

NORTH KELVIN MEADOW CAMPAIGN

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

COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES HELP PREVENT CRIME, SAYS CRIMINOLOGY EXPERT, AS ROBERT BROWN MSP JOINS GROWING WAVE OF SUPPORT FOR UNDER- THREAT NORTH KELVIN MEADOW

Glasgow, 27 July 2009:

AN EXPERT IN CRIMINOLOGY HAS WRITTEN TO GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL (GCC) CRITICISING ITS DECISION TO SLAP AN EVICTION NOTICE ON THE NORTH KELVIN MEADOW, A COMMUNITY-RUN GREEN SPACE IN THE MARYHILL AREA OF GLASGOW, WHICH THE COUNCIL WANTS TO SELL TO A PROPERTY DEVELOPER FOR FLATS.

Dr Laura Piacentini, reader in criminology at Strathclyde University, told Steve Inch, executive director of development and regeneration at GCC, that community green spaces such as the North Kelvin Meadow were important in the battle against crime, after GCC posted a 14-day notice of removal at the Meadow on 15 July .

She said: "I see huge crime-reduction benefits from supporting efforts such as the North Kelvin Meadow. Through green spaces such as the Meadow, individuals can connect, and support and care for the environment, rather than violating and damaging their surroundings. There is a massive research body which demonstrates that when a council/government body takes the bold initiative to step back, and engages with communities, then this gives promise of them functioning in meaningful, inclusive and dynamic ways."

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Noting that the North Kelvin Meadow – where local residents have installed raised-bed allotments, a fruit garden and composting facilities, and have cleaned up and secured a shed previously used as a drugs den – was a pioneering example of how local people can come together to utilise and preserve green spaces, Dr Piacentini added: “It would be folly to embark on an eviction.”

Meanwhile, Liberal Democrat MSP Robert Brown has also lent his support to the growing campaign to save the North Kelvin Meadow. He said: “The North Kelvin meadow is a unique asset for local people. The extensive work already done by the campaign group to plant fruit bushes and organise allotment locations shows what can be done with a bit of imagination. The last thing we need is to lose yet more green, recreation land in the West End, and I am vastly disappointed that the Council are taking what appears to be a rather hard-line approach, with scant regard to the wishes and needs of local people.”

Mr Brown urged GCC “to put their sale plans on hold pending further discussion with the local community”. Mr Brown visited the North Kelvin Meadow in June along with Patrick Harvie MSP (Green Party) and Bob Doris MSP (SNP), who have also lent their support to the Meadow. GCC has refused to meet with the community group.

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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, 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 '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 500 signatures.

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