



April 2013

Quarterly Newsletter

WWW.MIRRLEESFIELDS.ORG.UK

A new year and a new way of working...

The Mirrlees Fields Action Group (MFAG) and Friends of Mirrlees Fields have been active for over five years now, which is a reflection on just how important Mirrlees Fields are to many local people. Our 2012 AGM held in December at Great Moor Junior School was attended by over a 100 people. Our current supporter list exceeds 600 people—and is growing all the time!

MFAG is now actively partnering with the owner of Mirrlees Fields (Man Diesel). This includes regular face to face meetings and an 'open and honest' approach to communications. Both parties are working constructively towards a sustainable community led recreational space for Mirrlees Fields, with MFAG providing a vital link between the local community and the land owners. This year there have been a number of exciting

changes already. Man Diesel are commissioning a new Ecological Survey on the fields this summer, with an aim to include any findings into the first 'spatial master plan' for the fields. This plan will provide us with an up to date map of the fields and any key ecological areas - it may not sound like much to some people, but to MFAG this is wonderful news, and something we have been keen to try and establish for the last couple of years.

We are also in the early stages of an exciting collaboration with the Cheshire Wildlife Fund, who will be using their expertise to help manage and improve the fields in the short term and also to a plan for their sustainable long term future.

Our improved relationship with the land owners has enabled us to begin planning some volunteer days and special events for

the fields this summer (think Bat Walks, Responsible Dog Owner Days and Eco Walks) as well as trying to encourage more people to have a say in the potential future use of this precious open **space**.

We are always interested to hear your thoughts about the Fields (past, present and future) as well as looking for new supporters to join us.

CONTACT US!

You can email us —
info@mirrleesfields.org.uk.

'friends of Mirrlees Fields' on Facebook.

It's a great forum for keeping up to date with developments and connecting with other people who use the fields.

Visit our dedicated website
www.mirrleesfields.org.uk

Demolition work set to begin

Demolition works are due to begin in April 2013 on Man Diesel's 'Brownfield site' (the old factory) adjacent to Mirrlees Fields. The work will drop and clear the old factory buildings. Man Diesel have assured us that they are trying to ensure that disruption to the local community is kept to a minimum. However

there will obviously be some unavoidable noise, dust and heavy vehicle activity.

This planned demolition is the next step following the approval of the planning application for residential units on this site, and is set to continue for approximately 6 to 8 weeks.

Prior to this work commencing, recent additional applications in respect of trees and wildlife protection have been submitted by Man Diesel and approved by Stockport MBC. No confirmed developers for this site have yet been announced by Man Diesel. **If you have any concerns about any aspect of the works please contact us**

Additional public footpath petition

Following the recent erection of a replacement boundary fence on the fields, one of our members approached us with a request to help support an application for some additional public rights of way (footpaths) to be granted across the Fields. Currently there are only 3 entry points onto the fields, and two public foot paths

which traverse between them.

After consultation with a number of stakeholders, including the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, and a lengthy discussion at our Committee Meeting, MFAG Committee Members voted against supporting the application at this time.

MFAG remains focused on the

long term goal of a sustainable future with public access to the entire fields as one open space. We believe that additional (fixed) footpaths could, potentially, have a negative impact on any future plans that reflect these objectives.

If you would like to talk to us about this matter in more detail please do contact us.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust: People taking Action for Wildlife

Cheshire Wildlife Trust is the region's leading independent wildlife charity working for all wildlife in all wild places. We take action for wildlife working across Cheshire which includes Halton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington and Wirral.

In January 2013 we met with Man Diesel (the current owners of Mirrlees Fields) and we are at the beginning of a relationship with MFAG and Man Diesel to protect and sustain Mirrlees Fields for the future.

In early summer we will be conducting an ecological survey of the fields. That survey will help us draw up maps which we

then want your input and ideas on. We look forward to working together and maintaining and enhancing the space for both people and wildlife.

We already own and manage 45 nature reserves covering 500 hectares full of wildlife for you to enjoy.

Every year we inspire thousands of people to action for wildlife at local and regional events. Nearly 2,500 children were taught by our community engagement team last year. We provide volunteering opportunities for over 400 people annually.

Importantly, we meet with influential people and campaign for better wildlife pro-

tection across the region and in our seas. We work collaboratively with other Wildlife Trusts to respond to major development proposals and ensure that vital wildlife habitats are not put at risk.

All this we do with the support of our members.

To add your support, please join us at www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

**Richard Gardner,
Living Landscapes Manager**



**Cheshire
Wildlife Trust**

People taking action for wildlife

A footpath/open space for everyone, not a toilet for a dog...

One of the biggest complaints we have from our members (and the land owners) is with regards to dog walkers who leave their dog's faeces behind.

Given the use of the fields by many local people, including young families, this practice is not only unpleasant but also dangerous; potentially leading to blindness in children should bugs from dog mess get in their eyes.

An unfavourable new craze at the moment appears to be bagging up dog mess, and

then leaving it hanging from the fence, trees, or just thrown on the floor.

Who does this? Why do they do it?

We would like to call on anyone who uses the fields to be extra vigilant and help us to identify/report any one seen leaving dog mess behind.

It is a criminal offence not to clean up after your dog, even on private land. With this in mind MFAG is working with Stockport MBC and the local Dog Wardens to try and tackle

this problem – and your details (times, descriptions of animals/owners etc) will help.

We do appreciate, and are very thankful for, the majority of dog walkers who are very responsible with their animals waste, and who ensure that their animals behaviour is not threatening to any other users of the fields (k9 or otherwise!). Together, we believe we can help stamp out the unacceptable behaviour of the minority – to make the fields and footpaths a much safer and cleaner place to be – for everyone.

Donations to Mirrlees Fields Action Group (MFAG)

To enable MFAG to continue its work the group needs access to funds. As well as communications such as this newsletter, the volunteer days outlined above and the work to produce a spatial strategy for the Fields needs to be financed. We are actively pursu-

ing public sources of finance, but many of these need to be 'match funded'. At the last MFAG AGM those present agreed that supporters should be asked to make a small voluntary annual donation to the Group.

Our **suggested** amount is £2 per supporter

– but anyone donating should feel comfortable with the amount they choose to pledge. Details of exactly how to make a donation to support MFAG's ongoing work will be included in our next newsletter and on our website soon.

In other news

Boundary Fence Application—Ref: DC/050195. Still awaiting for a final decision from Stockport MBC.

Planning Application for additional residential Units: This application is with respect to small area of the Brownfield site, which originally had been set aside for light industrial units (as per planning requirements). Due to a recent change in planning priorities, an updated application has been

made to utilise this space for residential accommodation of up to a further 42 units.

Green Dye Contamination in the Culvert -

This was reported to the Environment Agency (EA), who have traced the source back to Stepping Hill Hospital. The water is now running clear again, and no further action is being taken.

The Woodsmoor History Project— Did you know in the 17th and 18th centuries a part

of Woodsmoor was once known as **Snyb-
bes Moor**, and had approximately 10 families living on or around it?

We'd like to thank local residents for their continuing support and interest in the project, and a special thank you to Peter at Woodsmoor Post Office, for all his help and advice. If you have any information you would like to share with this project please get in touch!