

Appendix 2:

Finsbury Park recognised stakeholders' full responses to Festival Republic park hire applications – 2023-27 events

From: Cllr Alexandra Worrell, Ward Member for Stroud Green

As local councillor for Stroud Green I would like to raise concerns about this application and more widely about the proposal to give permission to Festival Republic to hold large events in the park for the next 5 years up to 2027. I will make my points under 5 different headings:

Size of events and impact on residents

I ultimately believe that, at 45,000 capacity, events of this size are unsuitable to be held in Finsbury Park, which is in a densely populated urban area, and also functions as a major public transport/commuting interchange. It results in vast swathes of the park being made unavailable to the surrounding public, many of whom don't have their own private outdoor space, during peak summer months. It causes severe noise disturbance (and sometimes, flats shaking/vibrating) to nearby residents. It makes the rest of the park that is still open confusing and unwelcoming – personally, despite not finding the events upsetting or disruptive from my home when they're on, I tend to avoid the park itself when the Festival Republic events infrastructure is up because it becomes an unpleasant environment for park-goers and usual thoroughfares are disrupted.

I fully understand the financial justification for the events and I understand that the council is cash-strapped and would have to find money from elsewhere in the budget if we did not have this income. I understand and support the need to be pragmatic and sensible about the council's limited budget. However, I don't think sufficient efforts have been made to explore possible alternatives, which should be done in honest consultation with local residents. For example, what funds could feasibly be raised in the park if we hosted smaller events which better met the needs of the community? Are we maximising the commercial income we make from the café or allowing other (responsible) organisations to hire space? Could major events be limited to a much shorter period of time? Would local residents be willing to accept a less well-maintained park, which would run on a smaller budget, if it meant not having the major events?

There has not been a public consultation on the use of the park for major events since 2013 – I don't think that's good enough. I think there needs to be an honest discussion with residents, not just stakeholder groups, on the options and the trade-offs. It may be that there is a silent majority out there who are not particularly bothered by the events and are sympathetic to the council's arguments about the financial need for them, in the context of our wider budget pressures. It may also be that the silent majority pretty much agree with positions taken by stakeholders like the Friends of Finsbury Park. And there are probably some residents out there who are quite keen on the events. Either way, we need to hear from and be guided by them, meaningfully.

Environmental impact and lack of consistency with other green council policies

Environmental benchmarking should have started a long time ago to understand the environmental and ecological impact these major events have – on trees, wildlife, air pollution and CO2 emissions. I welcome that that's going to start but it's not sufficient to say that benchmarking hasn't been done in the past so we just can't say for sure if the events have an adverse environmental impact. Anecdotally and observationally, it seems obvious that they do, particularly when it comes to the fumes pumped out by large vehicles and festival infrastructure.

The climate crisis we face is urgent and immediate and should always be a top priority. I'd argue that hosting events of this size is in direct contradiction to several of the council's green policies and Haringey Labour's green manifesto commitments.

Safety concerns

I have seen video footage from last year's Wireless festival various incidents of overcrowding/crowd-rushing, showing young people jumping fences and being tackled to the ground, others dragged, caught in crushes. I was there on a site visit on the Sunday during one such incident when police on horseback started rushing at crowds of would-be festival goers who were trying to break in. Police seemed to have fully lost control of the situation. I appreciate that out-of-context videos can distort a situation, but there's no denying that several incidents were dangerous, chaotic and scary, I witnessed it with my own eyes. I particularly worry about this in the context of Live Nation's track record on safety violations and crowd deaths.

I appreciate that things like this can happen at major events but have not been sufficiently reassured that the organisers/police would be able to prevent a similarly high risk situation arising at a future iteration of the event. At what point do we say no, that was too badly handled, too dangerous, we're not permitting you to use our park for those purposes again?

Lack of oversight and accountability if permission is given for 5 years

Granting permission for these events to go ahead for the next 5 years removes the already limited ability that ward councillors and other stakeholders have to place conditions on the organisers and hold them accountable, raise concerns directly with the organisers, or push for improvements and mitigations. It also essentially puts paid to the idea that there will be a meaningful consultation with local residents on the issue of major events in the park any time soon, which is something I support and will continue to advocate for.

Doing so to enable Festival Republic to erect semi-permanent infrastructure in the park to power their events sends completely the wrong message about what and who the park is for.

Lack of sufficient benefits to Haringey residents

At present I do not think the disruption and disturbance caused by the events provides sufficient clear benefit to Haringey residents. I do not think the council has been sufficiently clear, transparent or communicative about what exactly the money generated by the events is used for, what improvements it has enabled, and what the park would look like if the income wasn't generated. This should be rectified. Some stakeholders point to things in the park that are broken or that have fallen into disrepair and decline over the years, saying they can't see what all the money is being spent on. If we have evidence to refute this, we need to be really open and communicate this well to people.

There is often a narrative used about young people from poorer parts of the borough loving the fact that Wireless happens in Finsbury Park and reaping the benefits of it. The council's own evidence suggests that this is not the case – a very small minority of attendees or Wireless are actually from Haringey. And tickets to Wireless are extremely expensive so less likely to benefit those with lower incomes.

If major events are going to happen in the park, residents need to see much more benefit from them. Could Festival Republic pay to upgrade other things in the park, as well as repairing the damage they inevitably cause? Could we maximise what we are getting back per ticket sold to spend in the park? Could there be more of an emphasis on local talent? Could we give free or discounted tickets to a significant number of disadvantaged young people across Haringey? (I know there is already a scheme where you can volunteer as a steward and attend the festival for free but this only benefits small numbers.) Could the worst affected residents living closest to the park receive free tickets, either to

Wireless or to something that might be more up their street that is also run by Festival Republic? Or financial redress?

