# Brockwell Live festivals to continue despite high court ruling on planning breaches



Organisers of Brockwell Live, the popular series of music festivals held in Brockwell Park, south London, have confirmed that the events will proceed despite a successful legal challenge by local residents. The parks' sizeable festivals, including Mighty Hoopla, Field Day, and Cross the Tracks, have become a staple in the London music scene, attracting tens of thousands of attendees.

The legal dispute arose when the advocacy group Protect Brockwell Park (PBP) challenged Lambeth Council’s decision to permit the festivals. The high court ruled in favour of PBP, citing that the council had acted irrationally by approving the events without adhering to established planning law, notably allowing for temporary land use beyond the 28-day limit without additional permissions. This judgement reflects growing concerns among local residents regarding the prolonged closure of the park and its impact on the environment and community heritage.

Critics of the festivals argue that large crowds and heavy equipment have detrimental effects on the park’s ecology, with claims that the grass, trees, and overall biodiversity suffer as a result. Prominent figures, including actor Sir Mark Rylance, have publicly voiced their concern, stating that the events could lead to lasting damage in a venue cherished by the local community. However, Lambeth Council maintains that the areas used for these events have been assessed as having low ecological sensitivity and have asserted that no significant damage has occurred.

In light of the court ruling, the organisers insisted that all festivals would move forward, claiming that the legal determination related only to procedural issues and not the core legality of the events themselves. They expressed their commitment to the park’s maintenance and the surrounding community, highlighting ongoing dialogue with local groups. Over the past five years, Brockwell Live has argued that it contributes significantly to local businesses and community projects, claiming a connection to the park that they are eager to uphold.

Despite reassurances from event organisers, PBP remains resolute in its stance. The group is not fundamentally opposed to events within the park but advocates for a more measured approach that limits the scale and frequency of such gatherings. Rebekah Shaman, a key figure in the PBP campaign, stated that they seek a balanced outcome allowing events while prioritising the community’s needs.

As the Brockwell Live festivities approach, the high-profile Field Day festival faces its own set of challenges. Following controversies surrounding the festival’s parent company, KKR, artists have begun to withdraw due to concerns over ethical investments related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Prominent names such as Midland and Sisu Crew have pulled out in response to pressure from campaigners who demand a clear stance from Field Day regarding KKR’s activities. The festival’s promoters acknowledged the strong sentiments of both artists and attendees but expressed disappointment over the withdrawals, underscoring the complex interplay between commerce, ethics, and community sentiment in today’s live music landscape.

The unfolding events at Brockwell Park indicate broader tensions between community-focused initiatives and commercial interests, raising vital questions about the sustainability of public spaces in urban areas. As the 2026 festival season looms, the ongoing dialogue between residents, authorities, and festival organisers will be essential to shaping the future of Brockwell Park as a communal space.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/may/19/brockwell-park-music-festivals-to-go-ahead-despite-successful-legal-challenge), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/brockwell-park-brixton-wide-awake-cross-the-tracks-mighty-hoopla-b1223948.html)
* Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/e9389e54-3dd2-460a-a9de-895e05664a10), [[4]](https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cx2wrrdgl77o)
* Paragraph 3: [[5]](https://www.iq-mag.net/2025/04/campaigners-bid-to-halt-brockwell-park-festivals/)
* Paragraph 4: [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/brockwell-park-brixton-wide-awake-cross-the-tracks-mighty-hoopla-b1223948.html)
* Paragraph 5: [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/brockwell-park-high-court-legal-battle-lambeth-council-mighty-hoopla-b1226291.html), [[7]](https://www.brixtonbuzz.com/2025/05/no-walls-campaigners-rally-to-keep-brockwell-park-open-as-legal-battle-with-lambeth-council-heats-up/)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/may/19/brockwell-park-music-festivals-to-go-ahead-despite-successful-legal-challenge), [[4]](https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cx2wrrdgl77o)
* Paragraph 7: [[5]](https://www.iq-mag.net/2025/04/campaigners-bid-to-halt-brockwell-park-festivals/)

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 permitted 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 following 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://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cx2wrrdgl77o> - BBC News reports that campaigners argue that summer festivals are causing long-term damage to Brockwell Park, leading to legal action against Lambeth Council. The group Protect Brockwell Park contends that large-scale events like Brockwell Live, which attracts over 285,000 attendees over nine days, are damaging the park's ecology. The campaign has received support from actor Sir Mark Rylance, who claims the festivals harm the park's grass, trees, and plant life. Lambeth Council stated that the area used for events had been independently assessed as being of 'low ecological sensitivity grassland' and that no ecological damage was caused.
5. <https://www.iq-mag.net/2025/04/campaigners-bid-to-halt-brockwell-park-festivals/> - IQ Magazine reports that campaigners are seeking to halt festivals in Brockwell Park due to concerns over environmental damage. The group Protect Brockwell Park argues that large-scale events like Brockwell Live, which attract over 285,000 attendees, are causing harm to the park's grass, trees, and plant life. The campaign has received support from actor Sir Mark Rylance, who claims the festivals turn the park into a 'prison camp.' The organisers of Brockwell Live emphasise their commitment to the park's stewardship and maintain open channels for dialogue with residents and community groups.
6. <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 battle over Lambeth Council’s decision to approve large-scale summer festivals. The protest, involving over 150 residents, was in opposition to four-metre-high fences due to enclose parts of the park as festival season approaches. The group Protect Brockwell Park is challenging the council’s decision to allow the commercial events under 'permitted development' rules, arguing that it bypasses proper planning scrutiny and causes adverse ecological impacts on the park.
7. <https://www.brixtonbuzz.com/2025/05/no-walls-campaigners-rally-to-keep-brockwell-park-open-as-legal-battle-with-lambeth-council-heats-up/> - Brixton Buzz reports that residents are rallying to keep Brockwell Park open amid a legal battle with Lambeth Council over large-scale festivals. The group Protect Brockwell Park is challenging the council’s decision to permit commercial festivals under 'permitted development' rules, arguing that it causes long-term damage to the park and restricts public access. The campaigners emphasise the park's importance as a shared heritage and are seeking legal advice on a potential second legal challenge concerning the Lambeth Country Show, scheduled to follow the Brockwell Live festivals.