

Cash's

One of Coventry's oldest and best-known firms has collapsed into administration. Cash's (UK) Ltd, that manufactures woven labels and accessories is now in urgent need of finding a new buyer to save it from closure after more than 160 years in the city. According to press reports cash flow problems, described as "significant", are a result of a deficit in the group's pension scheme. Despite efforts to find a solution the firm had to appoint administrators.

The company was set up in 1846 by Quaker brothers John and Joseph Cash in Coventry and has grown to become one of the most famous worldwide suppliers of woven products.

Civic Day

For the first time since its founding the Society will be organising a clean-up operation in the city. It will take place on Civic Day, Saturday, June 21, as part of a nationwide series of events instigated by Civic Voice.

The clean up will focus on the River Sherbourne, a feature of the city that many will hardly know to exist. The concept is for other local groups to participate, and already there has been interest from groups in the Charterhouse area.

The idea has been put forward by member Jayne Long who suggested a team might work in the Palmer Lane area near to the historic bridge across The Burges.

The Council has shown great interest in the project and has indicated its full support.



February 2014

Lecture

Civic Voice President Griff Rhys Jones has just announced the launch of an annual lecture to recognise the work of Lord Duncan Sandys.

Appropriately the inaugural lecture will be by Laura Sandys MP and is scheduled to take place on April 17 in London's Central Hall, Westminster.

Keresley Old Hall

We supported the plans two years ago to restore and convert the 19th century Keresley Old Hall into a hotel and restaurant but the application was turned down after local opposition. Pavan Kalia from owners KEP Development said they thought last time that we had done a good job communicating with the parish council and the city council, but this time they have tried to be more open.



Now a modified plan has been submitted that would see the Old Hall open with a banqueting suite and hotel facilities.

The owners say they are poised ready to bring the Grade II listed building back to life as soon as the all important permission is granted. In the latest scheme there are 50 bedrooms, a gymnasium and ladies boutique.

The Old Hall on Tamworth Road was an 1840's country house, that dates from the development of Coundon as a residential district for the more affluent city residents. During the Victorian period, affluent traders and retired people from the city built their large houses along Tamworth Road in the still attractive rural area of Coundon and Keresley, away from the working class areas of the city.

The Society is looking to scrutinise the new plans at a meeting with the developer.

Browns

The change of ownership at Browns has already signalled a series of changes already out for consideration. Alan Higgs Charity who now own the business, has asked the management team behind Inspire Café Bar to run the establishment.

A visitor on the first Saturday of this month would have been greeted with a series of stalls selling a multitude of items—costume jewellery and collector's artefacts, to arty soft toys and racks of ladies and gent's clothing. While the mini market hummed the bar was doing good trade with a full house of diners on the upper level. After looking at the plans CovSoc will forward its thoughts on the scheme.

- More clarity on HSUK
- Friargate— latest
- ASDA in Cheylesmore

All over page

The value of nature in our cities designing ecological rich urban environments



with chartered landscape architect
Ian Lanchbury from the ARUP campus in Solihull
Monday, February 10 at 7.30pm
Shop Front Theatre, City Arcade
His special interests—infrastructure, environmental
design and urban design.
Visitors welcome—£2 . Refreshments

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More news and views on our website: www.coventrysociety.org.uk

Cheylesmore approval

Last month's newsletter was plagued by production problems – resulting in an out-of-date report appearing about Asda's attempts to gain planning permission for a new supermarket in Cheylesmore. We apologise for the error.

Just for the record, the latest position is that Asda was successful in its most recent bid to gain planning permission for the proposed new store - on the site of a former pub in Cheylesmore and opposite a row of small shops on Quinton Parade.

Despite fierce opposition from some local traders, councillors at a planning committee meeting in November narrowly approved the plan by four votes to three. The essence of debate in committee – highly relevant to other local shopping areas in Coventry – was whether the presence of a new supermarket in an area was likely to destroy the trade of existing small shops or whether a new store was more likely to increase footfall in a district and therefore boost the trade of existing small businesses. The latter argument won the day, with some councillors providing anecdotal evidence that small shopkeepers had benefitted from the presence of a new supermarket in other areas of the city.

Examples given included shops at Empress Building in Binley Road, where Lidl and Iceland are now located, and small shops on Holyhead Road which have now been joined by a local Tesco store.

As part of the Cheylesmore planning agreement, Asda has offered to provide a total of £150,000 towards community facilities in the area, to offset the loss of the pub.

Asda will also pay for a new zebra crossing on Daventry Road which will link the new store to the existing parade of shops.

HS2: Campaign for Real Rail

Our December HS2 article outlined the national plan for the better alternative to HS2, to be known as High Speed UK. So what's in it for Coventry? Will we have a new railway through Coventry? Thankfully, no.

The principle is spine-n-spur, i.e. a north-south spine railway with a



spur to every conurbation along the route, in many cases by means of the existing railway into the city centre. That is the case for Coventry where trains will run along the HSUK spine from the north and the south then branch off near Rugby to the existing line via Coventry, International,

New Street and Wolverhampton. Centro want the line between Coventry and Birmingham four-tracked regardless of HS2, and this will give the capacity needed as well as allowing higher speeds. Isn't it horribly disruptive to alter an existing railway? That was certainly true of the West Coast Main Line upgrade where maintenance had to be carried out on busy tracks, but where new tracks were added offline, the work went smoothly.

Isn't it too late to change HS2? No, the principle of a new railway is firmly established but the details are fluid. The Hybrid Bill that would allow construction regardless of local opposition, will not get through this parliament. Details such as the type of track are still being debated. The sticking point is the disastrously poor route decided by the controlling minds very early in the process and which the promoters cannot afford to admit is wrong even though their own chairman resigned saying "Whether we went the right way is questionable" (Sir Doug Oakervee, Independent on Sunday, Sept 3, 2013).

Major private business for Friargate?



With the building of a platform across the ring road to link Greyfriar's Green with the rail station approach is about to start, a public launch of Friargate took place in Birmingham at the end of last month. At the event Coventry's assistant

development director David Cockroft announced that Coventry Council is in deep negotiations with a private sector occupier looking to take 40,000 sq ft in a new office block on the site. He hopes a deal will be agreed within the next few weeks.

As previously reported the City Council would be the prime tenant of the 40,000 sq ft space, effectively subletting it to the unnamed potential occupier. Its plan is to reduce the number of Council offices across the city from 27 separate buildings to just nine.

That would apparently mean developer Cannon Kirk having the confidence to build a block of some 80,000 sq ft, finding other occupiers for the remainder.

The council has already committed to moving many of its offices around the city onto a 160,000 sq ft development at Friargate, which has the working title 'Kickstart', to get the project underway—now given the title Coventry's Central

Business District.

Speaking to the publication Midlands Business Insider David Cockroft said: "If we can get an agreement on the office block I can see things moving fairly rapidly. We'd get planning permission within four months, and construction on both buildings could start this year, ready for occupancy in 2016. I can't overstate the importance of Friargate. It will change the face of Coventry forever."

► A total of 25 new buildings are planned for the site, including 14 Grade A offices, two hotels, homes, retail and leisure facilities.

But the Society is still concerned that a new bus hub has yet to be properly designed into the development. And there are still concerns about the arrangements for queuing taxicabs and a proposal to open up Park Road as an exit route for taxis. We shall continue pressing for a proper detailed plan to be produced.