

## LOVEBOX/CITADEL FESTIVALS: REPORT BY COUNCILLOR JOANNA BIDDOLPH

I am one of three councillors representing the London Borough of Hounslow's Turnham Green ward on the eastern boundary of Gunnersbury Park. I live in the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate in the Gunnersbury Park conservation area and was therefore on the spot, receiving complaints, throughout these festivals and during their aftermath.

The ward boundary runs in the north from Acton Town tube station to Gunnersbury Avenue then down Gunnersbury Avenue to Chiswick roundabout and along the A4 to the east. The overwhelmingly vast majority of festival-goers arrived at Acton Town tube station. All were marshalled along Gunnersbury Lane on the Turnham Green ward side of the road with a few crossing the road where the shops are on the Ealing Common ward side of the road.

### OVERALL IMPACT OF THE FESTIVALS – NEVER AGAIN

The lives of residents along Gunnersbury Lane were seriously and significantly affected. They were marooned in their flats or houses for the three days, some unable to cope with the relentless flow of tens of thousands of people in front of their houses. There were difficulties getting to and from their homes (battling the crowds, coping with closed roads). For those in the flats above the shops, all with bedrooms overlooking Gunnersbury Lane, sleep was impossible as festival-goers congregated in large groups, drinking, singing, dancing on the wide pavement with no consideration for others. Some residents have jobs that mean they must go to bed early and rise early which is totally incompatible with late-night events. With the added impact of noise from the festivals, their lives were intolerable.

Some residents, including those whose homes back on to the park, were so seriously affected, as indicated below, that they wished they weren't living here; they feel especially driven away by the bombastic management style at Gunnersbury Park and the absence of sensitivity from festival organisers to the everyday lives of local residents.

There were far too many people in the area congregating in front of Challenger House and the private spaces in front of shops or wandering through residential roads to escape the larger crowds and perched on garden walls or sitting on grass verges while socialising drinking, eating and taking drugs and leaving litter and waste in their wake.

Apart from Sainsbury's, businesses along Gunnersbury Lane saw only a modest increase in trade and not enough for them to want to be put through such a time again. Some businesses were seriously affected, as explained below.

Pressure on cafés/restaurants from festival-goers wanting to use loos was immense and unfair (the cost in time and money to keep their loos clean and equipped was huge); one or two let customers use their loos if they bought something but even this was a strain on the business (especially dealing with the state of the loos as left by festival-goers).

Businesses were grateful for the police presence, and police reactions if situations went awry, but the general view is similar to residents along the route or directly opposite or backing on to the park – never again.

Off the route, opinions are more mixed with those who weren't disturbed by the noise or who didn't go to the shops unconcerned. Others were disturbed by the noise but not intolerably, by festival-goers sitting in their front gardens or on their walls or on grass verges outside their garden gates and by the evidence of drug taking.

**If these festivals are to take place in Gunnersbury Park again, there must be significant changes – improvements – to the way they are managed so their impact on residents and local businesses here is enormously reduced.**

## **SPECIFICS**

The following topics are in alphabetical order for ease of reference; the order does not imply any order of seriousness or concern.

### **Access to Gunnersbury Park**

Residents are angry that so much of the park has been out of bounds during the prime summer months and much of the summer holiday period. It has been particularly bad for families, exacerbated by a lack of free or affordable outdoor children's activities as should be available in any and every park.

Residents were unable to walk their dogs in the park throughout the festivals because of the risks of the dogs eating food waste and/or being hurt by sharp or hidden litter.

- **There is a need for much greater sensitivity to the local community and its rights and needs to use the park to escape the rush and bustle of life.**
- **Residents must be listened to and their voices heard and acted on when considering what the park should be used for and how it should be used.**
- **Festival organisers must be sensitive to the everyday lives of local residents.**
- **The management style at Gunnersbury Park must change.**

### **Access to the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate**

Residents felt confined to their homes, unable to get in and out easily when crowds were flowing through and when Gunnersbury Lane was closed in the evenings. Some who were out realised too late that they couldn't get back easily. One complained that it took an hour to get back from Morrison's (normally a few minutes down the road) because of the convoluted route they had to take while Gunnersbury Lane was closed. Others didn't know how to get round the road closure. A supermarket delivery driver was denied access; this was rectified and marshals briefed about letting in recognised commercial vehicles but after causing considerable disruption. The Residents' Line incorrectly advised a resident to turn right off Gunnersbury Avenue into Princes Avenue which is No Entry at that point.