From: Finsbury Park Parkrun

Parkrun has no objection to other events taking place in the park and we accept this means that we sometimes need to cancel. We have no opinion on whether event permission should be granted permission on a year-by-year or multi-year basis. We appreciate when efforts are made to allow parkrun to take place alongside other events. parkrun is a free community sports event where around 500 local people walk, jog or run 5km each Saturday morning, supported by 25 volunteers each week.

For the large festivals we typically cancel for event days at a minimum. However, we are sometimes able to run during the set-up and take-down period. In order for us to be able to run while event infrastructure is on site we would need:

- A traffic curfew on the main carriageway around the park between 8.45 and 9.45 am
- The main downhill stretch of the carriageway to be clear of barriers. Previously the 'water fill' clip together barriers have been used to make a zig-zag down the carriageway and we're not able to go ahead if these are in place. Similarly we really need a good 5m of useable carriageway space so if temporary crowd barriers are used to separate motor vehicle and cycle space on the carriageway the main section need to be at least this wide.
- Access to most of our normal route (see attached image). We can normally divert from the carriageway parallel to Seven Sisters on to the grass, but we need a clear space of about 3m wide from the tree line (rather than from the wooden fence) to any steel shield to allow our runners to safely pass any pedestrians coming the other way. We are not typically able to divert around blockages to the carriageway parallel to Green Lanes.

Our three other points to note are:

- We historically find it difficult to recruit volunteers for one-off events. Therefore, depending on how the dates fall, if it ends up that there is one viable parkrun week in between the Festival Republic events and the KrankBrother events we would normally cancel that week.
- We understand that sometimes things don't go to plan (like with the record-breaking heat last year). But ideally, where it looks like take-down is not running to plan or the event staff are not able to accommodate a traffic curfew or barrier removal, someone would let us know on Thursday at the latest, so we can warn people that we need to cancel and they have the opportunity to make other plans.
- If we are going to go ahead with a diversion, we need about 3 weeks notice of this so we can submit an updated risk assessment and get it approved by parkrun HQ.

As ever, once the application process has been completed, please let us know what the plans are so we can make arrangements to cancel or go ahead as needed.

From: Ladder Community Safety Partnership

Thank you for your email of 7 March explaining the issue of booking concerts in Finsbury Park for the period of 2023-27.

This was discussed by residents at the monthly LCSP meeting on 9 March, as result of which several points emerged, which I am now forwarding to you as Chair. The following text is taken from the Minutes of the meeting and is, I hope, self explanatory.

Following discussion, residents made the following points:

- The arguments used by LBH to justify bookings for a 5-year period were understood, however it was strongly argued that, given the level of disruption, the council is not getting enough money from the promoters, and that this is an ideal opportunity to negotiate a better deal, especially from Festival Republic.
- Will LBH income negotiated over such a long period be inflation proofed?
- Given the financial advantages outlined by LBH in seeking a 5-year deal, will there be any penalty clause if the promoters decide to pull out before 2027?

Other concerns were expressed regarding the more detailed management plan of events, in particular:

- Disruption to public transport (especially buses) at Finsbury Park is considerable; there is a need for better information both inside and outside the station; it would be a good idea to warn passengers on trains/tubes that it may be better to alight at adjacent stations.
- Parking problems for residents in the roads adjacent to Endymion (Lothair N/S, Venetia, Tancred, Coningsby) during the festival periods need to be addressed

The Chair will pass on these concerns to the appropriate LBH officers.

From: Edible Landscapes

Please can you share how you will mitigate the environmental impact from 100's of HGV diesel trucks and generators and how this sits with The Biodiversity Action plan and Parks and Green spaces strategy? How will they align with your vision "green spaces become fully inclusive shared spaces that deliver our key aims of inclusion and wellbeing, climate change and sustainability" and your aim "need to better protect those natural spaces from both inappropriate usage and over use". How will this sit with your policy of decarbonising all park vehicles by 2027 and improve air quality?

From: Highbury Community Association

I am replying to your email below as the designated person from the Highbury Community Association which is a stakeholder as far as Events Management is concerned.

We are opposed in particular to the granting of applications from Festival Republic 2023-2027. We agree with the Friends of Finsbury Park that standards could slip over this period, and that proper monitoring of events might occur.

HCA believe that last year's concerts on the first weekend were not well managed, and that the failure of orderly admissions had knock-on effects in the area. We also agree with the Friends that nature recovery in the park should be the first aim, as indicated by government policy, and that it needs to be much clearer to stakeholders that events income is actually spent in the park.

HCA considers that the main harmful effect of the major Festival Republic concerts is felt by the residents of Islington and Hackney, not the residents of Haringey. The top of the Blackstock Road is an area already badly affected by drugs, crime and anti-social behaviour, and the Festival brings more drugs, nitrous oxide and alcohol into this area. Islington residents shopping along the Seven Sisters Road encounter crowds of Festival goers consuming drugs and alcohol. Children in the area can still be studying for exams and find the noise disturbing.

HCA looks forward to a policy involving only small community festivals, which all local people can enjoy without the harmful effects of major commercial events.

From: Furtherfield

We would like to know how this booking sits with Biodiversity Action Planning for Finsbury Park. What are the plans for monitoring and mitigating harm to biodiversity in the park?

