

Rooksmoor Mills Public Meeting - 3rd April, 2018

A well-attended public meeting was held in Woodchester Village Hall in April at which Tony Cooper and Alan Tyndall, Directors of Rooksmoor Mills Ltd, explained the latest plans for the construction phase of the development now that planning permission has been granted.

Tony explained that they hope to start work on the site in July, although there is still a lot of detail to be agreed with Stroud District Council's planning department. The first stage will be enabling works, including rebuilding or renewing the derelict river tunnels under the site (which could take three months) and enlargement of the old mill pond to about 5 times its current size. The housing at the southern end of the development (Block F) will then be ready for occupation 12 months later, and the remainder of the development completed by the end of 2021.

Tony made it clear that many of the details of the design have been imposed on them by Stroud District Council and Heritage England, preventing them from implementing some features they would have preferred, but that they genuinely believe that the finished development will be "great looking buildings which we can all be proud of".

The meeting was, for the most part, very constructive, and gave local residents an opportunity to ask questions and raise specific concerns about the impact of the development.

- **Light pollution.** Residents raised concerns about light pollution from the site. Tony responded that they understand these concerns and that the designs (including the use of bollard lighting around Block F and the Mill Pond) ensure this will be kept to a minimum.
- **Flood risk.** Tony assured residents that comprehensive flood risk assessments are believed to have dealt with any possible flooding risk, including one of the river tunnels becoming blocked.
- **Noise pollution:** Tony confirmed that the new buildings will sit on 12-14m piles, and that the piling process will inherently be noisy, but that this should last only two weeks. Residents requested that we be given notice of this phase of the process.
- **Construction Traffic:** Tony confirmed that "special measures" will be implemented to allow construction traffic to access the site. Although not yet agreed with GCC Highways, these may include temporary traffic lights on the A46. There is understandable concern that this may result in traffic diverting through Woodchester, particularly Selsley Road. Chairman Gervase Hamilton confirmed that the Parish Council would carefully monitor this situation. Access to the site will be via the existing entrance during initial construction. Once Block F is nearing completion, the second access to the south will be prepared.
- **Materials:** The red brick finish on Block B specified by SDC has always been contentious, but the developers are currently looking at the possibility of changing this to stone facing, a move which was warmly welcomed by the meeting. Some red bricks will be retained during demolition for repairs to the wall along the A46.
- **Parking:** some concern was expressed that overflow parking from the finished development would spill into areas of the village, but Tony re-assured the meeting that there are 2.5 parking spaces for each of the 54 units.
- **Landscaping:** Tony explained that the detail of the landscaping, particularly around the pond and adjacent to the A46, have yet to be agreed, but that there will be "a variety of attractive planting in this area".

- **Commercial Units:** Alan confirmed that the commercial element at the North end of the site still requires a detailed planning application to be submitted, and is under review depending on the commercial success of the rest of the site.
- **Access to the Cycle Path:** There will eventually be two access points to the cycle path, a new one to the south and the existing path to the north (although existing steps are only temporary).
- **S.106 Funding:** £5,400 has been allocated to the Parish Council through s.106 to be spent on kissing gates in the village.

Gervase also confirmed that a process will be out in place to ensure regular dialogue with the developers throughout the construction process, enabling local residents to be kept fully up to date with plans and developments. More details will follow as we near the start of the construction phase.

History

1729 water-driven woollen mill

1859 2-storey water and steam power mill, with own private siding from Stroud-Nailsworth railway

1935 major fire destroyed most of mill.

1963 mill closed, machinery removed, other businesses moved in