# Lambeth Council overrides court ruling to allow Brockwell Park festivals amid community backlash



In a contentious battle over the use of Brockwell Park in Brixton, London, events such as the 'Brockwell Live' festivals are set to proceed despite a recent High Court ruling that challenged their legality. The campaign group Protect Brockwell Park, led by Rebecca Shaman, has made significant waves in the community, raising alarms about the impact of multiple festivals scheduled throughout the summer. Their legal challenge resulted in a pivotal ruling which found that Lambeth Council had exceeded the permitted duration for temporary events. Although the court sided with the campaigners on legal grounds, the council has now issued a certificate of lawfulness allowing the festivities to continue.

The festivals, including Wide Awake, Mighty Hoopla, and Field Day, which kicked off recently, have drawn both fervent supporters and vocal opponents. Cllr Donatus Anyanwu, Lambeth’s Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, addressed the delicate balance the council strives to maintain. He noted the economic benefits that such cultural events bring to the area, arguing that the revenue generated is vital for ongoing investments in local community projects. However, the pressure to deliver these events has raised questions about transparency and sustainability.

Critics, including Jen Hawkins from Protect Brockwell Park, articulate deep concerns about the detrimental effects of the festivals on the park’s natural environment and the loss of public access. "Loss of public access, damage to nature, and the council's lack of transparency and consultation" are the principal grievances she identifies. Many locals depend on this green space, viewing it as their connection to nature amidst the urban sprawl of London. Hawkins underscores that the fenced-off sections of the park hinder the mental and physical well-being of those who lack private gardens.

Actress Sir Mark Rylance has also joined the fray, specifically regarding environmental issues associated with the festivals. He has accused the council of treating the park as a "prison camp" rather than a communal space. Rylance’s involvement highlights a broader concern: the potential long-term damage to one of London’s cherished public parks. In contrast, some locals voice support for the events, asserting that they inject vitality into the community and contribute to the park's upkeep.

The implications of these events extend beyond recreational use; they reflect a growing tension surrounding the commercialization of public spaces in London. While supporters argue that festivals enrich cultural life and provide crucial funding, opponents fear that unchecked development will erode the very essence of public parks. The ongoing legal disputes and community debates illustrate a microcosm of a larger national conversation about the importance of sustainability, community engagement, and the rights of residents to enjoy their public spaces without restriction.

As Brockwell Park braces for a summer filled with vibrant yet divisive festivals, the challenge remains for Lambeth Council to navigate these competing interests while safeguarding the park’s future for all its users. The community continues to advocate for a balanced approach, one that acknowledges both the need for cultural events and the imperative to preserve the park’s integrity as a natural refuge in an increasingly urbanised landscape.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059496/we-live-park-fenced-off-cash-brockwell-brixton), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/4d70a5b0-3ec2-4f92-83c5-8d3450d1f1f3)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059496/we-live-park-fenced-off-cash-brockwell-brixton), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/brockwell-park-brixton-wide-awake-cross-the-tracks-mighty-hoopla-b1223948.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/brockwell-park-live-festivals-mark-rylance-lambeth-council-b2737962.html), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lambeth-brockwell-park-mighty-hoopla-field-day-wide-awake-lambeth-country-show-legal-challenge-b1225467.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3gg8p770eeo), [[7]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2wrrdgl77o)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059496/we-live-park-fenced-off-cash-brockwell-brixton> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/4d70a5b0-3ec2-4f92-83c5-8d3450d1f1f3> - This article discusses the escalating tensions in London over the use of public parks for large-scale festivals. It highlights the legal challenges faced by Lambeth Council regarding Brockwell Park, where a High Court ruling found the council exceeded legal limits on event durations. Despite this, festivals are proceeding under a newly approved certificate. The piece also delves into the financial implications for local authorities and the broader debate over the commercialization of public spaces.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/brockwell-park-brixton-wide-awake-cross-the-tracks-mighty-hoopla-b1223948.html> - This article covers the ongoing legal challenges against Lambeth Council's approval of large-scale festivals in Brockwell Park. It details the concerns of local residents and campaigners, including actor Sir Mark Rylance, who argue that the events are causing long-term damage to the park. The piece also highlights the organizers' defense, emphasizing their contributions to park maintenance and community engagement.
4. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/brockwell-park-live-festivals-mark-rylance-lambeth-council-b2737962.html> - This article features actor Sir Mark Rylance's involvement in the campaign against large-scale festivals in Brockwell Park. Rylance criticizes the environmental impact of the events, describing the park as being turned into a 'prison camp.' The piece also provides insights into the broader community's concerns and the ongoing legal battles with Lambeth Council.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lambeth-brockwell-park-mighty-hoopla-field-day-wide-awake-lambeth-country-show-legal-challenge-b1225467.html> - This article presents the perspectives of local residents who support the festivals in Brockwell Park, arguing that events like Mighty Hoopla and Cross the Tracks bring vitality to the area. It contrasts these views with the concerns of campaigners who warn of the park becoming 'soulless' without such events. The piece also touches upon the ongoing legal challenges and community debates surrounding the issue.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3gg8p770eeo> - This article reports on the cancellation of a community event in Brockwell Park due to damage caused by previous festivals. It details the concerns of local residents about the state of the park and the impact of large-scale events. The piece also includes statements from festival organizers and Lambeth Council regarding the situation and future plans for park maintenance.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2wrrdgl77o> - This article discusses the legal action taken by campaigners against Lambeth Council, arguing that large-scale festivals are causing irreparable damage to Brockwell Park. It includes statements from the Protect Brockwell Park group and highlights the support from community organizations and residents. The piece also presents Lambeth Council's response to the concerns raised.