

The background of the slide is a photograph of a dense forest of bare trees, with a grey, overcast sky visible in the upper portion. A solid orange horizontal band spans the width of the image, serving as a backdrop for the title and subtitle.

# RYEBANK REIMAGINED

Proposal by the student society: People and Planet

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# RE:VIEW

..... The value of Ryebank Fields to our education, community and planet far outweighs the monetary gain from selling the fields. We urge you to listen to the voice of the student body and not sell Ryebank Fields to developers but keep it as a wild green space

## Climate

..... One of the aims stated in MMU's Sustainability Strategy is to "Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University and promote its benefits for students, staff and local communities."<sup>1</sup>. Selling Ryebank Fields directly contradicts this aim. Construction is responsible for 39% of global carbon emissions<sup>2</sup>. Yet, in listing their CO2 emissions and targets in the Sustainability Strategy, MMU has not included CO2 emissions released through construction. Saving Ryebank Fields should be seriously considered as a method of offsetting CO2 emissions and biodiversity loss caused during the current Oxford Road campus construction<sup>3</sup> and beyond.

## Wellbeing

..... Universities UK recently reported a fivefold increase in the number of students disclosing mental health conditions since 2007<sup>4</sup>. Accessing green space plays a pivotal role in improving mental health<sup>5</sup>, and in a city with above-UK-average numbers of people accessing health care<sup>6</sup> the destruction of green spaces only adds to the strain of NHS and university mental health facilities. We could lead the way by preemptively directing students through existing wellbeing services to Ryebank Fields, prescribing them with mindfulness and exercise programs that prevent them needing medication or further access to our strained counselling facilities.

## Education

..... We understand that as a charity, Manchester Met must get 'best value' for disposal of assets. We declare this asset is too valuable to be disposed of. The sale and destruction of the Fields is equivalent to the sale and destruction of the resources of the art school. The educational potential of this site includes: Manchester School of Architecture students designing and building a multi-purpose centre for student and community use; Business School students running a off-grid cafe in the centre; Zoology society, Wildlife Biology and Environmental Science students using a bird hide funded by green grants<sup>7</sup>; community classes run by the Sign Language society or TESOL students... These interventions would rapidly transform the site into a useful space and instantly increase the value of university courses.

## Community and Housing

..... There is a housing crisis in the UK<sup>8</sup>. Despite the council having a policy of 20% affordable housing in all new developments, in 2018 only 28 social homes were delivered in Manchester<sup>9</sup>. We are not against new homes in Chorlton and wish to point out that Friends of Ryebank Fields voted unanimously in favour of suggestions to create social housing on sites that already have buildings on them such as the leisure centre. We students also welcome such plans. Providing affordable social housing in Chorlton would be wonderful, however, private development will not be affordable and is not an answer to the housing crisis.

## Costs and a Sustainable Future

..... Manchester Met currently holds 2nd place in People & Planets' green university league. We are proud of the university's green credentials and they are an important factor for many students when choosing where to study. Selling Ryebank Fields is sure to impact this, especially as engagement is currently one of Manchester Met's lowest scores<sup>10</sup>. Losing its green status would lose future students and damage the long term income of the university. We wish to emphasise that the world is facing a climate crisis and now is the time to put people and planet before profit. We understand that the university intends to use money from the sale for the benefit of students. However, we urge you to listen to the students when we tell you we value the protection of this wild green land above what money can buy.

# RE:ACT

..... We asked staff and students of Manchester Met to let us know how they feel about Ryebank Fields, its potential as part of our university and the issue of selling it for profit

“On Tuesday 16th July 2019, Manchester Metropolitan University was ranked second greenest University in the UK. The MMU Vice Chancellor Professor, Malcolm Press, reacted to this by saying that “Climate change is one of the greatest challenges faced by the world, and we as a University recognise the importance of creating a sustainable society”. But now, MMU want to destroy a natural space which hosts trees and animals to earn money. Is that sustainable?”

