

# TESCO DECISION

**7.30pm,  
Thursday 6th March  
St Philips Church,  
Mill Road**

**Come to support your local shops,  
and keep Tesco off Mill Road!**

 **[www.nomillroadtesco.org](http://www.nomillroadtesco.org)**



## NO MILL ROAD TESCO

*Campaign Update*

*March 2008*

### Inside:

- Why we're opposing Tesco
- Campaign success stories
- Window poster and much more . . .
- Price comparison - we prove Mill Road shops are cheaper
- Delivery analysis - just how many lorries will there be?

## It's decision time!

*East Area Committee meeting on March 6th will make decision on Tesco application*

Shoppers and residents of the Mill Road area have made their views very clear – we don't want Tesco on Mill Road. Around 5000 people have signed the petition opposing the supermarket giant's plans to open a Tesco Express on Cambridge's liveliest street, which people in Cambridge and beyond value for its rich variety of small, independent shops.

The No Mill Road Tesco campaign – your campaign – was set up quickly last September when Tesco's plans first came to light.

Since then, we've seen an unprecedented 1200 letters objecting to the Tesco proposal sent to the City Council – council officers would normally expect a dozen or so objections. We've marched – several hundred of us – along Mill Road to the old Wilco site where Tesco plans to set up shop, and listened as Mill Road traders and city councillors put the case against Tesco.

A planning officer's report in favour of the Tesco application was withdrawn after we pointed out that it contravened important elements of the City Council's own Local Plan regarding traffic congestion, road safety, noise pollution, and the character and vitality of the neighbourhood. Council Leader Ian Nimmo Smith has called for the application to be referred to the Competition Commission. Tesco already takes 51 percent of the money spent on groceries in Cambridge.

Now we must make a final effort to be sure that, in making their decision on the Tesco applications when the East Area Committee meets to consider them on 6th March, our councillors are fully aware of the strength of feeling among the people who live, shop and work in the Mill Road area.



### What you can do

The date for written objections to the Tesco applications has passed - but there are still lots of ways you can help the campaign:

- Contact your local councillor to let them know you support the campaign
- Write a letter opposing Tesco to the Cambridge Evening News
- Display the poster on the back page in your window
- Above all, you can attend the meeting of the East Area Committee at 7.30 on the 6th March at St Philips Church, Mill Road

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# Why we're opposing Tesco - the truth behind the myths

## Myth 1: Tesco will provide more choice

A common argument put forward by Tesco is that an Express store on Mill Road will increase choice for consumers. In fact, the opposite is true.



Mill Road currently has 13 grocery stores, as well as a greengrocer's, a butcher's, a baker's, and two independent off-licences. The evidence tells us that many of these will go out of business if a Tesco opens on Mill Road because of the tactics used by supermarket giants like Tesco.

Some people in Cambridge want to shop at Tesco, or at least to have the option of shopping in Tesco. They already can: there are already 13 Tesco-owned stores in Cambridge, from superstores to Express stores, to One Stops, which are Tesco-owned. There are already 3 Tesco stores (not including One Stops) less than 2 miles from the Mill Road site. Even without the new store, Tesco already

has a majority of the grocery business - at least 51% - in the city, making Cambridge one of the 10 most Tesco-dominated towns in the UK. As the Competition Commission noted in its recent report on supermarkets, this kind of local dominance is bad for competition and bad for the consumer.

Small, local independent retailers in an area like Mill Road always struggle to compete with a company as powerful and aggressive as Tesco, and not because they aren't

good shops. Supermarket giants like Tesco use a variety of means to draw customers away from other shops. For example, Tesco and the other big supermarkets have enough economic power to enable them to sell basic items at a loss as a way of drawing in new customers ('loss leaders'), even if their other products are more expensive. Their wealth also enables them to run short-term voucher schemes in new stores, heavily discounting selected goods for a short period of time. Obviously, local independent shops don't have the resources to run similar schemes, so even if their products are cheaper overall, they can seem more expensive.

Fair competition requires something like a level playing field, not a situation where one player has the wealth and the determination to force everyone else off the pitch.

## Myth 2: Tesco will be cheaper

Many people living in the Mill Road area are students and people on a tight budget, and for them, the attraction of a new Tesco Express is the price of the food on offer.

