

WIRELESS FESTIVAL 2018 AUDIT REPORT



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Festival Republic Ltd approached Reading Borough Council to carry out an independent audit of the measures put in place to prevent antisocial behaviour and crime and disorder in the streets around the Wireless Festival site.

1.2 Festival Republic Ltd runs the Reading Festival and they have developed a strong working partnership with Reading Borough Council (and other agencies) over many years of working together.

1.3 There are numerous events held in Reading each year and staff employed by Reading Borough Council have the experience and skills to ensure that event organisers have put in place the necessary systems and procedures to maintain public safety and reduce the external impacts of the event.

2.0 Scope

2.1 Two staff from Reading Borough Council attended the event both of which were on site throughout the operation which included the ingress and egress of the site by festival goers.

2.2 Clyde Masson - Principal Licensing Enforcement Officer - 20 years licensing experience covering all aspects of licensing including premise licensing. During this 20 year period he has worked at one day festivals between 500 to 1,000 capacity and 3-4 day festivals of 90,000+. This work has involved the monitoring of conditions attached to licences in respect of music, dance, alcohol, nuisance, ingress and egress of the festival site, Illegal Street trading, touting outside the festival site and monitoring the impact of festivals on residential areas around festival sites.

2.3 Jodie Wilson - Senior Environmental Health Officer. Jodie has an MSc in Environmental Health and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Acoustics and Noise Control from the Institute of Acoustics as well as 13 years local authority experience to include dealing with noise and nuisance, including premises licensing. During her career, Jodie has worked with many events and festivals, as statutory consultee for applications, advising applicants on noise control matters to minimise the noise impact on local residents and monitoring compliance with licence conditions relating to noise and nuisance.

2.4 The audit focused a range of key areas:

- Noise and vibration (in residential areas around the festival site)
- Public nuisance
- Crime and disorder
- Signage
- Security deployment in residential streets
- Drunkenness
- Drug use / drug paraphernalia
- Rubbish/Urination/damage to property in residential streets
- Resident interaction and feedback

3.0 Method

3.1 Officers focused on 3 sections of residential properties as set out in the offsite Hackney Security Deployments plan (appendix 1) covering the following areas:

Seven Sisters Road

Ambler Road (including Prah Road added due to proximity to Blackstock Rd)

Blackstock Road
Sommerfield Road
Finsbury Park Road
Wilberforce Road
Queen's Drive
Princess Crescent
Gloucester Drive
Alexandra Grove
Henry Road
Portland Rise
Adolphus Drive

3.2 Officers recorded observations using a time line of note taking (appendix 2) while covering the areas. On conclusion of each day a summary of observations was provided to Festival Republic via email.

4.0 Observations

4.1 Noise

4.1.1 Whilst music noise was audible for the majority of the time, levels did fluctuate between streets and at different times of day. Generally during the festival did we not consider noise levels intrusive to a point of statutory nuisance however some swear words could be identified which could give cause for concern. Officers visited streets where noise complaints had been received and did not experience excessive or intrusive noise (72 Park House, Portland Rise & 32b Summerfield Road).

4.1.2 Noise and disturbance due to festival goers within local streets was minimal and low level (such as car stereos or talking excitedly). This noise was quickly managed by security. Security teams were observed asking people politely to be considerate. This was generally well responded to. There were car horns beeping at the end of one evening as the metal security gates on Queen's Drive were slow to be unlocked.

4.2 Signage

4.2.1 Signage was displayed on large white boards with black writing requesting 'Please respect resident's property and keep noise levels down so not to disturb them' (appendix 3).

4.2.2 Signage was displayed in all streets identified at 3.1 stating that parking permissions were suspended over the festival period and penalty charge notices would be issued where illegal parking was observed.

4.2.3 The VMS (variable message signs) boards put out during the road closure at the main Finsbury Park entrance end of Seven Sisters Road was flashing instructions directing festival goers to the station and also "Sssshh!!" followed by "RESPECT OUR NEIGHBOURS" (Appendix 3)

4.2.4 Within the festival site grounds near the exit there was a sign stating "LAST TOILETS BEFORE YOU EXIT" which may help prevent urination in the streets after exiting.

4.3 Security Deployment

4.3.1 Groups of 2 and 3 security staff were deployed at junctions of roads identified at 3.1 with additional pairs of staff roaming throughout the area. Further to this provision 2 vehicles were used as response units to incidents and provide refreshments to staff (Appendix 3).

4.3.2 Security numbers were good in all streets with the exception of Henry Road where the cover was not always in place. Staff were very friendly and engaging.

4.4 Drunkenness

4.4.1 Only a few isolated incidents of drunkenness were witnessed on Seven Sisters Road, the vast majority of festival goers did not appear to be under the influence of alcohol. The world cup football matches taking place over the weekend seemed to draw large numbers to the 2 pubs near the Finsbury Park main entrance, which was where the few drunk people observed appear to have come from.

4.5 Drugs Paraphernalia

4.5.1 Nitrous Oxide was being used openly around the streets, predominately close to the main entrance to Finsbury Park including; Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park Road and Wilberforce Road. The use of this drug is not illegal but its open usage on the street did create an anarchic image.

4.5.2 No signs of other drug taking were evident, for example no needles or foil wraps were found.

4.6 Rubbish/Urination/damage to property in residential streets

4.6.1 The accumulation of rubbish which included cans/bottles and takeaway food containers were a constant and on-going challenge. Hackney Council's street cleaning team worked tirelessly to keep the streets clean with regular road sweeps by machinery and staff. They should be recognised as doing a very good job (Appendix 3).

4.6.2 No urination was found to have taken place or reported for investigation, 2 x vomit patches were observed on Seven Sisters Road which were attended too by cleaning staff and cleared. The use of security staff strategically placed throughout the residential area appeared to discourage this from taking place.

