

Moredun residents ask for more people to support their campaign to protect their park

Moredun residents continue their protest to try to stop plans to build houses on their community park.

They are asking people to camp out tonight, Sunday, or to join them at 8am (or as early as possible) tomorrow 6 July 2020, on the field behind the Moredun High Rises to stop a council survey going ahead.

On the Moredun Multis & Maisonettes Residents Association Facebook page, campaigners say: "Monday 6 July will see the third attempt by Council contractors to begin drilling on our park to ascertain whether they consider it safe to build 188 homes on.

"Their first two attempts were thwarted by determined protestors putting themselves between the vehicles containing the drilling equipment and the field. On the second day, 3rd July, there were far too few protestors. We succeeded but it could have gone either way.

"It is highly likely that this week will see the council decide whether to persist with the works or acknowledge that there is too much opposition and abandon them.

"Which way they go is up to you. Every day they don't manage to complete their work costs them £9,500 so they will

inevitably make a decision sooner rather than later whether to throw good money after bad or whether to cut their losses, go away and leave us alone.”



Robyn Kane has been behind the protest for some years. PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Local resident, Robyn Kane (22), told The Edinburgh Reporter on Thursday: “We are protesting against the 188 homes that are proposed on our greenspace. The community uses the space and we don’t have enough infrastructure to support any new housing or the tenants in them. As far as we are aware only a percentage would be affordable homes, and the rest would be private.

“We don’t know who would build these homes. Our campaign has gone on since 2016, when we thought it was removed from the local development plan (LDP). We were made aware in November 2019 that it was still in the LDP.

“We had 120 formal objections to building here . We used the community health flat at the time to gather all the objections. That has since been taken away. We have lots of signatures and thought that we had won, but it turns out that we hadn’t.

“We are going to continue to protest, to talk to the council and try to get them to move their plans to a brownfield site instead of our very used greenspace. We have fun days here. It’s used for dog walking, sunbathing, picnics, BBQs and children play on it. The Messy Church use this space too.”

George, who is camping out in protest said: “For everyone who is here this is our back garden and drilling in these places is dangerous as well as disruptive. They are going to find mines under here. The flats are already subsiding and drilling here will cause a knock on effect to the flats.

“This is the only bit of green space we have left. They have

taken away the greenbelt. I am going to camp out for as long as possible to protest against it.”



Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron joined protesters on Thursday morning.

Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron has been involved in this campaign since being reelected to the council in 2017. She told The Edinburgh Reporter: “I learned in 2016 that there had been consultations and chat around building on this greenspace and the community led a campaign then. to convey their concerns. I have always been aware of the possibility that this could happen. It is earmarked in the current LDP which is about to expire for housing.

“As far as I have been advised by council officers, the land remains in council ownership. There is as yet no planning application lodged. There is a shortage of social housing, thats council owned housing and I think we should be building more of that. That way the council has better management of the tenancies and also we have so much homelessness in the area and we have a shortage of temporary accommodation for families.

“The city has a land supply for housing. There are lots of brownfield sites for example in north Edinburgh, which could be built on and that is of course one of the areas of priority for regeneration, the whole Waterfront. “

Yvonne, another campaigner we met, told us that her 33 year-old son lived in Moredun flats until he died after falling from the window of his flat on 3 December. She explained: “He was depressed and did not want to stay in the high rise flats. We asked for him to be moved lower down in the block. So, I don’t think the council should be taking this green space away from us. I can’t just let them walk all over us. They really just don’t care.”



Yvonne (centre right) told us about her son who died in December 2019. PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Another campaigner said that everyone is suffering from mental health issues at the moment. She said: "There has been such pressure and stress on everyone. The thought of six weeks of drilling here is unbearable."

This development was first proposed in 2016 when the Council voted to include the area as a site suitable for development in the local development plan. However, following a high profile campaign by locals, including lodging 120 formal objections and delivering a deputation to the Council, the plans seemed dead in the water.

Last year the plans resurfaced. The Council pledged an extensive consultation with locals, but instead have gone ahead with a six week survey, costing £285,000, giving residents and councillors just a few days notice.

The survey is to determine whether old mines under the land make it unsafe to build on or not. It will report at the end of the year, if the company is allowed to complete its survey.

Locals say that open spaces like the field at Moredun are vital for play, socialisation and exercise and that they are loved by their local communities. The coronavirus pandemic has of course made everyone even more aware how essential greenspaces are.

Ian Murray MP said on Facebook that it was ironic the council has just begun a [consultation](#) on green spaces while beginning to survey the land at Moredun.

Additional reporting by Phyllis Stephen



Surveyors conducting work in the park 2 July 2020 PHOTO ©2020

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