

Minutes of meeting between Moorpool Allotments Association Committee (MAA) and Grainger PLC, Wed 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007 64 Margaret Grove, Harborne.

Present

Rob Sutton, Michael Parkes, Vivienne Winkley, Steve Wright (MAA)  
Tim Nicholson (Grainger PLC), Martin Portus (Whitton Associates).

Apologies:

Mike Frost.

The documents

*Masterplan-public consultation Preliminary Design Proposals\**

*Site A- Valley Site Preliminary Design Proposals\**

*Allotment relocation summary*

(\* for delivery to all residents on Thu 10<sup>th</sup> May)

were presented and formed the basis of a wide ranging discussion.

Whilst the meeting was nominally about the allotments it was agreed that there would be a frank exchange of views concerning various matters linked to the forthcoming development proposals. MAA hoped that the views exchanged would be taken on board by Grainger PLC because they represent not only the views of the Allotment Association but also of potentially many others on the estate.

MAA pointed out that the Allotments relocation summary did not accurately represent the status quo of allotments, including the fact that some parts of some sites (e.g parts site E) had had eviction notices served yet did not appear to have any development proposed. Grainger said that if this was the case it was a regrettable oversight and would be investigated.

MAA clarified that much of the green artwork on Site A plan should actually represented tarmacadam roads for parking and access for garages and was opposed to giving up allotment areas for access roads. Grainger said that overall the percentage of green space was the same in the proposals as existed currently. MAA did not find this evident from the proposals. MAA felt that there are various ways in which all allotments on the Valley Site can be retained as a positive feature of any redevelopment and that MAA had duty to preserve this essential and founding aspect of the estate.

Grainger PLC argued that the Estate was being well served by such an understanding business as Grainger PLC. Other developers would be much more ruthless at evicting and fencing off land to be left until it was developed. MAA pointed out that the Estate had already successfully opposed the Planning Application by the previous owners, Bradford. If it successfully opposed Grainger's first planning application then the resale value of the Estate would be greatly reduced. It was therefore in the best interests of both residents and Grainger PLC to consult extensively so that both parties would be seen to benefit. Thus MAA considered Grainger's second draft and Public meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May as only the start of a consultation program and not the climax.

Grainger PLC explained that their primarily business was property sales and that, since income from garages and allotments was insignificant, management of garages and allotments was not a major concern. They aim to devolve management of allotments to MAA and that the allotments would be eventually owned by a Trust. Grainger also pointed out that they would supply the estate with a substantial

package of improvements to trees, shrubs and other planting and signage.

They envisaged that it was inevitable that the Trust would be financed partly by an annual fee paid by Residents. MAA emphasised that the concept of a trust was worthy of consideration only if it was set up as a financially sound option. A trust created as a result of a deal which left the estate with a legacy of inappropriate development and insolvency would be unacceptable to many.

Grainger PLC explained that the Birmingham City Council was already aware that they were consulting with the Residents Committee via the CAMP committee. MAA pointed out that this consultation may not be in the original remit of the CAMP committee and questioned whether the Residents committee had a formal mandate from the Residents to negotiate at this stage. Grainger PLC felt that the CAMP committee was the obvious and most reasonable place for them to initiate consultation.

MAA pointed out that a more appropriate consultation would be an initial and properly constituted public presentation followed by a period formal consultation with residents of the estate. This would facilitate not only Grainger PLC's aspirations but also the wishes of the Residents and the long term future of the Moorpool estate.

MAA also questioned why so little development was occurring on the disused allotments on site B. Grainger PLC indicated that there were flora and tree issues here, though did not explain why the same flora and tree issues did not apply to the valley site.

Grainger PLC emphasised that they were very receptive to feedback from residents both before, during and after the Public meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and that feedback from residents was a crucial part of the consultation process. They also emphasised that they felt that failure of the consultation process would produce a much worse outcome for residents than for Grainger PLC. They also drew attention to the Moorpool Hall as a major liability of the estate and that rent revaluation for the tennis and other clubs was overdue. MAA again emphasised that the meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> must be seen as only the first step in a wide ranging and extensive consultation process covering not just allotments but also garages and buildings.

MAA also suggested that Grainger made extensive use of the internet to keep everyone fully informed of all developments as they occur.

MAA reiterated that it would very much like to continue to have substantive discussions with Grainger PLC and that such discussions must proceed much further in resolving many delicate issues before any planning application is made. Otherwise the damage to relations occasioned by the allotment 'Notices to Quit' will be repeated and the residents would not support any planning application.

MAA also appreciated the considerable time and feedback given this evening by Grainger PLC and hoped that others at Grainger PLC would continue to support such consultation so that the Moorpool Estate can continue into its second century as an example of cooperation and consideration.