- **Quentin Duflos, LLM student and Chair of the MMU Oxfam Society**

“There is potential for improving the biodiversity value of the fields: taking out a hay crop in late summer would reduce the soil fertility and in turn promote a ‘healthier’ grassland plant community; a scrape or pond could be beneficial as smooth newts have been recorded in the adjacent Longford Park; and there is an intriguing possibility to create some ‘broken ground’ with rocks etc. to form habitat for the Common Lizard, a species of real conservation concern in the UK.”

- **Prof. Stuart Marsden, Professor of Conservation Biology**

The proposed ‘development’ of Ryebank Fields has to stop and stop right now. Manchester people and local residents want it to stop. People around the Fields look after them and love it. They care for the site, as it does for them. We walk our dogs there. We go to work through it to avoid traffic. We take our kids there to learn about nature. It is a greenfield site which has so much wildlife and public enjoyment that it ought to be a local nature reserve. The site was given to MMU by the Council for sports & recreational use. MMU is no longer using it for that, so it is time to give the Fields back and establish it as a nature reserve. Come on MMU, come on Malcom Press. Give it to the people.

- **John Vass-de-Zomba, Higher Education Climate Strikers**

Ryebank Fields is a flourishing ecosystem which should not simply be treated as an empty brownfield site because it has established vegetation and is well used by the community.

- **Dr Joanne Phillips, Associate Lecturer for the Master of Landscape Architecture**

“We like to visit Ryebank Fields with our society members; it is full of local wildlife including many bird species. If we had a hide to sit in, we could regularly birdwatch at any time of year, and could even host educational events with our members, MMU’s expert ecology staff and the local community.”

- **Julianne Robinson, Chair of the Zoology Society**

“Having a wild open space available so close to MMU where we have access is a great opportunity for the students to use for their work. It is a brilliant space which could be used for a Unit X project in the Art Dept. Having recently taken the students on a trip to the Merz Barn and seen the positive effect of being outside working had on them, I will be organising more of these trips to work outside.”

- **Hazel Jones MA (RCA), Senior Lecturer for Interactive Arts**



# RE:IMAGINE

After engaging with a variety of staff and students across campus, we created this infographic to display different ideas of how the site could be used by students, and what degree courses and student societies this could benefit

## MINDFULNESS WALK WITH INTERACTIVE ART POINTS

- Fine Art (and Curating)
- Gardening Society
- Mental Health Nursing
- MMU Counselling, Health and Wellbeing Service
- Photography
- Photography Society

## SPORTS CIRCUIT WITH INTERACTIVE POINTS

- Sports Business Management
- Sport and Exercise Science
- Sport Societies

## NICO DITCH MONUMENT

- History
- Landscape Architecture
- Medieval Society
- Sociology

## HABITAT MANAGEMENT – POND CREATION

- Animal Behaviour
- Biology
- Environmental Science
- Gardening Society
- Landscape Architecture
- People and Planet Society
- Wildlife Biology
- Zoology

## COMMUNITY ORCHARD

- Gardening Society
- Landscape Architecture
- MetMunch
- Nutritional Sciences
- Ryebank Reimagined cafe
- Sport and Exercise Nutrition

## BIRD HIDE

- Animal Behaviour
- Biology
- Environmental Science
- (Physical) Geography
- People and Planet Society
- Wildlife Biology
- Zoology
- Zoology Society

## RYEBANK REIMAGINED CENTRE

- Architecture
- Events Management
- Hive Radio
- Interior design
- Marketing
- Marketplace Studios
- Yoga Society



# RE:IMAGINE

••This infographic shows the potential Ryebank Reimagined Centre, an off-grid multi-purpose centre for Manchester Met students, staff and the local community, placed on the tar-macked old car park in the south of the Fields. Listed are the degree courses and student societies that could benefit by being involved in designing, constructing and running it

