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Tesco Continues Aggressive Expansion with Plans for new Preston Store

Tesco plan to maximise their monopoly in Preston, hoping to build their 10th store in the area. Local traders opposed for the planned Tesco Express store on Friargate fear that the low prices Tesco will be able to charge for groceries, alcohol, and cigarettes will put other retailers out of business..

Tesco has applied for permission to install a new glazed shop front in the former Bello restaurant. It also aims to build a two-storey extension at the back of the shop which will be used as storage space to allow it to hold more stock inside the shop. Tesco states the store will create 20 jobs, but the possibility of its opening forcing businesses to close or cut workers will no doubt reduce any significance in this figure.

Though Preston's Fishergate has long been lost to the large corporate retailers which can be found dominating the main streets in any other British town or city, Friargate has maintained a distinct character. In the heart of Preston's student district, Friargate largely consists of small-scale independent businesses, including bookshops, pubs, restaurants, newsagents and a cooperative social centre.

Whilst the council's planning committee have yet to formalise a decision, Tesco have been previously accused of using aggressive tactics to gain land and planning permission for building new stores. Growing evidence indicates that the success of Tesco is

partly based on trading practices that are having serious consequences for suppliers, farmers and workers worldwide, local shops and the environment. Tesco's mission to deliver "unbeatable value" for shoppers has pushed down prices so far that some UK farmers are on the brink of bankruptcy. Research on Tesco's suppliers overseas reveals that some pay workers wages which keep them in poverty and have only minimal health and safety protection in place.

Tesco have a large number of stores across Lancashire in their battle for complete control of retail, and have new stores opening soon in Lytham and Padiham amongst others. Resistance to Tesco's ugly brand of hyper-capitalism has spread throughout the UK in recent years. When council bureaucrats highlighted the reality of democracy by giving in to corporate interest and ignoring local resident's pleas for a rejection of another Tesco store planning application, frustration boiled over in Bristol earlier this year. The newly built store was subjected to some sabotage and property damage, and remained closed for around a month. Protestors saw the police once again act in the defence of financial interests, with their heavy handed and violent response.

In similar news, Penwortham residents have recently met to discuss resistance to a proposed 35,000 sq ft Sainsbury's store.

BBC's Preston 'big society' documentary: A flawed experiment

The BBC's 'The Street That Cut Everything' was a 'big society' experiment documentary, filming a group of Preston residents for 6 weeks as they tried to live out their daily lives without any assistance from the local council, public sector, or state in general. The residents kept their council tax, but had to fund or do everything else themselves. Shortly before filming, the BBC turned off the street lights, fly tipped the street, and covered it in dog turds in an attempt to stall them before they had even begun.

As planned, the show supposedly proved that the state is an essential part of our lives and that there are no alternatives.

There are a multitude of alternatives that the residents could have pursued to find successful non-state dependant living, had they not been set up to fail by the BBC. During the programme decisions were made on a hierarchical committee basis rather than through more democratic means such as mass meetings, resulting in fallouts and disillusionment. In our highly individualised society, it comes as no surprise that a group of people with only vague associations should initially struggle to work collectively and equally. Mutual aid however, gives the greatest chance of success for the entire group.

Apart from the obvious false choice between council services exactly as

they are now and nothing, the programme was fatally flawed. Residents only received back their local council tax rather than the full amount they actually contribute to council's incomes through central taxation. 'The Street' forced residents to start from scratch, despite having contributed for decades to council infrastructure, which they are then not allowed to use. Supporters of societies without government suggest that the workers themselves would run services without bosses and bureaucrats, creating a new society from the shell of the old.

The experiment did produce some interesting results, such as the elderly lady who because of lack of council transport, asked her neighbours for assistance with her shopping and eventually built friendship and a mutual working relationship with them.

Cameron's idea of big society, a place where public services are diminished but wage slavery and intense taxation go hand in hand is indeed a horrible vision, but this does not imply that a stateless society is a utopian impossibility. On the contrary, communities which learn, work, and develop together with residents on a mutual and equal standing can and do exist.

"Linnets faithful hope to fly free of Chequered nest."

Supporters of one of Lancashire's leading non-League football clubs hope to take back control of their team by establishing a democratically-accountable supporter's trust based on the model that has proven so successful at other clubs in the north-west, such as Runcorn Linnets and FC United of Manchester.

Burscough Football Club suffered a body blow during May when owners sacked two lifetime servants from official positions. Frank Parr and Stan Petherbridge had given the club a

combined eight decades of service, but were notified of their redundancy via mail on the day of a scheduled meeting with representatives of the Northern Premier League. The Linnets had been run solely by the Supporter's Club for the last eighteen months, with Mr. Parr and Mr. Petherbridge (Chairman and Secretary respectively) representatives of the latter, after the Linnets' takeover by Southport-based Chequer Properties.

The club was taken over last season with plans to sell the existing Victoria Park ground for a housing development. With promises of a new ground in tow, the new owners tasked the Supporter's Club with funding the team and running day-to-day operations. However, with the Supporter's Club making increasingly loud noises about their reluctance to sell the ground and ground-share with neighbours Skelmersdale United while planning permission for a new ground is sought, Chequer stepped in and decided to remove any influence that supporters had over the running of the club.

Chequer now plan to run the club, as expected, out of Skelmersdale next season, despite not having yet located a new site in Burscough for a ground, and despite having not yet obtained planning permission for the proposed housing development. Senior club football has been played at Victoria Park for 103 years, and the ground last year hosted Burscough's youth team, amateur side Burscough Richmond and nearly thirty junior girls' cup finals. Closing the ground would therefore leave a large hole in local football in West Lancashire.

In light of this, the Supporter's Club called a meeting at the end of May with the aim of forming and running a new club owned by supporters on a one-member, one-vote system. Fans have already spoken with Supporters Direct, a charity that assists in the setting up of supporter's initiatives, as well as contacting FC United of Manchester, Halifax Town, and

Chester FC, all of whom have successfully wrested back control of their clubs or established new teams from the ground upwards. With a renewed focus on community and youth football, the ultimate goal for the new club, according to a Supporter's Club statement, would be "to ensure that the Club returns to the Parish of Burscough with its own ground", and would not rule out an eventual return to Victoria Park. Subject to a final referendum of Linnets supporters, the new club would initially field a youth team for the 2011/12 season at a new site within the parish, and would then begin fielding a senior selection in 2012/13.

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- Report on news ignored by corporate media
- Cover stories and events of political and social importance to the local community
- Undertake the above with a volunteer led/not-for-profit ethic

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