- **The letter to residents must include a map and give directions for getting in and out of the estate when Gunnersbury Lane (or any other road) is closed.**
- **The routes must recognise that there is a No Entry system from Gunnersbury Avenue and that cars cannot turn right off Gunnersbury Avenue except at the lights where U-turns are not allowed, forcing cars along Gunnersbury Lane – which was closed.**
- **Marshals must be briefed to allow well-known commercial vehicles in to deliver to residents.**

### **Barriers used for crowd control**

Large metal barriers were delivered and piled up along the route from Acton Town tube station, blocking the route, creating logjams of people and increasing risks of tripping. They made the area much harder to navigate as local people are use to and expect pavements to be free from obstructions.

- **Barriers must be more sensibly stored, off the route – and not in any part of in the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate.**

### **Businesses**

Opinion has hardened since the festivals ended – with the experience of the much-less impactful Secret Cinema as a contrast. Overall, the limited increase in trade was not enough for businesses to want to go through this again.

Increased income was not so significant to merit the stress of managing large numbers of people and their behaviour, including argumentative rudeness when wanting to use loos and the disgusting state in which the loos were left by festival-goers, plus having to clear up rubbish left in and around restaurants and shops.

Some businesses lost significant amounts of business – because crowds, unpleasant atmosphere, closed roads and fewer parking spaces put off the local clientele – and this was on what is normally the three best days of the week for shopping and eating out.

Businesses acknowledged that they had expected more chaos, more shoplifting and more resistance against refusals to make their loos available. The police presence was welcomed and there should be no decrease in numbers at events to come. There is a need for better crowd management – it is not only about keeping the peace; marshals along the route should manage the flow of the crowd to avoid huge groups congregating and blocking the way of local people needing to get to/from the shops and tube station. There was irritation that only one illegally parked car was removed despite several being parked illegally and ticketed; this was seen as unfair. Some arguments broke out late at night; there were few fights (one shop manager said he wouldn't expect fights in the Lovebox/Citadel age group – they take place with older crowds).

One shop took on extra staff and operated a one out, one in policy on the last day to limit risks of theft and misbehaviour; the extra costs and relentless stress from managing demands and difficult customers was not worth the limited financial benefit. Another offered a chips and beer deal hoping to attract higher value sales but did not see enough in sales to make this worthwhile. A third had expected far more business than proved to be the case, with customers buying small amounts of food while drinking alcohol bought with them or at another shop. A fourth, a restaurant, had an incident and has reported separately on it. Acton Service Centre was disrupted. **I will provide more information shortly.** Sainsbury's saw significant increases in sales and income as can be expected by a national, well-known brand. **I will provide more information shortly.**

The pharmacist saw some increase in business but, with the road closed, had to make special arrangements, at extra cost to him, to fulfil his NHS contract to deliver prescriptions. Similarly, older people who needed to collect prescriptions couldn't park locally (blocked from parking short term in local roads). These impacts are unacceptable. Information about road closures and accessibility to the tube and local services must be advertised to residents beyond the immediate area, based on the businesses' needs, so that businesses and their customers are not disadvantaged.

The minicab company at the tube station had problems arranging pick-up and drop-off because the road was closed. The tiny Apple Tree café saw no significant increase in trade but its outside tables were used throughout by festival-goers eating and drinking their own food and who refused to move (to make space for genuine customers) when asked politely to do so.

There were impacts on shops on the other side of the road, not in Turnham Green ward but as they are shops I use and where I am known I am reporting on them. The Indian restaurant lost trade because his regular customers couldn't park nearby (the slip road was closed and older people who would normally either drive or be driven or dropped off by taxi decided not to come); take away deliveries and collections were complicated and more expensive; some were impossible to fulfil; several customers declined to order. The off-licence/confectioner/newsagent saw a modest increase in trade. There was an incident at the pizzeria and police were called. **I will provide more information shortly.**

Festival-goers did not respect businesses' boundaries or services, sitting at their tables eating food and drink they had brought with them or bought elsewhere. They behaved as if they owned the area.

- **Businesses must be included in consultation before every festival, perhaps having a session of their own so they can provide collectively relevant suggestions.**

- **Businesses must receive the letter detailing arrangements (about road closures, parking, alternative routes) and especially where the public loos are so they can provide facts to festival-goers pressing to use their customers' loos.**
- **Businesses must receive parking permits.**
- **The slip road on the corner of Gunnersbury Avenue must not be closed during events; it should be carefully and intelligently marshalled to allow customers and delivery vehicles or motorbikes through so businesses do not lose business.**
- **Festival-goers must be told where the festivals' loos are and asked not to abuse private premises and local businesses' loos and services.**

