



PRESS RELEASE

28th September 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release PDF attached

Picture of campaigners today, attached

Images Credit: Jay Clarke

We're Here! Join us MMU!

Ryebank Fields Community Woodland and Meadow IS a Local Green Space!

'...an opportunity for Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to collaborate with us to create something truly exceptional... Ryebank Fields is already a remarkable natural asset... We hope that you will accept this invitation, extended in complete sincerity...'

- Open letter from Ryebank Fields Community Group(RFCG) to MMU Vice Chancellor Professor Malcolm Press

'[Approval] reinforces the distinction between the site's potential for development, considered in previous strategic assessments, and the separate question of whether the land is demonstrably special to the local community and meets the criteria for Local Green Space designation.'

- Further submissions from RFCG to Planning and Infrastructure Growth & Development, Manchester City Council(MCC)

When MCC approved RFCG's community-led planning application to preserve Ryebank Fields as a Community Woodland and Meadow last Thursday, 24th September 2026, it endorsed the value of Ryebank Fields as a place for nature, wildlife, recreation and community. It also demonstrated that the land *can be retained and managed* as a functioning area of urban green space within the planning system.

Immediately following approval, RFCG took two further steps.

In an Open letter to MMU Vice Chancellor Professor Malcolm Press, RFCG describe the approval as: *'an opportunity for MMU to collaborate with us to create something truly exceptional... Its woodland, meadow, wildlife, open landscape and connections to the surrounding communities have created an extraordinary, rewilded, wildlife haven in an urban setting: this is the strongest foundation on which to build. Now, opening out consideration of how best to harness the active ecological development expertise and biodiversity research resources accessible via the Higher Education infrastructure... afforded through MMU creates, we believe, a dynamic and most constructive next step...'*

You can read the full text of the open letter here:

[2509 2026 Open Letter To Malcolm Press FINAL.pdf](#)

Manchester's Local Green Space designation is yet to be finalised and so RFCG also wrote a supplementary document for Planning and Infrastructure at MCC pointing out that this approval



'...reinforces the distinction between the site's potential for development, considered in previous strategic assessments, and the separate question of whether the land is demonstrably special to the local community and meets the criteria for Local Green Space designation.'

This approval for the retention of Ryebank Fields a Community Woodland and Meadow is a testament to what local communities can achieve when they come together.

RFCG offers solidarity with everyone fighting to preserve local green space.

Not One Blade of Grass!

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About Ryebank Fields

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 and subsequently became an unregistered tip. It was remediated in 1972 under the publicly funded 'Operation Eyesore' programme to make it safe to walk and play on. The University ceased using Ryebank Fields in 1996. Since then, the site has naturally rewilded into a richly biodiverse 11-acre green space and wildlife corridor, cared for over several generations by local people.

Developers acting on behalf of MMU have submitted proposals for housing on the site. Ryebank Fields Community Group's community-led and community-funded planning application, 143413/FO/2025, proposing its retention as a community woodland and meadow was approved by Manchester City Council's Planning Committee on 24 September 2026. Local residents and their supporters are now campaigning for the Fields to be designated a Local Green Space and have asked MMU to work with the Ryebank Fields community to develop the land into a world-class community woodland and meadow.