



Jeremy Corbyn MP

Member of Parliament for Islington North

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Cllr Joseph Ejiofor
Leader's Office
5th Floor, River Park House
225 High Road
Wood Green
N22 8HQ

12th July 2018

Dear Cllr Ejiofor,

Re: Finsbury Park: Summer Events

As we have now entered into summer time, Finsbury Park has again been used as a venue over the past two weekends for music festivals and a number of other earlier events. The popularity of these events are such that it results in thousands of people from across London, and beyond, coming into the area to enjoy the entertainment.

I fully accept Finsbury Park is a public park and therefore must be used for all kinds of events including music. However, as each year has gone by I am increasingly concerned about the impact of closures of the park has on the local community.

The events result in the local community having limited access to the park for a considerable amount of weeks each year. The area of the park cordoned off with huge barriers and the use of the hard surface and road for the parking of very large heavy vehicles seem to be increasing each year. The physical impact on the park through the continuous use of music events and fairs is considerable.

Last weekend, Wireless Festival was hosted in the park over three consecutive days: Friday to Sunday. This was in addition to another three day festival the week before. Given the popularity of these events it is very obvious the organisers were not sufficiently prepared for it or its effects on the local community.

Highlighted below are the key issues that have been raised:

- The lack of sufficient toilets resulted in some revellers having to use the streets and nearby gardens. Residents had to go through the awful experience of finding human excrement and urine on their doorsteps, streets and gardens. Aside from the obvious unpleasantness, there is also a serious health hazard that needs to be taken into consideration as residents have been left to clean up human bodily fluids;
- Reports of substance misuse including class A drugs such as cocaine have been received;
- Drunk and disorderly behaviour: young people were seen in very vulnerable states, which not only leaves them at risk of physical harm but is also often very distressing to witness, especially for families living in the area with young children;

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- Noise levels: residents have complained that the noise level from the event itself was so high they could literally feel their premises vibrate;
- Finsbury Park Staff: as a frequent visitor of the park, I am fully aware of the good work that they do. The excessive amounts of rubbish left from festivals held in the park puts an enormous burden on the staff as they are often the ones left with the responsibility of cleaning the park. This also suggests that organisers are not prepared for managing the effects on the park as well as they could be;
- Medina Road: there appears to have been a breakdown in communication regarding residents having vehicle access to their homes. There was apparently a pre-arranged agreement between Islington Council and Haringey Council that organisers would allow tenants access to their street but this unfortunately did not happen on the day.

It is important to stress that my concerns are not directed towards the staff on duty, as I firmly believe that the problem is not a staffing issue. I think we need a discussion around what events and how long these take place in the park. It is important that there is a balance met which ensures the enjoyment of the event attendees while also meeting the needs of the local residents.

I am not advocating for a ban on events, however, Finsbury Park is a public space that many residents feel they have lost access to and rightly believe are paying a heavy price for the organisers to make a commercial profit. They also express that there is a lack of financial benefit to the community or upgrade of the park that justifies the distress they experience on an annual basis.

I would, therefore, be grateful if you could look into the above concerns and also provide an update on the financial benefit gained to the community from the events over the summer. I would also appreciate you confirming if there are any plans for Haringey Council to review their policy and plans for the future use of Finsbury Park over the summer period. If so, will there be a consultation for residents to have the opportunity to express their concerns and desires?

This issue has already been discussed with my colleagues, therefore, I am copying this letter to Diane Abbott MP, Catherine West MP, David Lammy MP and Finsbury Park Ward Cllrs. Asima Shaikh, Gary Heather and Mick O'Sullivan.

I know my colleagues would agree with me, that an early and urgent discussion with you and relevant Haringey Ward Cllrs. is required and would be appreciated at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Corbyn MP

Cc. Diane Abbot MP, Catherine West MP, David Lammy MP, Cllr Asima Shaikh, Cllr Gary Heather and Cllr Mick O'Sullivan