

Appendix 4

Summary of comments from Epping Forest Consultative Committee

See minutes of meeting

Also, written response from WREN group and Friends of Wanstead Parklands shown below.

Summary of comments from resident representative meetings held on 09.03.2019 and 21.03.2019

Total attendance 21

Representatives included local councillors, local MP, Bushwood Area Residents Association, Wanstead Society, Wren Group, Aldersbrook & Cann Hall Area Residents Association, Counties Residents Association, St Gabriel's Church, Friends of Wanstead Parklands and several individual residents.

The sessions were chaired by Philip Woodhouse, Chair of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and presented by Jacqueline Eggleston, Visitor Services Epping Forest with Ed Chaplin, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager at London Borough of Redbridge.

The event proposal and processes for approval were introduced and explained by Ms Eggleston and Mr Chaplin. Mr Chaplin added that this is the furthest in advance of an event he has been involved in consultation and explained that the engagement to date had been beyond the usual requirement.

Feedback from the residents after listening to the proposals is summarised below with some responses in italics and other responses covered within the main body of the report:

Concern regarding anti- social behaviour

Drug abuse and alcohol on Heatherwood Close – used as a spot for antisocial behaviour now and will be worse during event

Wild camping

Drug abuse, alcohol, urinating and litter on way to and from event

Montague Road shooting and Stabbings weekly in area now

Wanstead has minimal policing

Would City of London Police cover this (*would be Met Police events team – they dictate the policing and require event to pay for it*) *Epping Forest keeps work closely with local police and attend SAG meetings*

Litter – (Chairman added heartfelt thanks to teams of volunteers who currently work to clear litter on the Flats – Epping Forest would not be able to do without them)

Poisoning in Alex Lake – dogs died – deliberate act in past

Access

Only one way in and out of Aldersbrook Estate

Will TFL be consulted (*yes*)

Not everyone arrives at the same time, over 3-4 hours staggered entry.

Impact on cemetery

Numbers not restricted to 50k as anyone might turn up on perimeter

I do not believe Manor Park station and local buses are sufficient. It also seems likely to me that attendees will also use Wanstead and Leytonstone tube stations and that because of the zone boundary at Leytonstone this might be the more popular stop because the fare is cheaper for west bound passengers. Apart from capacity issues and potential inconvenience to other travellers, this increases the difficulty of adequately stewarding the approaches to the event due to the amount of ground to be covered and the variety of routes attendees might take. *Access and egress covered in traffic management plan*

Reputation of organisers

Failure of MAMA to adequately keep its promise.

Experience of event elsewhere (*this is new event*)

The experience of communities around Victoria Park are not encouraging in this regard and bring into question how reliable a partner Mama might be

Cost to Public Purse

(assured that is covered by event promoters)

Concern events will occur more frequently

(assured that event policy only allows one per year)

worry about precedence and being locked into an annual event without any future control by yourselves or additional consultation of local people. *Report is for one year only*

Fire

Fear of fire particularly at back of Heatherwood Close

Increased risk of fire – repeat of last year

Remit of Epping Forest as charity

I enjoy Epping Forest tranquillity, what is in charity that is being saved by pop festival, what is being saved by the festival. *Purpose under 1878 Act is to preserve for recreation and enjoyment – this is not necessarily the same as tranquillity – e.g. for children who come to play and make noise*

Saying a three day festival is one event is a sleight of hand. *The event policy considers the duration of the event as part of the overall consideration of the impact of the event and duration is not prescribed; ‘Superintendents have authority to approve events which have up to 5,000 participants and a maximum duration of 2 days. For events of over 5,000 participants and/or of 3 or more days duration, approval will be sought from the relevant Committee.’*

Environment

I do not see how three events of up to 50,000 people can take place on the proposed site without disturbance and damage to local wildlife.