4.7 Resident interaction and feedback

4.7.1 Security staff was observed interacting with residents over the weekend in a positive manner.

4.7.2 A resident in Gloucester Road provided a couple of chairs for security staff to sit down and a resident from Somerfield Road provided ice lollies to security staff as a thank you.

4.7.3 Clyde Masson spoke to a resident and her friend outside her property in Ambler Road to gauge opinion on the impact of the festival and if there was any negativity towards it. The resident from No.21 Ambler Road stated that the festival was ok and she didn't mind it, there was a bit of rubbish from takeaways which was a nuisance. The issue of litter was passed directly to nearby litter pickers to deal with.

4.8 Ingress and Egress from the festival site

4.8.1 Ingress to the site provided little impact to the residential area on the mornings of the festival with most festival goers gathering at the entrance to Finsbury Park and immediate area surrounding the entrance to the site. The roads where it was busiest were the junctions of Blackstock Road and Wilberforce Road with Seven Sisters Road. Visitors to the park at this entrance will have been affected by the numbers of persons gathered in this area but Clyde Masson did not witness any incidents other than numbers of persons accessing the festival site.

4.8.2 The area in Finsbury Park in front of the ticket entrance was relatively small which did create a bottle neck to the park with festival goers both just inside the gates and spilling out into the road.

4.8.3 Clyde Masson witnessed festival goers parking their vehicles over the weekend in residential streets even though clear signage stated that vehicles parking illegally would receive penalty charge notices. Security staff actively engaged with festival goers advising that penalty charge notices were being issued which had limited affect. Penalty charge notices were issued over the festival period. If music was being played on car stereos they were asked to turn the music off or down and to respect residents by moving on to the festival site and not hanging around. The majority of festival goers observed in this situation complied with these requests.

4.8.4 Egress from the festival site was coordinated by the external security team to minimise the impact of festival goers into residential streets. A road closure was implemented on Seven Sisters Road by Metropolitan Police between Finsbury Park main entrance and Manor House tube station.

4.8.5 Security staff were deployed in good time at the junctions of Seven Sisters Road with side streets where low level barriers were placed to discourage festival goers from moving into residential areas. Where festival goers provided evidence that they resided in nearby streets, they were permitted access to these streets.

4.8.6. The volume of festival goers was large and the area very busy when the exit gates opened at the end of each night. The festival goers did however leave in an orderly manner and the noise levels were not intrusive.

4.8.7 On the whole the road closure, coupled with security staff and barriers on residential streets worked well although some festival goers were found on side streets. When the festival goers were questioned about their presence it was either that they wished to go back to their vehicle or to wait for a taxi/UBER vehicle away from the crowd. Whilst there were festival goers found in residential streets there was no evidence of misbehaviour or an unruly nature. Both Clyde Masson and Jodie Wilson felt safe working in this area especially with the presence of security staff in the area (Appendix 3).

4.8.8 Clyde Masson and Jodie Wilson both noted that there was very little litter being brought out from the festival site onto Seven Sisters Road considering the large numbers of people leaving (Appendix 3).

4.9 Incidents

4.9.1 Friday 6 July - 22.00hrs a group of young males who were not from the festival arrived opposite the exit to the festival site with a music (boom box) playing loud music in an attempt to create a party on the street. These individuals were moved on by security and Metropolitan Police.

4.9.2 Saturday 7 July - 22.27hrs On site festival fireworks part of performance but only for a few minutes.

4.9.3 Saturday 7 July - 23.03hrs Helicopter circled overhead which was quite loud.

4.9.4 Saturday 7 July - 23.12hrs Queens Drive street barrier and witnessed about 15 vehicles waiting for the barrier to be lifted for access. Took a while for the enforcement officer to arrive

which caused unnecessary beeping of horns and car stereo noise (only one officer with a key for all barrier gates in back streets).

4.9.5 Sunday 8 July - 20.20hrs Somerfield Road Street barrier reported blocked by festival vehicle, attended with security manager (Tony Hawkins) vehicle already gone, security staff in attendance.

4.9.6 Sunday 8 July - 21.30hrs Alexandra Grove. A female found by security staff to be apparently having a fitting seizure. It was unsure if this female had attended the festival. The ambulance crew were in attendance supported by security staff.

4.9.6 Sunday 8 July - 21.55 Seven Sisters Road security staff assaulted by a member of public from the festival. Member of security was unharmed but shaken.

4.9.7 Sunday 8 July - 22.00 Portland Rise/Seven Sisters Road. Festival goer received CPR for more than 15 minutes by ambulance staff assisted by Metropolitan Police and security. Outcome unknown.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The measures in place in the form of security personal, signage and litter pickers worked well to reduce the impact of the event on residents in the area.

5.2 Whilst security staff could not legally stop festival goers from accessing residential streets, their presence did reduce numbers in the area and any opportunity for unsociable activities from occurring.

5.3 Whilst parking restrictions did not prevent vehicles being illegally parked to attend the festival these measures appeared to reduce the impact in numbers of vehicles in the streets which could have been worse.

5.4 Whilst litter was evident in residential streets, the constant presence of road sweepers kept the area clean. We were very impressed by diligence of the road sweepers in carrying out this work. Understandably attention was focussed on the roads closest to the festival main entrance (Zone 1 of the Hackney Security Deployments plan - Appendix 1), however we noted overflowing litter bins further along Seven Sisters Road and litter likely to be associated with festival goers in the Zone 2 and Zone 3 streets, which could be improved.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Improvements to the signage could include luminous lettering. There should be general signage at either end of each road within the housing estate to capture festival goers walking to and from the festival.

6.2 Consideration should be given to establish taxi ranks and pick up and drop points for parents and private hire vehicles. Provision could be incorporated within the confines of Finsbury Park. These measures could further help to reduce festival goers from moving into residential streets to find transport.

6.3 Consider moving the ticket entrance further into the park to create more space for festival goers and draw them away from the entrance to the park including Blackstock Road, Wilberforce Road and Finsbury Park Road.

