

WARREN FARM RADIO FLYERS

RECTORY PARK PLANNING UPDATE

The planning application by Middlesex Football Association was heard by the LBE Planning Committee on Wednesday evening.

Bob Howard was invited to speak as the only objector to the plans. Bob's address to the meeting was as follows :-

"Until a few days ago, it was my intention to come here tonight to object very strongly to a redevelopment plan which would have resulted in the closure of the only officially sanctioned model flying club in the borough able to offer training to people wishing to learn a wonderful sport combining technology, skill, discipline and a relaxing way to spend time with like-minded enthusiasts.

Whilst I still object to this project, I have at least been able to take comfort from proposals by council officers which may mean that we can continue to fly in another part of Rectory Park which we had previously considered too obstructed for our activities.

The fact remains, however, that even this solution is not without its problems. When we had to relocate from Warren Farm, just over two years ago, many of our members were forced to scrap valuable models, flown regularly at Warren Farm, which were deemed unsuitable for use at Rectory Park. The restricted area which we have now been offered will mean even more such models will be consigned to the council tip, as they are mostly so specialised that they cannot be deemed saleable. Building projects for some such models have had to be abandoned when almost complete, and will not now be able to fulfil the builders hopes and dreams.

We will, I hope, be able to adapt to the restrictions of the new site, however the disruption to our activities, and the uncertain future for the club, have resulted in the near destruction of a club that I and a small number of helpers have spent many years building up. We now have only half the number of members which we had when news of the loss of Warren Farm first broke in early 2012.

It is reasonable to assume that the support that Ealing Council is giving to football will be used mostly by younger people. Model flying is an all-inclusive sport which encompasses everybody regardless of age, gender or disability. Many of our members are of an older generation who have long since ceased to be able to chase a football around a field, or are suffering a variety of infirmities which restrict their ability to be physically active. We can only hope that Ealing Council will offer model flying the same kind of support that it is lavishing on the so-called "Beautiful Game".

Finally, we trust that this will be the last time we are required to relocate because of such redevelopment projects. If we have to move again, there is no other option. We will be forced to disband the club, and many of our members will have to abandon the activity that they love"

As expected, the application was approved, as the issues raised by the above comments were, as also expected, outside the remit of the planning committee. However, council members from both sides of the chamber expressed sorrow that we have been put in this position, and appear very supportive. One even went so far as to criticise the handling of our relocation which has resulted in our original flying site at Warren Farm laying derelict and unused for over two years, when we could have still been flying there.

We have now done all that is possible to continue flying. Whether or not the proposals made by LBE officers to keep us flying, and the support from the councillors, will translate into practical help remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, it is important that we are seen to make use of Rectory Park as often as possible, to ensure that LBE understand how important it is for WFRF members to have access to a flying site.