

PRESS RELEASE



17th August 2026

For Immediate Release

Press Release as PDF attached

Pictures of the eclipse as seen last week from Ryebank Fields attached

Images Credit: Jay Clarke

At Last!

Planning Application that will Save Ryebank Fields to be heard on 24th September 2026, Manchester City Council Chamber

“With substantial brownfield housing delivery already taking place across Chorlton, the case for building on Ryebank Fields is extremely difficult to justify, and there is a strong case for seriously considering a community-led future for the site as a woodland and meadow.” Councillor Chantal Kerr-

Sheppard, Councillor for Chorlton

“I love this application and could not support it more strongly... Crucially it protects a precious green space in perpetuity. Which, in the middle of a climate emergency, could not be more important.” Gareth Twose, Councillor for Longford

“This is a great opportunity for Manchester to lead the way and make a decision that is in the interests of People and Planet – not would-be developers’ Profits.” Dr Rhetta Moran, Chair, Ryebank Fields Community Group

The community-led and funded planning application to retain Ryebank Fields as a Community Woodland and Meadow ([Planning Application Ref: 143413/FO/2025](#), validated on 28 August 2025. Click [HERE](#) to see the application) is finally being heard at Manchester City Council’s Planning Committee on 24th September at 2pm.

Over 30 years old, the campaign to leave this wildlife corridor essentially undisturbed has the deepest of community roots. Ryebank Fields Community Group (RFCG) is calling on all those who love these Fields to continue to protect all its flora and fauna, from the most common to the extraordinary, by joining them in solidarity on Committee day.

Since the people of Manchester invested in their remediation in the early 1970’s so that the city’s Polytechnic students could safely perform sports and recreation there, Ryebank Fields have been safely and thoroughly enjoyed by millions of people.

“The continued growth and development of rare and most delicate species, like its Aspen Wood and wild orchids alongside the swathes of blackberries, willowherb, grasses and oak trees that flourish in its superior air quality are all testimony to its health-giving properties. This is a great opportunity for Manchester to lead the way and make a decision in the interests of People and Planet – not Profit,” says Dr Rhetta Moran, Chair of Ryebank Fields Community Group who will be presenting RFCG’s application.

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In contrast, the contamination risks expressed by Statutory bodies that are associated with any would-development for expensive housing have been highlighted and amplified by the campaign, click [HERE](#).

Recently elected Councillors are fulsome in their support. Councillor Chantal Kerr-Sheppard, Green Party Member for Chorlton is clear:

"... the community's proposal offers a genuine alternative to development that deserves to be properly considered. Local residents have waited far too long for their proposal to receive the same level of consideration as any other planning application. Ryebank Fields is a functioning, nature-rich greenfield site with measurable environmental value... Manchester has sufficient brownfield land to meet its housing needs without the irreversible loss of valuable green space. With substantial brownfield housing delivery already taking place across Chorlton, the case for building on Ryebank Fields is extremely difficult to justify, and there is a strong case for seriously considering a community-led future for the site as a woodland and meadow."

Trafford shares the boundary of Ryebank Fields with Manchester. It's local Green Pparty councillor Gareth Twose explains:

"I love this application and could not support it more strongly. It recognises what should have been clear all along: that Ryebank Fields is a much-loved and life-enhancing community asset. It returns the Fields to collective ownership, allowing community-run events to continue, while preserving and enhancing greenery and wildlife. It also means the community gets to study what is a breathtaking example of re-wilding in action. Crucially it protects a precious green space in perpetuity. Which, in the middle of a climate emergency, could not be more important."

In the run up to the 24th of September planning application hearing, the Save Ryebank Fields campaign will be encouraging as many people as possible to show their support for the application either in person on the day or through messaging.

ENDS

For further information please email ryebankfieldscommunity@gmail.com or call Dr Rhetta Moran on 07776264646 or Tom Butler on 07833 358703

Ryebank Fields is public land that was gifted to Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)) as a sports facility in the mid-1970s. The area was formerly a clay pit for Jackson's Brickworks; it then became an unregistered tip and was remediated in 1972 under the publicly funded 'Operation Eyesore' to make it safe to walk and play on. The University abandoned Ryebank Fields in 1996, since which time this Local Green Space has naturally re-wilded into a richly biodiverse wildlife 11-acre haven tended, over four generations, by local people. Developers acting on behalf of MMU, want to destroy the land for expensive housing. Local residents and their supporters are determined to stop this attempt to cash this public land in at the expense of wildlife and humans.