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COUNCIL BACKS CAMPAIGNERS' SCHEME FOR PORTLETHEN GREEN HAVEN

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Environmental campaigners have secured agreement from Aberdeenshire Council to create a green haven in an Aberdeen commuter town.

Residents of Portlethen want to turn an area of agricultural land into a community woodland park.

After more than a year of negotiations they have secured the backing of Aberdeenshire Council. A planning application for the scheme, on a 17-acre site opposite Portlethen swimming pool, has now been submitted.

Portlethen was identified as lacking trees in a report produced by the council and the community sacrificed a large amount of recreational land for the new academy.

But environmental campaigners hope the latest plan will go some way towards addressing that balance.

The project has been led by Denise Martin, 52, chairman of the Portlethen Moss Conservation Group.

She said "We were asked by the council if we would take on other environmental projects and we knew they owned this area of land.

"We put forward a proposal asking if they would consider making it community parkland and fortunately they viewed it favourably.

"We still need planning permission but so far everyone has been very supportive of the idea. If we get the go ahead we would expect to start work early next year."

As well as providing a new woodland area, with trees, footpaths and a natural play area for children, the scheme would also link the north and south of the town with plans to reopen a footpath running alongside Portlethen Church.

Mrs Martin, of Easter Drive, added: "We would like to get the whole community involved with tree planting and fundraising. This will be something that will take years to mature but once it is there it will be something to be enjoyed by everyone and a lasting memory for those who created it."

The scheme has the backing of Kincardine and Mearns area manager Willie Munro.

He said: "This is something which has been very much community driven.

"The council had some land which was acquired with the original intention of creating playing fields but with the new academy that was not required. The plan for a woodland is an excellent idea which would really enhance Portlethen."

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