From: Friends of Finsbury Park

Summary: Haringey Council propose Major Events for FIVE YEARS in Finsbury Park

- **No peaceful summers for five years:** the proposal to extend Major Events in Finsbury Park for five years, with less oversight, and without any benefit for local residents – despite an incident prone resumption in 2022 and [a petition](#) of 2,406 local objectors – is stunning
- **No repairs, limited investment, no local support:** almost nine months on, with three months till the proposed resumption, our park has [not recovered](#) from damage in 2022. Nor received commensurate investment that might ‘mitigate’ the loss of access for a material period of the summer. The lack of public support for these events from neighbouring boroughs, or indeed their Local Authorities – and vocal private criticism – is deafening!
- **Dumping a power station in Finsbury Park:** we understand a longer commitment is proposed to enable promoters to fund a large permanent sub-station in Finsbury Park. This ‘gesture’ at greening is a fallacy, with the bigger green step to not run Major events in Finsbury **Park**. It does nothing to mitigate the broader [environmental](#) and [ecological impacts](#) of their setup, or attendance, to which the promoter nor Haringey Council currently do no monitoring of impact
- **Dubious relationship:** The Council has failed to set out any good case to do this; their tacit acknowledgement that it is linking park staff salaries and ‘green’ investment to income from an alleged [monopolist](#), with a challenging safety record in the US and the UK, is remarkable. Why would the Council weaken scrutiny or oversight of such a complicated customer? And does this deal reduce the overall amount they’ll pay as a result?
- **Letting the promoter (further) mark its own homework:** removing or weakening the process of a formal annual review cycle would remove any incentive for the promoter to engage with the community, or go beyond the marginal mitigations the Friends of Finsbury Park has ‘won’ in recent years – like noise monitoring, ecological monitoring – or safety reviews. We worry the commercial pressure to maintain income will further trump local concerns. Constructively, we have set out twenty-one proposals for licensing consideration
- **Policy breaches? And lack of scrutiny:** Whilst we are very concerned to hear the cabinet member responsible for parks is off on long term sick, and we do wish her well, the promises for a review of major events and parks funding 2022 have not been kept. The Council appears to have breached in 2022 its own [Major Events policy](#) (p9) by [closing](#) the Tennis Courts to facilitate event toilets, likewise the ad-hoc closures to play spaces; generally, some residents found monitoring and enforcement through events frustratingly

re-active. We are deeply concerned that the same department responsible for Trees is distracted with other community '[challenges](#)' in Stroud Green – and that this proposal lacks proper attention and scrutiny

- **STOP! FUND OUR PARKS!** Haringey Council should meet the elected party's 2022 manifesto commitments: co-produce with concerned local residents, assure this ecologically critical space, and deliver a funding plan for green spaces that is either not, or is much less, dependent on major events.

Dear Haringey Council

The Friends of Finsbury Park (FoFP) is a charitable Trust, founded more than 30 years ago, that seeks to protect and preserve Finsbury Park. With over 3,650 followers on Twitter, and a more formal registered member base of more than 400, the democratically elected management committee seeks to represent local views from residents in the three neighbouring boroughs. The FoFP in recent years has operated a broad set of campaigns, including re-wilding the park, fund-raising in partnership with Haringey Council a new skate plaza, and promoting safety in the park, encouraging the Council and neighbouring police forces to better collaborate.

Unlike Haringey Council, which has not conducted any formal engagement with the community on Major events in recent years, the FoFP maintains active dialogue with a range of community groups and residents of all backgrounds and views. We believe we work hard to represent that diverse opinion.

In November 2022, alongside the MET and some representation from invited Haringey Council officers and councillors, the FoFP held a well attended community meeting to discuss major events. In short: whilst we acknowledge a very small number of supportive voices, and some history, the overwhelming sense of our community engagement was *against* major events in 2023, with a deep desire for Haringey Council to address the state of the local park, and materially improve its safety.

As such, our answer seeks to do

1. Set out our views on major events
2. Rebut the arguments set out for the proposal and pose questions to the review
3. Provide constructive next steps, and a position on effectively funding Finsbury Park

Our position on major events

The FoFP has long disagreed with Haringey Council's major events policy, and we are keen to clearly set out our position. As a reminder, Major Events constitute events in Finsbury Park, with up to 49,999 people a day; whilst often unsaid, this number excludes the many thousands of support staff that make the event happen. The narrative often frames this as a limited area within our park, as opposed to much of the southern portion of it; and that is only 'weekends', as opposed to the elapsed period where areas are closed off up to 6 weeks around the events themselves.

- **Parks are parks:** Finsbury Park is an island of open green space in one of the most densely populated areas of Haringey, North London. It is a well loved area for exercise, socialising and relaxation. Haringey suffers above average levels of obesity and mental

health issues. And we think that Haringey Council is starting to take these issues seriously, rightly. But the proposal to extend Major Events runs directly counter to these public health considerations.

In 2019, Haringey Council declared a Climate Emergency, and, amongst other initiatives, committed to improving air quality. The Council also pledged to “decarbonise all parks vehicles by 2027”, which in the broadest sense would apply to those that have been granted access to it. Statements such as an intent to “better protect natural spaces from inappropriate usage, and over-use” and “use our land more sustainably – we can arrest the decline of species and improve our biodiversity” are important. But they are impossible to reconcile with the current Major events policy, that permits 1000s of motor vehicles into Finsbury Park over the summer, and perhaps 100,000s in an intense period.