## •DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

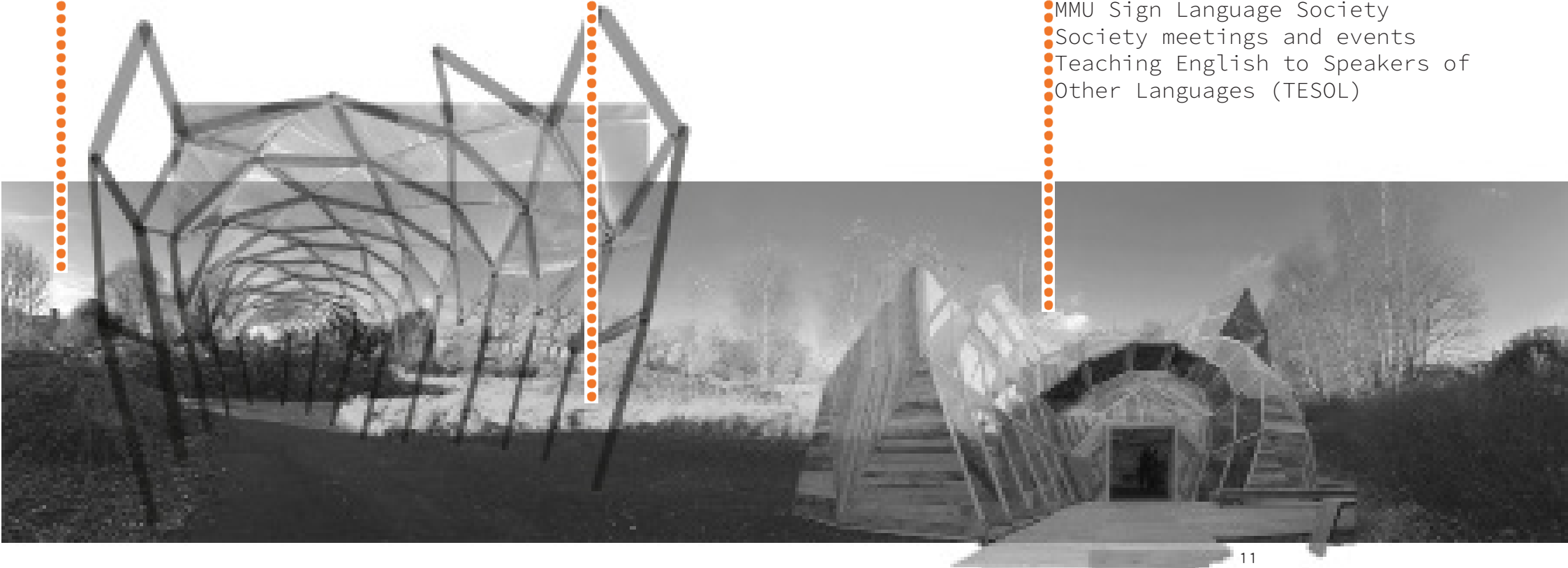
- Architecture
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Interior design
- Landscape architecture
- MA Design Innovation
- Product Design and Craft

## •RYEBANK REIMAGINED CAFE

- Accounting
- Business and Marketing
- Digital Media and Communication
- Marketing
- Nutritional Sciences
- Sport and Exercise Nutrition

