

Dear Member,

At about the time we last wrote to you in March, a press release announced the start of discussions between MAN Diesel and Stockport Borough Council over 'the best way of utilizing the site with regard to the concerns of the local community'.

Recognising that sensitive discussions such as these take time, we allowed three months before contacting the Council. We have recently met with representatives of the Council and also with local councillor, Maggie Clay, to obtain an up-date on progress and this is what we're passing on to you here.

Discussions are proceeding on two fronts – one relating to the current factory site which is designated for employment use and the other relating to the green-field site which has been designated as strategic open space.

The Factory Site

It is our understanding that MAN Diesel intend to put forward a planning application in the near future relating to their announced 'UK service and training base'. Although this application will not contain details about the remainder of the factory site, residents will be interested in the proposals, not least because of their impact on traffic on Bramhall Moor Lane and elsewhere in the vicinity of the site. Current discussions between MAN Diesel and Council Officers include establishing an agreed baseline for traffic generated by the site.

The Green Field Site

The good news is that Mirrlees Fields will remain a green space for the foreseeable future. Discussions are underway on whether the Council should take some form of ownership of the Mirrlees Fields. No firm proposals have been approved at this stage, so it is not known whether the Council will seek to lease or purchase the land.

At the present time we understand the Council is undertaking a thorough assessment of the site in order to determine possible uses and associated costings.

Action by local residents

How can we as local residents have any impact on these developments? The Mirrlees Fields Action Group suggest the following:

1. You can comment on the MAN Diesel planning application when it is made available for public consultation. We will inform you as soon as we know it's available.
2. The Action group will be seeking your views on possible future uses of the Mirrlees Fields. You will be able to respond to a survey and attend public meeting.

3. You can offer your expertise to the Action Group. We are looking for people willing to provide support who have, for example, any of the following areas of expertise or areas of knowledge:

- PR or marketing, press relations
- Web-site design and maintenance
- Legal knowledge relating to planning and land issues
- Planning and/or landscape architecture
- Eco-systems, biodiversity and wildlife habitat
- Rights of way and access issues
- Fund-raising, lottery applications, grant-applications
- Traffic planning, modelling, projections.

If you think you can provide support in any of these areas, please contact the Group's Secretary at the address below.

4. You can attend the Group's Annual General Meeting in November. We will inform you of the date and venue nearer the time.

Future role of the Action group

We envisage that the Action Group will continue to work to achieve its objectives:

- to retain and enhance the existing open space at Mirrlees Fields
- to prevent increases in the amount and flow of traffic to and from the MAN Diesel site
- to promote the potential of the Mirrlees Fields site as a community resource for recreational, outdoor leisure and sports activities.

However, we now see our role evolving in response to the changing situation, and this could include the following:

- Liaison with the Council on the future of the Mirrlees Fields
- Acting as pressure group to resist further increase in traffic flows
- Fund-raising and making grant applications
- Having a role in the long term management of the land to protect biodiversity and improve access for local residents
- Promoting the use of the Mirrlees Fields as a community resource.

We hope you've found this newsletter informative and that you'll pass on the news to your friends and neighbours.

With best wishes,

David Gosling
Chair, Mirrlees Fields Action Group

Sue Bailey
Secretary, Mirrlees Fields Action Group
4 Lomond Close, Woodsmoor, Stockport, SK2 7DY
Email: Sue_Bailey@ntlworld.com
Tel: 0161 612 5234