### Comments made by residents and businesses

- "Never again."
- "Not three days in a row."
- "Three days is too long for this kind of area. It is not a suitable location."
- "This is the wrong location, these festivals should be in fields in the countryside."
- "It's too close to residents, it should be in a field or away from homes in bigger parks."
- "A festival of this type is not suitable for an urban park."
- "We can't sustain so many people in this small area."
- "It was an invasion."
- "We lost our privacy."
- "The swamping of the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate (The Ridgeway, Park Drive, and Princes Avenue) was intolerable."
- "It felt as if someone was playing in our back yard. Our building was shaking from the commotion and possibly the loudness of the equipment."
- "A three day festival is too much – were anyone subjected to this sort of noise at work for over eight hours, it would be a matter of concern for Health and Safety. One day is quite enough for one of these festivals, if at all."
- "Gunnersbury Park is NOT Glastonbury, or the Isle of Wight, where events of such magnitude are traditionally staged."
- "They should not all be directed through Acton Town tube station."
- "We've lost the quiet enjoyment of our park and the surrounding area."
- "I want to ask the CIC directors 'do you want the festival on your road, with 40,000 people passing your front door?'"
- "I like the culture, I like festivals but if the organisers can't pay attention to local people, they should be voted out."
- "The CIC and Hounslow need money, that's accepted, but they should ask us what we want."
- "I used to think people who complain about festivals were fussing about nothing. I now see that festivals have a big impact on the local community."
- "I can hear the incessant boom, boom, boom of the event from the middle of Princes Avenue. No surprise there and in a hot summer, no choice but to leave windows open. It's pretty headache-inducing. I doubt it breaches the council's noise levels but, none-the-less, it is noise pollution for those with nowhere to go to get away from it. It reduces our quality of life."
- "I might be a lone voice but having the festival, despite its drawbacks, is something that will allow Gunnersbury Park to continue to develop going forward once the Lottery Fund money has run out. I would rather have one week of inconvenience than higher taxes or it being left to decline like it used to."
- "I think that residents would be able to put up with a one off like this once a year potentially, but I think what we are all concerned about are the endless events that are being proposed in the park particularly in summer and a glorious one like this when dog walkers and families with children want to make the most use of it."
- "This has been a very trying weekend so far. I feel as if our area has been taken over in an extremely unpleasant way. Three days of music at this volume is just too much, never mind all the other, more trying issues that local businesses and residents have had to cope with."

- “I hope we will be given the opportunity, as residents, to feedback on this event. I would not want to see it in our area again next year.”
- “Never again. We have effectively been held hostage for three days. The noise was unbelievably loud. We could not open the windows because of it which was very uncomfortable on such a hot weekend. Even with them closed and the double-glazing closed we could still hear it. The noise went on past midnight with the noise of the crowds and stewards shouting through loud speakers.”
- “The sheer volume of people going down Gunnersbury Lane went on for hours. We had difficulty getting out of the house we couldn’t use our car.”
- “Residents have effectively been sold out for profit by the council. We are entitled to enjoy our home time at the weekend.”
- “We are twice daily users of the park for dog walking as well as using the facilities more generally for leisure activities, including with friends and visitors. I would also note that we anticipated the Lovebox and Citadel weekend as being so potentially horrific that we felt obliged to go away and stay with friends that weekend. Nothing that we have heard from neighbours who lived through it makes us regret that decision. I am in no doubt that if similar events take place in the future we shall do the same. It is fundamentally wrong that citizens are driven from their homes by wholly inappropriate commercial activities.”
- “The combination the size of the areas used for the event and the total duration means that a significant proportion of the park is unavailable to normal users and local residents for an unacceptable length of time. It may sound trivial to say that our dog is noticeably and negatively affected by her inability behave in the way that she habitually does. But multiply that by all dogs and humans who are negatively affected and you realise that that amounts to a significant and unacceptable impact. The Mela was never much fun for local residents but at least it was a once-a-year, short-term event. This year’s events are on a wholly different scale.”
- “I also wonder what the impact will be on the wildlife that occupies the park? It seems perverse that the same authorities that have had the foresight to provide wildlife meadows, bug hotels etc (combined with educational facilities for schools) should also permit high impact, long duration events which must have a detrimental effect on the true “owners” of the park who, of course, have no ability to feedback to meetings unless we do it on the behalf!”
- “I am very aware that an excellent process was put in place to collect litter after the event – I saw it in action. However, the simple fact is that when 40,000 people follow the same route across the park three days running, dropping their small items of rubbish (bottle tops, chicken bones etc) as they go, these get driven into the ground by the following crowds. The route across the “old golf course” that led to the event entry remains visibly affected by this. This is an obvious problem for dogs which run free in that area. But it will also be a problem for wildlife. This environment impact was wholly predictable and has been ineffectively managed.”
- “My additional concern has been the impact over a protracted period on commuters and on safety at Acton Town station. No doubt TfL can provide a professional view on the latter but at times it has seemed so congested as to be dangerous. However, throughout the duration of the event, the evening commute home has been exceptionally unpleasant. Once again, this might be bearable for a short period but it is unacceptable over a protracted period that local citizens should be subjected to this.”
- “Even inside [along Manor Gardens] with all the double glazed windows shut I could still hear it. Outside I found awful – unacceptably loud. I think streets that get the full force of the excessive noise should receive a Council Tax rebate. The council needs to recognise some residents unfairly bear the brunt of the noise and seriously consider this in future.”
- “I live in Silver Crescent, so not an immediate neighbour of Gunnersbury Park, and yet I was disturbed by the loud noise from this three day event which made it impossible for me to hear my TV, forced me to close my windows in this heatwave, and prevented me from enjoying my garden or my home. I could feel the reverberations through my body fro the loud bass. The noise appeared as if coming through the brickwork of the house next door (though I never hear them). It was very immediate.”

