

Record of Emergency Meeting of Friends of Nutsford Vale Wednesday 29th March 2017 6:30pm at the Blue Bell Inn

Attendees:

Rosalind Janes,	Alan Gibson,	Daniel Heathcote,	Caroline Brandwood,
Jess Mayo,	Barbara Moore,	Rita Edge,	Barrie Edge,
Steve Cree,	Bernie Cree,	Kath O'Rourke,	Chris O'Rourke,
Cassie Spinks-Lewis,	Donald Cooke,	David Sloane,	Claire James,
Bruce James,	Charles Glover,	Maureen Riding,	Christine Punty,
John Prunty,	Jean Wood,	Bob Lomas,	Ally Fogg,
Brian Osbiston.			

Apologies:

Cllr Bernard Stone,	Mavis Holt,	Frank Pollitt,	Angie Bartholomew,
Denise Riding,	Janet Muldowney.		

Matters Arising: from Previous Meeting on 22nd March 2017

None.

Main Meeting:

Claire opened the meeting and welcomed Jess Mayo (Green Party Candidate) to our meeting and asked newcomers to introduce themselves.

Rita thanked everyone for their sterling efforts over the weekend, delivering leaflets. There are still a few more left for anyone else to deliver.

Ally gave us an update on what he'd been doing over the last week. Ally had planned to draft a letter to Councillors expressing our concern over their lack of support but unable to complete it. Tweeting with Rosa Battle, aided by Cassie, he felt she was sincere and with her agreement sent an email outlining our concerns about building a school on Nutsford Vale and got her agreement to a meeting with members of the group after she had got some answers from the planning dept to her own reservations about air quality. Rosa is away for the next 2 weeks, so the meeting will be on her return.

The Royal Institute of Town Planners - "Planning Aid", discussed at the last meeting, with a view to getting them to help us with submitting our objections, seemed not to be as strong as they were. Ally emailed them anyway and is awaiting a reply.

Ally had also contacted Manchester, Friends of the Earth to see if we could gain support through their current national campaign "Right to Nature" which acknowledges and promotes the idea that open green spaces, particularly in inner city areas provide real health benefits.

Cassie described some the "old" landfill rubbish she had found on the Vale, (pictures posted on the web) that had come up from the boreholes created during the survey. She mentioned some foamy orange residue at the edge of some puddles that her dog and she had walked through that was obviously landfill. Also, at a borehole near the Community Orchard, there was an uncapped borehole close to the pathway, surrounded by a pale grey slurry type residue. Claire pointed out that the borehole had been filled in today (29.3.2017) by a young man from a company called Romboll who noted that if the land needed to be "cleaned", it would be very expensive. As a result of the above, Cassie had emailed the council and told them she would be monitoring the wellbeing of her dog over the next few weeks and will seek legal advice if her dog became unwell.

Ally recalled the incident in Corby where the actual moving of the contaminants from a site

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had caused birth defects and illnesses because toxins had been released into the air. Rita pointed out that the council and LaignORourke had agreed that all the waste around the boreholes would be removed and replaced with topsoil.

Cassie advised that we need more information on our website about future events, what they are & what will be happening. Will there be drinks etc. What age ranges the events would be suitable for & so on.

Jess made reference to a landmark case in America, which hadn't been published yet, where a 4 year old boy died after falling into a pond within a landfill area. It was thought the boy died as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning coming from a pump, but a judge has now ruled that the cause of death was as a result of a breached landfill cap following some flooding. Alan pointed out that the EU Environmental principles to be applied in these cases can be summarised as the principle should be precautionary and where appropriate, the polluter pays for reparation.

Cassie advised the group that we have 366 signatures on the epetition and between 350 & 400 on the paper petition. As the deadline for submission of the petitions is 13th April 2017, her deadline for receiving any more paper petitions will be next Wednesday – 5th April 2017 to ensure that they are processed properly and any duplications are removed.

Save the Greenbelt Rally:

It was suggested that some petition forms be taken down to the Save the Greenbelt Rally on Saturday 1st April 2017 to see if we could boost that number. If we can get the number over 1,000, it would qualify us to have a meeting with the council about it. Jess warned that some of the signatures may be discounted to reduce the overall count but we could argue against that, arguing that they are frequent visitors to the area etc.

It was agreed that we would make our own way to Albert Square and find each other there, hopefully under a banner that Ally was hoping to produce.

Bob advised that he hadn't heard anything more about the meeting Cllr Peter Cookson had advised of where we could meet Cllr Sheila Newman and hopefully Sir Richard Leese and pointed out that it was unlikely to happen before May 4th 2017 because of the elections.

Bernie happened to see Caroline from LaignORourke on the Vale yesterday and Caroline confirmed that there was to be another Consultation Meeting but she didn't know when.

With regard to investigating Village Green Status for the Vale, Phil emailed saying that Once there's a plan such as for the academy, or a 'trigger' event as it's known, you can't apply for it to become a green. However we believe this was the case in 2011 but the 2014 ruling suggests that we could apply but it would cost us £1,000.

