

NORTH KELVIN MEADOW CAMPAIGN

P r e s s R e l e a s e

STANDING ROOM ONLY AS COURT RULES ON BAT BOXES - NORTH KELVIN MEADOW CAMPAIGN CONTINUES AFTER SHERIFF COURT DECISION TODAY

Glasgow, 21 August 2009:

Douglas Peacock, chair of the North Kelvin Meadow Campaign, and Karen Chung, treasurer, today appeared before a packed Glasgow Sheriff Court to respond to an interim interdict sought by Glasgow City Council. The Council objects to local residents cleaning up the North Kelvin Meadow and making it safe. The Meadow, which is on the site of the former Clouston Steet Playing fields in Maryhill, has never been built on, and the Council has left it derelict more than two decades ahead of a possible sale to a property developer.

The Sheriff ruled today that the two named individuals, and they alone, should be prevented from installing bat boxes or additional raised beds for vegetables. Mr Peacock and Ms Chung are free to tend their existing gardens, and other local residents may still go ahead with bat boxes and other projects as planned.

Douglas Peacock of the North Kelvin Meadow Campaign said:

"We have spent almost a year writing to representatives of the City Council, and they haven't even agreed to meet us or, in my cases, written back to us. Their interests and ours should be the same – we want a safe environment to live in, we want this space to be maintained, and yet today in a court of law is the first time they have even been in the same room as us.

He added:

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"The Council claims there was consultation on the planned residential development on the Meadow, and that residents chose the development the Council favours, but in fact there was no real choice. Residents were presented with four broadly similar proposals, all residential. They chose the 'least worst'. Now they HAVE chosen what they really want. They have voted with their feet - and their trowels - and chosen a green space."

Green MSP for Glasgow Patrick Harvie said:

"The Sheriff today declared in court that the community group here have 'done nothing but good', and I could not agree more. A plot of wasteland and a magnet for criminal behaviour has become a gorgeous space for kids to play in and for local people to grow food. It was standing room only today, and there could be no better illustration of strength of opposition to the Council's position.

"The decision to take members of the North Kelvin Meadow Campaign to court breaches the Council's own policies on derelict land, wastes local taxpayers' money, and the injunction they've asked for is petty and unjustified. It's not too late for Glasgow City Council to see sense and start supporting this project."

Glasgow City Council recently approved a policy supporting this kind of derelict land. The motion passed last year states: City Plan 2 encourages the use of vacant and derelict land as temporary greenspace. Council [...] resolves to work with site and property owners to temporarily use vacant land for energy crop production and failing that to landscape vacant sites to create simple, but well maintained grassed areas open to the public.

The North Kelvin Meadow Campaign also has the support of Glasgow Region MSPs Bob Doris, Robert Brown and Bill Kidd, as well as Canal Ward councillors Billy McAllister and Kieran Wild. A petition protesting at GCC's decision to sell the land has attracted over 600 signatures.

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Notes for editors:

The **NORTH KELVIN MEADOW CAMPAIGN** was launched on 13 October 2008 after Glasgow City Councillor, Jim MacKechnie, rejected out-of-hand the results of a survey conducted in August 2008 by Douglas Peacock, chairman of the **NORTH KELVIN MEADOW CAMPAIGN**. The survey showed local residents overwhelmingly supported the creation of a green space on the former Clouston Street pitches and opposed the Council's plan to sell the land to a property developer for the construction of 115 flats.

Since its launch the **NORTH KELVIN MEADOW CAMPAIGN** has worked to transform the former pitches, which have been disused for over two decades and had become a dumping ground, into a multi-use community green space comprising allotments, an orchard and a wild meadow. Members of the local community have come together to clear the land of rubbish, repair and paint fences, and install composting facilities and raised-bed allotments. A disused shed, which had become a drugs den, has been cleared of used needles and secured with the help of a grant from O2 'It's Your Community'.

A 'Big Lunch' event (part of the nationwide Eden Project) at the North Kelvin Meadow on 21 July attracted support from over 100 local residents. An online and paper petition protesting against GCC's plans to sell the North Kelvin Meadow to a property developer has attracted over 600 signatures.

The online petition can be found at: www.gopetition.com/online/28274.html