



NEWSLETTER

After a **448-day**
delay, the news
that will **shock**
no-one at all...

WELCOME TO THE SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER. With all the astonishing predictability of a Wednesday following a Tuesday, the worst kept secret in Enfield has finally been revealed: the Council's preferred bidder for Whitewebbs Park is Tottenham Hotspur Football Club. But do Spurs' proposals justify the Council's genuflections? Or are these plans a land grab lacking any real substance?

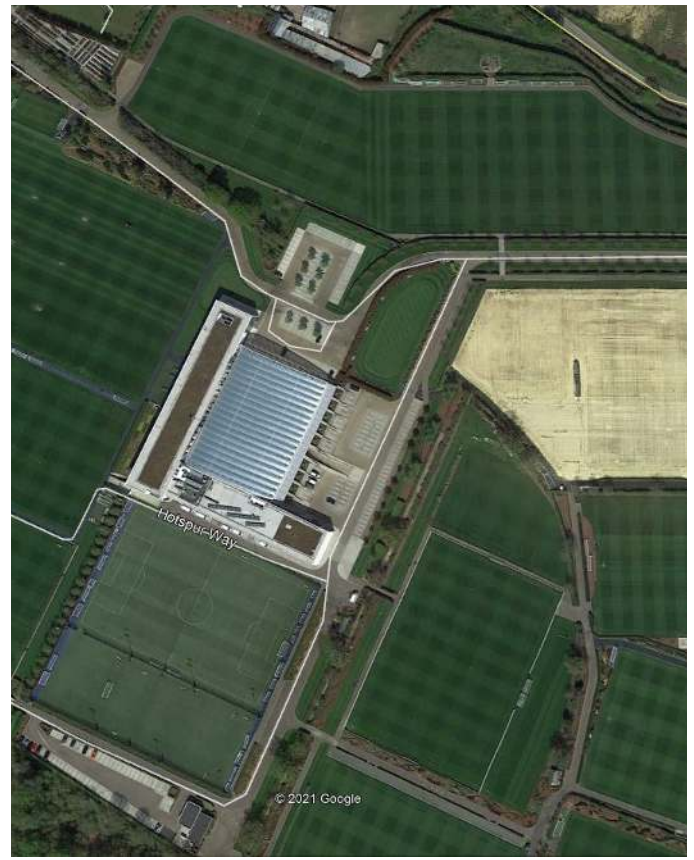
THE FUTURE OF WHITEWEBBS...

About 40 acres of Whitewebbs meadowland will be covered by flat, engineered, plastic reinforced football turf and service facilities - if the ENIC/ Spurs proposal for a training ground is approved by our Council.



This picture was taken on the 12th June 2021 in Whitewebbs Park in the area to be covered by pitches. The pictures in the ENIC/ Spurs brochure are mostly stock photos from New South Wales, California... wherever.

After two months of no grass cutting the golf course is restored meadowland with hundreds of species of grasses, insects, mammals, flowers, birds and bats. They have been there all the time but it was inconvenient to say so.



This Google Earth picture shows the existing Spurs training ground with its flat, immaculate, engineered, plastic-reinforced turf. This is what's planned for the Northern part of Whitewebbs.

The ground will be levelled, the meadowland removed and inconvenient trees removed perhaps. There'll be earth movement, construction traffic and security fencing and possibly high earth barriers just like the main training ground.



So what happened to the stakeholder engagement we were promised?

Enfield Council has indicated a preferred bidder for the leasing of Whitewebbs Park.

Despite the Council's promises there has been no meaningful consultation with the stakeholder groups.

The only documentation seen is an update of the marketing bulletin and a glossy brochure from Tottenham Hotspur. The marketing bulletin contained the briefest of brief summaries of the other bids and the "scores" achieved. There is insufficient information to comment on these (despite a promise that we would have sight of them).

The marketing bulletin can be viewed here

<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/leisure-and-culture/marketing-of-whitewebbs-park-golf-course/#2>

Note that there are two pages.

The Tottenham Hotspur brochure can be seen here

<https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/whitewebbs/>

The Council decided not to reopen the golf course at the end of March. Shortly afterwards all mowing and maintenance ceased.

