

The Trustee of West Ham Park  
c/o Savills  
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Roger Jones.  
Chair, Friends of West Ham Park.  
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5<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Dear Trustee,

The Friends of West Ham Park are a group of local residents who believe very strongly in the benefits which this precious open space brings to Newham, and which helps the local community to gain the most from this facility.

We write, therefore, to object to the proposal to sell part of the historic West Ham Park site, edged red on the Public Notice. We believe, as representatives of the users of the park and the wider local community, that all of this historic park site should be retained by the Trustees and used for the benefit of the local Community. This was the basis on which the West Ham Charity was originally created.

The whole of the current park area is designated as a Grade II Historic Park by Historic England. Maintaining the current size West Ham Park and increasing the area of public open space is an absolute priority because:-

- Newham Borough has the least Green Space per resident of any London Borough;
- West Ham Park is the largest park in the borough and is a vital asset as recognised in its Local Plan (2018-2033);
- Newham is one of 4 least active boroughs in London. 12% of Newham children aged 4-5 and 28% aged 10-11 were classified obese in 2012/13;
- Newham has the fifth highest rate of children in poverty, after housing costs, of any local authority area, 38% of children in West Ham and 37% in East Ham live in poverty. This free recreational space is vital to the mental and physical health of these families; and
- The local plan also highlights the large number of homes that are to be built in the borough - 43,000 borough wide, with nearly 4300 units in the Stratford and West Ham area. This will further increase the demand for already very well used open spaces, as few of these new

homes are likely to have a private garden. This is a rare opportunity to create more public open space in Newham.

**Therefore, access to quality public green space is a priority for this area if we are to reduce inequality of access to physical activity and help improve people's wellbeing.**

We also note the City of London Corporation is not proposing to sell any part of any other public open space they manage, and in some cases have bought land to protect and increase their Open Spaces. What is the justification for this inequitable approach to open space management?

The City of London Corporation, on behalf of the Trustees, have promised to keep residents and park users informed of progress with their proposal. They made a statement in the Newham Recorder to say "*We are very pleased to be moving forward with this project which will be of great benefit to park users. This is an opportunity to make effective use of previously developed land and we are excited to move onto this next step. We will keep residents and park users fully informed as we progress with this long term project*". The public promises made by the Trustees have not been kept by this notice.

The information given presumably does not reflect the extent of the Trustees' knowledge of what is proposed for the land. In what way is this keeping residents and beneficiaries **fully** informed? The notice is unclear and fails to deliver on both the statutory duties of the Trustees and the public promises by the City of London Corporation on their behalf. It reflects the completely opaque manner in which Trustees have handled the development of their proposals and the complete lack of any form of public engagement or consultation over what is public land and facilities.

It is a matter of common sense that the notice should be sufficient to allow the public to make representations effectively. The information regarding what they are doing with the land edged red and blue is completely unclear. Residents can't tell what will be built on the land or what "improvements" will be made. What does this actually mean for the Park? What is happening to the disposed land and the retained land?

We believe the Trustees should abandon their proposal to sell the land, the notice should be withdrawn and the Trustees should engage with the local community to agree a plan to transform these areas of a Grade II Historic Park to public parkland.

Yours Sincerely,

Roger Jones.  
Chair, Friends of West Ham Park.