

Alexandra Palace

ALEXANDRA PARK AND PALACE **JOINT MEETING OF THE STATUTORY ADVISORY AND** **CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES** **3rd October 2017**

Report Title: New Year's Eve - Park and Palace Management Plan

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Purpose: To consult the SAC and CC regarding the Trusts intention to close the road through Alexandra Park on New Year's Eve to safeguard the assets and the public, the reputation of the Trust and in the interests of making the best use of the charities resources.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Advisory Committee consider the impact of closing Alexandra Palace Way during New Year's Eve and provide advice to the Board on the proposed approach.

2. Background

2.1 There are no events held at Alexandra Park and Palace on New Year's Eve. However each year large numbers of people arrive on foot and by car from 10.00pm onwards to view the fireworks over London.

2.2 There has been a marked increase in recent years. This could be due to displacement from central London since ticketing was introduced (a theory also considered by the City of London Corporation – Primrose Hill). The electronic people counter on The Avenue (gate 11) can be used as a proxy indicator for visitor numbers and shows an increase of almost 70% since recording began in 2013. In

recent years, the weather has been dry, which has also encouraged people outdoors.

- 2.3 This creates several issues for Alexandra Park and Palace that has required increased management by the Trust as numbers on site have grown. This is causing year on year increases in management cost which is unsustainable. It is recognised that some costs are necessary to safeguard the assets but the costs cannot continue to increase beyond the Trust's available resources.

3. Issues

3.1 Traffic Management

- 3.1.1 The number of vehicles on site exceeds the capacity of the car parks. This year the east car park was closed at 11.00pm as it was full. By 11.50pm vehicles parked on the grass in the rush to be on site by midnight. Alexandra Palace Way became blocked for 60-90 minutes and unmanageable before midnight. It is estimated that at least 1,000 vehicles were on site.
- 3.1.2 The excess number of vehicles creates illegal parking on the road and on the parkland. This creates traffic and pedestrian hazards and damage to the park. It also creates traffic issues on surrounding roads. Many drivers refuse to move and can become aggressive, last year a traffic marshal was assaulted.
- 3.1.3 Various previous attempts to close the car parks or install barriers along the pavement have been difficult to manage with the sheer number of visitors on site.

3.2 Crowd Management & Safety of the public

- 3.2.1 Security control estimates the number of people on site and on the ground, just before and just after midnight, are as high as 8,000. For comparison, this is around the same level as a live music concert. However the crowd is very boisterous. Large amounts of alcohol have clearly been consumed and also brought onto site.
- 3.2.2 Many fireworks are released amongst the crowd, floating lanterns released and rockets are often set off from the hand. These items pose a fire risk and are a hazard to other members of public on site.
- 3.2.3 This year a serious incident occurred: a fight on the South Terrace resulted in serious injury. Police and ambulance attended. The *Evening Standard* reported this incident on 20th January stating that a 36 year old lost the sight in one eye when he was punched repeatedly and hit with a glass bottle.
- 3.2.4 The Director of Event Operations met with two senior members of Haringey Borough Metropolitan Police in June; to discuss the proposed road closure of Alexandra Palace Way on New Year's Eve 2017, the need to create a

safer place for those who want to watch the fireworks and ensure order on the road.

3.2.5 Alexandra Palace have initially suggested that they would be able to deploy the necessary staffing to enact a road closure but police assistance would be required to ensure there are no public order issues at the two closure points. The Metropolitan Police have suggested that we take this issue to our Safety Advisory Group (SAG) specifically including Transport for London (TFL) and Haringey Council's (HC) highways team alongside the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to discuss in greater detail. They were supportive in principle of the closure; the issue for them is available resource within the Borough.

3.2.6 Alexandra Palace will be meeting the Safety Advisory Group on Friday 6th October to discuss this in more detail. This meeting will cover all relevant impacts relating to road closures. This will include the displacement of parked vehicles and those that will be put on a diversion. The meeting will be attended by senior members of the metropolitan police, Haringey Council Highways and TFL alongside Alexandra Palace traffic and security teams.

3.3 Clear up operation and site presentation

The grounds maintenance team report growing volumes of litter and rubbish each year adding additional costs.

3.4 The costs

3.4.1 With the size of crowd increasing the management approach has also needed to adapt. This year a full traffic team of nine staff and six security staff on the ground were booked from the Park budget. The staff know the venue well and are coordinated by the Control Room Officers.

3.4.2 It is anticipated that this year crowds will increase further but in any case more management is required. The budget available for managing traffic and crowds on non-event days is insufficient and the Trust does not have additional resource to spend especially when there is no corresponding income generating activity to offset it.

4. Risk Assessment

4.1 The issues above present several risks to the Charity:

RISK 1: The Palace cannot be properly safeguarded

Fireworks are set off without proper management presenting a risk to the Palace

Poor traffic controls mean that Emergency vehicles cannot reach the Palace as the road is blocked.

RISK 2: Public safety cannot be assured

Injury from fireworks including burns to members of the public.

Antisocial behaviour presents a risk to the public and to staff and contractors.

RISK 3: The trusts reputation is negatively impacted

Damage to reputation owing to uncontrolled crowds and disorder.

Damage to reputation traffic management.

Risk 4: The Trusts financial position is weakened

The reputational damage poses a potential threat to the Trading Company's reputation to manage events effectively and potentially creating a challenge to the premises licence, despite New Year's Eve not being an 'event' and the Palace being closed. The Trust relies on the income generated by the Trading Subsidiary to provide Gift Aid which forms a critical proportion of the Trusts income.