But would a Tesco Express really be cheaper than the shops on Mill Road?

In February we conducted a shopping basket comparison between local Mill Road shops, the Cherry Hinton Tesco Express and the Newmarket road Tesco supermarket.

Many people don't realise that the Tesco Value lines available in supermarkets aren't on offer in Express stores. In our comparison, we found the Cherry Hinton Tesco Express was 20% more expensive than the Tesco on Newmarket road,

Crucially, for the range of products in our shopping basket, **Mill Road shops were almost £5 cheaper than Tesco Express.**

Prices correct as of February 2008. For more information on our shopping basket, visit [www.nomillroadtesco.org](http://www.nomillroadtesco.org).

### What we discovered

Item	Tesco Express	Mill Road
Two pints milk	76p	75p
1 kilo potatoes	87p	37p
1 litre orange juice	92p	89p
Free range eggs	£1.51	89p
Chopped tomatoes	49p	39p
Baked beans	32p	25p
4 pack Fosters	£3.49	£2.99
4 pack Toilet Roll	£1.79	87p

Total for these and other items in our entire shopping basket:

Tesco Express: £47.99

Mill Road shops: £43.08

**Mill Road shops = £4.91 cheaper**

## Myth 3: Only(!) thirty deliveries per week



Above: what happens when a lorry tries to reverse down Sedgwick Street.



Tesco have said that there will be 30 deliveries per week at the Mill Road store. However, our research in monitoring the Cherry Hinton Express store has revealed the true figure could be much higher.

Our volunteers monitored Cherry Hinton Tesco Express on Tuesday 12th and Friday 15th February. On Tuesday there were nine deliveries, and on Friday there were five. We were not able to monitor the store for the entire day - so the total number of deliveries could be even higher.

At this rate, the total number of weekly deliveries would be closer to 70 - over double the figure estimated by Tesco.

Left: Railings damaged by Tesco lorries in Cherry Hinton

## Myth 4: No increase in traffic

Tesco have claimed that few people visit their Express stores by car.

No Mill Road Tesco campaigners were not convinced by this, and we decided to monitor visitors to the Tesco Express in Cherry Hinton High Street on two days in mid-February.

During almost 12 hours on Tuesday 12th February, 110 people parked their cars on the street in order to visit the Cherry Hinton store. On Friday 15th February this rose to 142 during a 9 1/2 hour period - an average of 15 people an hour parking on the street in order to use the Tesco store.

These figures do not include people who used nearby car parks. The site of the Cherry Hinton Tesco Express is surrounded by parking facilities, including a 40-bay car park shared by local shops.



Mill Road, by contrast, offers little in the way of public parking, and the parking in adjacent side streets is already insufficient for the needs of residents. An additional influx of car-borne shoppers visiting the proposed Tesco Express would inevitably increase traffic congestion - and Tesco is actually asking for 18 parking spaces to be removed to make room for an extension to the store, and access for its delivery lorries.

## Myth 5: Tesco can't be beaten

Councils are standing up to Tesco up and down the country. Here are just a few examples:

**Barnet** - Tesco turned down because it would damage the "vitality and viability" of the area, threatening the survival of local shops. In April 2007 the Planning Inspectorate upheld the council's decision - thus providing a precedent for rejecting Tesco Express applications where they threaten local shopping areas, like on Mill Road.

**Darlington** - In December 2007, councillors in Darlington rejected Tesco's application to build a Tesco Express because it wasn't needed, would threaten local shops, and would generate too much traffic. Tesco put the site up for sale last month.

**Preston** - In January 2008, Preston council rejected an application to build a Tesco Express on the grounds that there was no proper provision for parking and that it would have an "adverse impact on the vitality and viability of nearby local centres and retail provision".

All of these cases show that there are real and effective planning grounds for turning down applications for Tesco Express stores for exactly the reasons that thousands of us oppose the Mill Road proposal. They show that where councillors and planning officers are committed to representing local people and to defending their interests, it is possible to successfully stand up to Tesco.

### Competition

We have a signed copy of 'The Cambridge Curry Club' by local author Saumya Balsari to give away.

To enter, email [competition@nomillroadtesco.org](mailto:competition@nomillroadtesco.org) with your suggestion for an alternative use for the Wilco site.

Closing date for entries: Saturday 8th March.