6.4 Consider establishing a no drinking zone outside the entrance to Finsbury Park and include surrounding streets like Blackstock Road, Wilberforce Road and Finsbury Park Road.

6.5 Consider extending litter picking arrangements to include Zones 2 and 3 streets at least once daily along with more regular emptying of the litter bins along Seven Sisters Road.

6.6 There was only 1 Local Authority officer with the key to the barrier gates within the housing estate. It would be useful if there were more officers with keys or information about when the barrier would open to avoid the queuing of vehicle at the gates and the associated noise.

EMS OFFSITE

HACKNEY SECURITY DEPLOYMENTS - SIA POSITIONS

ZONE 3

Position 10 = 6 static SIA
Position 11 = 2 static SIA
Position 12 = 6 static SIA
Position 13 = 2 static SIA
Z3 Mobile Team = 6 x SIA

ZONE 2

Position 6 = 6 static SIA
Position 7 = 2 static SIA
Position 8 = 4 static SIA
Position 9 = 2 static SIA
Z2 Mobile Team = 6 x SIA

ZONE 1

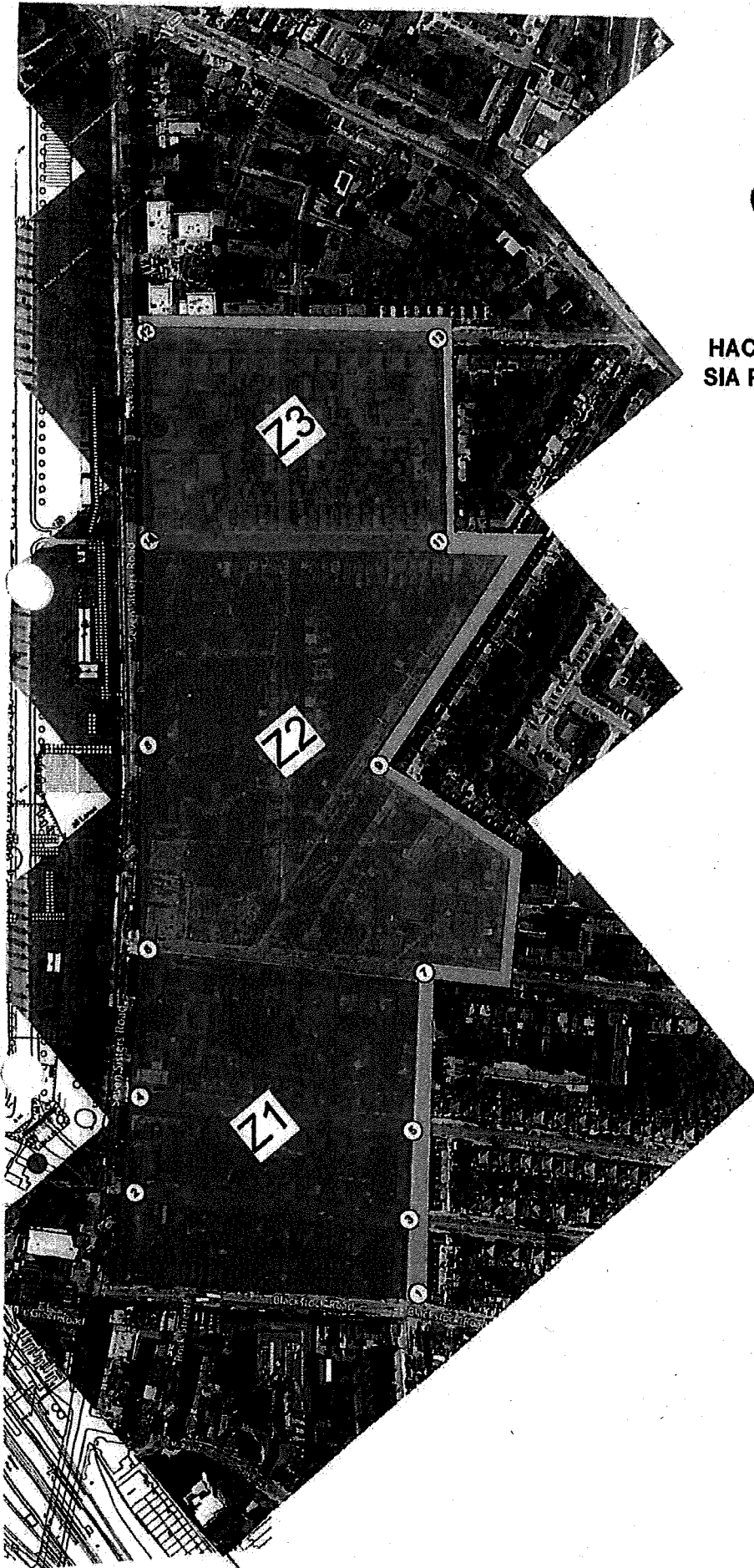
Position 1 = 2 static SIA
Position 2 = 6 static SIA
Position 3 = 2 static SIA
Position 4 = 6 static SIA
Position 5 = 2 static SIA
Z1 Mobile Team = 6 x SIA

