



# The Enfield Society

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To Members of The Enfield Society

1st October 2015

Dear Member

## Threats to our heritage and the green belt

We need your help to respond to two developments which threaten aspects of Enfield that we have long fought to protect.

### 1. Proposals to downgrade the services of the Local Studies Centre and Museum

The Enfield Local Studies Centre and Archive, based in the Dugdale Centre, is the core resource for information about the history and development of the borough. It has a comprehensive collection of books, maps, plans, newspapers, photographs and manuscripts, built up under David Pam and Graham Dalling, and now promoted and developed by three knowledgeable and helpful staff. We have donated many items to the Centre, because it has the people and resources to look after them and make them available to the public. We rely on it for historical information, and use it extensively, for example for Monica Smith's recent vol. 4 of "History of Enfield" and for the background of buildings we are working on for the Council's Local Heritage Review project.

The Enfield Museum has a small permanent display on the first floor of the Dugdale Centre and a larger area on the ground floor which is used for a series of excellent and successful exhibitions such as *Enfield at War 1914-18*, *Water Water Everywhere: 400 Years of the New River*, *Roman Enfield from settlement to London suburb*, *Our Sporting Life*, and several others.

Enfield Council have set up a consultation exercise on proposals to "change" these services. Though presented as "more efficient and cost effective" and "increasing access to the heritage resources", these are really cuts in the services provided. The core proposal relating to the Local Studies Centre proposes that the opening hours would be reduced to visits by appointment only and that "the Centre's resources are scanned and made available online, making them available 24/7".

This is misleading. It would take many years and millions of pounds to scan all the Centre's resources, and the Council have acknowledged that they have no intention of doing this. They propose starting with items which enable them to meet their statutory obligations (probably such things as minutes of Council meetings) and items of high value to the local community (though they have not specified what these would be). They have not estimated the cost of this, or the cost and time needed to catalogue and index material so that people can find it without staff help. They also give the impression that commercial family history services such as [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) would be accessible through your own computers or smartphones, but in fact it would only be possible to use these in the Local Studies Centre, as at present.

The proposal for the Museum is simply to do away with the temporary exhibition area, leaving only the small display area on the first floor lobby of the Dugdale Centre. Significant temporary exhibitions would no longer be possible.

The Council is currently consulting with staff about its future structure and staffing but the economies it is seeking are likely to require a reduction in staff from the present total of five. The gross cost of both services is £305,120 which is about 95p per Enfield resident per year and less than 0.03% of the Council's annual budget. The museum reductions may well mean that it loses its status as an accredited museum, and therefore becomes ineligible for the Heritage Lottery Fund grants which it has received in the past.

[PTO]

**Formerly the Enfield Preservation Society**  
**Founded in 1936 to protect Enfield's historic heritage, defend the green belt**  
**and encourage good design in new developments**

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**We would like you to complete the Council's consultation form**, bearing in mind what we have said overleaf. The closing date is 18th October. You can do this online at [tinyurl.com/EnfieldLSconsultation](http://tinyurl.com/EnfieldLSconsultation) (our abbreviation for the Council's complex web page address) or by filling in a paper form that you can obtain at the Local Studies Centre. The form asks you whether digitisation of the resources would be of benefit to you, but it seems that the only possible answer is "Don't know" because nobody knows what few resources might be available, or when.

The other questions mostly ask what times you would like the Centre to be open for appointments, and whether you would be more or less likely to visit the part of the museum which would be left on the first floor. Rather than bothering too much with these trivial questions, we suggest that you make full use of the comments boxes to express your views on the implicit reductions in services.

So that we know what our members think, to help our discussions with the Council, we would be very grateful if you could **tell us too**. An email message to [feedback@enfieldsociety.org.uk](mailto:feedback@enfieldsociety.org.uk) would be most convenient, but if you don't use email perhaps you could drop us a line in the post. Our address is at the top of this letter.

## **2. Proposed building on Green Belt land bordered by Enfield Road/Cotswold Way/Lowther Drive (EN2)**

Fairview Homes intend to build three hundred houses and a school on Green Belt land bordered by Enfield Road/Cotswold Way/Lowther Drive (EN2). The land in question is a "green lung" of twenty acres, which provides an important break between housing west of Slades Hill and Oakwood.

In 2011 the Borough undertook a review of the Green Belt boundaries in Enfield. Apart from a small section near the A10/M25 junction being taken out of the Green Belt, the rest of the well-established boundaries remained, serving their role of preventing urban sprawl and encouraging the re-use of brownfield sites. A consultation on the 2011 boundary review took place and Fairview Homes responded, stating that the twenty acre site on Enfield Road could be removed. Enfield Council's response was that as the land in question was in an area of special character, it served its intended role as Green Belt and should be retained.

A developer would always prefer a Green Belt area as it is like a blank sheet of paper and will realise greater profits due to there being no demolition costs. The National Planning Policy Framework states that "Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan", i.e. not in response to an individual planning application.

An independent focus group, "Enfield Road Watch", has been formed to defend the Green Belt fields that are under threat. More details are on their web site at [www.enfieldroadwatch.co.uk](http://www.enfieldroadwatch.co.uk), where there is a link to an online petition.

If you are an Enfield resident **we encourage you to sign the petition**. If 3124 people sign this (1% of the population), the matter will be placed on the agenda of a full Council meeting.

## **3. May we contact you by email in future?**

Whether or not you send us any comments on the above matters, if you use email we would be very grateful if you could send us a brief message, to [feedback@enfieldsociety.org.uk](mailto:feedback@enfieldsociety.org.uk) to let us know whether you would allow us to use email for messages like this to members in future. This would help us to keep you in touch with developments more quickly and at much less cost. (You do not need to do this if you have already told the Secretary that you are willing to receive email communications.)

Regards



Dave Cockle

Chair, The Enfield Society