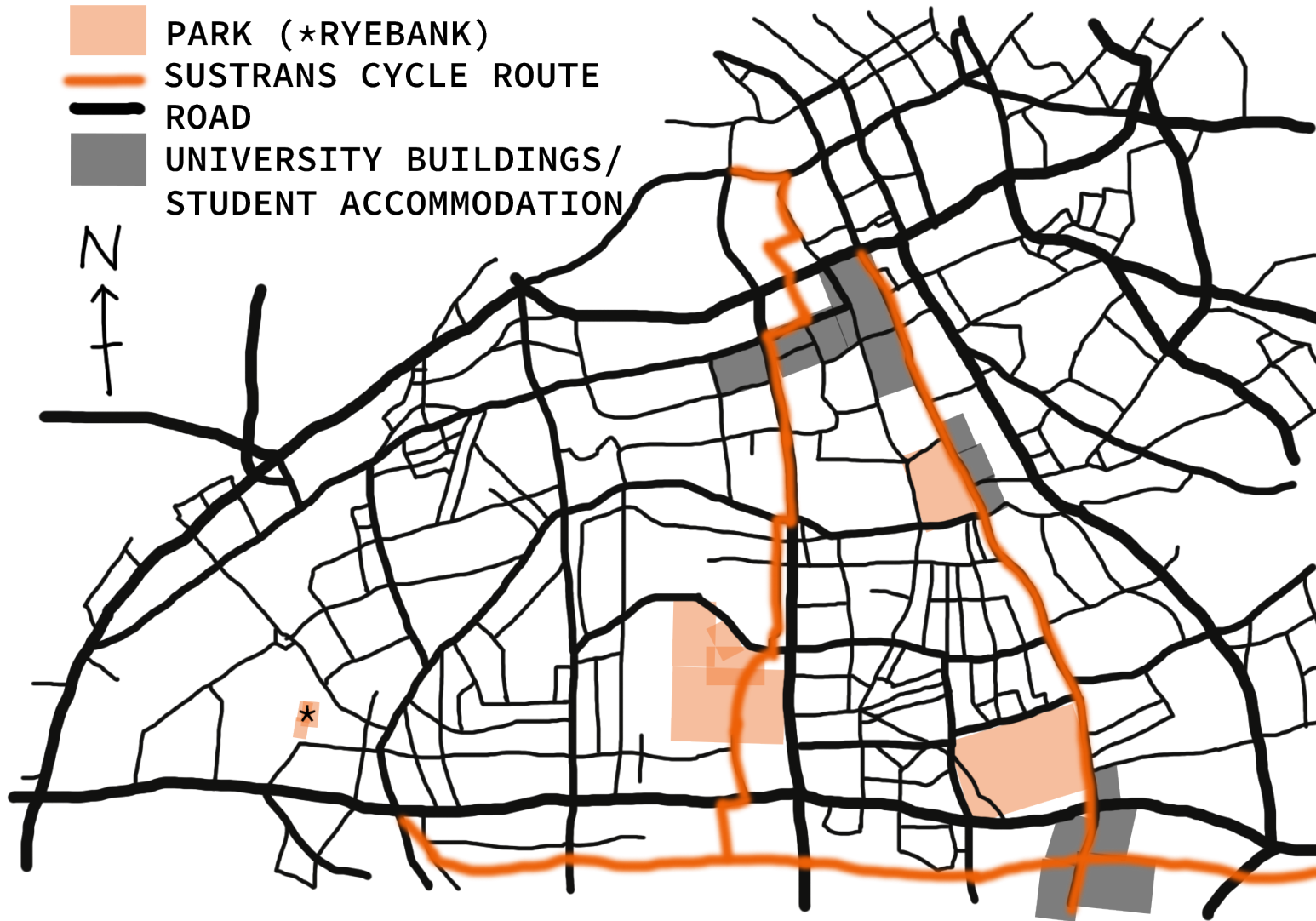
## •RYEBANK REIMAGINED CENTRE EVENTS

- Events Management
- Graphic Design
- Hive Radio
- Marketplace Studios pop-up event
- Meditation and Gong Bath with the
- Yoga Society
- Mental Health First Aid training
- MMU Sign Language Society
- Society meetings and events
- Teaching English to Speakers of
- Other Languages (TESOL)



# RE:IMAGINE

Sustrans are custodians of the cycle path Fallowfield Loop, which connects the student residential area of Fallowfield and Chorlton.



Initiatives connecting Ryebank Fields and the student population naturally fall along existing cycle routes.

The recently developed Oxford Road corridor provides a safe route between MMU All Saints campus and Fallowfield. Between Fallowfield and Chorlton exists the Fallowfield Loop, a car-free cycle route on the site of an old railway line.

Sustrans is working to improve community use of the Fallowfield Loop and increase biodiversity along their routes.

The MMU Environment Team runs various cycle initiatives to get staff and students cycling rather than driving to MMU.

Exercise improves physical and mental health, further reducing strain on NHS and student wellbeing resources.

Reclaim The Night activists are keen to improve the safety of Fallowfield and some areas of Fallowfield Loop.

Creating an initiative to get students cycling along the Fallowfield Loop to Ryebank Fields would raise awareness of the site and improve the health and wellbeing of student cyclists. Increased traffic on the Loop would improve the feeling of safety and reduce crime, and Sustrans would have more cyclists and pedestrians to engage with when running biodiversity improvement schemes.

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All other images were taken and edited by Jessica Peach