PATROL

Patrol Response Team = 6 x SIA
Patrol Covert Teams = 3 teams of 2 x
SIA

ADDITIONAL

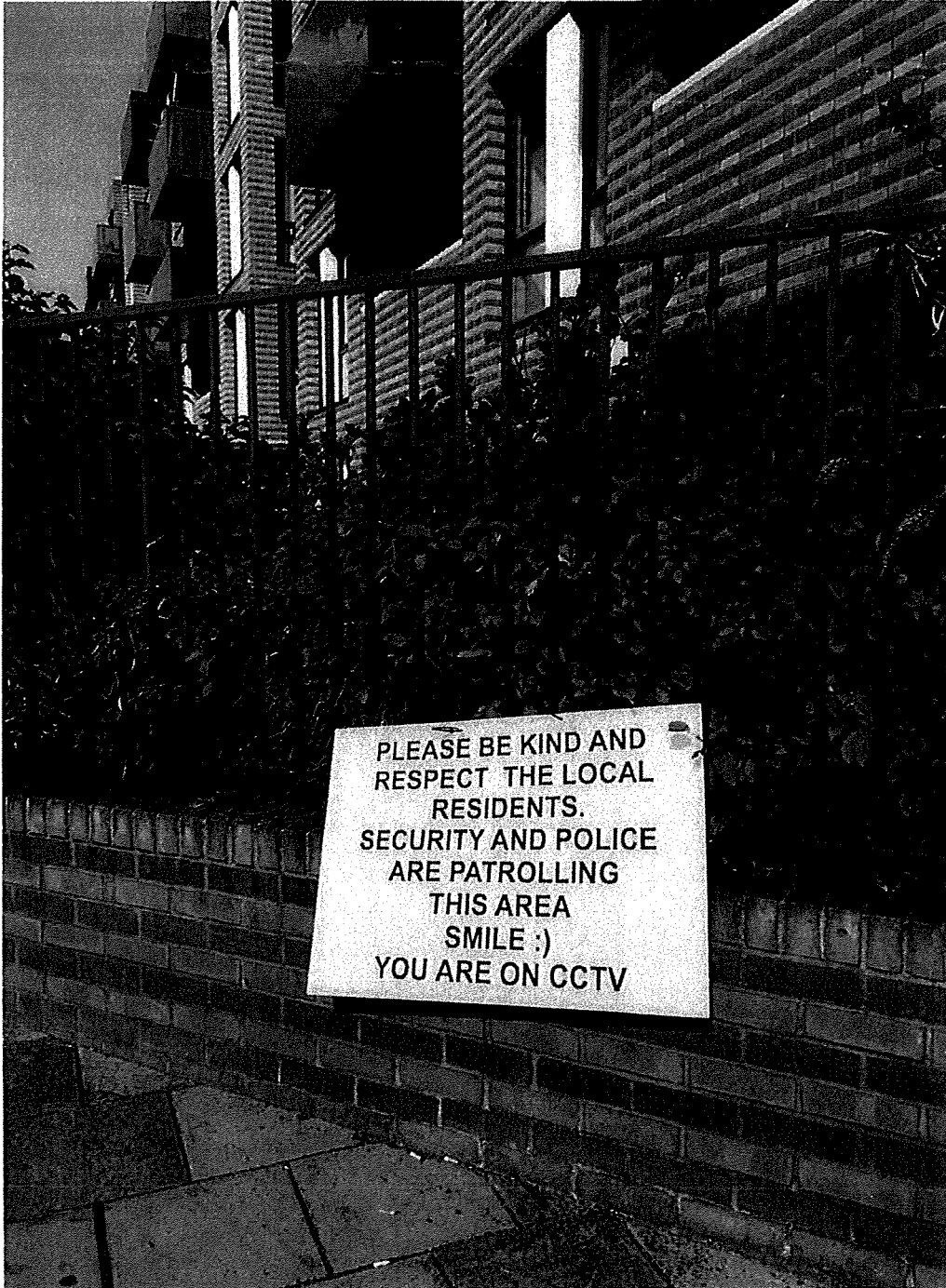
Supervisors = 4
Petrol Station = 2
Blackstock Road = 2



