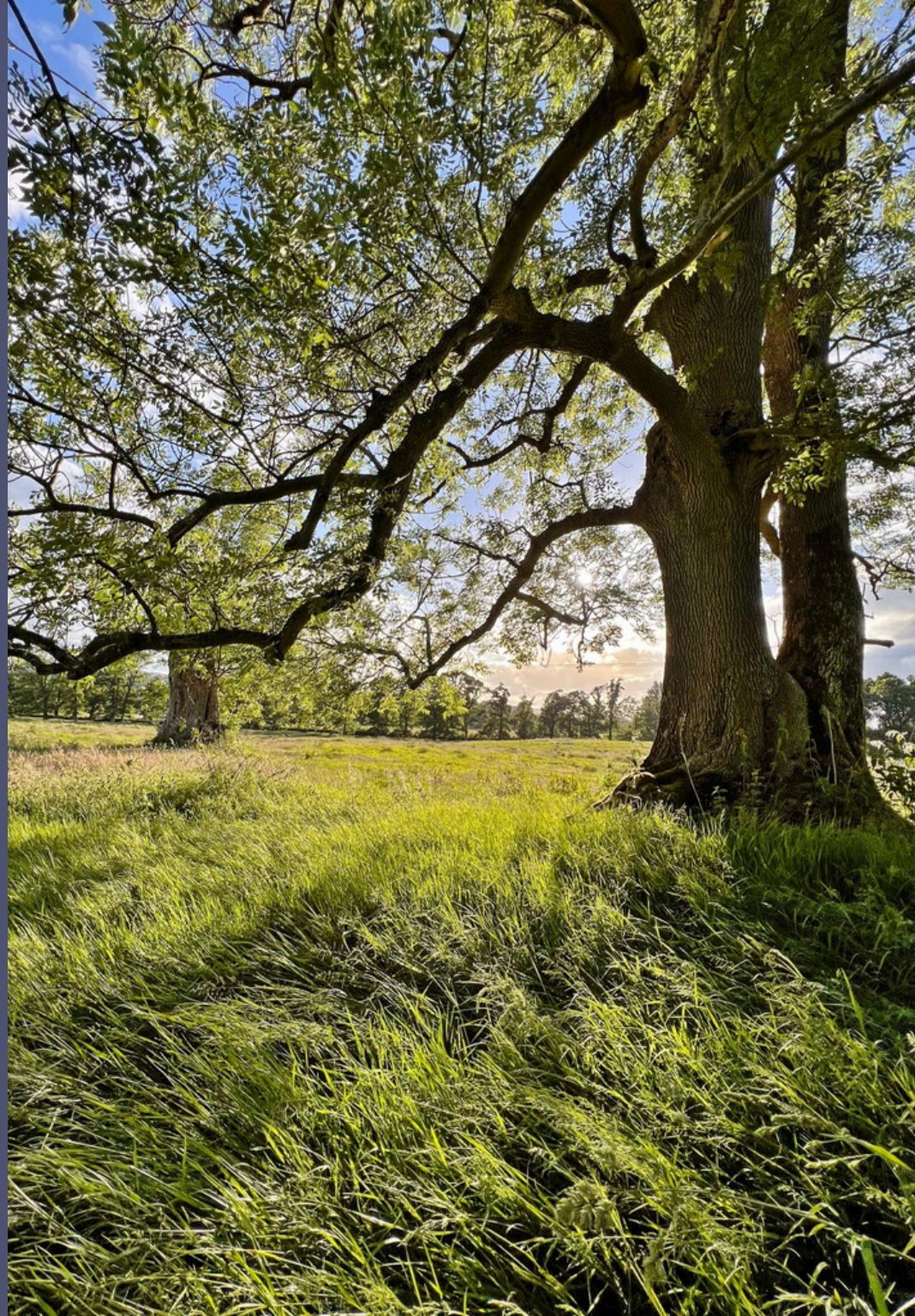


# Ladyfield

Site Specific Local Place Plan



# Ladyfield Local Place Plan

The Ladyfield Local Place Plan (LPP) sets out the concerns of the community within the Kingholm Quay Community Council area and adjoining area of St Michael's (see map overleaf) with regard to the land use of the Ladyfield site and proposes a vision for its future.

Ladyfield is an area of undeveloped green land which sits within the Crichton Conservation Area as part of the original Crichton Royal Hospital estate. Ladyfield was historically an estate in its own right, predating the Crichton institution and has remained as wild green land against the backdrop of the manicured and landscaped gardens of Crichton. Ladyfield has become a unique habitat to a variety of protected wildlife despite its proximity to the busy town centre of Dumfries. However Ladyfield has an uncertain future with the prospect of large scale housing development suggested for the site which would have dramatic and detrimental implications for the community around it. The community have showed united concern for the proposed use of the land at Ladyfield over recent years and a widely shared hope to protect and enhance the land as a community asset, centred around protection of its valuable green space, enhancing wild habitat for protected wildlife, but also enhancing community connections, educational opportunities and ecotourism.