They cited the need to save money as the main reason

1. The Council, by its own figures, has saved £200,000 a year by closing the golf course. (It claimed losses of £1.1 million over 5 years.)

2. As a result of COVID and recent publicity the people from all parts of Enfield are discovering and using the open space of Whitewebbs for recreation, leisure and for improving their mental and physical wellbeing.

3. In two months the golf course has reverted to diverse meadowland with no human intervention. To any one who has visited it is obvious that the course is now covered in

many types of grass, flowers, plants and insect life.

The only areas that have not reverted to meadowland are the greens which occupy less than an acre and a half in total. They are heavily engineered pieces of special grass with many underlying layers.

Biodiversity is alive and well on the course.

The greens provide picnic spots, games areas and a man was seen using one as his open air office on a warm summer evening this week.

Let us be quite clear: Tottenham Hotspur is part of a multi billion pound company ENIC registered in the Bahamas tax haven, not an underfunded local amateur club.

The owners are driven by commercial considerations that are beyond the capability of most of us to understand.

There is a distinction to be made, as with most clubs, between the supporters and the owners, just look at the furore caused by the European Super League proposal.

ENIC/Spurs are driven by huge commercial decisions, that is just the way it is.

Our Council is not appointed by ENIC but by the people of Enfield. It is here to serve us, not the interests and convenience of offshore companies, however big.

No doubt it is convenient for Spurs to extend into Whitewebbs Park from their existing training ground.

In doing so they will replace a mature meadow landscape with 40 or so acres of engineered, plastic reinforced football pitches which have all the biodiversity of tarmac.

There will be patches of grass and flowers chosen by paid ecology consultants but these will be token gestures at best.

There are other council-owned sites nearby — derelict farmland guarded 24 hours a day at our expense.

"The intention is to draw up a shortlist. We will engage with Members and stakeholders at that stage before selecting a preferred partner." LBE Update 6 Nov 2019

The proposal's spin unspun



We have to look at the ENIC /Spurs brochure very carefully. Essentially it is a public relations exercise.

What it doesn't say is at least as important as what it does. A lot of the photos are stock (from a picture library) with no link to Whitewebbs.

The Public access map is confusing and inaccurate. There is no commitment to improving access save for improvements to the bridle-way where it forms their northern border

Main public access points and car parking are wholly within ENIC/Spurs control.

Ecological and Environmental are much used but with no actual substance.

There are important discrepancies between the Enfield marketing update and the text of the brochure.

The river valley rewilding and tree planting has been going full belt for the last two or three decades , managed by birds.

It mentions opportunities for users but no actual facilities.

Spurs in the Community—yes there is some really good work being done by the Spurs Foundation, funded by Spurs, the Postcode Lottery and the Premier League Charitable Fund together with specific activity funding from other sources such as Enfield section 106. Total annual expenditure is around £3million. Sponsorship and corporate hospitality income alone was £145m in y/e 2020

1. The ENIC(Spurs) proposal offers little or nothing to enhance access to or the enjoyment of the park.

There are vague suggestions about some paths but to judge by the map no serious thought has gone into this. “If a lease was agreed which included the woodland, this would only have been considered if the use was appropriate, enhanced public access, and ensured the maintenance of the woodland and public rights of way and bridleways. “ This ENIC proposal does not include the woodland so there is no requirement for ENIC to support the ancient woodland or access to it.

2. ENIC(Spurs) has no track record of public park management.

3. The café / toilets/ facilities in Beggars Hollow could be better dealt with by a separate and well managed leasing arrangement.

4. There is no mention in the ENIC brochure about “ongoing community engagement - all bids should detail how the tenant proposes to engage with the community and stakeholders. The applicant was required to provide a comprehensive communication plan which, as a minimum, should include details of using social media and a website to provide details of their plans for Whitewebbs and provide updates. The new tenant will be required to provide digital and traditional platforms for engagement with the local community that allows for feedback.” Enfield Council Marketing update (In fairness, we have no evidence of any ongoing community engagement)

5. In summary, ENIC (Spurs) gets everything it requires with the option of more if it so decides. The real owners of Whitewebbs, the people of Enfield, get a few token gestures. Who is Enfield Council working for? Us or big corporation in a tax haven?

