



THE FRIENDS OF TRENT COUNTRY PARK

Autumn 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends

We hope you have all had a good summer and have been able to enjoy time in our lovely park. A full update follows, but first a date for your diary. The Friends AGM and Autumn public meeting will take place on **Monday, November 27 7:30-9:30 pm at Christ the King Catholic Church on Bramley Road**. More details will follow closer to the date. We hope to see you there.

Peter W. Gibbs, Chair

Events

We continue to work to reduce the load of avoidable commercial events on the Park as much as possible. Some progress can be reported in that, apart from one weekend with Ghana and Mauritius which are communal events attracting much smaller 2-3,000 crowds each, the influx has been stemmed. For now, so residents and visitors have had a far easier time this year to put the Park to its proper use.

We continue to negotiate with Enfield council to return events to no more than the historic carrying capacity - 10,000 maximum per day. This was the standard agreed this year, and we have weighed in your behalf to keep it at that level, not just for the Park but the benefit of the whole neighbourhood and community. We can report some improved understanding of this necessity amongst senior officers, and await announcements on the 2024 programme.

There are signs the Council now recognises the force of our argument that, at the bottom line, the major events of the past have not delivered anything worthwhile, revenues such as they are being consumed in costs and restoration of the Park. We continue to signal our support for community events, relevant to the Cockfosters area, and of size to suit the conditions in this suburban setting.

It is worth remarking that large commercial events have not gone away, and in other areas around London where they have been permitted this year, such as Finsbury Park, the community and council have experienced damage and loss that could well result in policy changes there too. It is unacceptable that the revenue from staged events falls mainly into the hands of promoters, and does not accrue to the public who have to tolerate them.



The Cafe

The operator of the cafe was recently evicted for non-payment of his rent. He also operated the cafes in Oakwood, Town and Whitewebbs Parks, which are also currently closed. Over the past couple of years the Friends have received and passed along to the Council many complaints about cleanliness, quality, cost and service, so we hope for a more appropriate operation in the future. The council intend to put in a temporary mobile unit while the tendering process is under way. If anyone is interested in operating the cafe, contact <mailto:peter.grimston@enfield.gov.uk>

Thames Water

Thames Water has been hard at work increasing and securing fresh water capacity for our area at its facility just north of the café, and works will wind up this year. Water will then be drawn from the upper Thames, processed here and distributed to the area. Thames have been exemplary operators, keeping us fully informed, and intruding into the Park as little as possible. Water companies may not attract too many admirers elsewhere but this one is in

good standing at least with the Friends. The extra capacity is needed now, and will be even more important if Enfield council achieves its objective of increasing housing in the west of the borough in the coming years.

The Heritage Gate

You have probably noticed that the Cockfosters heritage gate has not been repaired since it was struck for the 4th time this spring, and displaced off its base. The north pillar, weighing some 2 tonnes now rests on the oak leaf which is "grounded" and rotting. A small additional knock and it will all come down. The urn has not been replaced, Enfield council is once again looking the other way - for a grade two listed asset, this is shabby treatment but typical of the neglect and short change Enfield council hands out to Trent Park. We and CLARA, the local residents association, are pressing the council to ban heavy 40 tonne lorries from using this gate because of the width limit; it says it does restrict such vehicles, but as we know, it doesn't enforce its contractual conditions. We are supporting officials to control use of the whole Park and heritage assets much more effectively.

The Berkeley estate

The Berkeley estate makes further progress and is now home to a significant community. The grounds work is largely completed and the shape of the estate facing the Park is pretty clear to see - a quality job. The heritage assets reflect again the estate as it was at the end of the Sassoon era in the 30's with all the post-war ramshackle university buildings removed. Work on the mansion and its museum feature continues - a more complicated project than originally envisaged owing to the fragility of the fabric.

Neighbouring threats to the Park

The Park is an acknowledged special landscape to be conserved for the million or so who visit every year. Community groups and the Friends have worked hard for many months to ward off TfL's efforts to declare the Cockfosters station car park "redundant" so it can move in with an over-dense building project, primarily of small units, rising to 14 stories in a monolithic style, and degrading the whole Park setting. The car park is **not redundant**, it is valued by many thousands and is often full.

Now that Arnos Grove station car park has been closed by TfL, Cockfosters is even more in demand by travellers. Development here was approved by just one vote by Enfield council's planning committee, despite vigorous opposition. Campaigning by local groups, including the Friends, had a good outcome in that the Secretary of State for Transport used his powers under the 1999 GLA act to refuse change of use for this asset, so development cannot proceed. He cited its importance for the public transport network as a terminal station. The Mayor of London has treated this decision as an intrusion on his authority, but the constant and heavy use of the car park for the many thousands who rely on it to access the tube, shows the community has a prior claim on this asset. Housing has many other options across the borough.