- **Times have changed:** whilst Finsbury Park has a history of big events, three things have changed. First, the consequences of health and safety standards and the industrialised nature of the modern festival, necessitate elaborate ‘build / de-build’ periods around an event weekend. Secondly, festivals are now far bigger, longer, and more commercial; the income required to pay for the expensive / large US headline acts that dominate the billing. Thirdly, Finsbury Park has become more dense, with high rise flats now edging all sides of it. The days of free and easy festivals, operating in a lightly residential neighbourhood for a couple of days a year, are long gone. We are in a declared Climate and Ecological Emergency and protecting all green spaces is the priority of our times.
- **Finsbury Park today is a poor venue for major events:** Whilst superficially Finsbury Park appears a good site for a venue, a big space near some tube lines, in practice it is poor. Over repeated years, entry and exit have proved hard to control for promoters, council and the police. 2022 saw a number of crushes with the ‘riot police’ called to rescue an understaffed private security force on site. To prevent illicit access, a five metre high steel wall is erected for about two months, depriving access to most of the usable southern half of the park.

Key facilities – e.g. the tennis court – are closed. (This is in breach of the Council’s own Major Events policy, we might add). Well-attended activities like the ParkRun are unable to operate for almost two months. Whilst not formally closed, imposing ‘HERAS’ fencing is put around children’s play areas, and the skate park; this makes the space unwelcoming, and given the violent crime and drug-dealing in some areas of the park, unsafe for young users.

With deprivation on all sides, many families have limited outdoor areas on their property and rely on Finsbury Park for exercise and play; most are unable to escape the noise and side effects in stifling summer heat. Many Haringey residents use Finsbury Park as a cycle-way to avoid busy dual carriageways; major events closed that route, and forced cyclists back onto large roads.

Noting some events commence before the end of School term, local parents reported expletive abuse from festival-goers pre-drinking. Beyond noise and diesel pollution, some of the more pernicious effects are not always apparent – road closures with unpredictable timings, licensing changes for local supermarkets, and adhoc defecation and littering in nearby streets.

- **Better locations exist:** Whilst we will address the proposed substation later in the response, Finsbury Park requires promoters to truck in all the required equipment for a modern festival. We believe this constitutes 100s of truck movements, and counted 50,000+ litres of diesel on-site, with 10s of generators. Furthermore, in 2023, unlike the 1970s, Haringey, and nearby boroughs, do not lack major events space that frequently deal with the sort of events proposed.

Two major football stadiums (Arsenal, Tottenham), a large concert hall in Alexandra Palace, and many smaller live music venues that would materially benefit from the money such artists might bring. Noting the vast majority of attendees for major events do not come from Haringey, or neighbouring boroughs, event-venues like Wembley, the Olympic Stadium, The O2, are far better-suited, and operate on a more formal professional basis that do not impact nearby residents to anywhere near the same degree. An argument is sometimes made that even though not ideal - the Council needs the money to run the park. Noting that the money can only ever be spent in Finsbury Park, and that this was not the case pre-2014, we reject that argument. Haringey Council has failed to produce a detailed bottom up assessment of the cost to run the park to an acceptable standard; financials provided are opaque, and reflect odd choices (e.g. the park funding £200k of Haringey Council 'shared services').

- **This doesn't benefit or reflect Haringey, or nearby boroughs:** whilst this debate is about money, at times the Council suggests this is one of culture. These events do not represent local talent, and are mostly dominated by American performers. Our analysis highlighted that out of 73 artists on the 2022 Finsbury Park major events billing, only six had some link to Haringey, Islington, or Hackney. (Frustratingly, a non-trivial number failed to show at all.) Further, Haringey Council commissioned research in 2018 highlighted that most attendees came from far away from Haringey, and that relatively few economic benefits accrued to the borough. In short: these major events have no intrinsic tie to our area, community, nor do they provide some material benefit. Arguments that this provides accessible entertainment for our local youth are also flawed; noting that most attendees come from far away from Haringey, attendance is very expensive and in the current cost of living crisis would prove a challenging expenditure for many. For a weekend, prices run to £240, whereas per day it is £125. (Indeed, we note the tickets are now so expensive, that the promoter offers finance/credit (!) for the purchase.)
- **The council lacks commercial sense:** Since its ejection from Hyde Park in 2012, ejection from the Olympic Park in 2013, and arrival in Finsbury Park in 2014, the promoters have noted Haringey Council's desire for this income. Indeed, having tested the waters in south London in 2022, we note they are affirmatively back in Finsbury Park. Rather than treat it like the unique space it is, and reflect that in pricing, the council appears to capture a relatively limited share of income from the affair. Without repeating 2022 coverage, the *ad hoc* nature of the production highlights the lack of 'muscle memory', with operational lessons being re-learned each year, with different manifestations of commissures (e.g. entry/exit). A stark contrast nearby is found with Arsenal Football Club, receiving >60,000 on a weekly basis, which operates a well-oiled machine that garners limited local objection or basis for complaint.
- **PRO community events:** We believe there is a space – and support! – in Finsbury Park for small, well-managed, locally-focused events. In practice, we think that is fewer than

10,000 people, avoids ecologically sensitive areas of the park, does not dominate our park nor leaves large chunks un-available through key summer months. We think the Council should nurture events like Latino Life, RISE Anti-Racism, PRIDE, etc. – and ensure they are well managed and sustainable.

Our response to your proposal, and questions

On the 7th March you wrote to us, and other stakeholders, setting out your proposal to contract major events for five years, as well as a ‘smaller’ ~10,000 set of events. Broadly, you set out the following arguments which we have summarised below, along with our questions / queries – Appendix 1 for reference has your original letter.