“...halt any decision on the future of Whitewebbs until the local stakeholders have had an opportunity to meet with the relevant officers to review the bidders”

The devil is in the detail

ENIC /Spurs Brochure - "OUR PROPOSAL IS BASED UPON": (Our comments in red)

- The enhancement of public access through improvements to footpaths and bridleways

The only specific enhancement is the bridleway along the northeast and northern edge of the proposed training area, this may have more to do with site security than access. There are no proposals for enhancement of the bridleway elsewhere (The map included is misleading with many paths mislabeled or missing) Disabled access?

- The restoration of part of the former Whitewebbs Park Golf Course back to parkland.

Effectively this has happened already. Two months without mowing has produced an abundance of grasses and wild flowers. It is our contention that the existing biodiversity of the golf course landscape has been deliberately downplayed.

- The redevelopment of the Southern Clubhouse to provide enhanced food and beverage facilities for visitors to the park

This could mean anything from complete redevelopment to a lick of paint and more seats. No mention of any community facilities – shelter, rest areas, seating, function space.

- The creation of a new Women and Girls' Football Academy with a focus on the development of grass roots football and widening female participation in the sport.

This replaces a facility where men and women of all ages enjoyed about 80 -90,000 hours of exercise annually (25000 rounds of golf @3-4 hrs a round) and is purely a commercial venture by ENIC(Spurs) and not an act of community benevolence. Women's football is rapidly growing in commercial importance with television deals and international competition.

The map shows that ENIC/Spurs will control every part of the park to the East of the main path from the Beggars Hollow entrance, through the woodland to the North Lodge Gate, including the Lake. The main entrances and all parking will be ENIC /Spurs controlled

- The opportunity to work with Enfield Council and stakeholders to establish one of the Country's first Habitat Banks to provide for the long term stewardship of Whitewebbs Wood

As I understand it Habitat Banks are a means by which developers and planning authorities can meet their legal biodiversity obligations. "Implementing a system of biodiversity accounting where any off-site compensation is arranged via 'habitat banks' is a stream-lined, cost-effective solution. Such bank sites are already being set up across the country so that conservation credits can be quickly and easily sold from large wildlife schemes. Habitat banks give planners and developers access to a simple compensation solution, regardless of the size of the development, so that all development can be sustainable."

This item requires a lot more clarification. It appears to be a convenience for developers who wish to destroy habitats and yet remain within their legal obligations. Bulldoze a park and plant a few trees hundreds of miles away?

- The provision of education and training opportunities through the launch of our new Sports Turf Academy.

Surely the main training ground required trained turf and horticultural workers – has this work all been done by unskilled and untrained people – I think not. This has the feel of PR spin.

