

PRESS RELEASE



13th July 2026

For Immediate Release

Press Release as PDF attached

RFCG Update Factsheet PDF attached

Contemporary pictures of Ryebank Fields attached

WHY IS OUR COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING APPLICATION NOT BEING HEARD BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL?

“We have received neither a clear timetable for determination nor a satisfactory explanation for the continuing delay. This lack of engagement falls well below the standard of openness, transparency and communication that applicants are entitled to expect from a Local Planning Authority...” (Extract from RFCG letter escalating the delay in hearing our application to Tom Stannard, CEO, Manchester City Council)

The community's application to protect Ryebank Fields as a woodland, meadow and a nature rich space was validated by Manchester City Council on 28th August 2025 with a target decision date of December 2025...I am calling on Manchester City Council to list this application for Committee immediately, and to explain publicly why their own target has been missed. (Chantal Kerr Shepherd, Chorlton Councillor)

“Nothing will grind us down. Manchester City Council’ Planning Authority may delay, prevaricate, obfuscate and apply all manner of smokes and mirrors but they will not outlast Ryebank Fields.” (Dr Rhetta Moran, Chair, Ryebank Fields Community Group)

Today, Ryebank Fields Community Group (RFCG) escalated the continued delay in determining our Planning Application for the retention of Ryebank Fields as a Community Woodland and Meadow to Tom Stannard, Chief Executive Officer of Manchester City Council. Please use the link below to view our email to Tom Stannard.

<https://ryebankfieldscommunity.co.uk/data/open-letter-tom-stannard.pdf>

Simultaneously, RFCG released an Update Factsheet throughout our social media networks that is intended to dispel any confusions that people – understandably – may be harbouring in the face of competing planning applications and Manchester City Council’s unconscionable delay in hearing our application, ready since February of this year. It calls upon community members to email Julie Roscoe, Director of Planning at Manchester City Council and ask her to explain why our community led application is not being heard. Please use the link below to view our Update Fact sheet.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1apSyxsICsnED8V0jDWSqFRI9M-id4doB/view?usp=sharing>

Representing the Chorlton Ward since her election victory in May, Green Councillor Chantal Kerr Shepherd says: *The community’s application to protect Ryebank Fields as a woodland, meadow and a nature rich space was validated by Manchester City Council on 28th August 2025 with a target decision date of December 2025. Nearly six months past that target, no*

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Planning Committee date has been set despite repeated requests to do so. The residents who submitted this application did so in good faith and by the council's own timetable, the application should have been presented to the Committee months ago. I am calling on Manchester City Council to list this application for Committee immediately, and to explain publicly why their own target has been missed.

Dr Rhett Moran, Chair of Ryebank Fields Community Group says: *"Nothing will grind us down. Manchester City Council's Planning Authority may delay, prevaricate, obfuscate and apply all manner of smoke and mirrors but they will not outlast Ryebank Fields. Its local community and their supporters will cut through whatever stands in our way in an honest, transparent, and persistently professional manner. And that's the only cutting we are prepared to do. Not One Blade of Grass is our motto. We mean what we say and do what we mean to do."*

ENDS

For further information please email ryebankfieldscommunity@gmail.com or call Dr Rhett 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.