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Report for 2023 -2024

The long hard fight to protect Whitewebbs Park continues. It is, perhaps, worth remembering that the first public meeting about the threat to our park was called about 5 years ago and not by the Council. Since then we have held meetings, demonstrated, raised petitions, attended many council meetings, attracted attention from the media and carried out a large scale survey of park users. Despite the best efforts of the legal team and the hundreds of supporters the Judicial Review was ultimately unsuccessful.

Planning Application

We are now at the Planning Application stage. Spurs have invested hundreds of thousands of pounds into their application producing 150 detailed documents in the first application with 30 of those modified and extended in the revised application. According to the Council's website 341 members of the public waded through the documentation and made comments. 86% of the people responding are opposed to the application.

I know how much work is involved in trying to read and understand the application and applaud all who were able to make their views known. As at 30th October it is still possible to submit your views on line

<https://planningandbuildingcontrol.enfield.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=SAYPT2JNJZ900>

Suggestions and guides for making comments can be found at www.whitewebbspark.org.uk There are examples of comments submitted as well as the comments of the formal bodies consulted.

The Friends of Whitewebbs submitted responses to both the first application and to the revised one.

The date of the Planning Committee hearing has yet to be announced. It is not on the agenda for 5th November. Other dates this year are 19th November and 17th December. We will get 7 days notice of the meeting. The Friends of Whitewebbs will apply to make a representation at the meeting. Normally, 5 minutes is allowed for such representations. There are very tight restrictions on representations – see <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=124> for full details

With the change in Government new guidelines have been issued for planning decisions. There is much discussion of these in planning and legal circles. Our legal advisers have been updating themselves on how these will affect the Spurs planning application.

The legal team is looking at possible courses of action following a decision by the planning committee.

The Public Interest law Centre (PILC) has written to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Friends of Whitewebbs and the CPRE asking that she "Call in" the decision. The press release is below and the full letter can be read at www.whitewebbspark.org.uk. Copies will be on display at the café.

The letter has been written, not just because of our concerns over Whitewebbs Park but our wider concern for the protection of all public parks and public open spaces. Please write to your MPs and the Secretary of State

calling for this planning decision to be called in and asking the Government to ensure that our parks and public open spaces are fully protected.

PILC press release

Government Urged to Protect Public Park from Tottenham Hotspur Takeover and Set a Clear Precedent in Law to Protect Public Spaces

October 28, 2024

The Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) has written to the Secretary of State on behalf of Friends of Whitewebbs Park and CPRE London asking her to use her power to “call in” a planning application and stop Tottenham Hotspur FC buying over 50% of a public park for its own commercial gain.

This comes after the Court of Appeal refused Enfield resident’s permission to appeal the decision to let the council dispose of part of Whitewebbs Park to Tottenham Hotspur FC for its own commercial purposes.

This is an opportunity for the new government to consider the crucial issue of the privatisation of public open space in the context of huge pressure on land and set a clear precedent for local authorities that these vital spaces must be preserved for public use.

Key Points

- PILC has requested the Secretary of State use her power to decide the application in place of the local planning authority
- This will be a crucial opportunity for the new government to consider the issue of the privatisation of public open space in the context of huge pressure on land
- The secretary of state could set a clear precedent that local authorities cannot allow private development of public open space
- Local residents have been fighting since 2021 to prevent the lease of over 50% of their public green space to multi-billion dollar Tottenham Hotspur Football Club
- The current decision leaves no effective legal protections for local parks and recreational facilities.

National Consideration

Should the secretary of state "call in" the decision, it will ensure that the important issue of public park privatisation can be considered at a national level, benefiting from a public inquiry. This case is critical in establishing clear protections for public parks across the country.

Quotes from the Campaigners

“It is particularly saddening that this has been achieved by the active assistance of a council committed to climate improvement, a healthy lifestyle for all, not just a select few, and to biodiversity. This Council has massively subsidised a multi-billion dollar offshore corporation to attain its commercial objectives with land belonging to the people of Enfield.”

- Sean, Friends of Whitewebbs campaigner.

Implications and Future Actions

If this can happen to Whitewebbs Park, it can happen anywhere - to any local park, playground, or playing field. PILC is committed to continuing the fight alongside Enfield residents to save Whitewebbs Park and keep it in public hands for public use.

The Secretary of State now has the power to protect the Park from development despite this decision, allowing Enfield residents to continue to enjoy their park. This would set clear protections for public parks nationwide.

About PILC

The Public Interest Law Centre aims to bring greater accountability and transparency to local authority decision-making around the disposal of public open spaces. They offer support to communities facing similar challenges.

Local heritage list review

This review is in its final stages. It concerns buildings, edifices and landscape features that do not have Grade 1 or Grade 2 listing but which are of local significance. The Friends of Whitewebbs applauded the inclusion of Whitewebbs features in the list – Whitewebbs House, the Conduit House, the Stable Block, the garden wall and, newly listed, the Old Course of the New River. This last is long overdue for inclusion and is an important piece of history and industrial archaeology. It should be noted that THFC have ignored this amazing piece of 17th century engineering in their proposals.

I have requested that Ranger's Grave be added to the list.

The full Local Heritage list can be found at <https://www.enfield.gov.uk/consultations/local-heritage-list-review> It is a fascinating document in itself and can form the basis of many an exploratory walk.

