



THE FRIENDS OF TRENT COUNTRY PARK

Winter 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends

After so much rain this winter the Park is generally in good heart and we look forward to the bulb season with anticipation of a good show.

Parks maintenance has seen some progress of late but much remains outstanding. The Friends produced a list of maintenance requirements to meet the expectations of our many visitors, and pressed the Parks Department to find resources to fulfil its obligations. So far, potholes along part of Limes Avenue have at last been treated, but Parks ran out of materials before completing the work. Resurfacing of the café woodland carpark has been put off indefinitely, the money for this having been taken by the council's licensing department for other purposes. Likewise repairs to the damaged heritage gate, now nearly two years waiting agreement to proceed, are on the back burner for want of council funding.

The Friends are maintaining pressure on the Council to abide by its own assessment that major events in the Park deliver no net social or revenue benefits to western Enfield, but definitely degrade the park and its neighbourhood. At this moment we know of no plans for major commercial events this year, and continue to encourage Enfield council to support community events and activities of value to residents, and proportionate in size to the facilities the Park offers.

Longer term we all face a growing problem over the future of the Park and its assets. Enfield council has long worked on a comparison basis with other London boroughs most of which do not have the extent of green belt we do. Enfield was a key royal hunting ground for centuries and this wonderful undulating greenery is an important part of London's heritage, not just Enfield's. Parks occupy a large part of our green belt and have been protected to date, but our council is no longer prepared to recognise their importance. This move has major consequences for Trent Country Park and the whole area, explored in greater detail below.

The Friends observe that most of the arguments put forward in the draft Local Plan, now being examined by a government Planning Inspector, have council revenue at their core. The actual housing needs of the borough's residents are much lower than Enfield council seeks to build over the relatively short period to 2041. And much of that build is being pressed into western Enfield, if approved.

The Friends are also keeping an eye on TfL's delayed plans to close the Cockfosters station carpark for development. Not only would this dense high rise scheme have a major impact on the skyline from the Park, but would we fear, decant numerous commuter cars into our Park carpark when they are denied safe parking at the station. We observe that this is now taking place at Arnos Grove station which has lost its valued car park. Surrounding streets have been made subject to controlled parking zones – and everyone loses. Oakwood carpark is now also slated for closure and development under the proposed Local Plan.

Given the national drumbeat of growth through building, it is not realistic to hold the current pattern of land development in western Enfield, but judicious resistance by Friends and associates can bring moderation to the ambitions of developers so as to preserve proportionality and character across the area we call home.

Our **next public meeting is planned for May, venue to be agreed.** Details will be circulated. Do come and tell us your views.

Peter W. Gibbs
Chair

Local Plan Stage 1 Hearings update

The Stage 1 examination hearings for Enfield's Local Plan concluded on January 30 after six intense sessions scrutinising legal and compliance issues, the allocation of housing and employment land, the need for Green Belt release and more. The purpose of the hearings is for the Government-appointed Planning Inspector to determine if the plan is 'sound': was it positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with the London Plan and national policy?

The local interest groups were arrayed down one side of the room and the council's appointed lawyer [KC], officers, consultants and the developers on the other. It's highly unusual for there to be so much local engagement at this stage and it was notable how well-informed all the local speakers were. The Friends were represented at the table. We think many of our arguments had traction with the Planning Inspector.

A number of elements and issues in the proposed plan give the Inspector pause and could affect its soundness. Among them are the protracted problems with the Regulation 19 database, from which some public representations were still missing at the start of the examination hearings. The council has committed to transfer all the data to a specialist outside company, whose platform is more robust, by March 31. Any representors who did not have an opportunity to submit hearing statements must be given the chance to do so. We are unsure how many people that amounts to. You should be contacted by the Council if you are among them.

There are also some Duty to Cooperate issues with neighbouring local authorities and statutory consultees and other concerns which could have a bearing on the plan's soundness. The GLA [Greater London Authority] and TfL [Transport for London] contend that the plan in its present form is unsound because of the proposed Green Belt releases. However, [a statement delivered from the Mayor](#) about the need for Green Belt release in the next London Plan and an upcoming London-wide Green Belt/ grey belt review caused some consternation. [\[Enfield Dispatch article\]](#)

The Inspector was very clear throughout the rest of the hearings that he is assessing the plan under the 2023 National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] and current London Plan but the council's KC tried to emphasise whenever possible that the future cannot be ignored and the new rules must be material considerations in this case. The Inspector is thinking about that. We argued several times, and I think

with traction, that releasing Green Belt before the London-wide survey would be jumping the gun, because it might prove that none of Enfield's Green Belt is needed or, if some, not the sites currently proposed.

