



RYEBANK FIELDS COMMUNITY GROUP PRESS RELEASE



2nd February 2026
PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate release

Walk with us, Bev, and show you care for all the local green spaces in Manchester

“The care and commitment you’ve shown to protecting this space... is hugely inspiring”
Green Britain Foundation and @Ecotalk

As Ryebank Fields Community Group is congratulated by Green Britain Foundation and @Ecotalk, whose Chief Ecologist is Chris Packham, the Group has written an Open Letter, as follows, to Council Leader Bev Craig, inviting her to walk with us on Ryebank Fields as we celebrate International Women’s Day and amplify women’s right to feel and be safe wherever they walk...

Dear Bev,

We are writing this Open Letter to you as the Leader of Manchester City Council following your recent [Instagram](#) post reaffirming your commitment to the preservation of our wonderful city’s green spaces.

Given your stated love of green spaces and your historical support for [women’s safety at night time](#) we cordially invite you to join our annual **International Women’s Day Women’s Twilight Walk on 8th March at 5.30pm**, gathering at the Longford Road gate entrance to Ryebank Fields, M21 9WW.

As you are aware, Ryebank Playing Fields were created in 1972 on completion of extensive works to cap landfill tip areas and level the surface. The works were funded by the central government assistance scheme Operation Eyesore and the land was



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then used for sports and recreational activities. Since 1996, when Manchester Metropolitan University relocated their sporting activities to Carrington, passive rewilding has transformed the fields into a beautiful, natural green space.

As long as the land is not disturbed through any invasive processes there is minimal asbestos risk associated with walking here. The wide range of wild and rare flora and fauna that flourish in Ryebank Fields demonstrate their health-giving properties. The air quality in the fields has been measured regularly and is much superior to the air quality in the adjacent roads of this densely populated area. We feel we can reassure you that there is minimal risk associated with walking on this Greenfield site, which people do, every day and all day.

We also thought you would be delighted to know that, recently, Ryebank Fields Community Group received support from Green Britain Foundation and @Ecotalk (Chris Packham is their Chief Ecologist) as follows:

“The care and commitment you’ve shown to protecting this space, a haven for both wildlife and the community, is hugely inspiring. On behalf of the Green Britain Foundation and Ecotalk, we wish you all the best with your ongoing campaign and we hope that Ryebank Fields is protected for generations to come.”

It is worth remembering that local communities from Manchester and Trafford have been working for over 30 years to preserve and protect Ryebank Fields. We hope the Chorlton Labour Councillors will support our initiative to retain the fields as a community woodland and meadow. By walking with us, you will be demonstrating your leadership and your support for our city’s invaluable green spaces.

The recent 1000+ objections to the planning application to build 120 executive houses, the 1000+ endorsements for our community-led and funded planning application and the large number of supporting comments to designate Ryebank Fields as a Local Green Space during the Local Plan consultation period clearly show where local communities stand when it comes to Saving Ryebank Fields.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rhetta Moran

Chair,

Ryebank Fields Community Group

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT ryebankfieldscommunity@gmail.com; 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



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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.