Haringey Council letter to stakeholders, key arguments quoted	FOFP Question and comment
<p>“not only have we received applications to hold events this summer, but we have also received applications to host events in Finsbury Park each year up until 2027”</p>	<p>It is hard to believe that the council is merely a passive recipient of Applications.</p> <p>Question: Noting two distinct organisations (Live Nation / Krank), did the Council solicit this length of application from prospective customers? What was the basis of this solicitation?</p>
<p>“The Council feels that given the commitments in its manifesto to grow and expand the range of events held throughout the borough”</p>	<p>Haringey Council needs no reminder that it holds Finsbury Park in statutory <u>Trust</u>, as recently noted in the Supreme Court judgement (Day v Shropshire 2023); considerations to events held elsewhere in the borough are thus somewhat irrelevant.</p> <p>Although political parties have <i>Manifestos</i>, Local Authorities do not.</p> <p>As regards the Haringey Labour Party 2022 Manifesto, we presume reference to p30–31, which acknowledges an intent to “host or support MORE music festivals and events”, without specifying where or scale; should this refer to major events in Finsbury Park, this would appear to contradict other commitments on the same page, which speak to an intent to “support our local musicians” (Major events do not) and “protect Live Music venues large and small” (noting Finsbury Park is a park, major events here deprive large venues like Alexandra Palace, or smaller venues of vital revenues).</p> <p>We also find no reference online or elsewhere (March ‘23) to the proposed effort to “work with local musicians to develop a Haringey music strategy”, so assume broadly this page of manifesto commitments should be taken as directional rather than policy.</p> <p>Question: Is this a political decision to extend the licences to five-year periods? If not, why are officers relying on the political manifesto to justify? On the basis of the above, in what way do they feel it is justified?</p>

<p>“that securing the events in Finsbury Park over the medium [sic] is part of fulfilling this commitment”</p>	<p>The Council makes three material leaps.</p> <p>First, an assumption that Major Events in Finsbury Park are now a permanent fixture ‘over the medium [term]’. We fundamentally disagree, noting that they arrived in the current format only in 2014, and COVID gave two years of much–prized peace.</p> <p>Secondly, the idea that parks funding is now completely tied to major events and thus must be secured. We have yet to see a comprehensive breakdown of park finances, or, a bottom up, community–engaged effort to set out what it would cost to fund our local park.</p> <p>Thirdly, that there is any real security. There is a real risk that the promoter is unable to put on shows at the scale it currently seeks to do (lawsuits, changing consumer preference, another international public health event).</p> <p>Further, many elements of multi–year council spend rely on funding commitments that are approved on an annual basis or with funding sources subject to change (e.g. change of national government, interest rates). This is a fallacy, and reflects an operational and political choice by Haringey Council.</p> <p>Noting our strong disagreement to major events, we see no evidence that the Council charges a rate that reflects the value of Finsbury Park, or, commensurate with the impacts Major events have to it.</p> <p>Question: Does the Council track on a formal, Minuted / governed risk–register, its material reliance on a 3rd party for funding park services in Finsbury Park, and if not, why not?</p> <p>What efforts has Haringey Council made to follow through on promises to residents in 2022 to</p> <p>i) look at alternative funding models, and ii) undertake a bottom up assessment?</p> <p>What published document evidences this? Has the council changed the fee charged for major events in the last five years?</p> <p>How has the council benchmarked this fee, or effectively re–assured itself that this represents a good deal for residents?</p> <p>Was any independent opinion taken into any review of fees charged?</p>
<p>“By agreeing dates early, the Council has security in knowing what income is</p>	<p>Further to the above, Haringey Council has broadly offered the same set of dates, only adjusting for COVID and resident feedback around the length. There is nothing stopping the</p>

<p>expected and allows us to plan accordingly”</p>	<p>Council offering a set of dates for the next few years, without agreeing to a licence without review.</p>
<p>“A large proportion of the income received each year goes to fund the expanded maintenance team in the park. It is acknowledged that this expanded team has made a very real difference to the standard of maintenance in Finsbury Park. What is less well known is that at least 75% of the team are agency workers and not directly employed by the Council. Securing long term income (beyond one year) will give the Council confidence to appoint to these roles on a permanent basis.”</p>	<p>The Council seeks to make two arguments here.</p> <p>First, that the proceeds of event funds in part have been used to fund additional staff in the park. Whilst appreciated and noted locally, that previous administrations chose to cut the Parks budget is the more material consideration. To redress that is a positive step, but the nature of that funding requires change.</p> <p>Secondly, the council makes a political argument that it would prefer to appoint these staff on a permanent basis. The FoFP believes the most important thing is productive, well paid, happy and responsible staff and that it is up to the Council to assure that.</p> <p>Materially, neither of these arguments have any bearing on whether or not the promoter’s request for five years of licence is granted. There is no link. Should the Council seek to make currently contract or temporary staff permanent, it could. Indeed, this expenditure would constitute a relatively small financial risk in the scale of the council’s overall budget, should circumstances change.</p> <p>Question: Does Haringey Council have no other services where it incurs a multi-year cost but has a ‘risk’ of an annual income / budget approval process?</p> <p>How will this change of contract type affect the mean cost for staff affected?</p>
<p>“A longer-term view of income will also allow improvement plans to be developed covering multiple years and allows for residents to know event dates much further into the future than has previously been possible.”</p>	<p>As a general point, the FoFP does not seek Major Events in Finsbury Park, and thus would rather prefer the certainty that for the next five years, they will not be taking place.</p> <p>Notwithstanding that, noting the above comments, nothing would stop Haringey Council advising residents of future dates without a five year deal. (We note that most local residents would rather not have the prospect of their Council leasing their green space for five years).</p> <p>Question: What would stop Haringey Council defining some proposed dates to give residents some certainty should it seek to undertake major events in future years, without licensing them for five years?</p>
<p>“Working over the longer term with the event organisers will allow us to develop further improvements that reduce the environmental impact of the events.”</p>	<p>We believe this starts to get to the nub of the issue. The only credible basis – for Haringey Council – is that the promoter has requested a longer period of licence, to give them – not residents, not council – certainty – to offer funds ‘for investment’ in improvements. We think these proposals, any designs, should be set out clearly, publicly, and consulted upon.</p>

