

Address by Gordon Tilstone - Chair of SOS-Save Our Slattocks & TSJNF to the AGM @ Thornham Cricket Club 11 June 2019

Firstly I must thank all of you for continuing to support SOS & TSJNF.

Whether this be by marching to Tandle Hill or coming along to the fundraising events we've had or, more directly, by delivering leaflets or agreeing to display the Help Save Your Greenbelt signs.

Particular thanks to Jimmy Goslin at the Hopwood and all at Thornham Cricket Club.

Also, and playing major roles, Jobie and Paul for setting the Quiz questions.

Since its inception SOS-Save Our Slattocks has been *the* driving force in protecting the local Greenbelt.

Subsequent to this great work, TSJNF was created in January 2018 with the intention of having a greater, democratic say.

Along the way we've seen the initial and then 2nd and so-called revised drafts of the GMSF.

These two documents and the subsequent consultations have galvanised us as local residents in our opposition to proposals to build on the Greenbelt.

I think I'm right in saying that residents both locally and across GM were shocked by the initial GMSF proposals presented in November 2016. We resolved to see how we could oppose the GMSF plan which would see major changes to landscape we love.

With the publication of the revised GMSF in January this year, we saw a partial victory in our quest to save local Greenbelt.

The revised plan gave a 'headline' figure of a 50% reduction in Greenbelt land included in the plan.

In Slattocks/Stakehill however we have not seen anywhere near this lessening of Greenbelt take.

There remains a large area of land in Slattocks/Stakehill under threat from development of some 900 houses and an additional 250,000 sq metres of industrial units spreading across to Chadderton.

As an organisation we've said that we want to see a truly Brownfield First approach being pursued by our local Council and in the GMSF plan.

We shouldn't however, be downhearted, but instead give ourselves a pat on the back.

We're a relatively small community of around 750 households.

I believe we've been very proactive and positive in showing why we think the GMSF Plan is fundamentally flawed.

We've done our best to make sure the local community have been aware of the campaign and provided help with comments on the consultations. In turn you have shown your enthusiasm by supporting the events we've arranged to try to raise awareness of the issues and by engaging in the process we've been presented with – namely the two GMSF consultations.

We've also been proactive in the SGMGB group and thus joined with groups across GM in our condemnation of the GMSF plan.

Unfortunately Rochdale, Oldham and Bury Councils have seen the GMSF as a golden opportunity. They've now joined forces in an alliance called Manchester Smart Growth Area.

Basically they are combining the developments along the M62 and presenting it to investors in both the UK and abroad as the perfect venture.

But we still see the true picture.

Every local council is desperate for an influx of funds and they invariably see building lots of new homes and attracting employers as the answer to their problems. Yes we need homes and jobs – but not on Greenbelt

land, and it's difficult to envisage how even more warehousing will create quality jobs.

Obviously Rochdale's position on the M62 leads the Council to believe it's ideally placed to attract businesses. And yes it may - but we understand that the pie isn't big enough to go round. By this I mean that everywhere is desperate for investment.

Legislation means we cannot simply oppose this proposed expansion but instead need to work to persuade the Council against the loss of a very important asset - the Greenbelt.

There's no denying that Rochdale Borough has a large amount of Greenbelt land – more than 60%. But much of this is only accessed by a small number of avid trekkers. This is in contrast to our local Greenbelt which we know is well used and is readily accessible.

Alongside this is we understand that Greenbelt has other benefits. Amongst these are the farming industry and the families it directly supports. The need to produce food locally has been shown to be very popular in helping to reduce so-called carbon miles. Supermarkets have made an effort to support local food production. None of this seems to figure very highly in the GMSF plans. Perhaps all the new hi-tech industrial units will be laboratories growing our food. Pie in the sky?

Over the last 12 months we've continued to lobby our local Council and GM Mayor Andy Burnham to remind them of some the issues that the GMSF proposals seem to forget, namely:

- the potential to clog-up local roads & the motorway network;
- the associated air pollution problems;
- the wider benefits of the Greenbelt;
- Our demand to see a Brownfield first policy.

We will continue to point out the flaws in the GMSF plan which in its glossy publicity always paints a rosy picture of how things will just be absolutely wonderful and how Manchester will become a fantastic global city.

I think a reality check is needed when attempting to compare Manchester after the GMSF plan, to other already advanced Cities across the globe.

So the campaign, fight if you wish, goes on.

We will continue to do all we can to protect our local community and Greenbelt.