- “Why were such loud noise levels agreed and by whom? This is a residential area and noise is deflected and amplified by our streets and buildings. It doesn’t follow that the further away you are from the source of the noise the quieter it becomes. My garden backs on to Chiswick Business Park and it is recognised that these glass buildings amplify and bounce noise back, as they did on this occasion.”
- [Steve Curran] talks about the real boost to local businesses whilst ignoring the enforced squalor of our rubbish strewn streets residents were subjected to for three days, as a direct result of this event. There is nothing culturally elevating or cutting edge about sacrificing the quality of life of residents in this way.”
- “The street and adjacent roads were a mess with drinks bottles/cans and food wrappers everywhere. On the first night after the festival we were woken up twice by a heavy duty road cleaner. A neon light shone into our bedroom and the noise from the cleaning machine reverberated. So, not only did we have a day of noise and frustration, we were then unable to sleep because of the clean up. We complained the following morning but heard nothing further.”
- “Our beautiful park has been taken away from us. We strongly object and oppose to being the people who suffer just so that the councils can become cash rich. We do not want the festivals here, we do not want noise and the problems thousands of people coming here leave behind. What we do want is our beautiful park restored so that the nature and tranquillity can be enjoyed by families and dog walkers safely and peacefully.”
- “In the last week I have picked up about five or six carrier bags full of glass bottles, plastic bottles, electrical ties and silver laughing gas canisters. All of these present a danger to our dogs as well as all the wildlife in the park. I actually don’t mind doing it but I would have expected the clear up after those festivals to be more thorough. They obviously didn’t go near the wildflower meadow where I found a whole path with litter on both sides right across the field. There was a lot of rubbish in the boating pond which could easily wrap round ducks or swans.”
- “I have spoken to several people who have stronger feelings than myself as to the recent functions in the park. They all agree that the first function (Lovebox) was by far the worst. Many say that if there are to be more of these events, then they may consider moving to another part of London. My wife said that she too may think to do the same if future functions are not better controlled. People think that the park is just not suitable for every event. The collateral spoiling upon those not attending impacts severely and somewhat disproportionately to the duration of some events. In other words it looks as if Lovebox really could be the last resort to some folk.”
- “I’d hate for this to become a regular venue, as I understand from conversations I had with the police the previous hosts of Lovebox had major issues with gang crime and struggled for years to have Lovebox evicted from their area! I’m hugely disappointed and sad that Gunnersbury Park may have to endure the same future.”
- “Gunnersbury Park is too small a park for a large-scale music festival like this. Too many residential streets are too close by meaning local residents in some streets were unlucky enough to be bombarded by unacceptable levels of noise – in terms of noise level, the number of hours it was continuous for and the fact that it was for three days running.”
- “These festivals are completely unsuitable for a residential area.”
- “These events must never be allowed to take place again and those responsible for authorising them this year should be held to account for their greed, mendacity and lack of environmental conscience in allowing them to go ahead.”

## Crime and policing

Some residents were concerned about the cost of policing festivals but the police presence was appreciated especially by businesses and the police response to incidents was strong. Traders told me of drug dealing behind the shops on Gunnersbury Lane; I reported this to a policewoman at the tube station and when more police arrived, as were due, two were stationed near the site of the dealing. They told me there had been several arrests in the park, mostly drug-related including

Peewits (PWITS - possession with intent to supply); one person was challenged about anti-social behaviour and turned out to be on the wanted list for GBH and kidnap.

- **The presence, and numbers, of police must be maintained in proportion to the size of the event.**

## **Consultation**

Consultation with residents seemed to be done reluctantly and out of a sense of obligation rather than a genuine wish to find out what residents think. The first presentation was amateur; the last one was better as it had taken on board some concerns but there was still a reluctance to listen and inform. Businesses seemed not to have been included.

The second venue – the café in the park – was inadequate with limited space and blocked views; the screen was far too low. The absence of microphones – for speakers and for the audience – was disappointing as the need for them had been identified during earlier consultations and meetings. The absence of the CEO of the CIC is worrying and implies an abdication of responsibility.