The community hopes that the LPP will be used by Dumfries and Galloway Council to understand their wishes and informs the review of the new Local Development Plan (LDP3). The scope of Ladyfield LPP outlines the wishes of the community in how they want to see land used and a spatial vision for the site. With a Local Place Plan registered and verified for Ladyfield, the community around it will have a voice from which to influence their aspirations for Ladyfield.

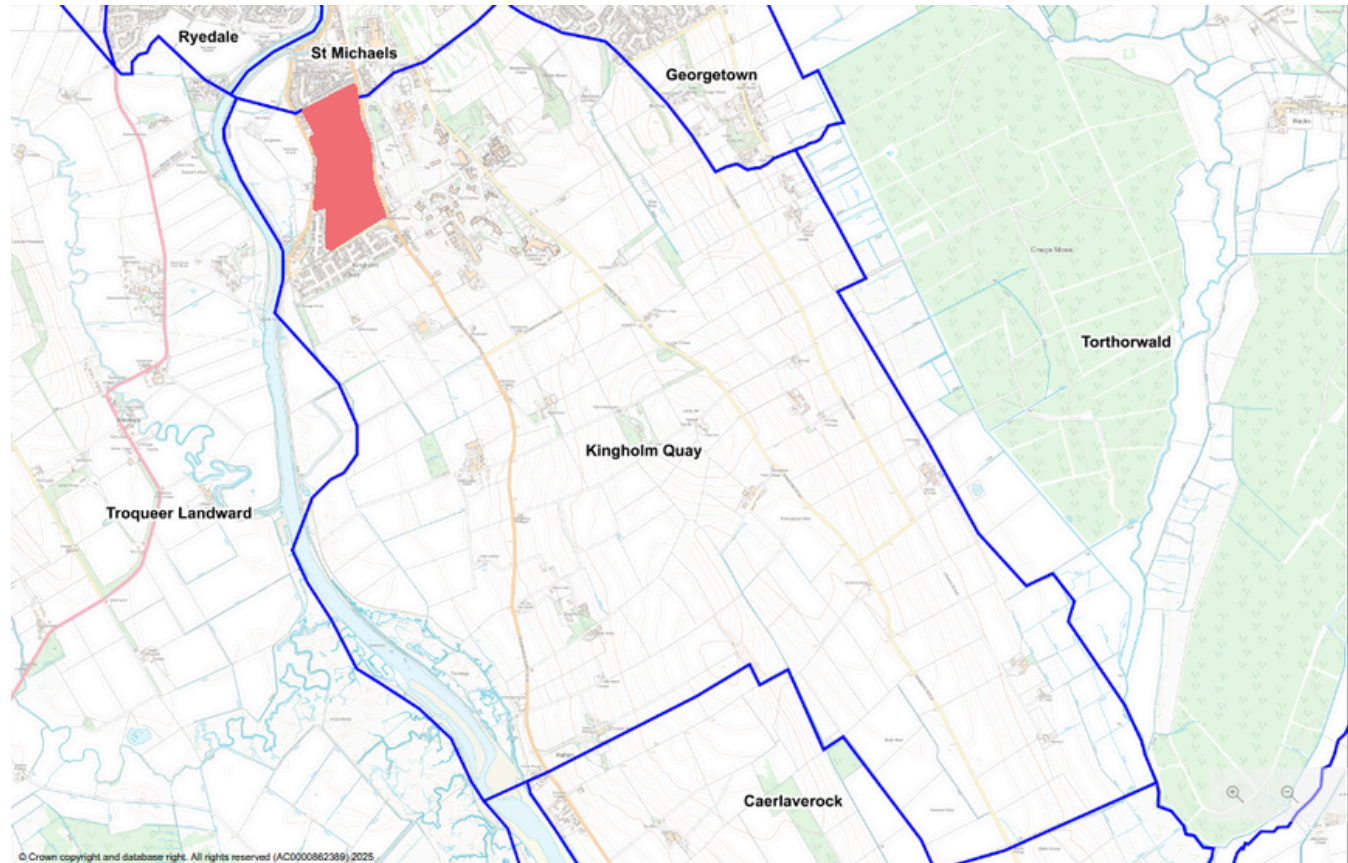




# Kingholm Quay Area

The Kingholm Quay Community Council area connects with Dumfries town at St Michael's to the north, Caerlaverock Estate and Glencaple around 4 miles to the south. It follows the River Nith to the West and connects with Torthorwald area to the East. Much of the area is open farm land within the Crichton and Caerlaverock Estates.

Kingholm Quay Community Council is a community body established in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Community Council meetings are held bi-monthly at Kingholm Quay Community Centre which are open to the public and supported by the Kingholm Quay Community Centre committee.



Within the Kingholm Quay area, the Ladyfield site is highlighted in pink. It is nestled within the most developed area at the northern Kingholm Quay boundary, sitting between Dumfries and Kingholm Quay, with a small area crossing into St Michael's boundary.