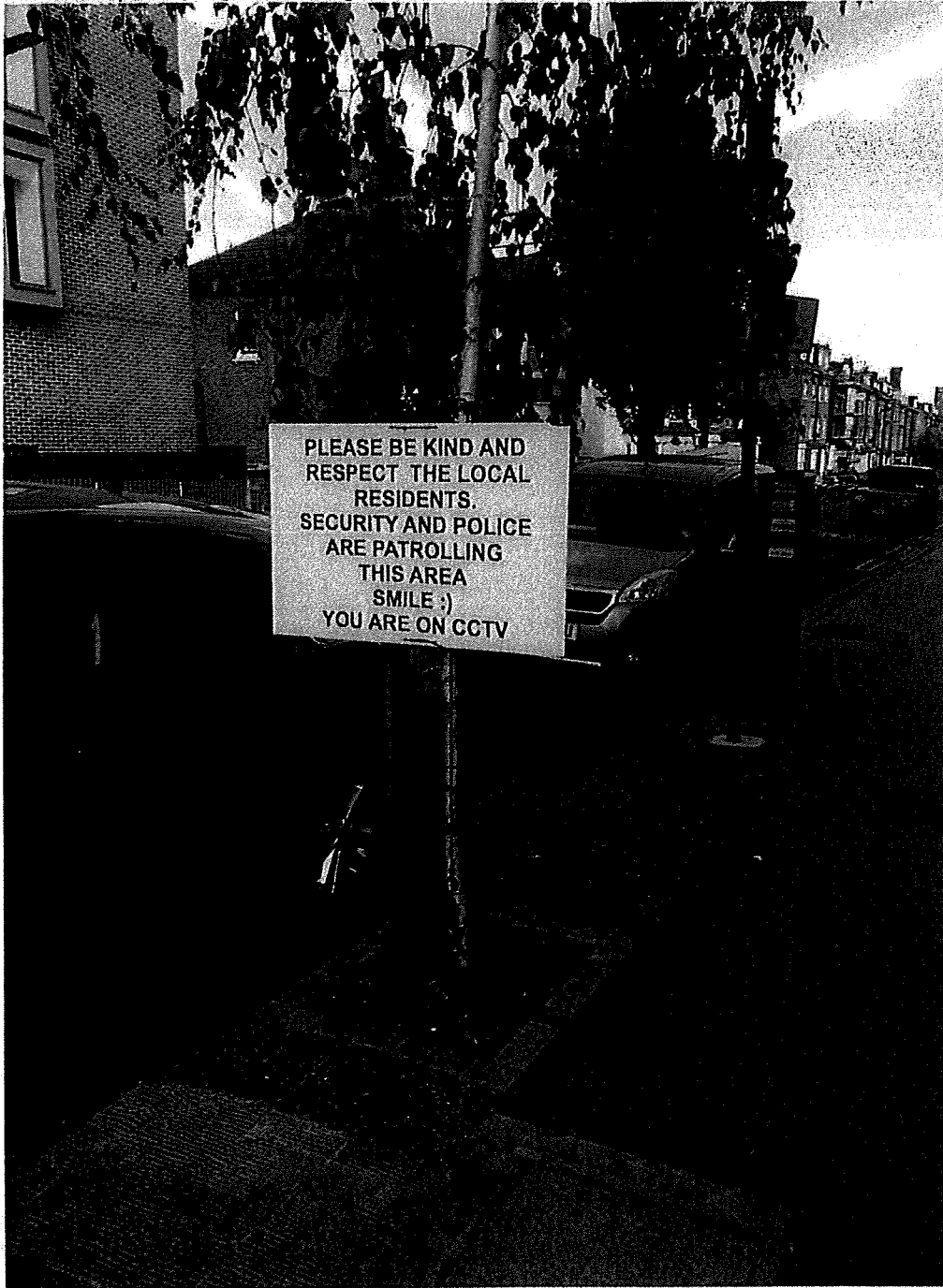
APPENDIX 3 - Photos

3.1 Signage in and around the Wireless 2018 site.

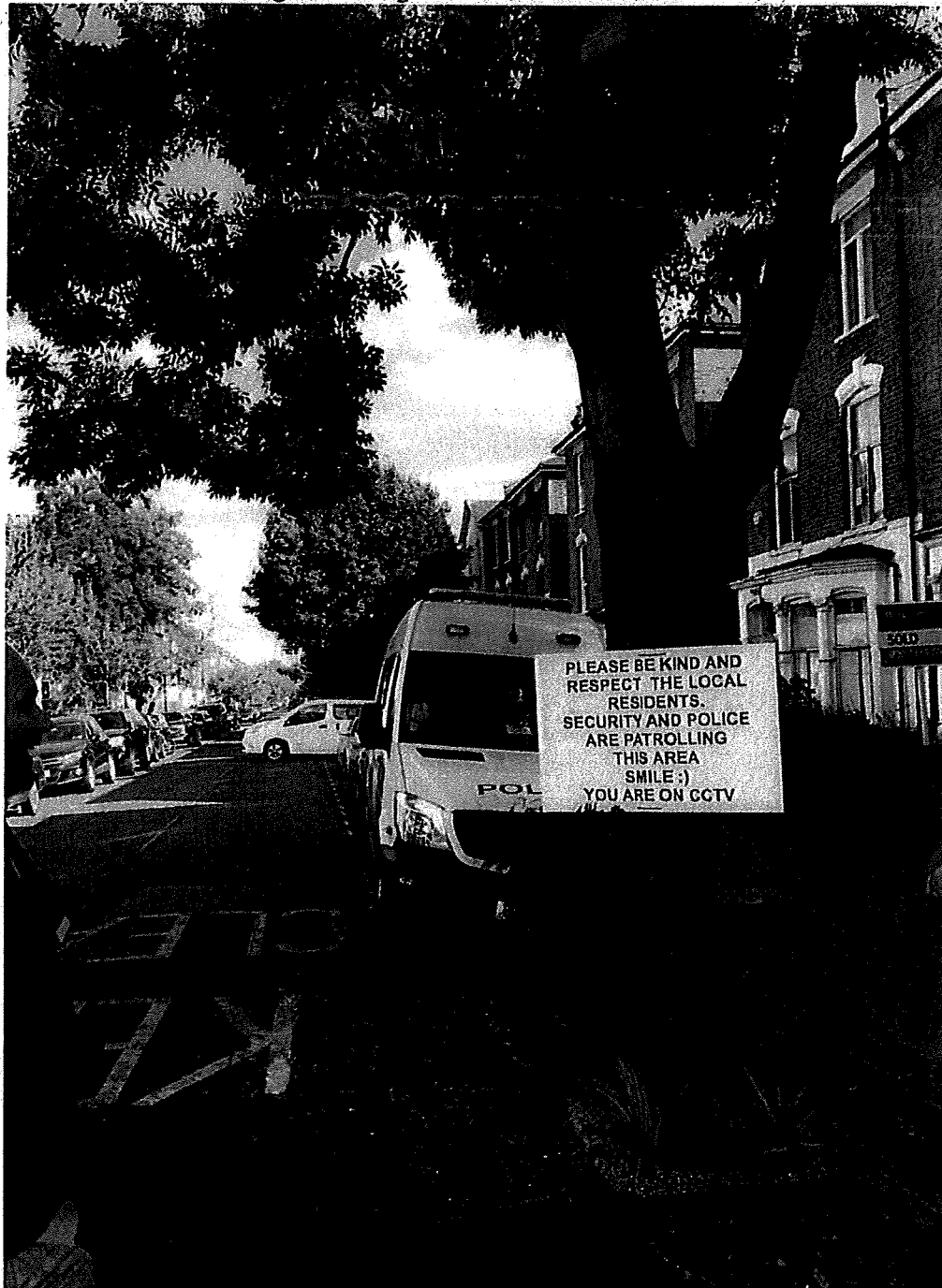
3.1.1 Respect the neighbours sign on Queens Drive / Seven Sisters Road jct