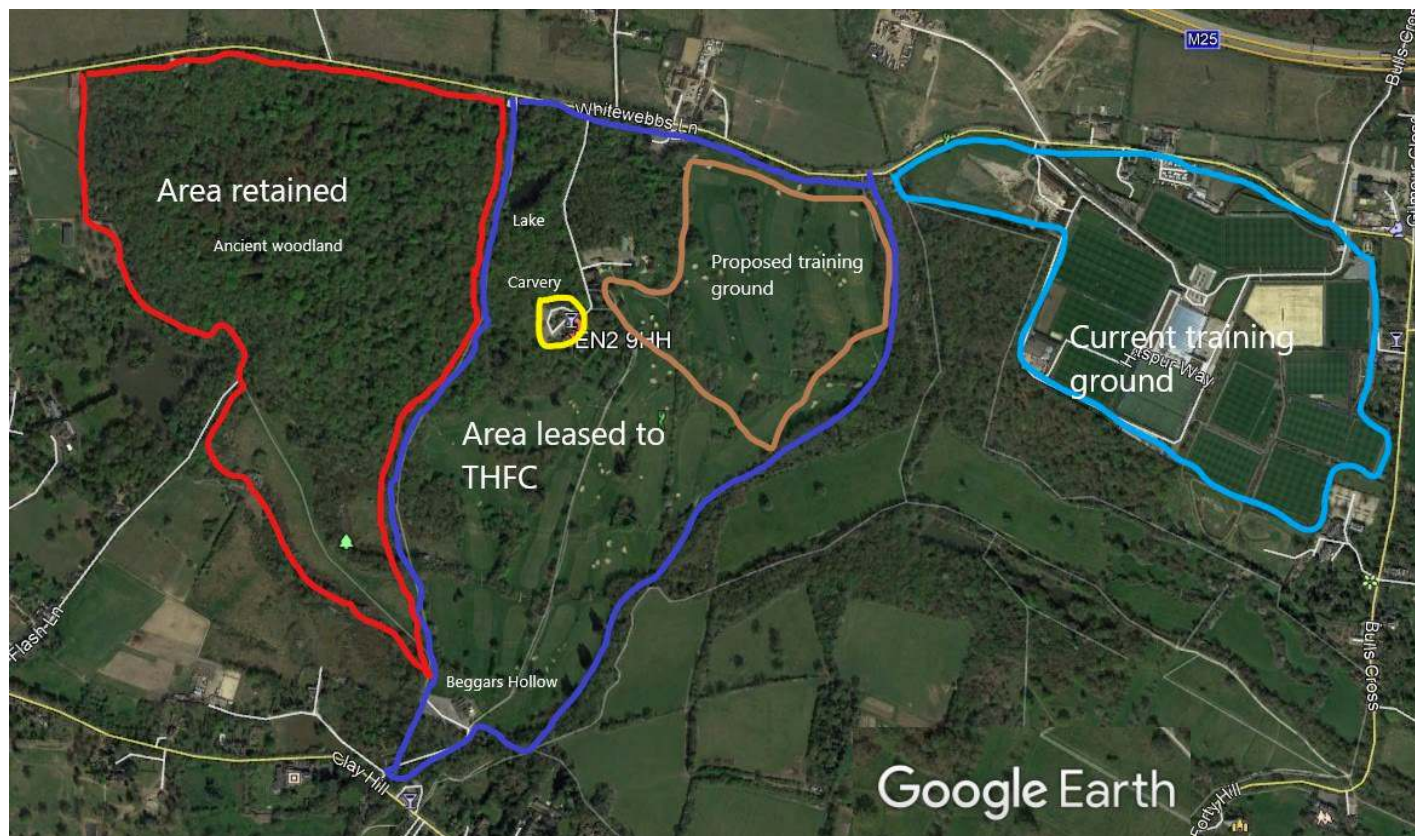
The Spurs brochure changes the terminology. According to their brochure, Spurs will 'facilitate' the creation of the Sports Turf Academy. What are they actually promising?

Don't worry about the details! Just look at the pretty pictures!



"...we will *engage* with members and stakeholders sharing details of all 5 of the bids *before* selecting a preferred partner." Mark Bradbury, LBE, 27 April 2021

This map shows that ENIC/Spurs will control every part of the park to the East of the main path from the Beggars Hollow entrance, through the woodland to the North Lodge Gate, including the Lake. The main entrances and all parking will be ENIC /Spurs controlled



Red outlines the area to be retained by the Council **Dark blue outlines the area leased to ENIC/ Spurs** **Brown outlines the training pitch area** **Light blue is the current training ground** **Yellow is the carvery**



Enfield Council has "declared a climate emergency". Biodiversity, ecology, environment are the current catchwords but what are they actually doing? Allowing a multi billion offshore-tax-haven-based company to destroy many acres of a mature biodiverse landscape for one thing. Close to Whitewebbs are derelict farm sites owned by Enfield with 24hr security that could used instead.

A soccer ball is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the white text box. The background is a blurred green field.

What Spurs wants, Spurs gets.

*Spurs employee
(who wishes to remain anonymous)*

Why does ENIC/Spurs want to lease 100 acres when it only needs about 40 acres for these plans? At the Greenbelt Forum 2019, Mark Bradbury said that if any Whitewebbs bidder had already been a tenant of Enfield Council, their behaviour with previous leases would be taken into account. And Spurs have consistently tried to expand at Bulls Cross. Will they be doing that at Whitewebbs?