# Ladyfield

Ladyfield is an undeveloped greenfield site of 22 hectares which sits approximately 2.5km to the south of Dumfries, between Crichton Estate to the east and Kingholm Quay along the River Nith to the west (see map).

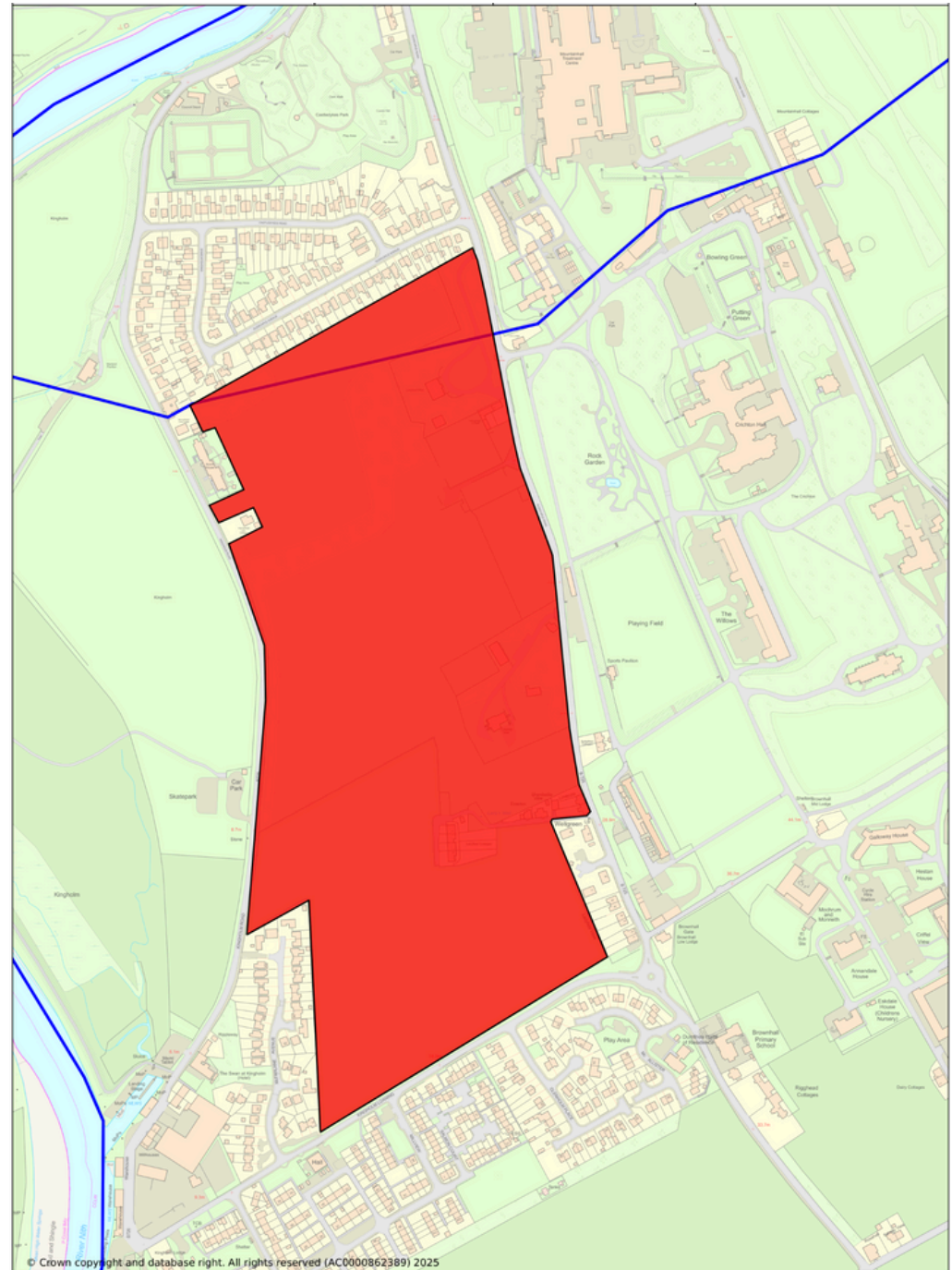
The site is currently wild grassland, with areas of established wetland and trees.

It has 134 trees currently registered on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree inventory due to their age and characteristics.

The site is known to have a variety of rare and protected wildlife and birds.

The site distinguishes Kingholm Quay as a historic port village outside the town boundary of Dumfries and maintains the character of Kingholm Quay as distinctly different from the town it borders.

The community around Ladyfield feels deep affection and concern for the site, and for its future.





# Ladyfield & Crichton

This Site-Specific Local Place Plan has been prepared by Kingholm Quay Community Council on behalf of residents within the Kingholm Quay community. This has included residents from St Michael's ward who are concerned about the future of Ladyfield and would be affected by its developments.