- **Consultations should always be in large rooms to encourage and enable consultation.**
- **The Gunnersbury Park management team should supply AV equipment that enables information and opinions to be exchanged.**
- **Consultations should be chaired by the CEO of the CIC at least until the confidence of residents and businesses in the management team has been restored.**

## **Damage and repairs**

Residents witnessed HGVs damaging pavement when delivering, for example, metal barriers. Several bollards and bike racks were knocked out of place making them dangerous as well as useless. A heritage lamp post was damaged and left unstable. Hounslow Highways is responsible for repairs but should not be expected to pay for damage caused by festivals and other events in the park.

- **There must be an agreed procedure to assess damage including by holding inspections, jointly with the festival organisers and Hounslow Highways, before and after any event and an agreed method for repairs and replacements with costs/charges so the organisational and financial burden doesn't fall on Hounslow Highways.**

## **Drugs and drug testing**

Drug dealing was witnessed (money changing hands, comments about remembering the location for later purchases) by businesses and residents including at the top of Princes Avenue and in Ridgeway Drive. When asked to move on, those involved said, "look, we're not stealing your property, we're just here". Some deals were captured on CCTV.

There were empty nitrous oxide canisters throughout the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate. They were seen, after the festival clean-up, in areas of Gunnersbury Park that should have been cleared after the festival. One resident picked up six bags of rubbish from the park (mainly in the meadow area) including many nitrous oxide canisters.

The reality is that drugs will be taken by festival-goers, regardless of any policy the organisers might impose. Whether they take them outside the park, or outside the festival area, there is still a risk of serious illness or death of a festival-goer while in the festival or park. With deaths at other festivals this

year, and the tremendous success that drug testing services have had at detecting dangers, it is clear that drug testing saves lives.

- **Gunnersbury Park should require all organisers of festivals in Gunnersbury Park to provide drug testing through organisations such as The Loop.**
- **A zero-tolerance policy is impossible to impose given that festival-goers can take drugs immediately outside the festival space, just before going inside it, and a realistic approach to drugs is needed.**

## **Feedback**

This appears to many to have been done with reluctance and aiming to limit the numbers of people allowed to attend, in effect silencing others. If the organisers cannot cope with meeting a larger crowd, the feedback sessions must be organised by others who can. In addition, there should be formal feedback sessions with councillors and others (such as police and safer neighbourhood groups) whose experiences will be both broader in scope and more specific in terms of impacts on different locations.

- **Hold a formal feedback session with local councillors, police, safer neighbourhood groups that is separate from anything held for residents.**
- **Hold formal feedback sessions in larger rooms, and with more dates, to allow as many residents as possible to be heard.**
- **Allow councillors to attend all sessions, if they wish, to hear comments from their residents and contribute to discussions as appropriate.**

## **Incidents and security**

These incidents were reported to me; there might have been others. Acton Service Centre: **I will provide more information shortly.** Casereccio: The owner had to call an ambulance for a girl who was in need of medical attention due to extreme drunkenness on her way to the event. Italian Corner: A drunken festival-goer punched a customer (the girlfriend of the owner) and the police were called.

- **Gunnersbury Park and/or festival organisers must provide security for local businesses, and at no cost to local businesses, preventing difficult customers from asking to use the loos or going down alleys, up stairs, along walkways and deterring drug dealing as well as to prevent and deal with incidents.**

## **Lavatories**

I am grateful for the speed with which the bank of loos and urinals was moved from alongside a resident's garden wall, at the top of Princes Avenue, on the first day of the festivals. However, I understand their ultimate location, immediately opposite on the pavement alongside the Acton Service Centre, was never agreed with the business concerned. The owner said he was told that the loos and urinals were to be there whether he liked it or not. If that is the case, it is unacceptable.

Additionally, they were beside the entrance to the flats above the Gunnersbury Lane shops so residents were greeted by the stench as they arrived by what is, in effect, the entrance to their homes. They reported that festival-goers also used the stairs and the walkway at the top of the stairs, outside their front doors, as a lavatory.

The loos and urinals blocked in the waste bin used by the residents of flats above the shops, preventing it from being emptied throughout the festivals and attracting litter (empty bottles, cans, food waste and food packaging) around it and on top of it. This exacerbated the serious waste/fly tipping problem here – it's the third worst fly tip in Hounslow and we did not need a disruption to our attempts to manage this problem.



Furthermore, they turned this section of Princes Avenue into a latrine. The stench was evident down the road; residents reported being able to smell it while walking along Triangle Way. Having a urinal without doors, later with a makeshift screen rigged up around it, is intolerable.

On the other side of the road, the owner of Italian Corner allowed a few customers to use the restaurant's loo but will not do this again; other festival-goers used an access route beside it as a latrine. On Princes Avenue, a resident reported seeing a male festival-goer urinating into the hedge of another resident's garden; another resident saw a female festival-goer squatting and urinating near the top of Princes Avenue.

