



MIRRLEES FIELDS FRIENDS GROUP

MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2016 AT STOCKPORT GEORGIANS CRICKET CLUB WOODSMOOR.

MEMBERS PRESENT

ATTENDING were 22 members of the "Friends Group" and 6 committee members.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

B & S Crofts, A Byatt, Wendi Walkies, Cllr John Wright & Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

2. MINUTES FROM 2016 AGM & MATTERS ARISING

The minutes from the 2015 AGM were read and approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising from these minutes.

Proposed: Gene Allen

Seconded: Brian

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS: CHAIR, DEPUTY CHAIR, and GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER

Chairpersons: Jim Gilligan and David Kemp

Secretary: Alison Marsden

Treasurer: Antony Byatt

Membership: David Gosling

Additional members of the committee:

The following members agreed to continue to be committee members

Gene Allen, Bill and Sandra Crofts, Brian Waddington, Charles Gallagher, & Alan Sillitoe.

Andy Stobbie volunteered to join the committee.

Anyone wishing to join the committee or become a volunteer on a work task day on an organised event would be most welcome. Please contact a committee member or visit the web site.

Committee meetings are held approximately every 6 to 8 weeks and are held at The Shady Oak on New House Farm Estate.

info@mirrleesfields.org.uk or www.facebook.com/mirrleesfieldsfriendsgroup

4. ANNUAL REPORT

David Kemp thanked everyone for coming along. He explained the role of the chair was still being shared as agreed at the 2014 AGM with Jim Gilligan.

In our last communication with all members of the friends group we highlighted the facts surrounding the inclusion of the fields in a Greater Manchester wide "call for development sites" consultation, which formed part of the development of a Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) and our efforts to ensure the fields were not included in this important planning document. We are pleased to inform you that our efforts have been successful and the draft GMSF document does not list Mirrlees Fields as a regionally important or priority site for built development of any kind. This outcome means the prospect of development on the fields becomes more unlikely and its designation as "Strategic open Space" is reinforced. However the long-term future of the fields remains uncertain.

Veolia Bid for £40,000 unfortunately was unsuccessful and no explanation was given. This may be due to the fields being in private ownership.

Volunteer workdays on the fields working with Cheshire Wild Life. 4 days were held in January, March June & July. January was a Spring Clean and was very well attended. Unfortunately the remaining 3 days very few volunteers attended. 60 acres of land requires a lot of upkeep so many volunteers are needed. Thank you to Adam Machin from Cheshire Wildlife for all his support.

Biggest achievement this year has been planting the Community Orchard and the Hazel trees. Finance for these projects came from the local Community, Cheshire wildlife and Man Diesel

Funding for Scythes to date £330 has been raised. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to all fund raising.

Bat walk over 50 people attended. Many thanks to Ken Wayman from the local Bat Society for helping MFFG put this event on.

A leaflet informing all new residents of the MFFG has been printed. We have asked the Bellway sales office to include this in their welcome packs for all new residents.

Diversions of Fred Perry footpath located near the new factory building. Unfortunately the trees planted a few years ago to camouflage the new factory building where planted on the right of way footpath. As these trees are well established everyone is reluctant to take the trees down. Prior to any work being carried out on the footpath SMBC is to place a "diversion notice/ order-advising members of the public of this diversion of the footpath around these young trees. Following completion of the housing all the footpaths on the Right of Ways including the Fred Perry Way are to be upgraded. Most of the footpaths are very poor and are hopefully to be upgraded so they are suitable to walk on in all weathers

5. TREASURERS REPORT 2015-2016

Antony Byatt presented the Committees accounts, and circulated copies of Statement of the Accounts as at 8 March 2016 and Statement of Accounts as at 31st October 2016. Antony 's report showed income and expenditure for the bank account. The bank balance at 1st November 2015 was £2,294.54 Income has been received from voluntary donations from 2015 AGM, Scythes & Orchard campaign, donations from Bat Walk and other donations. The biggest expenditure has been the Information boards. £1,400.00, Flag £137.82 Materials for information boards £42.29 Leaflets £29.00 Committee training £24.30 Room hire for AGM November 2015, Stand at Woodsmoor Classic Car Show £10.00, Charges re scythes campaign £26.58, Charges re orchard campaign £20.40, & charges re other donations. Total income £694.62 expenditure £1,720.61 the bank balance at 31October 2016 is now £1,268.55

Statement of Accounts accepted.

Proposed Jim Gilligan

Seconded Gene Allen

6. FUTURE OF THE FIELDS FOLLOWING GMSF INTERIM REPORT, RECOMMENDATIONS

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) The 10 local authorities in Greater Manchester were asked to put a plan together to identify building land where new houses maybe built, and may include green belt areas including the fields Unsurprisingly Man Diesel put the fields forward as potential building land. The Friend's Group was not informed of this. Valuable support in our campaign from MP Mary Robinson and local councillors.

Money has been raised to provide 3 notice boards at the 3 main entrances onto the fields. Permission has been obtained from the landowner for this to happen. The information to go in the notice boards has been designed by Cheshire Wildlife. Hopefully this information will be a useful resource for the local community.

Development of a healthy walk along the Fred Perry Way including points of interest is to be designed.

The Bat Walks held have been very successful.
Work Task Days supported by volunteers.
The friends Group now has Charitable Status

What's next? 60 acres of open space land takes a lot of managing, and a small committee is unable to do this on their own. Safe guarding the fields may not be successful. The landowner may put the fields up for sale. Neighbourhood development plans could be created with permission from the land owner' The fields are a community access used by many people from many districts of Stockport.

7. SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS TAKEN FROM THE FLOOR

Still limited access to the fishing pond from the public right of way. This is causing problems for members of Stockport Fishing Federation who have mobility problems.

CWT still have contract with Man Diesel to carry out work on the fields with the friends group and volunteers.

Could Cheshire Wildlife purchase the fields? Or a Land Trust set up?

If fields are found to be suitable for house building this would make the fields very expensive.

Could the fields be placed in a Conservation Area?

Could we ask Man Diesel to guarantee the friends group and local residents would be informed should the fields be put up for sale?

The farmer who usually cuts the grass on the fields annually has not been able to gain access due to the housing development. This is unfortunate as cutting the grass helps the ecology of the fields and wildlife.

The History book of Woodsmoor and Mirrlees Fields has been well received.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Due to cost of postage information about the fields including workdays can be found on the web page or is emailed to members.

The chairman on behalf of all the friends of mirrlees fields thanked Cheshire Wildlife and all the friends' members for all their help and support. Thank you to everyone for attending and finally to Stockport Georgians Cricket Club for allowing the AGM to be held here.

9. DATE, TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 21 November 2017 commencing
At 7.30 pm Venue: Stockport Georgians Cricket Club.