The eastern half of Ladyfield is within the Crichton Conservation area and was felt to be important in protecting the views and landscape of the historic Crichton Royal Hospital. Ladyfield is the oldest part of the Crichton estate, formerly Ladyfield Farm whose construction date is unknown but was present in 18<sup>th</sup> Century maps of the area. Ladyfield is home to two prominent villas, Hannahfield and Ladyfield, built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century before the Crichton Institution was established.

It became a significant part of the Crichton Royal Hospital, favoured for particular groups of patients who benefited from access to a wilder and quieter area of grounds than Crichton. However Ladyfield is best known as Scotland's first residential unit for Child Psychiatry (and the second in the UK) and a pioneering facility for children's mental health.

For various reasons, Ladyfield has been preserved as an area of open land for over 200 years and has been protected from the various developments of Dumfries until now.

The Ladyfield site is owned by Dumfries and Galloway Council, who acquired it as part of the purchase of the former Crichton Royal Hospital. It is currently under lease to Crichton Trust.



# Key Insights

Ladyfield is a historic greenfield site which distinguishes the character of the village of Kingholm Quay from the urban sprawl of Dumfries.

It is one of the oldest areas of Dumfries and has been an untouched area of green landscape for over two centuries.

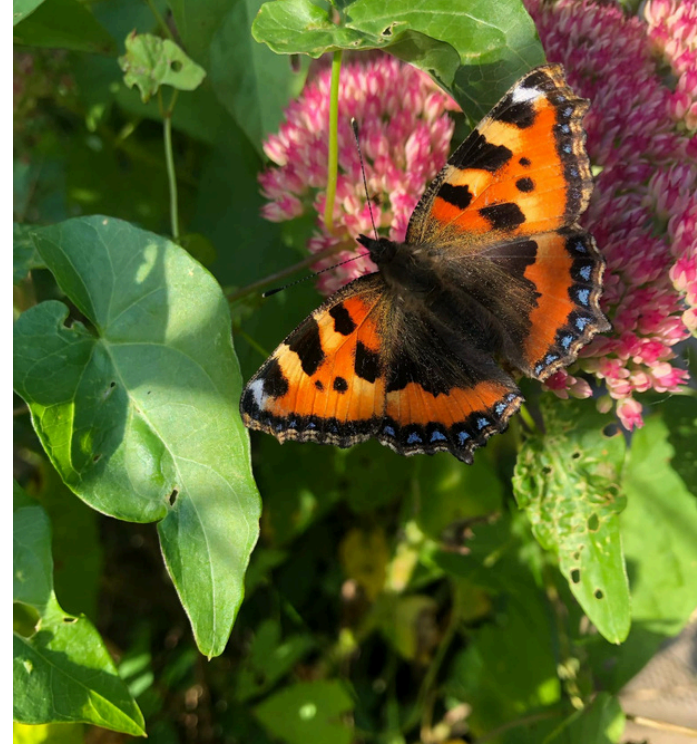
Its untouched grassland and wildflowers support local biodiversity, protected wildlife, birds and insects.

It is home to a number of ancient and veteran trees which are registered on the Ancient Trees Inventory.

It also has established areas of wetland and marsh which enhance range of habitat supported by the site.

It is valued by the community as a unique haven for wildlife despite its proximity to the urban centre of Dumfries. The community feels it should be protected as a natural asset for the town.

It is currently earmarked for large scale housing development of around 400 homes.



# Shared Concerns

Kingholm Quay area has unique challenges in bringing different strands of the community together. Various agencies, including Kingholm Quay Community Council, Kingholm Quay Community Centre and teams within Dumfries & Galloway Council (such as Community Safety and Active Travel) have faced difficulties with formal community engagement.

However, the future of Ladyfield has consistently brought large numbers from across the community, and from adjacent wards, to share their concerns into how the site will be used and the impact this may have on the area.

For this reason, Kingholm Quay Community Council decided, with the support of the community, to limit the focus of this Local Place Plan to the specific site of Ladyfield.

The community consistently express their concerns and hopes for the future of the site, which are outlined in the following pages.

As the future of Ladyfield becomes clearer, Kingholm Quay Community Council may wish to revisit and update the plan with greater detail around the community vision for the site and strategy for enacting this.



# Key Concerns

Ladyfield is currently listed on LDP2 as a site zoned for significant housing development.

LDP2 outlined that sites for development in D&G should avoid:

- Areas at risk of flooding and erosion
- The use of agricultural land
- Greenfield land
- Conservation area
- Areas of ancient woodland
- Habitats of protected wildlife

However these features are all present at Ladyfield and the community feels that Ladyfield should not have been included in LDP2 from the outset.

LDP2 was based on evidence which did not recognise the site has having protected wildlife, ancient trees or watercourses and wetlands upon it. More recent assessments reflect that Ladyfield possesses all of these attributes. The community therefore believes that Ladyfield was included on LDP2 based on inaccurate evidence and is eager for Dumfries & Galloway Council to be fully informed about Ladyfield, its characteristics and challenges, and the impact that development would have.



# Key Concerns

As it is zoned on LDP2 for housing development, Crichton Trust developed a masterplan for a modern and dense housing estate. The community is concerned that this would adversely impact the site, surrounding areas and existing community, as well as Dumfries town centre.

