

# Kilmacolm Meadow Background

<https://www.kilmacolmmeadow.co.uk/about>

## What is it?

- Kilmacolm Meadow is a 12-acre area of land consisting of two field enclosures next to the roundabout in Meadow Court in Wateryetts Drive, in the north-west of Kilmacolm
- Kilmacolm Meadow is referred to as “**West of Quarry Drive’ (WOQD)** by the council.
- It forms part of the government designated **GREENBELT** area.
- The Scottish Development Plan (SDP) 2010 defines the purpose of a greenbelt to “*protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities, and protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities.*”
- The SDP section 163 also states that ‘*The cumulative erosion of a green belt’s integrity through the granting of individual planning permissions should be avoided.*’ <https://tinyurl.com/APRSpdf>

## What is the problem?

- Inverclyde Council has accepted a proposal from their planning officers, to **redraw the greenbelt boundary**, resulting in the area known as Kilmacolm Meadow being removed from the Greenbelt.
- This has enabled planning permission in principle for a large scale housing development here.
- Developers **MacTaggart and Mickel** want to destroy the meadow and build 78 houses in its place.
- **Kilmacolm Community Council (KCC)** initially OBJECTED to the planning proposal, but then at the last minute withdrew their objection.
- Community Councils are meant to “represent the community” and “protect and promote the identity of their community”.
- Nearly **500 members** of the local community submitted formal OBJECTIONS to this proposal and were ignored.
- On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, Inverclyde Councillors voted in favour 8-4 to remove Kilmacolm Meadow from Greenbelt status and **approved Planning Permission in Principle (PPIP)** for MacTaggart and Mickel to build 78 houses in the meadow.

## What is the current situation?

- **Inverclyde Council (IC)** has given developers **MacTaggart and Mickel**, **Planning Permission in Principle (PPIP) to build 78 houses** in the **Greenbelt** known locally as **Kilmacolm Meadow**.
- IC has written to the **Scottish Ministers** advising this and seeking permission to **sell Council land** adjacent to the meadow (and needed for the development) at Wateryetts Roundabout.
- IC is currently promoting this proposal in the **Local Development Plan (LDP)** which is out for **public consultation until 9<sup>th</sup> July**.

## Previous significant dates

- 2004 – IC did not include this greenbelt area in the LDP
- 2014 – IC did not include this greenbelt area in the LDP
- 2017 – community objections persuaded IC to remove WOQD and Planetreeyetts from the LDP

## Why should it be saved?

### LOCAL DEMOCRACY

- **The local community** DOES NOT support this – there were 487 objections made.
- The Community Council did NOT represent the views of the community, as it is supposed to do, by supporting this development. This sets a dangerous precedent, and should not be tolerated.

### BIODIVERSITY:

- According to the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, public bodies in Scotland have **a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity**.

- Kilmacolm Meadow has **not been grazed or used for agricultural purposes for over 20 years** and is home to over **157 species of wildflowers and grasses**.
- The UK has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows since the 1930s contributing to increased erosion, flooding and the current climate emergency. Wildflower meadows take time to mature and so should be protected and preserved.
- **A survey carried out by an ecologist** noted the following reasons to keep the Meadow:
 

*“...this area has considerable potential for the restoration of a more diverse lowland meadow - lowland meadow is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan ‘priority habitat’ and its decline in the UK is well documented. Several relic lowland meadow species have survived here, including the nationally rare and endangered greater butterfly-orchid and whorled caraway, a species with a very local distribution in Scotland. The site represents one of high potential for the restoration of a flower-rich meadow and is more amenable to restoration contrasted with other sites used in grassland creation projects. The meadow is of value to local people who already appreciate the site and use it often.”*
- **Established wildflower meadows have very stable soil** due to the complex root systems formed by **wildflowers**. This allows the soil to handle heavy rainfall without losing nutrients and having them washed away to the nearest water system - in other words, they are vital for **preventing flooding**.
- The meadow supports **POLLINATORS**, bees and other insects which are **ESSENTIAL** for human survival. The Scottish Government has a clear Pollinator Strategy and Implementation Plan: The 1st Objective of the Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027 - Implementation Plan (Revised March 2021) is to **“Make Scotland more pollinator-friendly, halting and reversing the decline in native pollinator populations.”**
- **Inverclyde Council already SUPPORTS the development of a Pollinator** Corridor through Inverclyde to protect and develop wildflower meadows in order to increase pollinator population. (<https://www.inverclydebuzz.co.uk>)

#### PEOPLE:

- Currently, the meadow is the one of very few **safe open spaces** at the west of the village which is not grazed by cattle or used to grow crops.
- This enables **children to play**, participate in nature trails, and fly kites for example **safely** - during the recent lockdown, it was a vibrant outdoor education space.
- It is popular with **dog walkers** and provides a space that benefits both the owners, dogs and farmers as it is **free of livestock**.

#### OTHER SITES ARE AVAILABLE for housing.

- There are many Brownfield Sites already in both these Local Authority Areas, lying empty, with Planning Permission already granted.
- There is **NO** shortage of land in the Renfrewshire Housing Sub Market Area (RHSMA) This has been **confirmed by**:
  - Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan (SDP) unchanged since 2017
  - also **confirmed** by a Scottish Government Reporter in the Carsemeadow dismissal on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (para 71 in the decision notice -at the top of the documents is very relevant. <https://tinyurl.com/DPEA755938>)
  - also **confirmed** by Inverclyde Council on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (733651.pdf – paragraph 11) <https://tinyurl.com/DPEA733651>
- **Quote from the Housing Land Technical Report:**
- “There is no actual shortfall in the Inverclyde part of the Renfrewshire Housing Sub-Market Area (RHSMA), however, IC claim that there is ‘an **indicative** shortfall of approximately 100 units in the Inverclyde part of the RHSMA”.
- They go on to say that a **“surplus of land does exist in the wider Renfrewshire Housing Sub Market Area”**, but that “the identification of additional land for approximately 100 units for development would address any **perceived** shortfall in the Inverclyde part of the RHSMA”.
- Due to its location, the WOQD site does **NOT** meet the requirements for ‘sustainable development’ as described by the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) issued in December 2020.