Wanstead Flats and Wanstead Park are remarkable areas of biodiversity, including some birds, insects and plants which are rare or under threat in the London area and in some cases nationally. This is important in such an urban setting and as such this part of the Forest is of great value and contributes greatly to local people's enjoyment of their area. The damage may not be restricted to the event area because of noise disturbance and also, depending on the effectiveness of the event organiser's stewarding around the event, disturbance by attendees wandering in numbers over wide areas of the Flats and park with attendant issues of littering and other problems associated with large crowds

I echo the concerns others voiced about environmental impact, especially on ground nesting birds. I think that they are mainly nesting in grassland adjacent to the proposed site. They sadly seem to have abandoned the SSSI and may be further dissuaded from nesting there since the fire .

What will environmental impact be – will they use generators *(yes but noise would be addressed under public nuisance clause)*

Loss of amenity

concerned by the loss of amenity with regard to the football pitches and peaceful access to the Flats and the park due to any movement restrictions and noise pollution. The area affected will need time to recover before it can be used again *the site will be set aside for event and football moved*

consultation

It would seem that there is no requirement for Redbridge to notify or consider Waltham Forest or Newham residents who are likely to be impacted by 150,000 people over the 3 days moving from stations like Leytonstone, Wanstead Park, Forest Gate and Woodgrange. It also seems unlikely that unless this possibility is recognised, people may well be trampling over the SSSI area and other parts of Wanstead flats. *Heads of terms require extensive consultation in surrounding area.*

Positive

Positive letters and comments from residents in support of the event have also been received by Chair and via residents' association.

Summary of Correspondence received:

Noise

intolerable level of noise and light and until late at night. This would be compounded by the noise from those attending the concerts, generators and the vehicles and construction of setting up and taking down structures

Loss of amenity

The concert proposals make a mockery of Epping Forest as custodian of the Flats enclosing a large area for private use and gain *permission covered in Events policy and Epping Forest Act. Loss of amenity is charged for.*

Access

Impediment to access to Aldersbrook Estate and public transport. Track record of closures and disruption to Aldersbrook road through fire, gas leaks on 6 occasions.

Anti -social behaviour

Despite conditions enforcement will not be able to deal with it *this will be investigated through SAG and permission granted only if conditions can be met*

It is clear that licensing controls only work effectively within the confines of the festival arena. The operators cannot police the movement and behavior of attendees once they have left the festival compound. This will have serious consequences for the local community

Number of events

Setting a precedent by allowing such unacceptable events to subsidise Epping Forest will simply open the door for more in the future and provide an argument for further cutbacks. *Number of events is limited by policy*

Planning Permission

The event would need planning permission. *This will need to be addressed by event organisers however it may not be needed as under 28 days*

Previous Events Legacy

Every year we have Fireworks to 'celebrate' Guy Fawkes night, the noise resounds for miles and you can forget about any form of parking, the roads get blocked and all the aggravation and bad tempers often flow, but for a couple of hours residents 'put up' with it.

Likewise there are many occasions when the Fair comes to town, the same problems occur.

Perhaps the EF&C Committee should therefore ask more questions as to why there have been no further such large scale events on Wanstead Flats for some 25 years (a quarter of a century) if such events as the "MELA" in 93/94 were deemed such a community success (as implied in the 11/03/19 Report)?

Further, (1) to make reference to the annual (but now cancelled) LB Newham Guy Fawkes Night firework display as a further example in aid of the MAMA proposals is frankly unacceptable. Indeed, it was of such a different scale in all respects (the locals would be astonished at the reference to 30,000 visitors to it!) that it cannot in truth be defined as an "example" at all! *These are reported numbers and a clear comparison of what these numbers appear as on the ground.*

And (2) the reference to the 2012 Police Muster site qua the London Olympics is also unacceptable. Everyone knew it was for **security and safety** to facilitate a global event that brought fantastic kudos and benefit to the **Nation** and that is completely acceptable as a very special one off event.

Conversely, the MAMA proposals do nothing of the sort. That 3 day event would bring kudos only to the "artistes" who perform there and potentially huge financial benefit to them and the private entity organiser (MAMA) - with the local community and LBR suffering the brunt of all the downsides. Also, it would not, would it?, be a "one off" event. It seems to me the intention would be to set a precedent for such events in the future as well.

