



Full Council – 10 July 2023

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Protecting, preserving and promoting Parks and Open Spaces in Brent

This Council notes:

Our borough is home to many wonderful green, open spaces and parks that are enjoyed by residents of all ages and backgrounds. From smaller parks like Mount Pleasant Open Space in Alperton, King Edward VII in Wembley, to historical parks like Barham Park and Gladstone Park, larger country parks in Fryent, and thriving open spaces in the Welsh Harp and Northwick Park, to name but a few.

These vital spaces must be protected, particularly if they are threatened by development that does not meet local need.

In recent years we have become even more aware of how important green spaces are for local people. During the Covid-19 pandemic and periods of lockdown, they became a sanctuary for so many who were able to spend time in them, benefiting both mental and physical health.

With ever increasing building works in Brent, particularly of tall tower blocks, it is crucial that new residents are able to access open spaces in the areas they move to. Sadly, most new developments do not incorporate adequate large green space, rather most include only small pocket parks that are not sufficient and often not well maintained by Housing Associations/ Managing Companies.

Achieving Climate Emergency targets relies heavily on safeguarding open spaces in our borough, protecting mature trees and important habitats for local wildlife. Without doing so, we risk missing these targets.

The decision by the Planning Committee to allow the building of houses located along the north-west corner of Barham Park goes against Brent Council's long established Core Strategy of protecting Brent parks and open spaces from unwelcome development. The decision also undermines the whole point of local people getting involved in developing Local Neighbourhood Plans. The Planning Committee overrode the Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Plan policy BP1 which specifically designated Barham Park as a green space where development or redevelopment of buildings not intended for community uses should be refused.

The Barham Park decision creates an unwelcome precedent putting other parks and open spaces in Brent at risk. Following that decision hundreds of local people have signed a petition on the Brent Council website, calling for the protection of parks and open spaces from development, which indicates the strength of feeling on this important issue.

Therefore, this Council believes:

1. That all of Brent's parks and open spaces should be valued and celebrated as vital assets in our community.
2. Parks and open spaces must all be protected from the potential of development, particularly of development that does not meet local need or that is clearly not for genuine community use.
3. The value of parks and open spaces cannot be understated; even more so as increasing numbers of local people have little to no access to their own gardens or green space.
4. The Cabinet should reassure all residents that within its responsibilities it will always prioritise the preservation of our parks and open spaces and promote these assets.

This Council resolves:

- (1) To confirm its longstanding strategic position that it will recognise the value of open spaces and parks in the borough and seek to protect them.
- (2) To call on the Cabinet to ensure within its responsibilities there will be no new buildings and no expansion of buildings in parks other than for legitimate community use.
- (3) To seek to strengthen its Planning Policies on protecting public parks and open spaces by confirming the principle that "real harm" would be caused if permission was granted for the building of houses or other buildings within Brent Parks and Open Spaces which were not intended for direct community uses.
- (3) To incorporate in all Planning reports the potential environmental impact applications will have on our area, and how they might impact Climate Emergency targets.
- (4) To work with partners across the city, from the Corporation of London, other Local Authorities and City Hall to protect, preserve and promote vital green, open spaces in London.
- (5) In view of the public concern about intensification of building in Barham Park contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan policy and restrictions imposed in past disposal documents, to call on the Council and Cabinet to support the Barham Park Trust in considering a Judicial Review into the recent decision of the Brent

Planning Committee to approve an application for 4 houses located along the north-west corner of Barham Park.

Cllr Anton Georgiou
Alperton Ward