



Friends of Mirrlees Fields & Mirrlees Fields Action Group

Annual General Meeting

22nd November 2012

Minutes

The meeting was opened at 7.15pm by the chair, David Gosling, who welcomed the excellent turnout of over 100 people for the meeting, including Cllrs Wendy Orrell and Ben Alexander.

The Chair introduced Ms Durose, as MAN's company secretary at the Stockport site and responsible for land issues in the UK and Alun Hayes who is responsible for liaising with the local community. The Chair said that Ms Durose's attendance was part of the process of dialogue between the company and MFAG which was being actively supported by both sides in 2012.

In her presentation Ms Durose welcomed this opportunity to talk to MFAG members. She spoke of MAN's commitment to provide ongoing employment in Stockport through the recently-built office headquarters, the logistics centre and the academy. Since the closure of the factory, MAN's Stockport operation was now profitable. She referred to the successful outline planning application which had been granted to allow housing and small business units to be built on the old factory site.

Ms Durose addressed the concerns of members about the recently erected fence and about the future of the fields. She said that the fence had been erected to address security concerns and that the fence was a replacement of historic fencing that has become derelict over the last forty years. She emphasised that access to the fields via the rights of way was not affected by the new fence.

Ms Durose said that the company wants the fields to become an asset to the community and discussions with community groups (including MFAG) about the future of the fields are ongoing.

In a Q&A sessions issues were raised relating to the proposed new housing, the fence and the future of the fields. Some key points made were as follows:

New housing: There will be a mix of housing types with the minimum allowable amount of social housing (about 20%). With respect to traffic volumes on Bramhall Moor Lane, these were calculated using the approved method based on historic traffic usage on the factory site. A developer has not yet been appointed.

The fence: There are no current plans to extend the fencing further. Issues about access to properties in Glenwood road are being investigated by the Council. There were concerns about safety within the new fence, but the police believe the fence will improve security. The company is not willing to open the access point by Flowery Fields which has been in use for at least 30 years.



Ms Durose denied that the fence had been erected to forestall any potential town green application. It was admitted that the company had proceeded without making a planning application, but it had made the application when advised by the council that it needed to do so. Ms Durose said that it was not part of MAN's plans to fence the rights of way.

The fields: Members pointed out the commitment of residents to maintain the fields by picking up litter and informing the police of security incidents. Alun Hayes said he would let MFAG have a list of all community groups who have expressed an interest in the fields. Ms Durose said that MAN might be willing to 'hand-over' the fields to a community organisation if the right arrangements were in place. Richard Gardner, on behalf of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, said that he would welcome an opportunity to discuss with MAN the potential interest of the CWT in Mirrlees Fields. Ms Durose replied that the company was very open to having such a meeting.

The Chair thanked Ms Durose and Alun Hayes for attending the meeting and being willing to answer questions.

The business of the AGM begun at 8.15pm

1. Apologies for absence: Carol Condliffe, Graham Frith, Allan Baldwin, Anna Christensen, Cllr Mark Weldon, Mark Hunter MP.
2. **Report from the Chair** - full report is available on the web-site. As a result of the membership drive in 2012 MFAG now has around 600 members in over 500 households, with over 200 on the e-mail circulation list. The on-line membership form is proving a success. MFAG had a meeting with MAN about the fence in July, as a result it was agreed to create regular communication between the company and MFAG through Alun Hayes. The policy of improving dialogue with the company was endorsed by the meeting. The committee had decided against making a town green application for the Fields for the following reasons: uncertainty about the likely success of an application (given the outcome in the Chorley Meadows case); it would require substantial funding to pay legal fees to defend the application and a very significant time commitment by whoever would lead the application. The committee prefers to achieve its goals through collaboration with MAN rather than by legal opposition. Sue Bailey and Roger Simm are engaged in the history project and hope to have a publication and or a web-site in 2013.
3. **Treasurer's Report** - showed that expenditure has been £373 (mainly on the AGM room hire, printing of newsletters and some postage). Donations of £115 had been received. The balance of the accounts stands at £410.49. Cllr Orrell suggested that an application could be made to the Area Committee for further funding.

Because the funds are now low the Treasurer proposed that members of MFAG be asked to



pay a subscription of £2.00. This proposal was overwhelmingly approved. A suggestion that there should be a collection at the end of the meeting was agreed and raised £123.58.

- 4. Nominations for Chair and Secretary Posts** - There were no nominations to replace the out-going chair (David Gosling) and secretary (Sue Bailey). David Kemp agreed to be acting chair until the post can be filled.

- 5. Election of officers and committee of the Action Group.**
Gene Allen agreed to continue as Treasurer. Rachel Stoba has agreed to continue as Communications Officer. David Gosling agreed to be Membership Secretary. New committee members: Mr Phil Butcher, Jim Gilligan, Wendy Postner and (volunteering at the end of the meeting) Shirley Reason, Rachel Ryle and Bill and Sandra Crofts.
Other continuing committee members:
Alison Marsden, Carol Condliffe, Gail Escott, Geoff Taylor, Hilary Fletcher, Charlie Gallagher, Graham Frith (Anglers Club), Brian Waddington (Anglers Club).
Peter Goodwin continues to maintain the web-site as a non-committee member.

- 6. The role of the Friends of Mirrlees Fields and Mirrlees Fields Action Group in 2013**
Discussion focused on the implications of Ms Durose's presentation and continuing concerns about the fence.
Ray Brooker is in touch with the Footpath's Officer and wishes to put in an application for rights of way based on historic usage. He appealed to others to complete the requisite form (15 are needed for the application to be considered).

- 7. The meeting ran out of time and was closed at 9.05pm.**