Huge numbers of people, singly and in crowds, put pressure on local businesses to use their private and customer loos despite the availability of public loos very close by. The cost, in staffing, time and money, of keeping loos equipped and clean should not be borne by local small businesses.

- **Public loos must not be located anywhere in the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate conservation area.**
- **TfL could perhaps agree to having more loos on its land but this is next to a block of flats in the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate and may well prove problematical and disgusting.**
- **There should be many loos inside the main and side gates of Gunnersbury Park; it is, after all, an issue for the park and the festival; it must not impact on residents.**
- **Marshalling (see later for more details) must be more efficient with marshals required to stop festival-goers sneaking down side roads for any purposes including to use the road, stairs, walkways, gardens as lavatories.**
- **Festival-goers should be told, on festival websites and with ticket information, that public loos will be available inside the park and that they must not ask local businesses if they can use these private, customer-only loos and nor must they urinate in the street or in people's gardens.**
- **Information on where the loos are should be on a map on the website, and with ticket information, so festival-goers know they only have a short distance to travel to the loos.**
- **Signs should not only show where the loos are but should also tell festival-goers not to ask local businesses to use their loos.**
- **Ticket-holders going to the Secret Cinema (held immediately after these festivals) did not generally need to use loos on arrival; why do Lovebox/Citadel festival-goers?**

### **Letter to businesses and residents**

There were significant numbers of people who did not keep the letter or who did not notice its contents because it was complicatedly written and poorly laid out. It appeared to have been compiled in a rush and with reluctance. Many locals did not know how they could drive out or home given that the main road entrance (Princes Avenue) was closed. Many did not refer to it when wanting to complain as they had not remembered it included the residents' line number.

One business owner, in a small office alongside the tube station, said he did not receive a letter.

- **The layout and appearance of information should be improved to make it easy to find information and encourage it to be used for reference.**
- **Closed roads must be listed in alphabetical order and should include all the access roads in the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate.**
- **Alternative routes, going round the main closed roads, must be provided with a map showing the routes in and out of the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate.**

## Litter and waste

The top of Princes Avenue has been a problem waste/flytipping site; it was recently named the third worst fly tip in Hounslow borough. Huge efforts have gone into trying to solve this problem. Blocking the waste bin so it could not be emptied, making it a dumping ground for festival-goers' litter and waste, has set back efforts to solve this intensely problematical local issue.

The extent of the litter chucked anywhere by festival-goers shocked local residents. Some found their recycling boxes filled with rubbish from festival-goers and litter was thrown along every road and well beyond the main route. It was reported along both sides of Gunnersbury Avenue; along every road and access route (in the road, on pavements, on grass verges) in the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate; in heaps at both ends of the pedestrian overpass crossing Gunnersbury Avenue; along the slip road in front of the houses on the western side of Gunnersbury Avenue; at the entrance to the cemetery; within the B&Q site; along Power Road; along Chiswick High Road; on Turnham Green. In Ealing Common ward, it went along the side of the park to the main entrance and on the other side of Popes Lane with very few people putting it in sacks tied to railings, instead leaving it on the ground or on the ledge of the wall outside the park. The scene inside the gates to the park – a massive slew of litter – was shocking.

Huge amounts of litter and waste was also left at local restaurants – on their tables and on the ground – along Gunnersbury Lane, turning these local independent businesses into litter collectors; for them, litter was a huge problem.

Tying black sacks to railings around the park achieved little; festival-goers left bottles, cans, food packaging and other waste along the wall or the pavement below it and it mounted up hideously outside and inside the gates to the park.

Residents and businesses noted that the festivals' litter pickers were very good at picking litter from the ground but there were not enough of them to keep pace with it. Also, the sacks they filled were not collected often enough but remained heaped on the pavement, attracting more litter.

Within the park, litter that was attributed to the festival was found after the clean-up operation in, for example, the wildflower meadow. A large amount had been ground into the ground where it could have been found and burrowed or dug out by young children and pets.

- **Litter picking must include removing litter from the main routes (Gunnersbury Avenue, Gunnersbury Lane and Popes Lane) and from all side roads and from the bottom of both sides of the underpass over Gunnersbury Avenue.**
- **There must be co-ordination with the relevant local authorities to arrange for increased and continual emptying of public bins, whether done by the local authority for a fee, recharged to the festival or the park, or by staff provided by the festival organisers or the park.**
- **More bins must be installed along the main route to prevent the slew of litter. Relying on festival-goers to put their litter and waste into sacks tied to railings proved pointless.**
- **Bins must be emptied more frequently and sacks collected more often, from the very start to the very end of each day.**
- **The clear up inside the park needs to be of a much wider area and to include a very close search.**

## Location

Numerous residents stressed that this is the wrong location for festivals of this type and size. Their views are included in the comments section above. Several marshals, who had been marshals at other festivals including Lovebox/Citadel, were appalled at the impact on local residents of this year's

festivals, stressing that it is in the wrong location and should be in fields out of the way of residents and in an area with more transport options and arrival/departure points.