Residents are largely against development of the site and Kingholm Quay Community Council has sought to document the concerns and wishes of the community so that these can be better understood by Dumfries & Galloway Council in how the community wants to see the land used and its character protected.

## LADYFIELD IS VULNERABLE TO:

- Flooding
- Limited traffic capacity on surrounding roads
- Limited parking due to historic road network
- Erosion of its historic character
- Erosion of its conservation area, outlook and landscape
- Erosion of protected wildlife habitat
- Impact on registered veteran and ancient trees

The site is entirely undeveloped greenfield land, in greenbelt area which distinguishes Kingholm Quay from the town of Dumfries. Development would swallow Kingholm Quay into the urban sprawl of the town.

While housing development is needed within Dumfries, national and local policies endorse a 'Town Centre First' approach which makes Ladyfield unsuited to development and would undermine Dumfries Town Centre due to the scale of what is proposed.



# Flooding

The adjacent map shows the SEPA flood risk to the site from river flooding which already extends onto the western edge of Ladyfield.

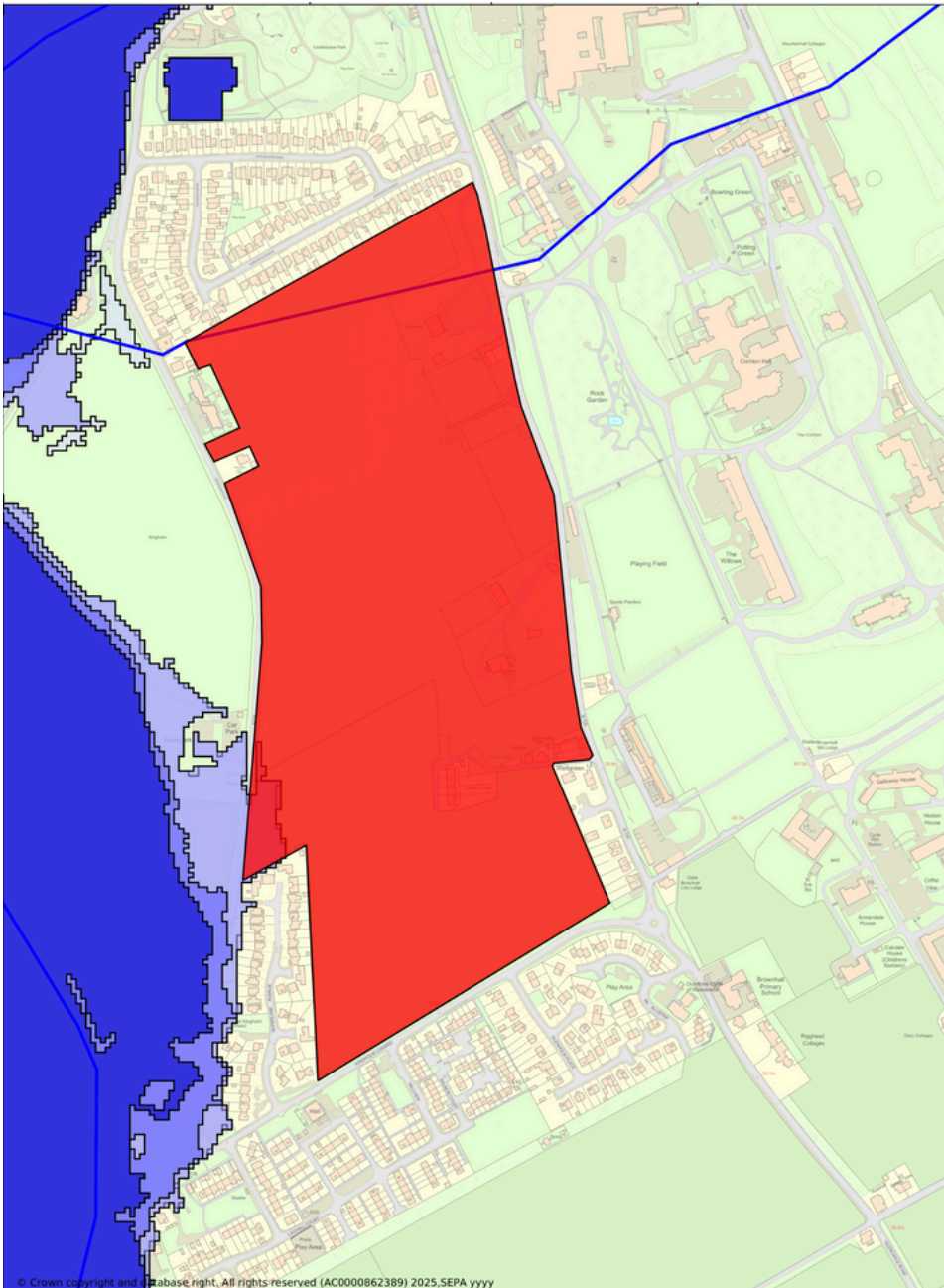
Ladyfield also has significant surface water run off from the Crichton estate to the East, which collects at the western boundary of the site and already encroaches on homes within Kingholm Quay each winter.