5. Appraisal of Options

- 5.1 The team have explored different options to manage the issues, ranging from options for turning the evening into an event thereby generating income to cover the costs of managing the volume of visitors to various different options for closing the Park and Palace, or parts of it.
- 5.2 The conclusion of the options analysis was that to host an event and to attract people to the site on New Year's Eve would be a significant undertaking at the busiest time of year for the Trading Subsidiary, in the middle of our largest and most financially significant event. Any event on New Year's Eve creates significant management and security issues and also event production risks in relation to the weather. In summary to host the event the cost would be very likely to outweigh the income from ticketing or secondary spend.
- 5.2 The internal Health and Safety Group have reviewed the options for future management set out in the table at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 The preferred option is number 7 (shaded).

6. Conclusion and next steps

- 6.1 The recommended option (7) is to close Alexandra Palace Way for the evening. There is a slight increase in cost to the Trust but this can be met within existing budgets.
- 6.2 The next steps are to,
 - Discuss the proposal with the Safety Advisory Group (MPS, LAS, LFB, HC, Licencing, TfL buses). This is a major undertaking that needs to be supported particularly by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).
 - Seek the Advice of the Advisory Committee particularly in regard to the current and potential impact on neighbouring streets of New Year's Eve activities at the Palace.

- To consider the advice and make the most cost effective decision, within available resources that best manages the risks and safeguards the assets.

7. Board Response

7.1. In considering this report at its meeting on 18th July 2017 the Board discussed concerns about the knock-on effect of the road closure for surrounding roads and the potential impact on parking in surrounding roads. The Safety Advisory Group on Friday 6th October will agree a strategy for this, including the potential option to implement a temporary Controlled Parking Zone in the area.

7.2 The Board supported the closure of Alexandra Palace Way, except for buses and emergency vehicles, on NYE and agreed to delegate the final decision to the Executive Team subject to consultation with the Statutory Advisory Committee (SAC).

8. **Legal Implications**

8.1 The Council's Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and advises that under the terms of the Alexandra Park and Palace (Public Purposes) Act 1990, the Corporate Trustee - acting through the Board – has the discretion to *“do any act or thing which may in the judgment of the Trustees appear calculated to promote the use and enjoyment of the park and palace by the public”*.

8.2. The above mentioned discretion is considered to be wide enough to cover the action proposed.

9. **Use of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Options assessment

Appendix 1 – Options assessment

	Options	Outcome	Impact on risks	Other considerations
1	Do nothing – continue with same management plan	Same or larger crowd attends. We see the same altercations with security staff, fireworks and disorder problems leading to injuries or reputational damage. No change to traffic issues.	Risks remain live and potentially increase	
2	Create content to attract audience	Allows AP to offset costs against income. Big security risk for NYE, likely to get a small commercial spend window. Carries a risk associated with the darts taking place within the venue. No easy way to regulate the numbers and therefore make suitable planning. Would need to close the road. A pull on internal resources as our busiest time of the year i.e. Fireworks involves all depts for over a week and we don't have resource to do this at this time of year	Risks are better managed	No capacity and resource to deliver an event at this time of the year
3	Create content and ticket the space	Opportunity to generate income. Develop in house events program. Estimated security spend of £25k. Would need very strong content to justify a ticket price of above £5. Isolates the park from normal park users. Creates a risk to license. A pull on internal resources as our busiest time of the year i.e. Fireworks involves all depts for over a week and we don't have resource to do this at this time of year	Risks are better managed	No capacity and resource to deliver an event at this time of the year
4	Closure of Terrace only	Same or larger crowd attends but is displaced to south front. We see the same altercations with security staff, fireworks and disorder problems leading to injuries or reputational damage. No change to traffic issues.	Risks remain live and potentially increase	
5	Closure of Terrace & South Front	Same or larger crowd attends but is displaced within the Park. We see the same altercations with security staff, fireworks and disorder problems leading to injuries	Risks remain live and potentially increase	

		or reputational damage. No change to traffic issues.		
6	Close central section of AP Way to traffic (no through road)	Same or larger crowd attends. We see the same altercations with security staff, fireworks and disorder problems leading to injuries or reputational damage. No overall change to traffic issues, but problems are displaced.	Risks remain live and potentially increase	Need to seek advice of SAC on their assessment of impact on neighbouring streets with mitigations in place.
7	Closure of Alexandra Palace Way to all traffic 22.00 – 00.30 except buses and emergency vehicles	Same fireworks and disorder problems and reputational damage. Traffic problems displaced off site – this will need prior planning. Increased costs? Marketing, signage and social media campaign required. Buy-in from the Executive Team required (and the Board.	Risks are better managed	Need to seek advice of SAC on their assessment of impact on neighbouring streets with mitigations in place. Keeping pedestrian access open allows access on foot for local people
8	Total closure of the Park 22.00 – 00.30 to traffic and pedestrians.	Crowds displaced, increased staffing required to secure each entrance (Berlin Wall?). Same fireworks and disorder problems and reputational damage displaced to Park entrances. Increased costs? Traffic problems displaced off site – this will need prior planning. Marketing, signage and social media campaign required. Buy-in from the Executive Team required.	Risks are mitigated	Need to seek advice of SAC on their assessment of impact on neighbouring streets with mitigations in place. It is not the intention to stop local people from accessing the Palace to enjoy the fireworks.