But this brake can be released at any time, especially if there is a change of government. If then constructed as currently planned, it will dominate the Cockfosters area, and the Park, and set a precedent for dense high rise building that will completely change the village character of the area. And of course it will rob the community of a valued transport asset.

Public Safety and Crime

The Friends have persuaded Enfield Council to intervene to block promoted rave events this summer, and this has been successful. Of course raves are thereby deflected elsewhere, but it is the nature of these things that once a site has acquired "accepted" status, it will be increasingly invaded by elements injurious to public health and well-being. Public assets need protection, and the expectations of such groups managed to deter them.



The Draft Local Plan

Friends will recall the current Local Plan, which exists to govern use of land across the borough and where development is permitted, is coming to the end of its 15 year life. A new local plan is under way and there has been considerable public input throughout the process, in particular objections to the council's stated desire that building on the Green Belt is the only way to meet housing need. While development will be required, regeneration of old brownfield assets should be prioritised and should meet present housing and other needs without denaturing the current living space.

Despite more than 7,000 responses at the last consultation phase, we understand that the council is moving forwards with the very aggressive draft plan that was revealed 2 years ago. It proposes development on the open farmland south of the Park and in N Enfield, essentially all over Crews Hill and up to the M-25. The next phase of the local plan - Regulation 19 - is expected later this year. Although public input is more complicated at this phase because of the technical responses required, local organisations such as Enfield RoadWatch and The Enfield Society will have guidance on how to respond and we will send out more information about this when the time comes.

This version of the plan, along with all the objections and comments, will go to the Planning Inspector who, through a long process of public examinations, will decide whether the plan is sound and can proceed. There are many arguments that can be made against the plan so campaigners will keep fighting throughout the process and are cautiously optimistic about mitigating the council's ambitions at least to some degree.

The Friends are closely involved in the campaign on behalf of open air amenities and the

Green Belt. The Friends do not have a policy on house building but seek to preserve the ecology and character, the heritage and amenity of the Trent Country Park endowment and are putting up a case, with others, to spare West Enfield from this destruction.

Projects - Friends initiatives to enhance the visitor experience

The Friends continue to work with LBE on various improvements and ecological projects in the park. Here's a quick update:

- **Limes Ave;** the surface is breaking up under the weight of trucks for events and we are pressing for these multiple trip hazards to be rectified. There is some hope of work taking place later this year..
- **Kids play areas** are fully open and much appreciated by the many youngsters and families who work on their hand to eye and balancing skills. The Friends keep a close watch on these amenities to ensure they perform as required. Restoration of one piece of apparatus that is still out of commission after more than a year in the youth play area near Go Ape is being pressed with Parks.
- **Wildflower meadow** - left inside the Cockfosters gate - this feature has rather lost its way owing to inadequate maintenance, so the flowers are not what they were. We seek to restore this area as a highlight on entering the park.
- **Café:** as mentioned above, the current tenant has been discharged and a new operator will be announced in due course.

Contacts

Please feel free to contact us if you have any concerns about the park or would like to join or help the committee. You are guaranteed a response from the committee.

You may also want to share your concerns with the Cockfosters Ward Councillors.

Cllr.Alessandro.Georgiou@Enfield.gov.uk

Cllr.Ruby.Sampson@Enfield.gov.uk

Park issues can also be reported via the [Council website](#).



Membership renewals

Thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership for 2023. It's not too late. You can renew or join via PayPal on the website for just £4 a year or £25 for a lifetime membership.

[Click here to support us](#)

FRIENDS OF TRENT COUNTRY PARK

WELCOME ABOUT US NEWS, EVENTS & MEETINGS ABOUT TRENT PARK LINKS CONTACT

Welcome to our Website
info@friendsoftrentcountrypark.org.uk



OUR MAILING LIST

Sign up to our News Updates here

NEWS, EVENTS & MEETINGS

Lockdown - Version 2 November 4, 2020

2020 AGM Report and Autumn Newsletter
October 28, 2020

Summer 2020 Newsletter August 21, 2020

July Update Trent Park during the
Coronavirus crisis July 5, 2020

Spring 2020 Newsletter May 1, 2020

Please support the Wildlife Rescue
Ambulance Centre April 9, 2020

Welcome to the Friends of Trent Country Park website

We hope you will find the information here of interest and that it will encourage you to help us to improve the facilities in Trent Country Park for the enjoyment of all.

Visit the website

The Friends website is packed with useful and fun information. You can learn about the history and ecology of the park and much more.

[Website](#)

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<https://friendsoftrentcountrypark.org.uk/>



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