Charles felt it might still be useful to talk with other groups such as those in Chorlton who had gone through the process. He agreed find out who was the national association. It may be that if somebody joins, they can offer legal advice. On checking the internet the annual subscription is around £33 pounds and Alan agreed to pay that. Another query was what criteria applies in terms of an acceptable size for a village green?

Record of Emergency Meeting of Friends of Nutsford Vale Wednesday 29th March 2017 6:30pm at the Blue Bell Inn

Bernie advised that she'd not heard back from the Environment Agency yet and Claire was still waiting to hear from the MoD.

We are still waiting for the minutes of the meeting we had with the council on 16th March 2017 and have sent an email chasing them up.

We have learnt that Nicola Cootes is the Parliamentary Representative for the Ward and Danny has emailed her expressing our concerns about the planned destruction of our green space and the possible contamination of the land as a result of unregulated landfill materials.

Cassie pointed out that there are plans to demolish a bridge on Hyde Road as part of the planned road-widening scheme and suggested that once work gets under way from the 18th April there will be a significant impact on traffic congestion in the area. Perhaps another survey might be useful.

Apparently, Manchester City Council have acquired the Mecca Bingo site, which is on the right-hand side of Hyde Road as you go towards the City centre. We don't know what for.

A discussion ensued as to which were the other sites being considered to build the new school on. We believe one was the Showcase Cinema car park and the other was off Crossley Road behind McVities based on the descriptions the sites were given.

With regard to the planned building on Mellands, there is a 1909 covenant in place restricting building to 101 houses which will be for sale plus 30 for social housing and there will be parking spaces for 289 cars. According to the covenant, they can't build anything commercial on the site, only housing and they can only charge 8 shillings and sixpence for the rent.

Rita also advised that tree growth is affected by contamination of land. The wider the growth rings in a tree the better the growing season so trees growing on contaminated land would have much thinner growth rings.

Whilst on the Vale earlier today, Steve picked up a map which indicated the location of all the boreholes and the gas monitoring caps put in place during the survey. There was also an outline of where the school buildings were planned to be as well as the 2 games areas marked out as football pitches, but it was dated 3rd January 2017. We only saw a true representation of the layout on March 16th 2017. Rita indicated that we had copies of the plans from the Consultation Meeting of 16th March available for review if anyone wanted to see them.

Cassie again pointed out that we not against a new school being built, just that we consider Nutsford Vale to be totally unsuitable for it for several very good reasons.

Jess pointed out that each of the Trust's Academies teach pupils in their specific way instead of conforming to an overall general plan so ultimately, we will end up with a very disparate population and education system.

Record of Emergency Meeting of Friends of Nutsford Vale Wednesday 29th March 2017 6:30pm at the Blue Bell Inn

Ally made the point that if the school is built on an old landfill site, parents may choose not to send their children there, making it very difficult to make money out of it, and as a result, only a very ruthless company would be able to keep it going.

Jess also advised that because people may not know how to or don't have the confidence to complain there is no opposition to proposals to change the way things are done.

There was an observation that the last Consultation Meeting on 16th March was not managed very well. People couldn't find a way in due to lack of signage. Signing in on arrival wasn't managed. People weren't asked to fill in the feedback forms or told where to put them when completed.

The group at this stage began to realise that it wasn't the architect or LaignORourke we were up against, but the council and their Councillors. Jess emphasised that pressure on the councils suppliers can be effective because they don't want the aggravation or stigma.

John asked if anyone had approached any of the people that use the Vale as a cut-through or those collecting their children from school or people on their way home after work to get them to sign our petition.

Jess was asked if she knew of any solicitors who might offer free legal support and she agreed to try and find out and let us know.

Claire enquired of the group, would anyone be interested in a "Save Nutsford Vale" tee-shirt? Jess mentioned that umbrellas may be a better option because you don't need to worry about different sizes. Claire agreed to investigate it. Cloth bags would also be very good.

Claire asked would people be able to bring some food or something to the Street Party on the Vale on Easter Monday from 3:00pm. Concern was expressed about the problems with health and safety, so may be better restricting foodstuffs to pre-packed purchased offerings.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 5th April 2017 at the Bluebell Inn at 6:30pm

Next Event:

Save the Greenbelt Rally: Saturday 1st April from 1:00pm Albert Square, Manchester.

Litter Pick: Saturday 8th April 2017 from 10:30am

Meet at the Bickerdike Avenue Entrance to the Vale.

Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday 15th 2017 April from 11:30am 'til 1:00pm

Street Party: Easter Monday 17th April 2017 from 3:00pm 'til 5:00pm

Big Lunch Event: Sunday 18th June 2017 from 1:00pm 'til 3:00pm

(Date & time to be confirmed)

Gorton Carnival: Sunday 3rd September from 10:30am 'til 3:00pm

(Timings to be confirmed)