



<http://protectbrockwellpark.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community and nature organisations – and BAFTA-winning actor Sir Mark Rylance – unite to protect Brockwell Park from commercial exploitation by Lambeth Council

London, 22 April 2025 – In a powerful display of unity, a coalition of community, parks, and nature organisations has come together to urge Lambeth Council to protect Brockwell Park from the threat of ongoing commercial exploitation.

Spearheaded by **Protect Brockwell Park**, a group of local residents passionate about the welfare of Brockwell Park, and the **nine** organisations have issued an impassioned open letter to Lambeth Council, urging it to cease large-scale, unsustainable events that are damaging the ecological fabric of the park and reconsider the approval of this year's event permit for Brockwell Live music festival, organised by Summer Events Ltd.

Protect Brockwell Park is proud to have the support of **BAFTA winning actor, Sir Mark Rylance**, who shares our vision for a protected and thriving local park: *“Brockwell Park is a place for People and Nature. It is essential to many people's mental health, to our joy, our healing grief. It was a gift to the local community and is held in trust for us by Lambeth. The imposition of high steel walls for Brockwell Live every summer destroys the park for weeks and harms the grass, trees and plant life for months if not for ever. It turns it into a prison camp. Now I learn that large amounts of money from the commercial events go to some anonymous offshore entity owned by private equity funds. Enough. The Lambeth Country Fair used to be open to all, no walls. I fully support this campaign to legally challenge our Lambeth Governors and make a new arrangement for our park. Enough is enough. STOP the walls!”*

Year-after-year Brockwell Park is damaged by large-scale multi-stage music events like Brockwell Live. Despite our repeated efforts to raise concerns with the Council, including letters and petitions that have garnered thousands of signatures, our voices have fallen on deaf ears.

Our **key concerns** include:

Ecological Damage: Brockwell Park is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. Its diverse ecosystems, including ancient oak trees, wildflower meadows, and various wildlife species, are being irreversibly harmed by soil compaction and from the impact of an estimated 285,000+ attendees over sixteen days, alongside massive infrastructure and multiple multi-axled HGVs, noise and lighting.

Loss of Public Access: Large swathes of the park – 35-50% – are fenced off for many weeks each year, during prime spring and summer to make way for events, depriving local people of fully enjoying this beautiful recreational space which was its founding purpose, especially impacting wheelchair users and people with disabilities.

Flood Risks: Soil compaction is resulting in increased flooding in an area already at high risk of floods.

Biodiversity Loss: The commercial music festivals come in the height of nesting season, with significant disturbance to birds, bats and other wildlife due to huge interference from extreme noise, lights and many thousands of visitors; and last year trees were damaged or cut back to give room to HGVs and infrastructure.

Air and Noise Pollution: Huge HGVs delivering and removing infrastructure, along with the operation of 26 generators to enable the festivals, are polluting a green space that serves as a much-needed refuge for both people and wildlife in an otherwise densely built-up area.

Heritage Damage: Brockwell Park, a valuable heritage site of Regency parkland surrounding the Grade II* Brockwell Hall, and a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, is being degraded by high steel fences, HGVs and the influx of over 285,000 people attending the festivals.

Crime and Nuisance: Large-scale events bring huge spikes in crime, noise, anti-social behaviour, and traffic congestion.

*“Brockwell Park is a haven for nature and a sanctuary for the people of Lambeth and Southwark, particularly those who do not have access to a garden,” said **Lucy Akrill, Protect Brockwell Park’s Co-Founder.***

“Lambeth Council must prioritise the ecological integrity of Brockwell Park and safeguard the public’s full, free, and unspoilt access to it. The park should not be treated as a resilient festival venue, fit for vast, commercial, and environmentally damaging events. To begin repairing the harm caused by these large-scale annual festivals, the grassland should be allowed to lie fallow for at least a year – if not longer. We’re not saying there should never be festivals, but the current model urgently needs review. Events must be downsized, made sustainable, and designed to reflect the needs of the local community as well as the park’s ecological and heritage value.

“The ecological damage and disruption to the park are far too grave to be balanced by the entertainment value offered to those who can afford to attend these major commercial events. Year

after year, wrecking the ground, disrupting wildlife and cutting back the trees is simply unsustainable – and runs counter to modern understanding of the vital role urban green spaces play for both people and nature,” said Akrill.

