against the opening of a Sainsbury's local. The turn out was higher than in the last general election.

A meeting was subsequently held with Justin King and colleagues at your headquarters in Holborn. The outcome of the meeting is in the public domain.

At the close of this meeting, Justin King stated that Sainsbury's would consider 'any commercially viable proposition'.

We understand that the Board has been informed of an offer for the lease made by ***** in January 2008. The offer met the full rental cost plus a £30,000 premium. We believe this offer was fair and commercially viable. As you may know, Sainsbury's response was to require £250/sq foot in key money. In effect £1m -the price at which the entire site was sold a few years ago.

You should be aware that at no point in our exchanges with Justin King has there been any suggestion of a £1million key money payment. Given the context and continuing local hostility to the proposed store, we believe that the projections on which this premium has been calculated are highly questionable.

Justin King remarked at our meeting that 'Sainsbury's would never wish to be in the situation it is in, in Barnes'. We have worked hard to help Sainsbury's get out of this situation and as part of this strategy, we have kept a low profile since the August meeting. The WHAG has no argument with Sainsbury's in particular, or supermarkets in general and there is no desire for flag waving or 'victory marches' if a solution can be found. The offer from ***** is still on the table and if you decide to reconsider its commercial viability we would be happy to close down the campaign without further comment.

The view from the WHAG

So now we know.

The truth about Justin King's statement to "consider any viable commercial offer" has finally been revealed for the sham it is and (probably) always was.



Probably the only company who could possibly afford the lease on these terms would be Tesco. And somehow, I can't see that happening. Can you ?

Justin *may* well look innocently around and he *might possibly* say that this is what he meant all along and that anyone who came out of the meeting in August thinking differently is either stupid or a liar.

He *may* say that, I emphasise. (We all know how litigious such companies can get.)

Were that to be the case, he'd do well to remember who he is talking about – amongst others - the sitting M.P. for Richmond Park, Susan Kramer.

And the Tory candidate for the same, Zac Goldsmith.

Neither is noted for telling porkies.

And neither falls into the other category.

So where does that leave us ?

With the chilling belief that the CEO of one of our biggest and best-loved grocery chains deliberately misled us, all of us, into thinking he would seriously pay attention to the feelings of the 4089 local people who told him his store wasn't wanted here.

As one of those who believed that it was entirely possible for our captains of industry to also be honourable, sensitive people, I've been advised by my lawyers not to publicly reveal quite how I feel about Justin's behaviour.

As one of those who voted NO in the referendum, I am, however, allowed to state that I feel like I've been kicked in the teeth.

I'm sure Justin thinks that this latest bombshell will crumple all local resistance.

I ask you now to prove him wrong.

The WHAG's campaign will be back in strength, with the aim of exposing to the full scrutiny of the national media, Mr. King's cynical attitude towards the neighbourhoods his company invades against the will of local communities and their elected councils.

The campaign is asking you all to vociferously and publicly announce that if this store now opens, you will not shop there.

And then we'll see whether it is worth £1 million or not.

David Rossiter, The WHAG



Justin King

The Information Page

Welcome to the latest issue of the WHAG weekly update—it's your free guide to the campaign to stop Sainsbury's ruining our neighbourhood for ever. This and all our previous newsletters, in full colour, plus much more can be found on our website:

www.savetheheartofwhitehartlane.co.uk

Your questions answered by our in-house nutritionist:

Q As a parent with a young family I'm anxious to make sure that my kids have a really healthy diet. I keep seeing this TV ad at the moment where Jamie says you should eat hot cross buns with custard. Will this count towards the recommended 'five a day' of fruit and veg?

A. **The dried vine fruits in hot cross buns are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. However, given the very small quantity to be found in each bun your children will have to eat several packets at each meal to see any improvement in their general health.**

Q I'm an older person living on a modest income. I keep seeing an advert on the television where that nice Jamie Oliver cooks hot cross buns with custard for all these poor people who have to live in the woods. I'd love to try it but can't really afford ready made custard—can you tell me where the woods are?

A . No—we don't think it's Barnes Common.

Q Hi. I'm a busy young professional with no time to cook at all. Even so, I watch lots of telly and keep seeing this ad where Jamie makes a cracking pudding with buns and custard—oh, and there's a great joke about bottoms at the end. Anyway, can you tell me where I can buy a ready made pudding like this?—I have a Gaggenau oven.

A. You may have to order off menu at a local restaurant.

BEST WHAG COMPETITION EVER! How to enter: Just tell us who said this:

'I can see that a national supermarket occupying the whole of the retail space would be seen as a brash incomer. Three independent retailerswould be much preferred' Was it:

- a) Justin King
- b) HM Government's Planning Inspector
- c) Le Corbusier

First correct entry drawn will win a £25 voucher to spend at wonderful White Hart Lane shops.

Entries on a postcard please to:

Pat's Food Store

White Hart Lane

SW13

to arrive by 20 April 08

**“Justin:
If you
build it,
we won't
come.”**

WHITE LANE

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Here's the idea
—free poster —
put one up.

Can be collected
from B&N
News, Pat's
Food Store or
Pooja News—

Whilst every effort is made to check the accuracy of information contained in the WHAG Weekly Update, neither WHAG nor any individual member of the group can be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused by any inaccuracy in this publication.

