

DEPUTATION 1 – FRIENDS OF ALLERTON GRANGE

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your Deputation.

MS C BRITTON: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, good afternoon. I am Charlotte Britton, Chair of Friends of Allerton Grange. To my right I have Bhupindi Dev, I have Ron and Margaret Fowler and I have Yvonne Herbert.

The founding members of Friends of Allerton Grange were united by the feeling that resident living in and round the Allerton Grange campus would be better able to address issues to create a cleaner, greener, safer environment. One objective is to protect and enhance the Allerton Grange playing fields, which are just off Lidgett Lane, on the boundary of Roundhay and Moortown wards.

The reason we are passionate about the fields is because we believe this green open space will benefit the local community in a number of ways. In a report by the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2007 states:

“High quality green spaces have been shown to:

- Support the local economy
- Enhance physical and mental health
- Benefit children and young people
- Reduce crime and the fear of crime
- Help make stronger communities
- Enhance biodiversity and the environment”

Today in this deputation we are seeking the following outcomes:

To agree community use of the Allerton Grange Playing Fields in accordance with original planning permission;

To get assurances that other options for primary school places are fully considered and that creating or extending a school on these fields would be a last resort;

To seek support and guidance for progressing the environmental improvements to the fields; and finally

To seek support for the nomination of the fields to the nation Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields Challenge/

The purpose of this Deputation today is not to seek financial support but the backing and guidance from the Councillors and officers to fulfil our aspirations.

So what is the background? In 2005, Local Councillors and residents were informed that the playing fields, (which were surplus to Allerton Grange School requirements) would

to be transferred to Leeds City Council and made available for community use. Education Leeds also accepted the need for a community use agreement as a part of the planning condition attached to the planning decision for the BSF School.

Councillor Paul Wadsworth (then Roundhay Ward Councillor) informed us of this position at a meeting in March 2010 and encouraged the Friends to consult the local community to develop ideas for how the fields could be improved, so we then circulated in June a Residents' Survey to the Moortown and Roundhay residents and held two public consultation.

From an email from Darren Dobson, Education Leeds sent to Councillor Lobley in July, this states that:

“The land falls outside of the new school PFI development and is in the process of being declared surplus to Education Leeds requirements. The land is being maintained by Education Leeds and will be transferred over to the Council once we have finished our works.”

In August, Roundhay Councillors received an email from Alex MacLeod, Interim Head of Estates, Education Leeds which states:

“It was Education Leeds intention to declare the 2 former school pitches surplus to educational requirements. However given the increasing demographic growth and demand for additional pupil places in the Roundhay ward, Education Leeds will not be declaring the land surplus at this time and will be exploring future educational use on this site. Education Leeds will of course work with colleagues in Parks and Countryside to explore recreational usage for the site, until future Education need has been defined”

The friends are obviously disappointed at this decision, but are willing to embrace this new position and will work with Leeds City Council.

However, over the past 15 years we have lost five playing fields within a half mile radius of Allerton Grange fields. If you can just refer to your first supporting document, the following were lost to housing:

- Shadwell Boys School and Playing Fields
- Leeds Permanent Building Society Sports Ground
- Leeds Rugby Union Sports Ground
- Parkland Grounds of Former Roundhay Hospital

Playing fields for the new Allerton Grange School playing fields have been also lost.

Given that research has proven the green open spaces are of immense value to local communities and the economy, we urge you to protect some of the last playing fields in North East Leeds.

I refer you to the other supporting document. Groundwork Leeds has produced a drawing, which was based on the feedback we had from the community consultation in June. This scheme drawing accurately reflects the aspirations of the local community.

Moving on, the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is a new programme to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It is also a landmark project to create a permanent legacy for the 2012 Olympics. We ask Leeds City Council to nominate Allerton Grange Playing Fields as part of their bid for QE2 Field status.

In conclusion, we understand the change in direction from Education Leeds with respect to the need for further primary school places in North East Leeds. However, we urge you to consider all options for where the new or extension of a school would be located. Even if you do decide to go ahead with the plans for building a new school on the fields, let us keep the dialogue open and work towards saving some of the school's playing fields.

We have identified sites within the existing Allerton Grange School and Moor Allerton Hall Primary School sites as well as mothballed sites such as the land at the back of Gledhow Primary School. We identified these sites and we hope that you can work with us.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you finish up in one sentence, please.

MS C BRITTON: You have this once in a lifetime opportunity to safeguard the playing fields for present and future generations. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred for consideration to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: It gives me great pleasure to second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call for a vote? *(A vote was taken)*
CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.