	<p>We suspect relatively few of these would be of benefit to the local community, rather, make the setup of major events in our park more straightforward. We've heard informal suggestions that these improvements might constitute a local sub-station – providing power in the park at scale –to reduce the need for the two huge generators that power the main stage.</p> <p>At first blush, to describe this as a positive move to reduce the environmental impact makes sense. But with a moment of consideration, the lunacy of the statement is revealed: unless the council proposes hosting the event equipment and stock – stages, shops, speakers, wires, drinks, toilets, etc – all of that must still be trucked in. The mass of generators – unless the council is proposing attaching plugs to each tree – will presumably still be required. None of these actions speak to the ecological impact – on soil, wildlife.</p> <p>But in any event, this premise is flawed. Any building in the park would presumably require some specific form of planning permission, that the Council would not be able to provide re-assurance of approval on in advance. In the event that was not granted, and we would strongly object, presumably the Council would have given benefit back to the promoter for no gain?</p> <p>In short: we think the best way to reduce emissions from major events in Finsbury Park is not to have events in Finsbury Park!</p> <p>Question: what 'improvements' is the council proposing, how has the council valued them (£, impact) and how are they tied to this extension?</p> <p>What would happen if, two years into the proposed agreement, licence terms were breached?</p> <p>Noting our objection to the proposal, what freedom does the council have if, after two years, it changes its major events policy and no longer wishes to hold major events in Finsbury Park?</p>
<p>“All contractual and licensing controls will remain and therefore, should there be a major concern arising from an event then the Council will be able to take strong action against any event organiser regardless of entering into agreements covering several years.”</p>	<p>The basic business incentive at play is to exchange the certainty of action in return for some discount. What else is the incentive for the business?</p> <p>As such, we suspect this statement to be misleading at best.</p> <p>The critical phrase – ‘the council will be able’ is the key one. As noted, this arrangement would further deepen the financial tie, and thus the incentive to maintain the promoter’s spend.</p> <p>We are generally underwhelmed by the standard to which promoters have been held in the park, noting i) ad hoc monitoring through events, with largely reactive measures; ii) potential contractual or otherwise, breaches of common sense safety standards reported and ignored.</p>

	<p>Question: will promoters pay the same amount of fees as if they had licensed each year, if they get a 5 year deal?</p> <p>Please clarify whether you have included any ‘new’ investment in response to this question, that might appear to net that reduction off.</p>
<p>“Considering applications in this way is aligned to the Outdoor Events Policy 2014 and the Labour Party manifesto 2022–26.”</p>	<p>We can find no reference to agreeing to multi-year events in either document. What we do note are what appear to be breaches of the Outdoor Events Policy document in 2022. For example “All tennis, skateboarding, basketball, and children's play facilities will be [sic] remain available whilst major events are taking place.” We note the tennis courts were unavailable in 2022, given their use as a toilet site. (The Council will no doubt note that it has since leased this land to a 3rd party to provide tennis services; how they choose to deliver tennis service to the community was not a consideration for the document and thus we would consider it a breach.) Local coaches lost earnings during this period as a result.</p> <p>Further, despite Council protestations to the contrary, maps distributed to residents showed play spaces closed, and, during events, security guards frequently closed HERAS fencing to prevent parents visiting them, only re-opening at the challenge of the FoFP. We again think this is a breach of the Major Event policy.</p> <p>Other sites were closed – the ‘drumming school’ had to shut, depriving them of income and a valuable service to local families for 5–6 weeks. The school is deeply embedded in the lives of ‘hard to reach’ communities, often with complex mental health and social issues that will have suffered disproportionate impact from its closure.</p> <p>Question: in what way does the Council believe the potential breaches of their outdoor events policy 2014 are acceptable, and how does it feel it meets the [Haringey] Labour Party manifesto 2022–2026?</p>

In short: the arguments put forward to give a 5 year licence don't hold water. Given events of 2022, it would seem a remarkable ‘reward’, and, an evasion of annual public scrutiny, to conduct this.

Input to 2023 review with considerations (‘mitigations’); looking forward

Haringey Council has informally encouraged the FoFP to set out ‘mitigations’ that we could put forward to help offset the impact of events. We think that’s a flawed premise, likewise the analogy to the use of so-called s106 development funds. There are some basic absolutes at play that we feel cannot be mitigated – most notably, the removal of access to a popular local park, the pollution, etc.

Indeed, this position would be reasonably accepted in other contexts. Take a simple example e.g.

why don't we ease congestion on a road by building a new road through a nearby park; for aggrieved park users, perhaps we could use s106 money to build better lights on side streets, or some traffic calming humps. Self-evidently, they still lost access to their park, even if another ill was mitigated. Thus, the suggestion that putting a sub-station in Finsbury Park would be a mitigation is a fallacy; the mitigation is not to put events that require a sub-station in a park!

