

Opposition Priority Business – Protecting Enfield’s Green Spaces

Enfield Council currently owns and maintains a wealth of open green spaces throughout the Borough which are enjoyed by residents of all ages, backgrounds, and with no regard to whether an individual is deprived or not. The Council’s website identifies the following *“With over 900 hectares of green space, Enfield offers an oasis away from the bustle of London. Ancient woodlands provide the perfect setting for golf, horse riding, jogging, cycling, walking, fishing, sports and more”*. These open green spaces are crucial for sport, mental wellbeing and other recreational uses and are one of the defining characteristics of the borough.

However, these green assets are under threat because of this current Labour administration. The Opposition notes the following:

Benefits of Green Spaces

- Historic England has identified the significant benefits of public access to parks and open spaces in an article *‘Public Parks and Greenspaces Matter’*. The article states the following benefits:
 - People between the ages of 25 and 34 (70 % use their park at least once a month)
 - Households with children under the age of five (90 % use their park at least once a month)
 - People identifying as Black and Minority Ethnic (of whom 71% use their park at least once a month compared to 56 % of people identifying as White)
 - 95% of visits are enjoyable, peaceful and relaxing
 - 60% of visitors take more physical exercise because they use parks
 - 80% say the park helps make their area more attractive and a better place to live
 - Evidence on the contribution of parks and green spaces to physical and mental health had already been submitted to the 2016-17 Select Committee ‘Public Parks’ inquiry and reducing stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression , combating loneliness and encouraging community cohesion are recognised in the government’s subsequent 2018 25-Year Environment Plan.
- The Greater London Authority, which is controlled by a Labour Mayor of London, says the following with regard to parks and green spaces: *“In a bustling city like London, parks, woodlands, rivers, and wetlands, provide spaces to relax and connect with each other. They’re also places that encourage us to be active, whether cycling or walking, or exploring nature with family and friends. Trees and green spaces also provide shelter from the sun and help us to stay cool as the climate heats up.”* In addition to this *“The Mayor wants every Londoner to be no more than a 10-minute walk away from green space.”*

Green Spaces in Enfield

Kenninghall Open Space

Better Homes Enfield has noted the following:

- *“Kenninghall Open Space in Edmonton is one of the few accessible green spaces in the area and is an important asset for the local community.”*
- *“Council policy (DMD 72) says that due to a deficiency of publicly accessible green space, ‘all available opportunities should be taken to make new public park provisions’ in the area. Despite this, a recently published document shows that Enfield Council (the landowner) wants to redevelop Kenninghall Open Space. Therefore, the park will no longer be for public use.”*
- *“This would not be the first-time Edmonton residents have lost a public park. In 2016, Enfield Council built on Ladysmith Open Space as part of its redevelopment of Meridian Water. It recently came to light that the new community garden at Meridian Water will only be temporary because Enfield Council plan to build housing on the site”*
- The Opposition notes the administrations constants attacks on open green spaces in Edmonton, depriving some of the most deprived residents of the Borough of open green spaces.

Haselbury Church Street Recreation Ground

- Enfield Council proposes within the Local Plan to turn a much valued open green space into a crematorium. Church Street Recreation Ground is a valued community asset which the administration is seeking to destroy.

Brimsdown Sports Ground

- Brimsdown Ward is in the 20% most deprived in the UK. Yet despite this Enfield Council, as identified in its Local Plan, is seeking to build tower blocks on this valued and much used sports ground. The site is currently used to play football, primarily by young Enfield residents.

Woodland surrounding Sainsbury’s, Winchmore Hill

- The Woodland surrounding Sainsbury’s in Winchmore Hill is a natural buffer between Green Lanes, the very busy and well utilised Sainsbury’s and a quiet residential area. This woodland is not only used as a pedestrian cut through, but also a walking path which is enjoyed by adults and children alike. This site has been identified in the Enfield Local Plan as a site for development.

Four Hills Estate, New Avenue Estate, Hoe Lane Estate, Exeter Rd Estate and Kettering Rd Estate

- The above mentioned estates house hundreds of residents that are able to access the open space within, and surrounding these housing estates. The Enfield Local Plan and proposed plans from the Council propose to provide further densification, thus posing a risk to the vital open spaces.

St. Anne's School Playing Fields, Enfield Town

- Rather than retaining green and open space within Enfield, the Labour administration is proposing to destroy a significant piece of green land that has been enjoyed by children in Enfield for decades. The St. Anne's School Playing Fields are proposed to be part of a large, tall and dense development proposed in the Local Plan.

Golfing in Enfield

- Over 2,000 Enfield residents are members of Enfield golf clubs, of which approximately 900 are resident in an N postcode,
- Of these residents, almost 700 are women and over 200 are under 18 years old.
- Irrespective of membership basis, over 60,000 members of the public who were not golf club members played golf at one of the Enfield golf clubs in the y/e 31/12/22;
- All Enfield golf clubs are open to non-members throughout the week and year, with only some weekend times reserved for members;
- These non-members would have paid a price from as little as £18 to £125 at the most, depending on which course and the time of year;
- For a four-hour round this represents an hourly rate of £4.50 to £31.25 / hour;
- Enfield golf clubs have outreach programmes to attract men, women and young people from all socio-economic groups not traditionally associated with golf;
- Enfield golf clubs host and support local civic groups through their use of club facilities, often at discounted rates.
- Some Enfield golf clubs are crossed by public footpaths;
- Golf clubs are probably the most bio-diverse outdoor leisure / sporting facility there is, being more biodiverse than any football / rugby / tennis / hockey club;
- Enfield golf clubs are all making efforts to phase out the use of chemicals and fertilisers, following National Course Sustainability programmes;
- Enfield golf clubs are making additional habitats for flora and fauna, including log piling, wildflower seeding and hedgerow maintenance.
- Unfortunately the Labour administration is now mired in a legal battle over Whitewebbs Park Golf Course and the surrounding open land and wants to build over Crews Hill Golf Course as identified in the Local Plan, all despite the public benefit to all residents in Enfield as identified above.

Council resolves

- that as per s2.16 of the Enfield Local Plan, outdoor sports and recreation facilities and golf course enhance the biodiversity of Enfield and allow residents to make the most of Enfield's natural assets;
- that as per s6.40 of the ELP, these outdoor sports and recreation facilities should be protected against unjustified loss;
- that outdoor leisure facilities and golf courses are a community asset to be valued, not an investment to be priced;

- that Enfield golf clubs and courses should therefore be protected in the ELP;
- that the Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy and the Director of Leisure, Park and Culture should meet with a delegation from community groups identified as representing parks, golf courses and green open spaces that are under threat to explore ways in which their relationships can be developed for the mutual benefit of residents, friends of parks, club members and other users.