Jen Hawkins, Protect Brockwell Park’s Co-Founder states, *“We understand that councils are cash-strapped. However, the biggest financial winner here is not Lambeth Council. It is the commercial operators that are earning multi millions in ticket sales by using Brockwell Park as a bargain venue for their commercial operations. Lambeth by contrast can’t use the park as a cash cow as it is held in trust for the public and they are prohibited from using it for any profitable purpose. They can only take what it costs to run the park.*

“Lambeth won’t even reveal the revenue derived from these events claiming it’s ‘commercially sensitive’ information. We want Lambeth to come clean about the income generated from these events and explore alternative and sustainable ways of generating revenue and treating the park with the care and respect it needs and deserves.”

Regrettably, Protect Brockwell Park has had to initiate Judicial Review proceedings in the High Court to challenge Lambeth Council’s decision to allow Brockwell Live’s commercial events to proceed under 'permitted development' rules. This move bypasses proper planning scrutiny for what is clearly a major, damaging change of use in the park. Such a significant change of use should require a full planning application – subject to the same scrutiny as the Lambeth Country Show planning application – particularly given the significant loss of access and repeated, large-scale impacts on the park and the apparent breaches of Lambeth’s own policies. Without proper assessment, mitigation is impossible and, with this level of impact, events of this scale are just unsustainable.

"After the devastation caused to Brockwell Park by last year's series of events, Lambeth Council needs to reconsider and remember that it holds this, and other open spaces, in trust on behalf of the public. These precious green spaces should be respected, cared for and kept open for public access and not abused and commercialised," said **Jeremy Clyne, Open Spaces Society Local Correspondent for Lambeth and Wandsworth.**

Brockwell Park is a wonderful recreational space where people come together and connect with nature. Protect Brockwell Park, along with eight other organisations, are calling on Lambeth Council to stop hosting unsustainable events and ensure that Brockwell Park remains a cherished sanctuary for both people and nature for current and future generations.

For interviews, contact Information:

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Notes to Editor:

Signatories to our open letter: Nine community groups, parks and nature organisations have signed our open letter: [Protect Brockwell Park](#); [Brockwell Park Community Partners](#); [Open Spaces Society](#); [The Countryside Charity-London](#); [Friends of Brockwell Park](#); [London Parks & Gardens Trust](#); [Friends of Clapham Common](#); [Brockwell Tranquillity](#) and [Extinction Rebellion-Lambeth](#).

Protect Brockwell Park (<https://protectbrockwellpark.org/>) is fighting to ensure that Brockwell Park is a thriving, green oasis that serves as a sanctuary for both people and wildlife, free from the interruption of protracted large-scale unsustainable events during the critical period of late spring and early summer. Please see our [media pack](#) for photos and background information.

Our organisation emerged after local residents rallied in Spring 2024 when 44 trees were due to be felled or lopped to facilitate these commercial events in the park. We are now challenging Lambeth Council over its renting out of this vital public space for multiple private events that are causing irreparable ecological harm to our park. To date, we have achieved:

- ✔ In July 2024, we submitted a deputation to the Council, requesting Lambeth Council puts forward a new vision for Brockwell Park, ceasing large commercial events.
- ✔ Over 1,000 people signed our letter to the Mayor, urging him to take action on the fencing off and damage to the Park.
- ✔ Over 3,000 people have signed our [petition](#)
- ✔ Over 860 people have signed our letter opposing this year's Event Permit.
- ✔ We have commissioned experts' reports, including heritage, ecological and acoustic reports.
- ✔ We successfully argued for an in-depth consultation on the Events Permit.
- ✔ We have successfully crowdfunded over £30,000 for our legal action fund.

Brockwell Park, surrounded by residential homes and tower blocks, is essential to the physical and mental wellbeing of all Lambeth and Southwark residents in an area where many do not have access to a garden.

As well as beautiful trees - including veteran/ancient oak, whitebeams and elms – the space is home to a variety of bats, woodpeckers, swans, newts and toads. The park's many micro-ecosystems and biodiversity makes it incredibly important in our nature-depleted borough.

There are multiple playing areas, and sports and community spaces across the Park. Consequently, the space is used by a huge range of ages and groups across our diverse community.