Having endured almost a decade of major events, the FoFP and local residents have a good sense of some fundamentals that come with their taking place and what can / cannot be mitigated.

Nevertheless, Haringey Council in the short term seems determined to continue these events. Having reflected on 2022, we have tried to constructively summarise things that were raised. We propose the following should be considered seriously for 2023, and where appropriate adopted as licence conditions:

1. DO NOT licence for 5 years and maintain the 1 year process / review cycles, especially around the granting of a land use agreement annually, and the formal process of a licence application/review
2. Conduct a review of major event fees – which appear to have been held flat – reset in line with the true costs of events to the local park (increase by 20%+) and for the period held flat index to inflation (10+%).
3. No events in the area near the New River, given its unique ecological investment, and recent planting
4. A serious review of onsite Council and Promoter management, scale of presence, location of presence, with an explicit focus on the *community livability* as much as enabling the promoter.
 - a. Scale and resourcing: council members of staff expressed repeated exasperation at having to answer basic and reasonable community enquiries, with responses like “We’ve been working 16 hour days for three consecutive days, over the past couple of weekends”. On another occasion, and to speak to the broader demands, members of the Parks department said they had been so busy with Tree issues in the borough, they had been unable to check and respond to emails for ‘3 weeks’. With sufficient time to plan, we hope this year the team will be suitably staffed for the scale of task at hand.
 - b. Location: whilst we observed members of the council ‘on patrol’, on too many occasions, a casual walk around site highlighted absurd findings –e.g. 4x4 on carriage-way, playgrounds closed, bike path closed, idling etc. The Council should encourage the Promoter to better control the access space near the cafe, and near the railway lines (e.g. public urination, litter) and more frequently get up and around the area to observe.
5. A serious review of access to facilities, notably:
 - a. Do not deploy HERAS fencing around play areas and skatepark, and make sure they are welcoming with sufficient security to assure any equipment is not vandalised by attendees

- b. Keep tennis courts open through the summer, especially Wimbledon Week
6. Conduct a serious review of the quality of comms around the events – both in advance to residence, and through the events – setting clear expectations on what can be used when, with acknowledgement of the disruption caused
7. A serious review of disabled access to site, noting complaints at Finsbury Park in 2022, and more material concerns in the promoter's other venue
8. A pro-active anti-sexual harrassment training programme for direct and in-direct staff on event, including security, noting a number of reports of sexual harrassment and sexual assault on the site in 2022.
9. Conduct a pre-event environmental, ecological baseline, and maintain monitoring through and after. This should include an explicit environmental audit of trees in the area near the event fencing, with sanctions for damaged branches post event, noting many in 2022 many were harmed.
10. Pre-event, the taking of more realistic park damage deposits; post-event, a schedule of park damage made available publicly and with a timetable for rectifying.
11. A re-assurance on security:
 - a. That the non-event security measures – Lighting, CCTV – will be deployed pre-2022 events. If not, effective interim measures will be put in place, and maintained throughout.
 - b. That event security personnel have better guidance on behaviour – not to drive on carriageways around the event site; should rapid transit be required to police their assets, adopt electric mobility like scooters – and a reminder that they too are guests in our public park!
12. An agreement to maintain access to the central carriageway for cyclists passing north/south through the entire summer events period, segregated, with a bias towards cyclists. N.B. We would be against the cycle path being routed along the same space as pedestrians around the outside edge, given the limited space that remains, the many buggy / wheelchair users, etc.
13. A more effective 'clean out' in the period after, with a focus on micro-plastics, metal from scaffolding; likewise, the rapid re-construction of any removed fence lines from Seven Sisters, in days, not weeks or months
14. A focus on pollution, notably:
 - a. A permanent presence throughout the build up and event to monitor engine idling
 - b. Sanction for cars, vans etc parked on green spaces (2022 examples include security dogs on green space next to cafe; the green space near the park staff office being given over to cars)
 - c. A review of the number of diesel generators in the park, with a set of rules on when they can be used (e.g. only during event live periods)

- d. An insistence that event staff, artists travel to the event by public transport, with a massively reduced number of cars given access
15. A better focus on public defecation, notably on the fence line bordering the railway, and in streets nearby the event. Similarly, a heightened focus on drug dealing and ASB around the events.
16. A commitment to fix 2022 damage ASAP / latest by April '23, and that any damage from 2023 major events is resolved within 30 days of the event. A new category of fine, whereby damage is undertaken callously – e.g. drilling into the central carriage way (nr Manor House); unnecessarily driving on pavement with HGVs, damaging trees etc – to encourage a greater sense of intrinsic responsibility for the park.
17. Insistence that major events promote a genuinely diverse and local set – Haringey, Islington, Hackney – artists to top billing slots, with gender parity, for each day of events
18. A review of the effectiveness of licensing enforcement on decency terms – noting the nudity (Summer Walker) and repeat explicit language on stage in 2022 (Cardi B – Wet A*sed P*ssy; Roddy Ricch, to name but 2). N.B. we surmise the Council's logic for 2022 on this issue as follows: so long as the promoter sends a letter to artists / displays posters on site, and asks them nicely not to swear and meet guidelines, but artists still do it, well we tried / it's not our job to police content. We think that's insufficient and fails the spirit of licence changes agreed in 2018. It should better match - for example - whatever conditions govern local radio for a similar time of day, given the many young ears in the vicinity of the park.
19. A serious review of ticket touting, noting a FoFP committee member witnessed an individual in a Haringey Council high-vis shirt offering tickets on site
20. Publication of the Safety Action Group (SAG) review from 2022, so that collective lessons learnt can be shared. Examples include reports of no water on site Saturday 9th July in the early evening; the lack of co-ordination with TFL; etc.

