

An Open Letter to Enfield Council



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Mr. Ian Davis
Chief Executive
Enfield Council
Silver St
London
EN1 3XA

17th March 2021

Dear Mr. Davis,

I am writing today to express the disappointment that Middlesex Golf Ltd (MGL) has upon hearing that Whitewebbs GC will shortly be permanently closed. As the governing body for Amateur Golf in the County it is our responsibility to promote, administer, encourage the development of, and to further the interest of Amateur Golf within the County.

The planned closure of Whitewebbs GC is devastating news, not only to the members and regular players of Whitewebbs GC but also to the borough of Enfield. It also saddens us to hear that our friends who work and play at Whitewebbs GC found out about this news via a report published on Facebook. This is extremely unprofessional in any situation, let alone when people's jobs are at stake.

We believe that much like local theatres, galleries, football pitches, parks, libraries, and schools, public golf courses are an intrinsic part of any community. Whitewebbs GC offers people in your area a cheap and accessible opportunity to play the great game of golf.

You mention in a statement on 15th March that it would be irresponsible for Enfield Council to continue to use tax-payers money to subsidise an activity that is well provided for elsewhere across the County. Enfield GC, Crews Hill GC, Bush Hill Park GC, and Hadley Wood GC are all private facilities that are not always accessible and often too expensive for the 'vulnerable residents' you wish to support. During the pandemic we have all become much more aware of how important key workers are to our daily lives and of the vulnerability of the elderly, most of whom earn low wages and pensions. Whitewebbs offers these important groups an affordable way to socialise, exercise, and play sport. This is now going to be stripped away from them.

Many golfers have their first experience of playing on public golf courses. Because of their inherent inclusivity and affordable nature, public courses are the arenas where people hone their skills and learn the game. They are a gateway to the game for many. The negative effect of closing the Whitewebbs GC to your community will not only have an immediate impact but in years to come generations of future Enfield golfers will never emerge. You are not only cutting off an essential lifeline, and first step of future golfers in your borough but other local courses will feel the impact in the longer term. Courses such as, Enfield GC, Crews Hill GC, Hadley Wood GC and Bush Hill Park GC all in your own borough of Enfield.

Many public golf courses are operated at a nil cost to the council and provide a wonderful resource for the residents, not just to play but to exercise and enjoy the environment. The COVID Pandemic has given the game of golf the biggest boost it has seen in the last century and this can be seen in the rounds played at Whitewebbs GC during the summer months in 2020, which were up by 55%, and income rose by 81%! There is now a latent demand for golf in the UK. Many private clubs are full and have closed their memberships. We implore you to take the opportunity to reappraise the value of this golf course and capitalise upon this new market and gain the benefit of the income.

Whitewebbs GC is not just a golf course. It is a piece of history and community art and if the golf course is looked at in an appropriate manner people will come and pay to play just like thousands of people pay to look at a picture in a gallery. Investment into the property does not have to be expensive and could reap considerable rewards socially, financially and politically for the council. Whitewebbs GC has the potential to be a golf course that people from outside Enfield want to come and play or visit. It could attract paying customers and be an asset to the borough.

We are aware that the Whitewebbs Park will remain open for residents to continue using for recreational purposes and also that you have been trying to find a partner to whom you could lease the area. While looking for a partner to lease the area I urge you to consider maintaining the golf facility in the short term and look for a leaseholder who also will maintain it in the long term.

On behalf of Middlesex Golf Ltd. Yours sincerely,

R P W Andrews

Chairman

Darragh Coghlan

County Secretary