Ladyfield also has waterways and historic wells on the site which swell in capacity during the winter months and often overflow onto the site.

The roads around Ladyfield also flood regularly during the winter when river levels are high. Kingholm Road regularly floods to the west of Ladyfield at the Harbour as well as near the entrance to Castledykes. Glencaple Road to the west also floods regularly due to surface run off from Crichton.

Ladyfield is already vulnerable to flooding and this risk is increasing over time with climate change.

Under National Planning Framework 4 (Policy 10: Coastal development and Policy 22: Flood risk and water management), the site would not be recommended for development due to this risk alone.



# Traffic

Ladyfield sits on the southern boundary of Dumfries and can only be accessed through a known traffic bottleneck at the Three Road Ends where the three main routes to the south of the town converge at a single junction. This area is already notoriously congested and carries a significant capacity of traffic due to the traffic flow to Dumfries & Galloway College, the Crichton Estate, Mountainhall Treatment Centre and Midpark Hospital. This places a significant burden on a junction of limited capacity. Roadworks and congestion in this area causes traffic issues and congestion across Dumfries town centre.

The two roads accessing Ladyfield, via Glencaple Road and Kingholm Road have further reduced capacity due to their width, poor visibility, on-street parking and limited alternative solutions due to the historic road infrastructure of Crichton Royal Institution, Castledykes and Ladyfield itself.

Traffic capacity and safety concerns resulting from development at Ladyfield have been consistently raised by residents across Dumfries and as far as Caerlaverock. Dumfries & Galloway Council's own EIA reports also stated that developments which increase traffic at the Three Road Ends should be avoided.

Ladyfield is vulnerable to traffic capacity and parking issues.

Development of the site would lead to significant traffic issues impacting the area around Ladyfield but also across Dumfries.



# Community Consultations

Two consultations have been undertaken relating to development of this site within the past few years. Residents express frustration at raising consistent concerns, turning into ‘consultation fatigue’ this plan has sought to prevent.

## CRICHTON TRUST

Crichton Trust held four consultation events between June and October 2022 and documented the following ‘key outcomes’ in their Masterplan.

They reported that those consulted stated:

- The site should be left as a biodiverse wild landscape for nature to thrive
- Development of the site will have a negative impact on the roads around the site
- The site floods and development will have a further negative impact
- Brownfield sites around Dumfries should be brought back into active use [instead]

## SAVE LADYFIELD

A local community group, Save Ladyfield, held a consultation event attended by 119 people from the Ladyfield and Kingholm Quay area on 6th September 2022.

They also randomly sampled residents in the local community, with a total of 284 responses:

- 87% felt Ladyfield was not an appropriate location for residential development
- 86.5% stated concerns relating to traffic issues
- 69.1% reported concerns about flooding
- 86.5% reported concerns about loss of greenspace

721 people signed an online petition in December 2022 entirely opposing the plans to develop the Ladyfield site for housing.

The following proposals for the site are based on the wishes expressed by residents within these two consultations and within the wider community discussions heard at a variety of community events and engagements.



# Hopes for Ladyfield 1



**Under National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (Policy 5: Soils) agricultural land is recommended to be preserved.**

The southern half of the Ladyfield site is arable land in continuous use and leased by the Crichton Trust to a local farmer. This area also serves as water storage for a significant amount of surface water run off from Crichton and makes the site particularly wet during the winter months.

**Ladyfield Local Place Plan seeks to maintain the arable land in its current use.**

In the event that it ceases to be useful as agricultural land, the plan would wish this area to be included in the park with potential for example as public gardens, planting of public orchards and maintaining its value as a natural area of water seepage.



# Hopes for Ladyfield 2



**Under NPF4 (Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places) conservation areas should be protected from development.**

The conservation status of the eastern half of the site outlines the importance of protecting the outlook of the Crichton Estate across to the Lake District in the South and the Galloway hills to the west.

**The Ladyfield Local Place Plan seeks to prevent the area being developed for modern housing to prioritise the open greenspace. This includes considerations for the development of the existing listed buildings on the Ladyfield site (Ladyfield East and Ladyfield West) and their surrounding ground.**



# Hopes for Ladyfield 3



**Under NPF4 (Policy 8: Green Belts) recommends that greenbelt land is preserved.**

Residents describe the Ladyfield site as 'green belt' which distinguishes the unique character of Kingholm Quay as a historic river harbour dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, from the more urban areas of Dumfries town.