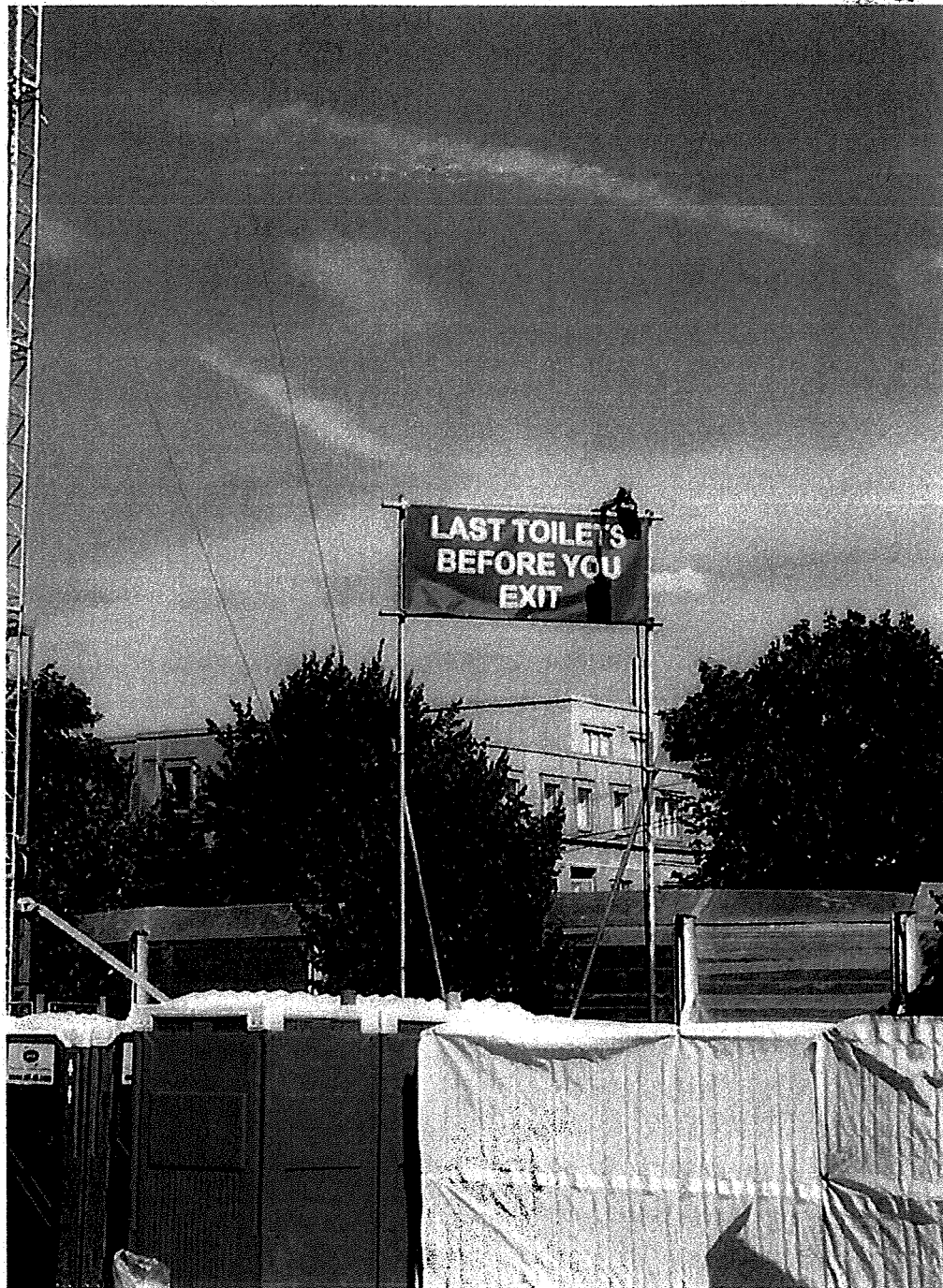
3.1.2 Respect neighbours sign on Alexandra Grove



3.1.3 Respect the neighbours sign on Wilberforce Road



3.1.4 "Last toilets before you exit" sign may help reduce street and garden urination.



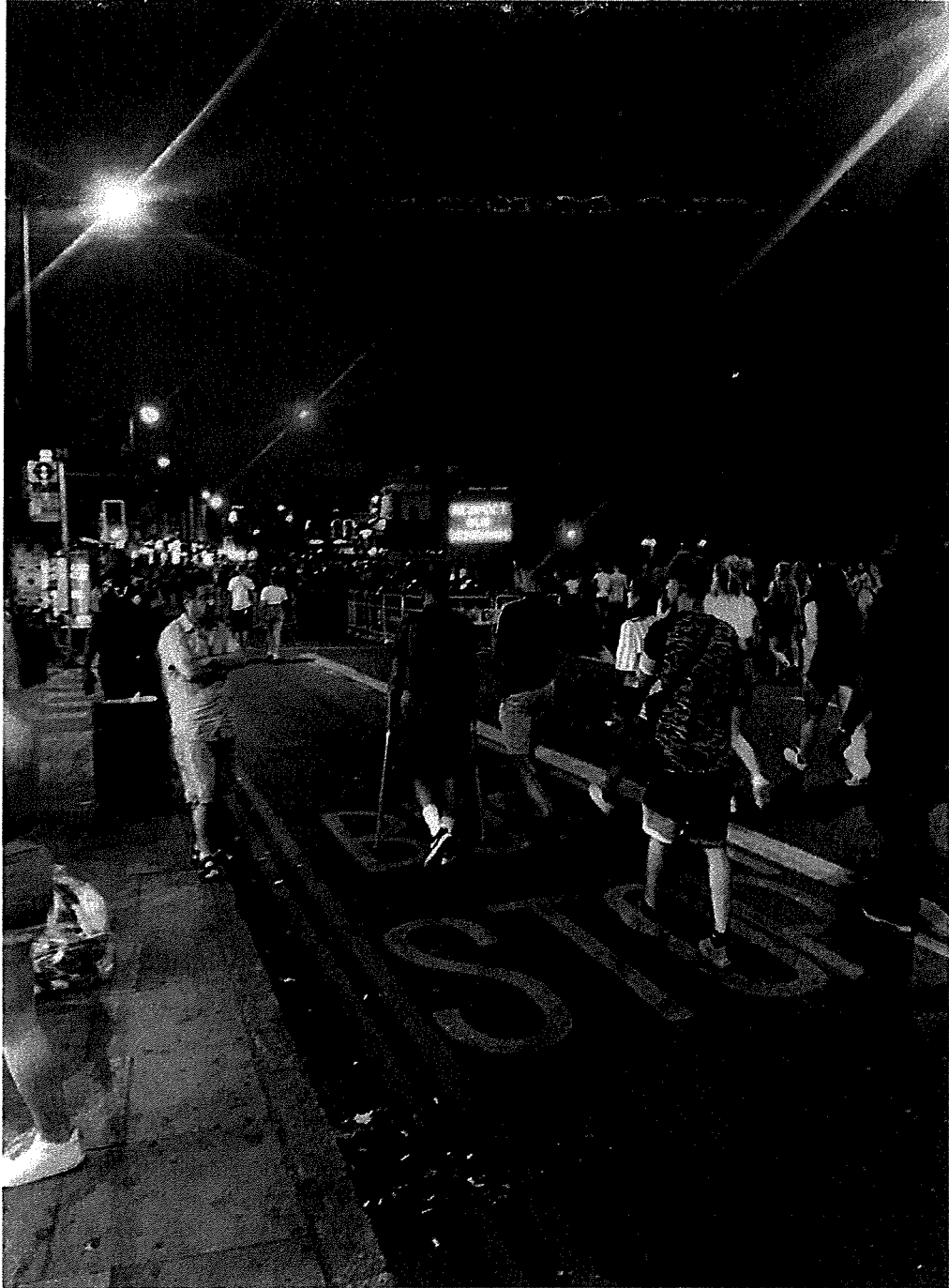
3.1.5 Illuminated variable message board at the exit directing festival-goers to the nearest tube station to assist with dispersal. Stewards were also directing people. The sign shows "Manor House [left arrow]".