We are now awaiting the Planning Inspector's notes or report. If the Inspector finds the plan unsound and looks to make it sound through some main modifications, he could decide to delete the two large Green Belt releases, reduce the housing target accordingly and leave it there. In which case, there would be a more considered strategic release of Green Belt once the London-wide survey is complete and the new London Plan is in place [the current one expires in March 2026]. However, in the [GLA's statement](#) they recommended three ways to make the plan sound. Removing the Chase Park and Crews Hill allocations was only the third option. First was a major modification increasing the Green Belt release as suggested by TfL [see below] and second was the inclusion of an Area Action Plan within the local plan. Both those remedies would probably fall foul of the new pragmatism rules, which prevent a local plan examination from becoming too drawn out. The work and consultations needed for those options would probably take too long. However, we don't know if there are exceptions to the pragmatism rule so we are concerned about that.

The Planning Inspector will now be busy with the Bristol Local Plan until late April, so we do not expect the Stage 2 hearings to happen until late May or early June. Those will include site-specific sessions. At the end of Stage 1, the Inspector would not commit either way to moving on to Stage 2. If he finds the proposals unsound and not able to be made sound with modifications, he could stop the whole process and require it to start again. That would take place under the new NPPF, which has less protection for the Green Belt and more emphasis on development, so making the current plan sound would probably be preferable.

You can find more information about the hearings in the following Enfield Dispatch articles:

Day 1 <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/khan-set-to-support-new-housing-on-londons-green-belt-for-first-time-inquiry-hears/https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/khan-set-to-support-new-housing-on-londons-green-belt-for-first-time-inquiry-hears>

Day 2 <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/council-admits-it-wont-be-able-to-meet-london-plan-housing-target-for-enfield/>

Day 5 <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/high-harm-to-green-belt-caused-by-housing-plans-enfield-council-admits/https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/high-harm-to-green-belt-caused-by-housing-plans-enfield-council-admits/>

The Transport for London [TfL] proposal

[TfL's hearing statement](#) gave the first suggestion that the Mayor might be changing his stance on protecting all of London's Green Belt. The statement suggests that, in order to make the Local Plan sound, any Green Belt release needs to have greater housing density than currently proposed and that the first Green Belt to be released should be adjacent to the Piccadilly Line [Oakwood to Cockfosters]. This would mean developing a large area of Trent Country Park. Heritage and ecological considerations aside, this would allow development without major infrastructure investment.

TfL's proposal would also include the greenfield land currently proposed for release - Vicarage Farm - but later on once there is a critical mass allowing for public transport investment. So instead of 4,000 homes on Vicarage Farm, we would end up with 12,000 all along Enfield Road/ Bramley Road [A110]. That would change the character of Western Enfield entirely. The Green Belt in question is all high-performing and its release would cause high harm to the remaining Green Belt.

We hope that TfL's suggestion does not indicate that the upcoming London-wide survey will make access to public transport an overriding factor for Green Belt release, regardless of the quality of Green Belt in question. The GLA made the point that very little of London's Green Belt is near public transport so, in Enfield's case, we fear that it may. [\[Dispatch article about TfL's proposal\]](#)

[Politics London](#) covered the story on BBC 1 last Sunday. You can see it at about 13 minutes into the programme.

In other news



Spurs plans for Whitewebbs approved

Despite persistent community opposition over the past few years, the council's planning committee has approved the take-over by Spurs of most of Whitewebbs Park for an elite female football academy. The vote on February 11 went along party lines.

There are still a couple of obstacles in its path so we hope it may yet be stopped.

It made the national news. You can see more in [The Guardian](#).

And in [Enfield Dispatch](#).



New duck feeder

A few months ago, rather unexpectedly, the council installed a duck food dispenser on Limes Avenue. The Friends are receiving part of the proceeds and we are trying to decide what to do with it. Maybe a duck nesting box for the pond? The increase in feeding is attracting more waterfowl, so would dog walkers please take care that your pets don't disturb the wildlife. Thank you.



Sad cow news

Sadly one of the red poll cows died a few days ago. The team in charge have given us the following information:

The cow had eaten some bits of yew. The affects of eating yew are very quick, and are fatal. Cows normally keep away from poisonous plants, so it is an unusual circumstance. The LBE tree team and Capel Manor College (the Grazing Management Team) met on site and identified the presence of yews within the grazing area. Most of these yew trees are self-set and very young. These trees are being removed within the grazing area where identified. This has been noted in the risk assessment for the project, and the presence of poisonous plants within the grazing areas will be reviewed each year.

RIP little red cow.

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

Thanks to all our members. We are having a hiatus on collecting dues this year. We'll let you know if and when we resume. You can still use

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

- Lookdown - Version 2 November 4, 2020
- 2020 AGM Report and Autumn Newsletter: October 23, 2020
- Summer 2020 Newsletter August 21, 2020
- July update! Trent Park during the Coronavirus crisis July 3, 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 PayPal link if you'd like to purchase books or maps.

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

Click here to go to the
Membership page

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