**The Ladyfield Local Place Plan seeks to maintain and identify Ladyfield as essential green belt which protects the character of Kingholm Quay as a small village on the outskirts of Dumfries and not a suburb connected to the town.**



# Hopes for Ladyfield 4

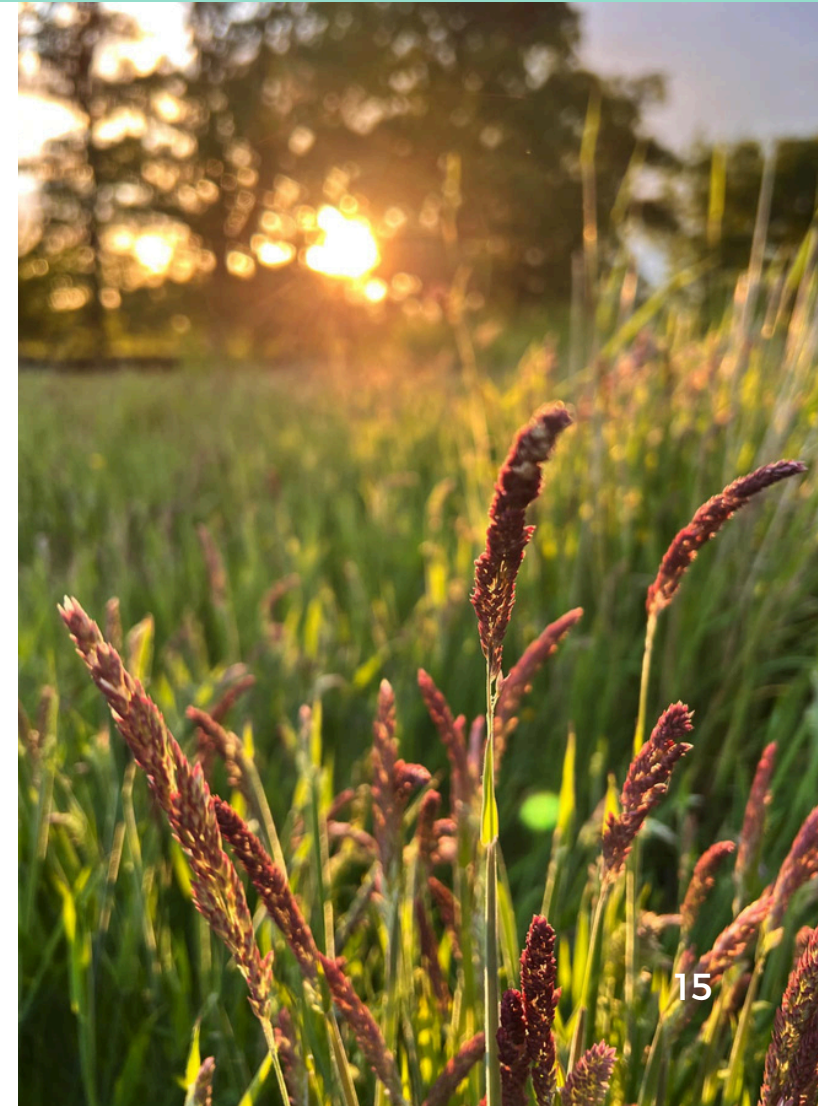


The majority of residents surveyed, and comments made across the community, reflect a wish that Ladyfield is protected as a conservation site that prioritises wildlife, biodiversity, trees and benefits the local community.

Residents have expressed a wish for the site to be enhanced further as a designated nature reserve, with enhancements to improve the wetland areas, forested areas, additional sympathetic replanting and nurturing of the site. Habitats of protected wildlife and birds would have to be carefully assessed as part of any plans in order to protect the established wildlife already present.

**The Ladyfield Local Place Plan seeks to have Ladyfield recognised as a wild park to enhance the biodiversity of the area but also to complement the manicured gardens and parkland of Crichton Estate.**

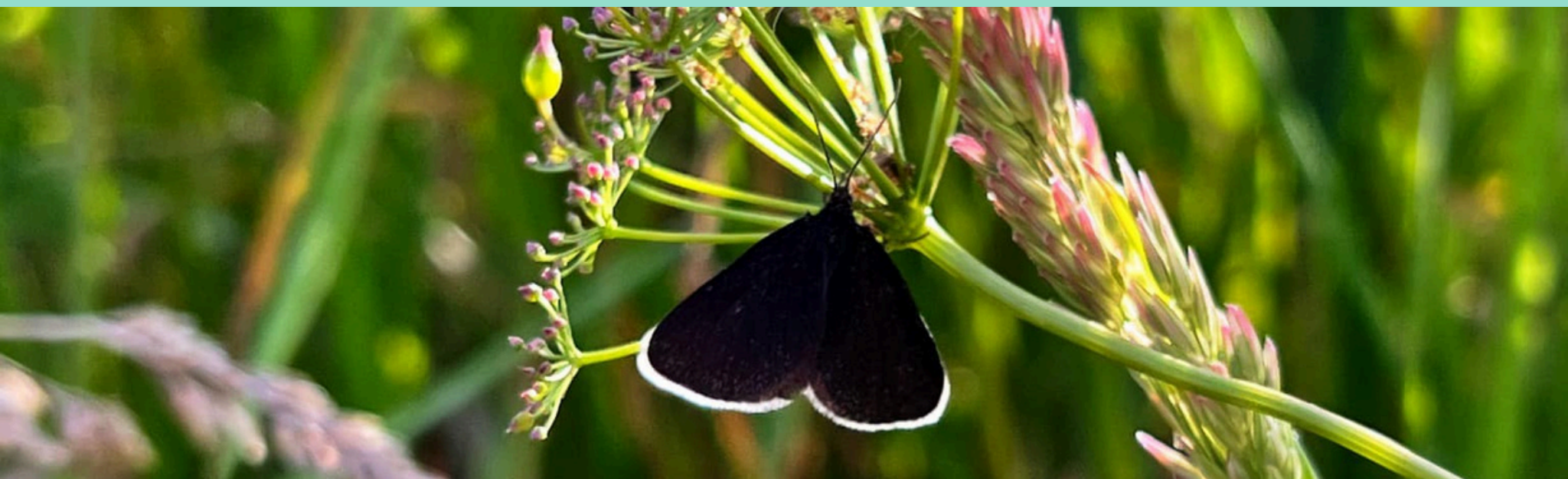
**These concerns and wishes are supported by NPF4 Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 14 and 23.**