3.1.6 Illuminated variable message board which gave directions to the Finsbury Park tube and reminding festival-goers leaving to "Ssshhh!" and "Respect our neighbours"

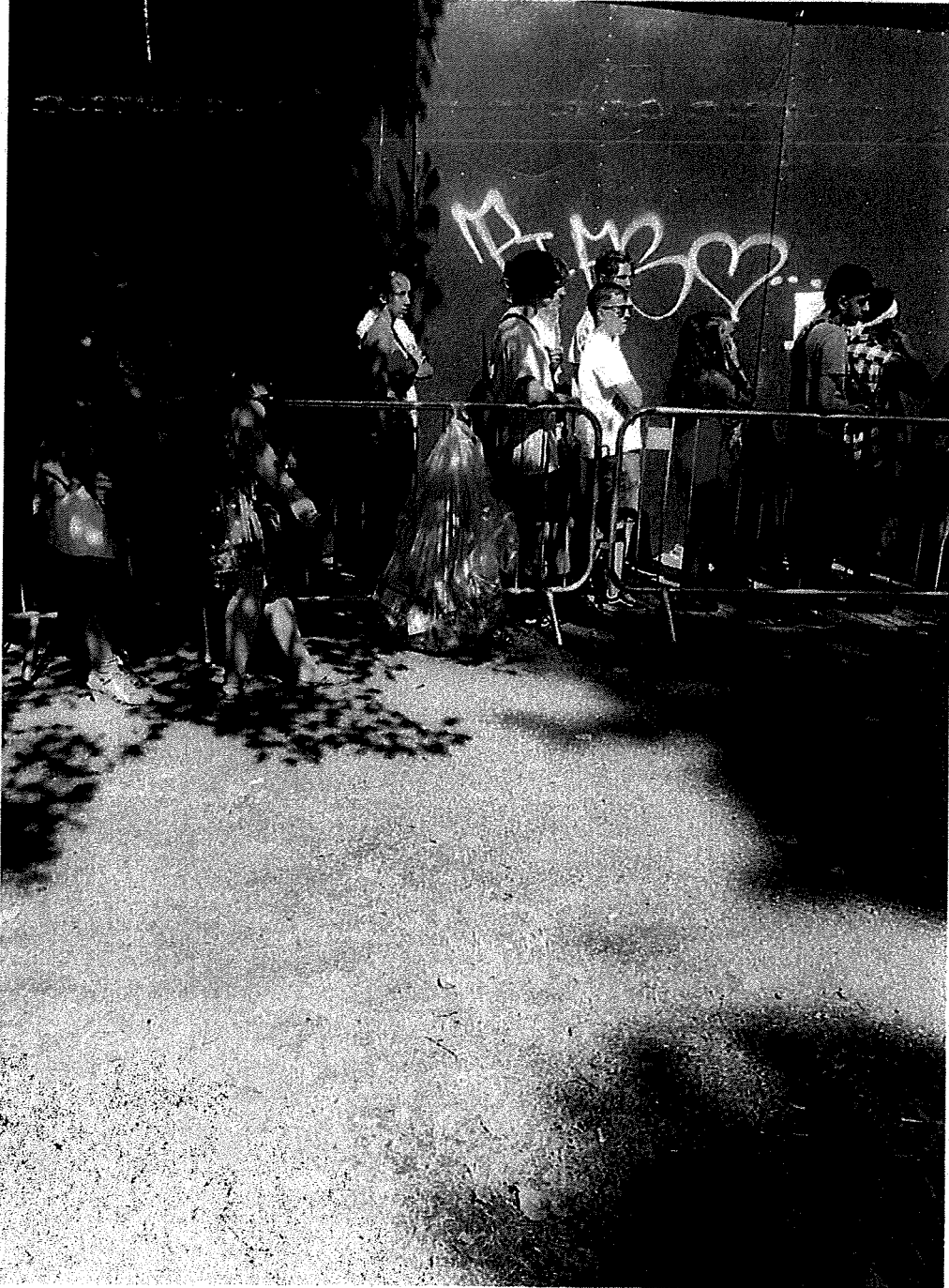


3.1.7 "Respect our neighbours"



