

# FRIENDS OF TRENT COUNTRY PARK

Report by Peter W Gibbs, Chairman

**Report on Proceedings of AGM & General meeting, held at 7.45pm on Nov 27th 2023 at Christ the King Catholic Church, Bramley Rd, Enfield. With added explanatory notes.**

**AGM** - The Chairman opened the AGM and welcomed 29 members and guests:

Cllr Alessandro Georgiou

Cllr. Ruby Sampson

Colin Bull, Chair CLARA

## **ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

The following candidates were presented for approval and voted in to hold office for 2023/4:

Chairman – Peter W Gibbs

Vice Chair and Treasurer – Carol Fisk

Membership secretary – Brenda Nathan

The **Friends Action Committee** was introduced comprising the above officers of the Friends plus: Ronald Cohen, Tony Hillman, Shanna Marinar, Tony Claydon, Juliet Barnett [Trent Park Conservation Committee], Kirsty Johnstone ( Berkeley home owners)

Additional contributions always welcome, please volunteer your skills; there is plenty of interesting work regarding the park and planning

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **FRIENDS OF TRENT COUNTRY PARK TREASURER'S REPORT**

#### **AUTUMN 2023**

BANK ACCOUNT: **Starting balance at 31-10-22: £ 4,808.91**

Activity since last AGM report:

<u>Income:</u>	Membership dues:	£ 141.77
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 4,950.68</b>

<u>Expenses:</u>	Ruth Smith – web hosting	£ 25.00
	Christ the King hall rental [Nov '23]	£ 40.00
	Cricket Club hall rental [Nov '22 and May '23]	£ 60.00

**Total £ 125.00**

**Balance at 20-11-23: £ 4,825.68**

NOTES: £ 200 from a Grassroots grant encumbered for park projects  
£2,000 Tesco grant encumbered for Water Garden project.  
Unencumbered funds = **£2,625.68**

CAROL FISK, TREASURER

The report was well received by the meeting and voted for acceptance.  
The AGM closed and the general meeting commenced.

## **GENERAL MEETING**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Our team has spent much of the past year assessing how Enfield council will now honour its commitment to sustain and enhance TCP, its premier park attracting 1 million visitors a year. At the moment only the most basic maintenance is being applied, and deterioration has not been addressed. Further meetings with officials are scheduled to find ways of persuading the council to restore a reasonable level of maintenance. Enhancement projects seem a long way off when even maintenance is not provided.

TCP was managed under a 3-year maintenance and improvements plan which was discussed annually with Friends. It was withdrawn prior to Covid and not replaced. TCP was awarded Green Flag quality status for some years but LBE withdrew TCP from the scheme in 2017 and promised to maintain the GF standard, but it has not.

The Friends have attempted again to offer practical support where appropriate on a quid pro quo basis. It is not our aim to demand a fairer share of council spend without coming forward ourselves, but the Council has not responded.

We Friends have now tabled a fresh list of essential items required to keep TCP in former condition, and discussions with officers are slated. Councillors are sympathetic but nothing has yet translated into action. It's up to the Council to undertake the basic items such as repairing all the kids' area swings – one now over 2 years derelict.

Events revenues were promised to be spent on parks, but clearly budgets have been removed so there is no evident improvement in cash for parks, sustaining our argument that oversized commercial events in fact contribute nothing positive, only wear and tear and quite a lot of damage, and loss of visitor amenity. There is no evidence that parks have a champion within Enfield council - parks have no votes so no one really cares, excepting our ward councillors.

The Council has not withdrawn its financial objective, namely to move the whole parks estate on to a self-funding basis. All Friends regard this as totally unachievable without major loss of amenity and quality in the parks estate, and so reject it.

On the events front, we have learned the Council is working to restore major events, proposing a new entrance for oversize trucks, an outlay of at least £300,000 and still occupying in effect half the summer holiday period, depriving families of the park during a key outdoor opportunity. Together with residents, the Friends continue to press the Council to desist from massive events in the park – to concentrate on local and community activities of far greater local value.

Major events are not cost free at all. Damage to the exhibition ground from 2021 remains visible and our Grade 2 heritage gateway has been damaged for the fourth time with no repairs – the product of uncontrolled access by over-sized contractor vehicles, which the Council is belatedly coming to recognise cannot be squeezed through the gate. Repairs always take at least a year because Enfield Council is focused on budgets and not outcomes.

On one issue, security, the Council has now stepped up to the plate and we recognised that illegal reveller gatherings are now effectively kept out of the park. This change is most welcome although tinged with regret that we were told for years that action was not possible over raves.

The Friends remind all members of the value of writing to the council with observations and proposals. Short notes are fine. Alternatively all notes sent to the Friends will be responded to and passed on if this is preferred. By writing in twice a year, boosting the committee's efforts, members make the public's views plain to LBE. The chances of improvements are much increased with widespread support.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** Members are requested earnestly to address concerns to us and also make their views known via the following LBE councillors / officers:

- Leader of Enfield Council: [Cllr.nesil.caliskan@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.nesil.caliskan@enfield.gov.uk)
- Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability:  
[Cllr.Chinelo.Anyanwu@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Chinelo.Anyanwu@enfield.gov.uk)
- Assistant Cabinet Member  
[Cllr Chris.james@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Chris.james@enfield.gov.uk)
  
