

We are in a climate emergency - WE MUST SAVE RYEBANK FIELDS!

Yes, there is a **housing crisis** - and also a **climate and biodiversity crisis**. We must learn lessons from the past, and prevent developments that will **harm our environment** and crowd nature out of the places where people live. There are many years' worth of brownfield sites across the city already waiting to be developed for housing.

Please sign up to MMU's consultation and support the campaign to save the fields: <https://ryebankfieldsconsultation.co.uk>



WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION?

To read more about our upcoming fundraising campaigns and join the fight, visit our website at: <https://saveryebankfields.co.uk> or scan the QR code.



Follow our socials:

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsofRyebank>
- https://www.instagram.com/friends_of_ryebank_fields/?hl=en-gb
- <https://twitter.com/ryebankfields>

RYEBANK FIELDS IMPORTANT UPDATE

Statement from Friends of Ryebank Fields on the announcement of MMU's 'Preferred Developers'

RYEBANK
FIELDS
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UPDATE

Ryebank Fields have been a treasured place for people to walk, play and learn for generations. Communities have repeatedly defended this **precious green oasis** against threats of development, and over the decades it has been naturally rewilding into a **flourishing space for nature**, at a time when experts and government recognise the need for urban rewilding to help protect us against the effects of climate change.

Manchester Metropolitan University tell us they 'own' Ryebank Fields.

MMU were in fact given stewardship of Ryebank Fields by Manchester City Council when they were a Polytechnic, with a **formal agreement** that the land would be used for **education and recreation**. The land was then formally transferred to MMU, for that same purpose, during their conversion from a (council controlled) Polytechnic to (independent) University in 1992.

In November 2017, MMU made a **commercial decision to sell this land** to developers for a lucrative house building project. In July this year, they announced the proposed purchasers of the land: a partnership between Step Places (a privately owned residential developer) and Southway Housing Trust.

Together, Step Places and Southway Housing Trust are planning to build over Ryebank Fields, eradicating a precious, rewilded, accessible green-space, loved and protected by many generations of local people. **Their proposals would destroy the mixed woodland, scrub and grassland habitat which together act as a valuable ecosystem - supporting wildlife, storing carbon in the ground, and mitigating the local impacts of climate change.**

The construction project would also involve **excavating toxic soil and asbestos** and transporting it through local streets. There is also a risk of unearthing unexploded WW2 bombs. Longer term, **increased traffic from 120 houses** would be a lasting burden on the already congested and at times polluted roads in this residential area, next to two large primary schools.

It is criminal in a climate crisis to consider building on rewilded urban green space, whilst more than **8,000 homes stand empty** across Manchester, and more than 6 years' worth of brownfield land for housing has already been identified in the Strategic Housing plan.

MMU say: "An overall net biodiversity gain for the site which retains and enhances as much of the broadleaf woodland and mature trees as possible"

We say: there's so much greenwashing in this sentence - how do you enhance anything by **destroying two thirds** of it and surrounding what's left with 120 houses, roads, underground pipes, parking spaces and street lights?

And in policy speak, the phrases 'as much... as possible' render everything in the middle pretty much meaningless.

The Fields are the site of hundreds of years' of local folk history and connection to the land, and to go ahead with these proposals would **ignore the decades of overwhelming demands** from the community to protect the land, and leave Ryebank Fields to the people and to wildlife.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

It is vital that as many residents as possible make their views known to the developers and MMU. The Friends of Ryebank Fields are urging you to do this now by registering at the link below, so that you will be contacted to take part in the public consultation as soon as it is launched.

<https://ryebankfieldsconsultation.co.uk>

Friends of Ryebank Fields will continue to lead the campaign to **Save Ryebank Fields**, along with our allies both local and across the country. We will continue to demand that Manchester City Council **designate Ryebank Fields as a Local Green Space**, which would give it the same protected status as Green Belt.