21. A transparent discussion on park finances, including:

- a. A bottom up review of Finsbury Park Trust spend, line by line
- b. A serious commitment from Haringey Council to look at Finsbury Park funding, and 'in the medium term' move away from its reliance on a commercial 3rd party (see: Better Health; Veolia)
- c. An incremental investment of event income in the proposed Skate Plaza

We would be grateful for a point-by-point consideration of the above asks.

We will host a community meeting in April to further prepare residents for the impact. We will also look at how from 2024 onwards, major events could cease and the council seek a more sustainable basis to fund Finsbury Park. The Council might constructively consider:

1. Acknowledge the basic inconsistency between Labour's (admirable) green-focused Manifesto and it's funding constraints that have led it to this position; catch up with local residents and make the political case to fund this properly
2. Take the talented events team and focus them on fund-raising that has a far less impact on Park users, or a dependency on a single source
3. Reach out to Islington, Hackney, and consider an alternative arrangement where in exchange for joint-funding, responsibility is shared. (See: Islington and Camden partnership on parks)
4. Reach out to the City of London Corporation and consider an alternative arrangement akin to Hampstead Heath
5. Genuinely nurture local music, rather than outsourcing the task to large corporations

We continue to believe that Finsbury Park is a gem in the community. We are happy to work constructively with Haringey Council on safety – and are excited at the Love Finsbury Park campaign. We are glad the Council is able to engage in effective partnership and look forward to delivering the Skate Plaza jointly this year. But we believe the Council has got itself to the wrong conclusion on funding, and on major events.

And now's the time to stop, reflect, and change course.

With constructive best wishes,

Tom Graham, Bethany Anderson, Co-Chairs FoFP
Obo FoFP committee.

Appendix 1 – letter from Haringey Council

Dear Stakeholders,

I am writing to you, as we do each year, to let you know that we have received applications to host large and major events in Finsbury Park this summer.

The difference this year is that not only have we received applications to hold events this summer, but we have also received applications to host events in Finsbury Park each year up until 2027.

The Council feels that given the commitments in its manifesto to grow and expand the range of events held throughout the borough, that securing the events in Finsbury Park over the medium is part of fulfilling this commitment. Securing event bookings over several years has many benefits to the Council, residents and staff working in the park.

By agreeing dates early, the Council has security in knowing what income is expected and allows us to plan accordingly. A large proportion of the income received each year goes to fund the expanded maintenance team in the park. It is acknowledged that this expanded team has made a very real difference to the standard of maintenance in Finsbury Park. What is less well known is that at least 75% of the team are agency workers and not directly employed by the Council. Securing long term income (beyond one year) will give the Council confidence to appoint to these roles on a permanent basis. A longer-term view of income will also allow improvement plans to be developed covering multiple years and allows for residents to know event dates much further into the future than has previously been possible.

Working over the longer term with the event organisers will allow us to develop further improvements that reduce the environmental impact of the events. All contractual and licencing controls will remain and therefore, should there be a major concern arising from an event then the Council will be able to take strong action against any event organiser regardless of entering into agreements covering several years.

Considering applications in this way is aligned to the [Outdoor Events Policy 2014](#) and the [Labour Party manifesto 2022–26](#).

EventApp notices will follow this email and will mark the start of the formal (10 working day minimum) notification process for the event applications. We very much welcome your feedback to the proposed events, to be received by the dates set out within each notification. We will stagger the distribution of notifications to give you time to consider and respond to each event individually. The timeline for you to receive notifications is as follows:

- Week commencing 6 March: Festival Republic applications 2023–2027
Application numbers: HGYEVE000367, HGYEVE000365, HGYEVE000506, HGYEVE000508, HGYEVE000682, HGYEVE000683, HGYEVE000688
- Week commencing 13 March: Krankbrother applications 2023–2027
Application numbers: HGYEVE000631, HGYEVE000666, HGYEVE000667, HGYEVE000668, HGYEVE000692

Appendix 2:

Finsbury Park recognised stakeholders' full responses to Festival Republic park hire applications – 2023-27 events

We will only accept feedback from the Chair of your group or ward member. Any individual responses from members of your group or residents/businesses should be fed back to the Chair of your Group or ward member and should form part of their overall response. Feedback from individuals will not be accepted, as detailed in the Outdoor Events Policy 2014.

All applications are subject to our standard process of internal review. Recognised stakeholder feedback will be subject to lengthy discussions to ensure that operational plans associated with the delivery of the proposed events are of a high standard and not only meet but improve on previous years. Feedback will be included in the Cabinet Member report, along with officer responses. You will receive a copy of this report in due course.

We will continue to work with the event organisers to develop existing and community initiatives that benefit and enhance the local area. The applications will require Cabinet Member approval and events are subject to final agreement of the park hire contract and approval of the Safety Advisory Group.

Further discussions between all relevant statutory bodies and stakeholders will take place over the coming months to ensure that all events are well management and safe, with as limited an effect on the local area as possible. This includes looking at issues raised by stakeholders and members following last year's events.

A proposed schedule of Finsbury Park Events Stakeholder Meetings is below. These provide an opportunity to discuss the 2023 events season as plans progress, and to meet the event organisers. Once dates have been confirmed, invitations will be shared with you all.

Event planning (week commencing):	3 April	1 May
		5
June Post event analysis (week commencing):		11 Sep
		23 Oct