# Brockwell Live to go ahead despite High Court ruling on park event permits



Organisers of Brockwell Live, the music festival series held in the vibrant Brockwell Park in south London, have announced that their events will proceed as planned, despite a recent legal challenge against Lambeth Council. The park hosts a series of popular festivals, including Wide Awake, Field Day, and Mighty Hoopla, which collectively attract tens of thousands of attendees. However, the Protect Brockwell Park (PBP) campaign, led by local residents and supported by cultural figures, has raised significant concerns about the ecological and communal impact of these large-scale gatherings.

The legal challenge revolved around the assertion by PBP that Lambeth Council failed to adhere to planning laws, specifically regarding the duration of park closures for these events. The High Court ruled that the council's approval for a series of festivals exceeding the permitted 28-day usage for temporary activities was "irrational." As a result, PBP solicitors have called for the immediate cancellation of the events, arguing that the lack of planning permissions means the public should have full access to the park, free from fences and infrastructure. "The site now has to be made immediately available to the public," they stated.

Despite this judicial ruling, Brockwell Live has maintained that the events will continue, asserting that the court's decision only addressed specific legal processes rather than the festivals’ merits. The organisers stressed their commitment to the stewardship of Brockwell Park and expressed enthusiasm for welcoming festival-goers. The company further highlighted its active engagement with the local community, stating that they have contributed to local organisations and the park's maintenance over the years.

Meanwhile, Lambeth Council has confirmed that while it will revisit the legalities surrounding the event’s permit, the festivals can proceed. They have been informed that a new application for a 24-day certificate of lawfulness is currently under consideration, which does not impede festival planning this summer.

The PBP campaign has instigated a broader debate on the balance between public space and commercial events. Many local residents express sentiments that these festivals, such as Mighty Hoopla and Cross the Tracks, enrich the community, enhance local businesses, and foster cultural vibrancy. Conversely, opponents such as Rebekah Shaman, who played a pivotal role in the PBP campaign, advocate for a more sustainable approach. "We are hoping to come to an agreement where events can still continue, but on a much lower level and also much more connected to the community," she has said.

This legal battle reflects a growing trend in urban areas where public spaces are increasingly contested by commercial entities. Actors like Sir Mark Rylance have lent their voice to the debate, stating that the events have turned parts of the park into a “prison camp”. In response, supporters argue that limiting events could lead to a sterile and unaffordable atmosphere in Lambeth, with residents voicing that the festivals bring "life, joy, and connection" to the borough.

Brockwell Park’s upcoming events are not without their own internal crises. Field Day, one of the main festivals, is confronting backlash as numerous artists have withdrawn from its lineup due to ethical concerns about its parent company, KKR, and its investments in controversial sectors. The festival’s management has conveyed its understanding of the situation and expressed regret over the withdrawals but insists it must navigate a complicated landscape in today’s global context.

In the wake of this controversy, the future of festivals in Brockwell Park teeters on the edge. As discussions continue, it remains to be seen how both festival organisers and community advocates can coexist in a way that respects the park's ecological integrity while recognizing its role as a cultural hotspot. The stakes are high, not only for this summer's events but also for the planning and potential scheduling of future gatherings, with opponents and supporters alike awaiting developments with bated breath.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 6
2. Paragraphs 2, 4
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraph 5
6. Paragraphs 3, 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/may/19/brockwell-park-music-festivals-to-go-ahead-despite-successful-legal-challenge> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/e9389e54-3dd2-460a-a9de-895e05664a10> - The Financial Times reports that the High Court ruled Lambeth Council acted irrationally by approving a series of summer festivals in Brockwell Park without adhering to planning law. The council's decision was deemed irrational because the festivals' duration exceeded the 28 days allowed for temporary events without additional planning permission. The legal challenge, initiated by local resident Rebekah Shaman and advocacy group Protect Brockwell Park, highlighted concerns over restricted public access and environmental damage. Although the court did not halt the imminent events, Lambeth Council must revisit its approval process.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/brockwell-park-brixton-wide-awake-cross-the-tracks-mighty-hoopla-b1223948.html> - The Evening Standard reports that festival organisers of Brockwell Live, which hosts events like Mighty Hoopla and Cross the Tracks in Brockwell Park, have welcomed scrutiny after campaigners launched a legal challenge to protect the green space from large-scale private events. The organisers emphasised their commitment to the park's stewardship, stating they take their responsibilities seriously and maintain open channels for dialogue with residents and community groups. They also highlighted their financial contributions to local organisations and the upkeep of the park over the past five years.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/brockwell-park-high-court-legal-battle-lambeth-council-mighty-hoopla-b1226291.html> - The Evening Standard reports that campaigners staged a 'No Walls' protest at Brockwell Park ahead of a High Court legal battle over Lambeth Council’s decision to approve large-scale summer festivals. More than 150 residents participated in the protest, lying on the grass to spell out the phrase 'No Walls' in opposition to the four-metre-high fences scheduled to enclose parts of the park during the festivals. The protest was a prelude to a judicial review hearing where Protect Brockwell Park will challenge the council’s decision to allow the commercial events under 'permitted development' rules.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lambeth-brockwell-park-mighty-hoopla-field-day-wide-awake-lambeth-country-show-legal-challenge-b1225467.html> - The Evening Standard reports that a group of south Londoners warned that Lambeth could become 'sterile, unaffordable, and soulless' if festivals held in Brockwell Park and other late-night events are blocked. Residents joined forces, insisting the majority of people in the borough enjoy events such as Mighty Hoopla and Cross the Tracks, saying they 'bring life, joy and connection' to the borough. Meanwhile, campaign group Protect Brockwell Park has insisted that the festivals are permanently damaging the park, with actor Sir Mark Rylance claiming the events have turned the space 'into a prison camp'.
6. <https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cx2wrrdgl77o> - BBC News reports that campaigners argue Brockwell Park is being 'damaged beyond repair' by large-scale festivals. Protect Brockwell Park argues the green space is being harmed by events like Brockwell Live, which draws more than 285,000 attendees over nine days. The campaign group has been backed by resident and actor Sir Mark Rylance, who says such festivals harm 'the grass, trees and plant life for months if not for ever'. Lambeth Council stated the area used for events had been independently assessed as being of 'low ecological sensitivity grassland' and 'no ecological damage' was caused as a result.