

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this meeting, in which we will discuss the proposed construction of a new shopping centre in Ash. I know that you all feel very strongly about this issue, as it will affect all of your lives a great deal.

This meeting will be arranged as follows:

- Firstly, we will have a vote to find out the general level of public opinion.
- Next, I will outline the plans for the new development, explaining some of the intended features and the actual location of the site.
- Then, I will provide some time for you to discuss the issue in small groups. During this discussion, I will ask you to write a short speech outlining your feelings about the proposed development. After about 20 minutes, you will then, in your groups, read your speech, so that everyone can hear how you feel about the new building.
- Once we have heard everyone's speeches, we will then conduct a vote which will decide if the development will go ahead.

[Conduct vote to find out opinions at the beginning]

[Hand out maps (one per group)]

My company, the Warner Construction Company, is proposing to build a new shopping centre in Ash. The location of the shopping centre itself is coloured in pink on your maps, while the green area shows the parking spaces which we will build. They will be able to hold up to 3000 vehicles.

As you can see the development will be situated on what is now farming land, although a number of farms buildings and houses will have to be destroyed. There will also have to be major changes to the road system in Ash, in order to cope with the large volumes of traffic which we are expecting, especially around Christmas time.

Chequer Lane, Queen's Road and The Street will have to be expanded, which will mean the destruction of houses which are situated at the sides of these roads. Residents whose houses are expected to be destroyed will be paid for their properties and will be found new homes in Ash and the surrounding area. They will also be paid a considerable sum of money as compensation for losing their home.

Thus, the construction of this site will have major implications for the future of Ash, and there will be considerable changes to the area around your homes. We chose this site for a two main reasons:

Firstly, there are large areas of open spaces which we can use to build on and use as parking spaces.

Secondly, the transport links to the area are excellent. The area is close to Dover, Canterbury and Thanet, and we expect people to travel from even further afield to visit the site. French people will also be able to visit because of the proximity of the ferries at Ramsgate and Dover, and the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone.

Although the changes to Ash itself are quite drastic, we see this development as an exciting new chapter in Ash's history. The building will not just house shops, as there will be many new leisure facilities, which residents of Ash will be able to use at discounted rates.

The following features are planned:

- A huge shopping mall, including branches of Marks and Spencers, Sainsburys, Argos, Boots and other large chain stores, as well as a number of small, family-run shops.
- There will also be a new twelve-screen iMax cinema. A swimming and leisure complex which will house an Olympic-size swimming pool with numerous flume tubes, gym, sauna, tennis courts, a football pitch and a small golf course.
- Other intended features include an arcade with all the latest video games, a Lazer Quest centre and a go-karting track.

It is hoped that this development will only be the start of Ash's bright future. By starting the ball rolling here, we are expecting a number of other companies to locate branches here, including Toys'R'Us, PC World, Homebase and Halfords. The owners of Alton Towers have also shown an interest in building a smaller version of their world-famous theme park in this area.

We, at the Warner Construction Company hope that the residents of Ash will welcome this new and exciting development. Although it may cause a great deal of this disruption to residents, we hope that the benefits of this new centre will outweigh the disruption.

Has anyone got any questions?

Next, in groups quickly discuss how you feel about this new development. Then, together make a short speech which you can read out in about twenty minutes. One person writes, another reads, and the others contribute to the speech.

After twenty minutes:

- Read speeches
- Discuss points raised in the speeches
- Final votes - should the development take place or not?]