# Frasers Group plans major headquarters in Ansty, raising local concerns



The small village of Ansty in Warwickshire is set to undergo significant changes within the next few years as the sports fashion retailer Frasers Group has been granted planning permission for a massive new headquarters. This development aims to cover an area of 371,600 square metres and will include a hotel, retail shop, and recreational facilities intended for the company’s 7,600 employees. The decision was made on Christmas Eve, marking a notable milestone for Frasers Group, which is owned by billionaire Mike Ashley.

The new headquarters will position the business in direct contrast with the tranquil rural setting of Ansty, which features lush fields and the historic Coombe Abbey. Local concerns have emerged regarding the potential impact the large facility may have on traffic and noise in the community. Additionally, there are worries from current employees based at the company's existing head office in Shirebrook, Derbyshire, many of whom may struggle to relocate due to the 70-plus miles distance. The union Unite has stated that a significant number of workers, particularly those on agency contracts, may face job losses as they are unlikely to be able to afford the commute to the new site. “They would be unwilling and unable to afford to travel 70-plus miles to attend the new site,” said Gary Groom from Unite.

Mike Ashley, who has a controlling stake of 73% in Frasers Group, has spent over four decades building his empire from a single sports store in Maidenhead. Through a series of aggressive acquisitions and deals, he has expanded Frasers to approximately 1,500 stores in 20 countries, employing around 30,000 people across a diverse array of brands. These range from luxury casualwear to financial services, with Frasers recently grappling with a mix of financial pressures, including being ejected from the FTSE 100 and disappointing profit forecasts.

Despite stepping back from a formal role on the Frasers board, Ashley is still perceived to maintain considerable influence within the company. His son-in-law, Michael Murray, has taken over leadership, aiming to elevate the share price of Frasers Group significantly, but has thus far been unable to achieve his targets, with the stock currently standing at below half the desired value. In an environment characterised by a high level of agency and zero-hours contracts—two-thirds of Frasers' retail staff reportedly fall into the latter category—concerns over worker rights and conditions have intensified, sparking scrutiny from Members of Parliament.

Frasers Group has also been entwined in various controversies, with critics highlighting the conditions faced by its workers, including comments about the Shirebrook headquarters being dubbed a “Victorian workhouse.” In addition, Ashley has often found himself at odds with rivals and has been willing to speak publicly about disputes, thereby earning a reputation as a disruptive force in the industry.

As Frasers Group looks to expand its operations with the new headquarters, local communities and workers will be watching closely to see how these developments unfold, particularly concerning the logistical challenges faced by existing employees and the broader economic implications for the area. The company's future moves, both for Ansty and beyond, remain a focal point of interest amid a rapidly changing retail landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2024/12/frasers-hq-wins-backing/> - This article supports the claim that Frasers Group has received planning approval for its new headquarters in Ansty, Warwickshire, despite concerns about the impact on the green belt.
* <https://www.logisticsmatters.co.uk/Frasers-Group-secures-site> - This source confirms that Frasers Group has secured a site near Ansty for its global headquarters and logistics campus, following planning approval.
* <https://www.eastmidlandsbusinesslink.co.uk/mag/property/frasers-group-gains-approval-for-new-campus-headquarters/> - This article provides details about the new campus headquarters, including its location and the facilities it will include, such as a hotel and recreational facilities.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-> - Unfortunately, no specific BBC article was found in the search results to support the claims about Frasers Group. However, BBC typically covers business news and could provide relevant information on Frasers Group's developments.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/frasers-group> - Similar to the BBC, The Guardian often reports on business news and could offer insights into Frasers Group's activities and controversies, though no specific article was found in the search results.