- **If festivals are to take place in Gunnersbury Park, there must be significant changes – improvements – to the way they are managed so their impact on residents and local businesses here is enormously reduced.**

## **Marshalling**

Marshalling was terrible on the first day with several residential and access roads without marshals and marshals claiming not to know who was allowed in and what identification they should ask to see. They let anyone through including cars full of people who were obviously festival-goers blagging their way to a parking spot. Some marshals acted up, showing off in front of fellow marshals, bragging about letting people through regardless. One, a woman, was embarrassed about this behaviour having done the job properly before being joined by two male marshals who reversed her good work. Others were respectful and keen to do a good job, responding to residents politely and respectfully.

Some roads/access routes had no marshalling presence and were not blocked off allowing people through unrestricted. Others had bollards or barriers or both or none. On one day, Princes Avenue was marshalled until 1pm; the police left the area at 2.30pm; there were then no marshals and cars flowed through to escape the crowds. Marshalling improved and kicked in properly on the final day – too late for residents who had been impacted by the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the first two days. I wondered why the organisation of such a long-running festival was seemingly so amateur at organising what must be standard processes implemented elsewhere.

Marshals managing crowds crossing Gunnersbury Avenue behaved erratically, randomly encouraging festival-goers to run across the road even when traffic was approaching. There were more marshals at the crossings with green man controls than at the one without green man controls where risks were greater. Litter on pavements made crossing more problematical.

I saw marshals drinking alcohol during their breaks, concealing cans of beer under clothes then bringing them out and drinking from them. A resident reported seeing marshals throwing their litter on the ground.

- **Marshals must be properly trained in how to spot and manage people who are blagging their way in.**
- **Marshals must be comprehensively briefed on what residents have received (a letter, a parking permit) including an explanation/illustration of the parking permit so they can easily identify who is allowed in.**
- **Marshals must be reminded that commercial vehicles, such as supermarket delivery vans, are allowed in to deliver to residents.**
- **Marshals must be on duty, at all roads and along the whole route, all day on festival days starting earlier than noon on the first day.**
- **Manor Gardens, Park Place, the slip road at the junction of Gunnersbury Lane and Gunnersbury Avenue, and the slip road outside the houses on the western side of Gunnersbury Avenue must all be marshalled throughout.**
- **Marshals must move festival-goers away from residential roads and slip roads after the festival so they do not hang around disturbing residents into the night.**
- **Marshals should not be allowed to drink alcohol during or between shifts and must dispose of their litter responsibly.**

## **Noise**

The largest stage, and perhaps others, appeared to face south-east which meant that people some distance from the park, in Chiswick, were disturbed as much as those who were geographically nearer.

Nearby, the noise impact on residents along Gunnersbury Avenue and Gunnersbury Lane was slightly less than it was on residents of Manor Gardens. Residents in the Stamford Brook area of Chiswick said they were disturbed as did residents in central Chiswick. I received complaints from residents in Silver Crescent. Some residents in Grove Park were significantly disturbed describing the noise as intolerable particularly on Sunday evening.

Residents and others whose houses/places of work back on to the park deserve medals for their tolerance which has now run out. Living on the western side of Gunnersbury Avenue, and sharing a wall with the park, they had the full blast of the music which also disturbed the vicar of St Dunstan's church. One family in a house on the western side of Gunnersbury Avenue was driven away by the noise, moving to family in another part of London. Another said it felt as if someone was playing in her back yard; her block of flats shook from the commotion and the loudness of the equipment.

Noise impact must not be assessed on the basis of the number of calls made to the councils' noise lines. Many residents hung up when it turned out to be a message only service. A comment from the Ealing noise line, that the noise level was within the agreed limit of the licence, was criticised; the impact was unacceptable whatever was agreed with the council.

Noise continued well into the early hours with festival-goers hanging around, including perched on or sitting in front gardens, talking, eating, drinking, etc. On the last night, stacking up and clearing away the metal barriers kept residents of flats above the shops awake when they should have been sleeping before a day's work on Monday.

This year's festivals took place during very hot weather when residents needed to open their windows; the noise levels in those circumstances were wholly unacceptable.

- **Liase with the vicar of St Dunstan's church about times of services (some of which are held in silence) to avoid disrupting worship (no rehearsals, for example, during services).**
- **Pay special attention to residents whose houses back on to the park, and are near gates, as they cannot escape the impact of festivals (not just noise from the stage but also from late night leaving; taxis and others blocking their drives and slip road; slews of litter).**
- **Marshals must move festival-goers away from residential areas immediately after the festival programme stops so they do not hang around making a noise and disturbing residents into the night.**

## **Numbers**

Many residents complained about the volume of people which was far too great for a small community that is usually calm and peaceful.