- Cockfosters Ward local councillors;  
[Cllr.Alessandro.Georgiou@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Alessandro.Georgiou@enfield.gov.uk)  
[Cllr.Ruby.Sampson@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Ruby.Sampson@enfield.gov.uk)
- Conservative lead for parks; [cllr.Edward.Smith@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.Edward.Smith@enfield.gov.uk)
  
- Senior Operations Manager for Parks: [Marcus.harvey@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Marcus.harvey@enfield.gov.uk)
- [Enfieldletters@london.newsquest.co.uk](mailto:Enfieldletters@london.newsquest.co.uk)
- Enfield's website has a "Report it" facility to notify anything untoward seen in the park. LBE promises to scrutinise all reports and take appropriate action.  
<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/parks/>

### **1. Events Programme (Colin Bull of CLARA)**

Residents campaigned for 8 years to bring over-sized commercial events in TCP under control. This year LBE restrained promoters to no more than 10k attendees per day. Partly as a result, no major events took place this year, only two community gatherings of about 3000 attendees each – Ghana and Mauritius. But the Council will not clarify its intentions for 2024, and appears once more to avoid the real limitations of the site and area in trying to extract real revenue from events.

Everyone supports community events in the park of a size commensurate with the facilities in the park and the need to respect quality of life expectations for neighbouring rate-paying residents.

Efforts to control events traffic and parking, and the impact on the area have not been totally successful and continue to be a matter of consultation between CLARA / Friends and officers from the two adjacent boroughs who have genuinely worked to find solutions to major public incursions. However, there is a limit to the additional costs promoters can bear. Nobody wants to chase away suitable promoters with disproportionate costs, but operating on a site not prepared for large gatherings is a fixed impediment. CLARA continues to work

towards an acceptable solution, but will oppose licence applications that damage the interests of residents and park visitors.

CLARA has vigorously opposed TfL plans to build 4 high towers on the Cockfosters station carpark, which would ruin the outlook from the park as well as overshadow the neighbourhood. At present progress is halted by an order from the SoS at the DfT. This restriction may not prevail if there is a change of administration.

## **2. Local Development Plan ( Cllr Georgiou and Carol Fisk for ERW)**

Enfield Road Watch was set up 8 years ago to resist unwarranted development of green belt along the Enfield Rd. It has now joined with other groups to resist the transformative proposals announced in Enfield Council's draft local Development Plan. The key objections surround the huge developments proposed for Vicarage Farm (Enfield Rd) Hadley Wood, and Crews Hill, amounting to small townships. Local amenities would be intolerably pressed in this event. Trent Country Park would also be impacted and its setting in the historic Enfield Chase lost.

The target build of 25,000 new houses by 2029 cited in Stage 18 has now been jacked up to 35,000 by 2041 for no explicit reason, so adding up to 80,000 residents or 25% to the current 330,000, borough population. It implies an annual build rate of some 2,000 new homes each year to 2041, vs the current build rate of 600 pa. There is no evidence building at this rate could ever be achieved. These targets are without foundation, and way beyond the social needs of the borough, are not proportionate to the proposed building sites, heavily erode the Green Belt, and cannot but result in lowered standards of living for all residents in the vicinity. If approved and built out, Enfield would be transformed and the quality of life for residents substantially degraded, including the present rural ecology. The plan would make nonsense of the Council's Climate Change ambitions.

ERW mounted a petition which was well supported, and led to a debate in Council at which the administration agreed to special measures to ensure full consultation by the public and all councillors at the Regulation 19 stage. This is important for TCP because without moderation, large tracts of land close to the park will be opened for building; in the current climate this could well be over-height tower accommodation, with severe impact on the environmental and heritage value of much of western Enfield.

All groups including Friends reject gross exploitation of the Green Belt as not justified. Re-working "brownfield" sites across the borough, fulfilling regeneration opportunities in wards with older less efficient properties is the obvious first choice for proportionate development.

After the next stage of consultation the draft plan will be put to a housing inspector for detailed analysis. It is anticipated the examination will not take place until later next year. Friends should pay close attention to the debate and be prepared to weigh in. Enfield RoadWatch, The Enfield Society and other local civic groups will provide guidance about responding to Regulation in March 2024, when the consultation is open for comments. Unchanged, this Plan is the most radical and excessive change to the whole character of Enfield and its quality of living ever proposed.

Cllr. Georgiou spoke of his group's determination to reshape Enfield's development policy to meet the real need for housing mostly from brownfield, ie previously developed, land. His group were entirely opposed to building into the Green Belt.

### **3. Volunteering with The Friends**

Friends of Trent Park would welcome more volunteers to assist in all sorts of work in the park to enhance and improve the facilities and their presentation to the public. Those with **experience in organising volunteer events, horticultural knowledge, legal experience, sports backgrounds, architectural and planning experience, social media outreach skills, event planning and management, and fund-raising experience**, are especially needed, but we also welcome anyone who can spare a few hours canvassing in the park for new members and helping with other one-off tasks.

### **4. Social Media**

Please Like our **Facebook** page and share it with friends and family. This is the first place to look for news of events, alerts or just pretty pictures of the park. We would like to increase our **X [Twitter]** and **Instagram** activity. If anyone can help, please get in touch. And our website has lots of good information about the park, council contacts, etc.:

<http://www.Friendsoftrentcountrypark.org.uk/>

### **Next Friends meeting**

The next meeting is planned for May 2024. A further newsletter will be issued early next year.

Meeting closed 21.20hrs.

PWG 1-12-23