

19 February 2007

PRESS RELEASE

Sainsbury's To Transfer Historic Barn to Chawton House

Today, Sainsbury's Alton store, in partnership with the charity, Chawton House Library, announce the start of a programme to relocate and preserve an historic late 17th Century barn situated adjacent to the supermarket.

Sainsbury's has committed £41,000 to the project and has bought in a team that specialise in the dismantling of timber barns. Work will start this week and is due to finish at the end of February when the structure will be delivered to the Chawton House estate.

The move follows a request made by Chawton House Library to transfer the historic barn to its grounds, which are currently being restored with a view to creating an organic rural English working manor farm of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The period barn will help complete the picture, and once it is erected, will serve as storage for winter fodder and horse drawn farm equipment.

In support of the proposed plan, the charity is launching the 'Chawton House Barn Appeal' to help with the cost of reconstructing the barn on its estate, estimated to be in the region of £100,000

Heather Shearer, Director of Chawton House Library, said:

"We're thrilled that Sainsbury's is helping us to preserve a slice of Alton's history, ensuring that it can continue to be enjoyed by the community and future generations to come. They have kick started the transfer of the barn with a significant donation and we are now seeking the help of other individuals and organisations to complete the project. The project has already attracted interest with a possible 'in kind' donation of labour, perhaps as part of a vocational training scheme, so it will become a real community enterprise."

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Similarly, Daryl Copper, Manager of Alton Sainsbury commented:

“Sainsbury’s has been a part of Alton’s community for over 15 years and so we have an important responsibility to not only invest in its future, but also help preserve its history. That commitment can be seen in our support for this project.”

Sainsbury’s in Alton was recently given the green light by East Hampshire District Council to extend, improve and update the store for its customers.

The works comprise a larger car park to ease congestion, new choice of general merchandise including Sainsbury’s TU clothing range, a new coffee shop, new meat and fish counters, pharmacy, and an improved petrol filling station.

Work is due to be completed in September 2007, and the store will trade as normal in the meantime.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

- Chawton House Library is a charity with a unique collection of books focusing on women’s writing in English from 1600 to 1830. This specialist collection, set in the home and working estate of Jane Austen’s brother, provides the opportunity to study and savour the texts in their original setting and inspires passion in readers of all ages.
- Donation cheques, made payable to *Chawton House Library*, can be sent to Chawton House Library, Chawton, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1SJ. Credit Card donations can be made by calling 01420 541010. Registered Charity No. 1026921

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