# Ladyfield Vision

Further consultation by Kingholm Quay Community Council on the detail of the Ladyfield Local Place Plan commenced on 26th May 2025. Discussions elicited various ideas from the community regarding sympathetic enhancements for the site which can be expanded upon in future reviews of the plan, including:

- Educational opportunities for the community, primary school and links to Higher Education
- Community opportunities to access green space for mental health and wellbeing
- Opportunities for sympathetic ecotourism
- Opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site to benefit wildlife and possible establishment of a community trust
- Establishing greater links to existing local groups and charities focused on similar green objectives, such as the Veterans Garden Dumfries, Incredible Edible, The People's Project and to wider wildlife protection agencies, such as Species on the Edge.





# Ladyfield Park Ideas

## **Accessible Access with a path connecting Kingholm Road and Crichton**

Residents have expressed a wish for the site to be made more accessible in a sympathetic manner, ideally connecting the Nith river walk which ends at Kingholm Quay with the walks around Crichton. Making a route such as this accessible for those with mobility issues has been suggested.

## **Accessible Social / Community Garden**

Residents would also like areas off Glencaple Road to be more accessible, possibly with a sociable picnic and seating area near the original entrance to Hannahfield farm at Hannahfield Cottages.

Residents have also expressed a wish for gardening opportunities for local children and community groups which could be supported within the same area of the site.





## Wet & Wild

Residents are clear that while areas could be made more safe for walking on the site, they wish the majority of the site to be protected for the wildlife and particularly for the deer and protected species who live on the estate. The community wants to avoid wildlife being adversely affected by significant encroachment from people and dogs.

### **Enhanced Wetland**

Residents expressed support for rewilding and enhancing the natural wetland area on the western boundary of the site along the Kingholm Road.

Wolverines have been reported on the site, and as a protected species Ladyfield provides an ideal wetland habitat to support them and other wetland species.





# Leafy & Green

## Enhanced Foresteing

Ladyfield is already home to a large number of veteran and mature trees which provide essential habitat to a variety of birdlife, including protected species such as owls.

Residents would like the site to be carefully planted to increase the number of native trees on the site and enhance the habitat available for birds, bats and insects.



# Grassy Meadow

## Enhanced Grassland and meadow

Ladyfield's grassland is currently abandoned pasture but sustains a variety of wildlife including a family of Roe deer and protected species such as badgers.

Residents have expressed a wish for enhanced native rewilding, adding native grasses and wildflowers to support greater biodiversity and encourage more insect life and pollinators to the site.

While residents would like areas of the site to be more accessible, the overwhelming concern has been supporting wildlife and preventing undue encroachment which might affect the species already living on the site. Paths would have to be carefully selected to avoid nests and setts and providing viewing of the area from safe vantage points which prevent disturbance to the wildlife who live on Ladyfield.



# Ladyfield Future

Kingholm Quay Community Council shared this Local Place Plan with the community to sensecheck that it accurately reflected the community's wishes.

130 residents from across Kingholm Quay and St Michael's ward areas responded to this consultation.

88.3% wanted the agricultural land to be maintained as it is

94.5% wanted Ladyfield being retained as a green conservation area

95.2% wanted Ladyfield to remain as greenbelt separating Kingholm from Dumfries

86.6% wanted it to be made into a wild park

Comments from residents reflected ongoing fierce opposition to Ladyfield being developed for housing.

The overwhelming majority reflected a wish for it to be left as it currently is, but with most residents understanding that its current status leaves it vulnerable to deterioration, vandalism and erosion without some form of sympathetic oversight.





we love ladyfield



**Ladyfield should be protected and enhanced as a unique wild habitat which is an asset to Dumfries.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Consultation information:  
Crichton Trust & Save Ladyfield

Photography:  
Save Ladyfield

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Save Ladyfield  
Kingholm Quay Community Association  
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Residents of Kingholm Quay Ward