3.2 Litter

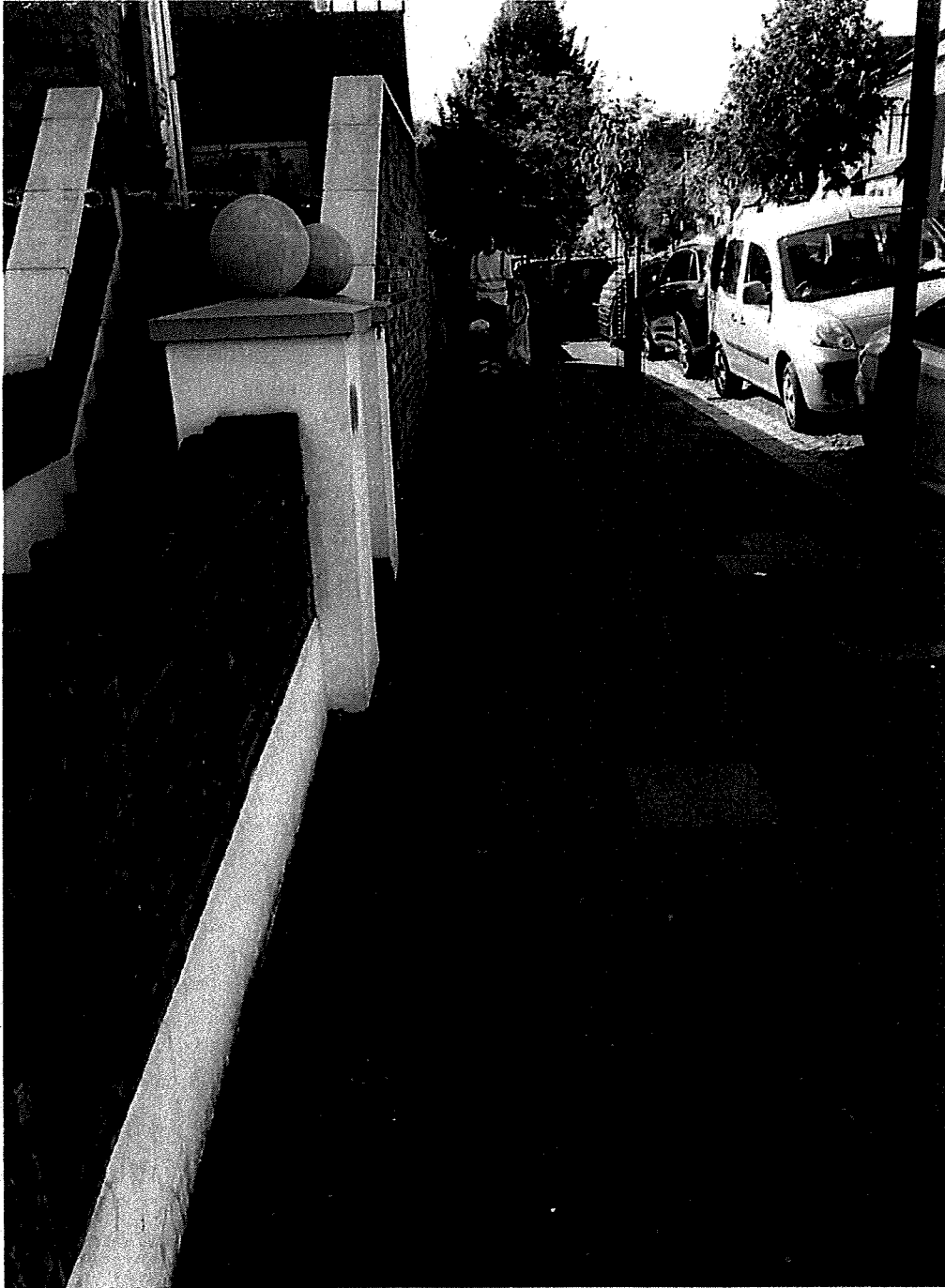
3.2.1 Bin bags placed at regular intervals along queue barriers gave festival goers somewhere to put their rubbish



3.2.2 The Street sweeper was a regular sight particularly on Seven Sisters Road keeping the roads and pavements free from litter.



3.2.3 Litter pickers spotted regularly in residential roads near the site



3.2.4 very little rubbish brought out of the festival onto Seven Sisters Road at the end of the festival each night. It is assumed that festival goers are encouraged to discard waste cups and bottles before leaving the festival site.



3.2.5 Road sweeper at night.



3.2.6 Road Sweeps at the junction of Blackstock Road



3.2.7 Sweeping through Blackstock Road



3.3 Security presence on local streets

3.3.1 we saw lots of incidences where the security teams were challenging people on the streets to disperse them away from the residential roads into the festival. They were always observed to be friendly in their manner towards the public and generally their requests were well received and quickly resolved. They were generally keeping people moving towards to the festival, picking up their litter and asking to keep noise down rather than any serious incidents, however their presence on most street corners is likely to have been a deterrent.



3.3.2 An incident on Finsbury Park Road was brewing which appeared to be a fall-out between friends. The security team at that location were dealing with it and the security mobile patrol and later the police also patrolling the area stopped to see if assistance was required. The response was very fast and demonstrates that serious incidents could be dealt with very promptly which has the benefit of also minimising impact on local residents.



3.3.3 The road blocks at residential street junctions from Seven Sisters Road were largely successful at deterring the majority of festival goers from accessing the residential streets and appeared to help with dispersal by encouraging them to keep moving towards either tube station.



3.3.4 Security presence at exit to festival site



3.3.5 Security presence at junction of Seven Sisters Road and Portland Rise