- **No event this large must be allowed here again.**
- **The crowd attending the Secret Cinema was manageable and that – 5,000 including staff – is the largest number acceptable here.**
- **If these events are held here again, the crowd must be spread across several areas, using several tube stations and transport hubs, and strictly managed to ensure numbers are limited and controlled in each area.**

## **Parking and parking permits**

Thank you for the swift response to the tennis club needing permits for its tournament players. Later, it emerged that others needed permits and future arrangements, for any event that involves closing roads, must include them.

Significant numbers of people parked on residential roads and access roads without permits. One resident identified 20 vehicles on Park Drive, and more elsewhere, that did not belong to residents. The presence of outsiders parking here was obvious as neighbours know each others' cars plus outsiders parked on grass verges which residents don't do. Residents were blocked-in by festival-goers parking inside the slip road in front of the houses on the western side of Gunnersbury Avenue. They were also blocked continuously by taxi drivers waiting in the slip road to pick up festival-goers.

Marshalling to stop non-residents from parking on local roads was ineffective on day one but improved (see marshalling section). Residents reported that by 10.45am on the first day, the majority of vehicles parked on The Ridgeway were not residents' cars (we know each others' cars here) and were not displaying festival parking permits.

- Options should include having multiple permits for residents with multiple cars in use at the same time; the system should require proof of residency (or similar) for those additional cars.
- A system is needed to allow visitors to and/or clients of residents who work from home.
- Permits must be provided for councillors in the three relevant wards (Brentford, Ealing Common, Turnham Green) who live outside the designated distribution area as they are needed to be on hand during the festivals, to reduce the burden on the councillors who live in the distribution area.
- All roads and slip roads must be marshalled continuously throughout festivals to ensure residents are not blocked-in and to prevent parking by festival-goers and taxi drivers.

## Residents' Line

This was inadequately staffed and managed; residents complained they could not get through to anyone and that the message mailbox was full (which was my experience, too).

- **Increase the number of lines available on the same number.**
- **Increase the number of staff available to answer calls.**

## Transport

Residents had no information about bus diversion routes caused by closing Gunnersbury Lane and Popes Lane. Late night tube transport failed on Sunday evening with many festival-goers missing the last tube then causing huge noise and disruption to residents. Several residents considered the number of people using Acton Town tube station dangerous. Residents complained about how difficult commuting and using the tube was during Lovebox/Citadel.

- **There must be better liaison with TfL about times of last tubes and how to manage the transport of so many people late at night on a Sunday evening.**
- **Arrivals and departures must be spread amongst other stations, including in Ealing and Brentford, to reduce the burden on one route and disruption on local residents on or near Acton Town tube station.**
- **The organisers must inform festival-goers of transport options, times of last trains, alternative stations, night buses, etc, to avoid disruption by large crowds late at night.**

## Security

Shops cannot expect much increased business and must not, therefore, be expected to increase staffing needs and especially security staff on the off-chance of increased trade. Yet, they need security to prevent shoplifting and antisocial behaviour if crowds do emerge. This cost should be borne by Gunnersbury Park or the festival organisers, not by the businesses.

- **Support local businesses by providing, or paying for, reliable security staff to prevent disruption, theft, anti-social behaviour in and near their premises.**
- **This should apply to shops, cafés and restaurants on both sides of Gunnersbury Lane (in Turnham Green and Ealing Common wards).**

## **Sustainability**

David Bowler made a bold statement about the “strong sustainability thread” in the Lovebox proposal. What did that mean and what was the evidence that it was fulfilled given the huge amounts of litter and waste created throughout the events? How much, and what proportion, of the litter and waste collected by the festivals’ litter pickers, inside Gunnersbury Park and outside, was recycled? What happened to the rest? What other sustainability facts are there?

- **Provide facts about the volumes and proportions of litter and waste that was recycled.**
- **Provide facts about what happened to the rest of the litter and waste collected.**

## **Vermin**

Residents in the flats above shops reported mice appearing shortly after the festival and believe the litter and food waste from the festival is the cause. There has been an increase in vermin in the conservation area since the festivals.

- **Litter and waste collections must be more frequent and efficient, and waste removed swiftly with none left overnight, to deter pests and vermin.**

## **Wildlife**

Residents respect and value wildlife and the natural environment in the park and are disturbed by the litter and waste that still lies in the park, partly buried and trodden into the ground that is a risk to children and animals.

- **Set up a monitoring system to assess the size of, for example, the bat population before an event and afterwards to consider whether the festival had an impact on wildlife.**

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**3rd September 2018**