Wren Wildlife and Conservation Group statement on proposals for major music events on Wanstead Flats

In recent years, one of the focuses of our work has been to survey, publicise and lobby for protection of ground-nesting Skylarks and Meadow Pipits on Wanstead Flats. According to the most recent *London Bird Report*, published by the London Natural History Society, in 2016 there were four Meadow Pipit territories on the Flats. With the exception of Rainham Marshes, this is the highest total anywhere in London. In the same year, there were three Skylark territories, the only multiple-territory site this close to the centre of London. Skylark is a Red Data list bird because of the dramatic decline in its numbers nationally. Partly because of the work of local volunteers, but also due to the positive attitude of the Epping Forest ecological team, and their sympathetic grassland management, this number increased to five territories in summer 2018.

The value of the Flats does not lie only in its ground-nesting birds. For example, in recent years, Green Hairstreak and Brown Argus butterflies have colonized, and in 2018 had a successful season. More than 80 species of spiders have been recorded in the last few years.

The Wren Group appreciates that Wanstead Flats is not a nature reserve. It is an area of mixed usage, available for footballers, model aircraft enthusiasts, dog-walkers, those who simply enjoy being in an open space, and naturalists alike. But any damage to the 'natural aspect' of the Flats will diminish the experience for every user. Not everyone may recognize the Skylark's summer song, but most will appreciate it.

While the existing footfall on Wanstead Flats is large, it is not generally concentrated. The area's natural heritage seems to be able to cope, just about. However, the Wren Group feels that the combination of the construction and de-rigging of a large arena and the large numbers of people attending one or more music events will be seriously detrimental to this 'natural aspect'. Although the footprint of the arena itself is not on land of special wildlife value, it is close to such areas and it seems clear that the construction process, and very large numbers of people making their way to and from the site will not impact on the more wildlife-rich areas – especially as this is the middle of the breeding season for ground-nesting birds. The Skylark nesting area by Alexandra Lake is adjacent to the arena site, and large numbers of people making their way to and from Forest Gate on foot will be passing directly through the core breeding area for Skylarks and Meadow Pipits. Additionally, there is a very real fire risk in these very areas of the Flats during the summer, as witnessed this year, and this is likely to be exacerbated with large numbers of additional people on the site.

In summary, given the fragile state of the ecosystems on Wanstead Flats, especially after the worst grassland fire in London's history earlier this year, we cannot envisage a scenario in which such a large scale event would have anything other than a severely damaging impact on the local wildlife. For these reasons, the Wren Group strongly opposes the plans to hold events of this kind on Wanstead Flats.

Comments were written in response to earlier proposal for summer event. Current proposal is outside breeding season

Friends of Wanstead Parklands' position on proposal for large scale events on Wanstead Flats

Friends of Wanstead Parklands is supportive of Wanstead Flats as a multi-benefit green space providing nature conservation, formal recreation, informal recreation, heritage, events space and many other benefits.

Friends of Wanstead Parklands believe that each application for events on Wanstead Flats should be judged on its merits, but that the information provided is incomplete to make a meaningful decision on the options or the general principle.

In conclusion, Friends of Wanstead Parklands would only support an event with the following conditions:

- Full information is provided as set out above.
- It takes place over just one weekend, in line with the City of London's Open Spaces Events Policy, minimising the disruption to park users and the environment.
- Structures are in place for no longer than 10 days.
- Local residents and community groups receive full and detailed information on the event proposal prior to approval of the event by the City of London, including precise timings, plans for traffic management, transport impact study, noise impact study, plans for exit from the events, security and restoration.
- A significant proportion of the funds are reinvested into Wanstead Flats and Wanstead Park, with full transparency on the revenue generated and allocation of funds.
- Adequate stewards are provided to minimise the disruption to the surrounding areas, including security and traffic management
- Measures are put in place to protect areas of natural/environmental importance, including the skylark nesting areas.