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## **Wireless Festival: two die amid calls for park ban**

Revellers' deaths come after Finsbury Park neighbours' protests over noise, drug-taking and rowdy behaviour

13 July, 2018 — By [Emily Finch](#)

*One of the review notices at Finsbury Park (Credit: Clive Carter)*

A COMMUNITY group has made a fresh bid to block festivals taking over a popular park for months at a time as two revellers died after attending Wireless festival.

Police are investigating the death of a 20-year-old woman in hospital on Monday after “becoming ill” at the music festival on Sunday while a 16-year-old died in hospital after he collapsed in Seven Sisters Road following a suspected asthma attack.

Residents living near Finsbury Park, which borders Islington but is managed by Haringey Council, have slammed the council for blocking access to half of the park for months at a time.

Jono Kenyon, 42, who lives near the park, told the *Tribune*: “I’ve lived in this area for over 40 years, but this is the worst it’s been. We, as local residents, have to tolerate a lot of anti-social behaviour, with huge amounts of drug-taking in the street.

“There is drug paraphernalia all over the children’s playground. The aftermath is disgusting.”

He added: “It feels as if Haringey licensing have given up caring about this community.”



**Rubbish left at the park playground (Credit: @mum\_on\_bike)**

Another resident, Emily Turner, said streets around Finsbury Park tube station were covered in a thick layer of grime for days after the festival.

“There were just so many people on Saturday and Sunday,” she said. “Many were rowdy and, combined with football crowds, I saw a lot of women being harassed.”

Around 45,000 visited Finsbury Park on each of the three days of Wireless festival, with some travelling hundreds of miles to hear musicians Stormzy and Drake.

For the past few years community group The Friends of Finsbury Park has tirelessly campaigned to block festivals in the park because it says the green space should be preserved for use by the community.

Around half of the park is blocked by a 10ft fence between May and October for nine events.

The group mounted an unsuccessful challenge at the Court of Appeal last November when a judge ruled that Haringey Council could continue hiring out the park for large-scale events.

This week, it has submitted a licence challenge to Haringey, claiming that the organisers of Wireless, Live Nation (Music) UK, failed to prevent public nuisance and crime and disorder.

Group chairman Simon Hunt, 21, said: “The challenge is based on sound recordings we made last year. We believe the festival breaches the sound levels agreed. We have people writing to us to say their house is shaking because the bass levels are so high.”

He added: “People say they don’t want to live around here anymore. If you move to a park area you’re looking for a tranquil open space. Instead, this place has thousands of people at the weekend causing noise pollution.”

Mr Hunt said he felt positive for the future of the park after the vice-chair of his group was chosen as a councillor in Haringey during this year’s May elections.

A Haringey Council spokeswoman said: “Our clean-up team have been working at the park since the festival finished. We understand that residents have concerns and would encourage them to share them with us.

“Haringey has some fantastic green spaces and we work hard to keep them maintained all year round. We treat all complaints seriously and will aim to resolve them as swiftly as possible.”

Residents can make representations towards the review until August 2 when a licensing sub-committee will consider the application.

The organisers of Wireless festival did not respond to requests for a comment, despite numerous phone calls and emails.



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