Local Plan

The Local Plan is an important document to which all planning applications are referenced. Many Friends of Whitewebbs made submissions, not just about the Park, but about various proposals for the Green belt and Enfield Town. The Friends of Whitewebbs made submissions about the change in designation of the park and about the protection of unique views across the park. The Enfield Society and Enfield RoadWatch made huge efforts to facilitate submission making. It would appear that many submissions were not included in the report to the Planning Inspectorate.

The council has submitted the local plan to the Planning Inspectorate. If you made a representation/objection to the recent Regulation 19 consultation, which closed on May 20, please check that it has been included. To do this you have to download an Excel workbook with an index of names and reference numbers Find your name or organisation's 5 digit reference number (Note - there are three sheets in the workbook). You then go to a search page on the council web site, enter your 5 digit number. This provides a link to the document(s) you have submitted.

Index sheet a spreadsheet with the names of those who submitted comments together with a reference number <https://whitewebbspark.org.uk/local-plan/>

Documents link

<https://www.enfield.gov.uk/.../new-enfield.../elpexamination>

If you want to see the edited summary of what you submitted plus the Council's commentary on what you have said, download the

Regulation 22 Consultation Statement

Report on the consultation of the Enfield Local Plan: Proposed Submission Document

https://www.enfield.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/61910/ELP-Reg-22-statement-2024-FULL-REPORT-Part1-Planning.pdf

It is a very, very long document. The easiest way to use it is to download it and use a pdf reader with a search/find facility. Search for Whitewebbs or for your name.

The Enfield RoadWatch site has additional guidance.

Café

It is great to have the café back in operation 7 days a week. The coffee is great, service is excellent and the freshly baked croissants are a treat. The owners have plans for improving facilities but bear in mind that investments are expensive and there is limited certainty over the future of the site.



Litter , Bins and more

Thanks to all those who help on the organised litter picks coordinated by Danielle and those who do their bit as they walk around our park. With winter approaching the Council has taken the sensible step of moving many of the bins to the roadway through the park. It is too muddy for the lorry to drive to all the 23 bins across the park.

Thanks also to all those who have assisted with path clearing , minor maintenance jobs and reporting problems.

Thanks also to everyone who has participated in the campaign to support and preserve our beautiful park.

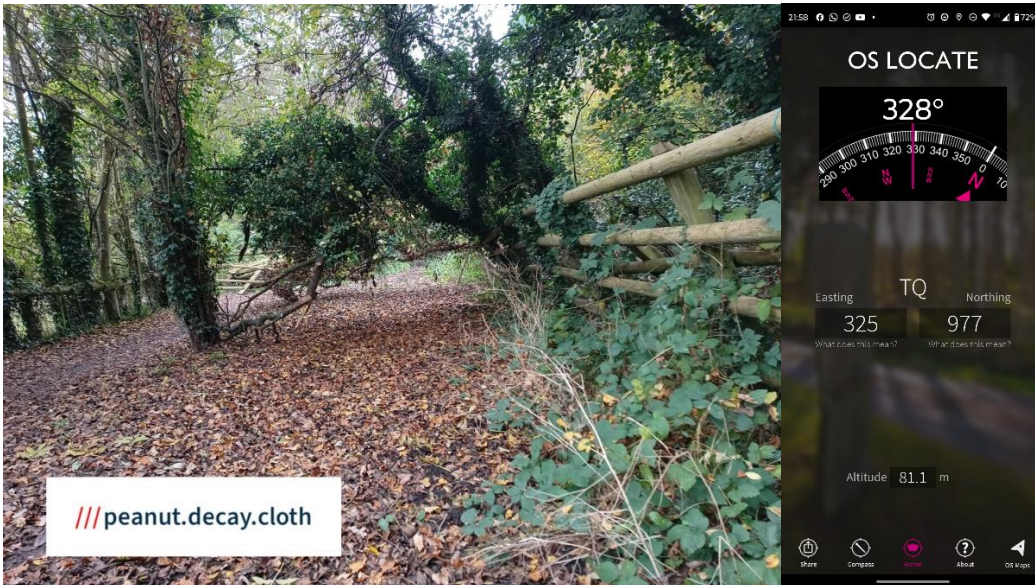


Safety in the park

If you have an accident in the park or come across someone in difficulties it is important that you are able to give an accurate location – not always easy in the woods or the open areas. The emergency services are able to use the What3Words app to pinpoint your location. It is free and works on Android and IOS. Refresh your position on the screen to make sure that your location is accurate.

The photo mode is great for reporting maintenance issues and recording the exact position of a feature. (I use it for reporting fallen trees and recording plant locations) The council tree team like it when you report a fallen or dangerous tree.

The other app to have on your phone is the free OS Locate from the Ordnance survey. Not only does it give your exact grid reference but includes a compass. I understand that mountain rescue services prefer this app as words can be misheard over the phone.



AGM

With the prospect of the Planning Committee hearing so close the AGM will be an active one in the park. Please meet at the café 10 a.m. Saturday 9th November. We will deal with the business as quickly as possible and then walk the park to run through the planning objections.

Agenda

1. Chair's report (issued in writing to all members before the meeting)
2. Election of officers*
3. Planning application and planning walk.

*Nominations for the post of Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer should be submitted by 10 p.m on 4th November to whitewebbspark@gmail.com or to the post box in the shelter by the café. There should be a proposer and a seconder together with an email / letter from the candidate stating their willingness to stand. If there is more than one candidate for a post, all members of the FOWW will be asked to vote by email or by letter (to the shelter post box). Candidates should provide a statement in support of their candidacy