



2019 – 51ST STATE AND ELROW TOWN EVENTS: IMPACT ON COCKFOSTERS

**Cockfosters Local Area
Residents Association
(CLARA)**

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SUMMARY

- 1 This report summarises the impact on Cockfosters of the 51st State and Elrow Town events held on 3rd and 17th August 2019 respectively.
- 2 It has been prepared by Cockfosters Area Residents Association (CLARA) with input from the Friends of Trent Country Park and the Trent Park Conservation Committee. We have been further assisted by input from both Enfield and Barnet residents in Cockfosters. We believe that some commercial events have become too large and cause unacceptable nuisance for those living nearby in both boroughs.
- 3 Events must be also reasonably accommodated by the neighbourhoods adjacent to the Park. When Enfield Council developed its Events Strategy, no consideration was given to impact of large events on residents.
- 4 Over the last five years, CLARA has invested much time in working with Enfield Council to mitigate the adverse impacts of large events. We have approached this in a spirit of genuine cooperation but the blight of large events has undermined the trust of residents in the Council.
- 5 When commercial events initially began to be held in Trent Park, licenses limited attendance to 10,000 but attendance for larger events grew to 25,000 in 2019.
- 6 We now believe that, given the constraints of the site and the local infrastructure, the adverse impact of ‘mega events’ (over 10,000) can never be acceptably mitigated.
- 7 This report is not intended to provide a detailed analysis of the events but rather to provide a vivid, accurate overview of the events from a resident’s perspective.
- 8 It uses contemporary comments from residents, those with lived experience of the impact of the events, and residents’ photos to explain and illustrate the impact. Quotes included are verbatim quotes; they may have been shortened but they have not been précised.
- 9 The quote below from a Bramley Road resident encapsulates most of the comments received from residents. However, perhaps from a wish not to offend, it does not mention some of more egregious observed incidents such as the public urination and defecation, nor the open and widespread drug taking and dealing.

I have to say that all community objections have been ignored.

Trent Park is a special park, it is a place for families and the community to enjoy, with space, peace, rest after school and work. The numbers are just too much for transport and the park to handle.

The excessive noise from the Elrow concert, the numbers present and an increase of cars in the area resulting with an increase in air pollution, the street drinking is not acceptable. These numbers of people attending in and around the area has caused concern to us all in the local home community of Cockfosters. Enough is enough.

- 10 Enfield Council has shown a consistent lack of transparency in various matters relating to large events. The licensing procedure does not follow the spirit of legislation nor involve an objective and independent review of each event, such that residents have no confidence in how events are undertaken.

- 11 The adverse impact of mega-events, especially 51st State, are not mitigated to an acceptable standard. Enfield Council takes the view that all risks and liabilities are assumed, and entirely so, by the organiser. CLARA believes that this approach is incompatible with the Council's duty of care.
- 12 Poor standards of event management have been observed by 51st State, notably in residential areas. This is compounded by the inability or unwillingness of Council officers to ensure effective oversight of such events generally and specifically in relation to environmental impact, e.g. sound levels, damage to the Park, traffic and parking problems and anti-social behaviour.
- 13 CLARA considers there is a lack of transparency relating to the financial returns from the events programme. It is questionable if mega events do benefit the Park, make money for the Council and benefit Cockfosters. Indeed, we believe they are a blight on both Enfield and Barnet residents.
- 14 Enfield Council has previously refused to provide details of net income from their specific events or from their events programme in general. It appears that little of the income, if any, is ring-fenced to be used for the upkeep of Trent Park. It is against this background that the disruption associated with mega-events must be weighed.
- 15 Against any reasonable criteria, the report provides irrefutable evidence that such events not only materially damage the fabric of Trent Park, such that their continued licensing by Enfield Council disregarding reasoned residents' opposition may irreparably harm the Park; it also evidences unreasonable and unjustifiable interruption to the lives of residents.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

PUBLIC URINATION

- 16 Men openly urinated along Cockfosters Road and elsewhere. Women were seen urinating on the grassed area next to the bus shelter outside Cockfosters Station: (See sample photos below.) There was one reported incident of defecating in public.

Residents have been held hostage in their own homes due to this event taking place

The personnel from Enfield council who was in Chalk Lane did absolutely nothing to deter three females urinating under the wall at the Sovereign building.

The council should be ashamed of themselves as human beings to allow this as the money they were making from it took precedence over the local community.

Paddocks resident about Elrow London Town

One is a couple who have just finished ... she pulled everything down and squatted – charming! Goodness knows what's going on with the threesome – one was bent over double, urinating and spewing his guts up.

(Leys Gardens resident about 51st State)

We live at Westpole Avenue and were indeed affected by antisocial behaviour last night. Specifically, 3 instances of urinating in our front garden between 10.15pm & 10.45pm last night.

My husband ... rang the Council number on the 3rd occasion who said that it was noted.

We are disgusted by such behaviour & feel disappointed that the Council is driven to raising revenue in this manner.

(Westpole Avenue resident)

So, the tally was about a dozen urinators in the service road next to my house and openly in Leys Gardens.

(Leys Gardens resident) (Note that Leys Gardens is a considerable distance from Trent Park.)

- 17 Portaloos were set up at the entrance to the Cockfosters Road Cemetery. This siting was highly disrespectful and inappropriate.

- 18 A Selection of Facebook posts from residents on this is reproduced below.

One fairly senior and experienced security man told her that having handled many similar size and type events, it was clear to him that the venue was totally inappropriate for an event of this size. He normally worked on the inside of very big events and handled all sorts of serious anti-social behaviour. He also mentioned that lots of event-goers always made a beeline to the pub principally because it had clean toilet facilities. He thought that the pub had obtained a licence extension for tonight but wasn't sure.

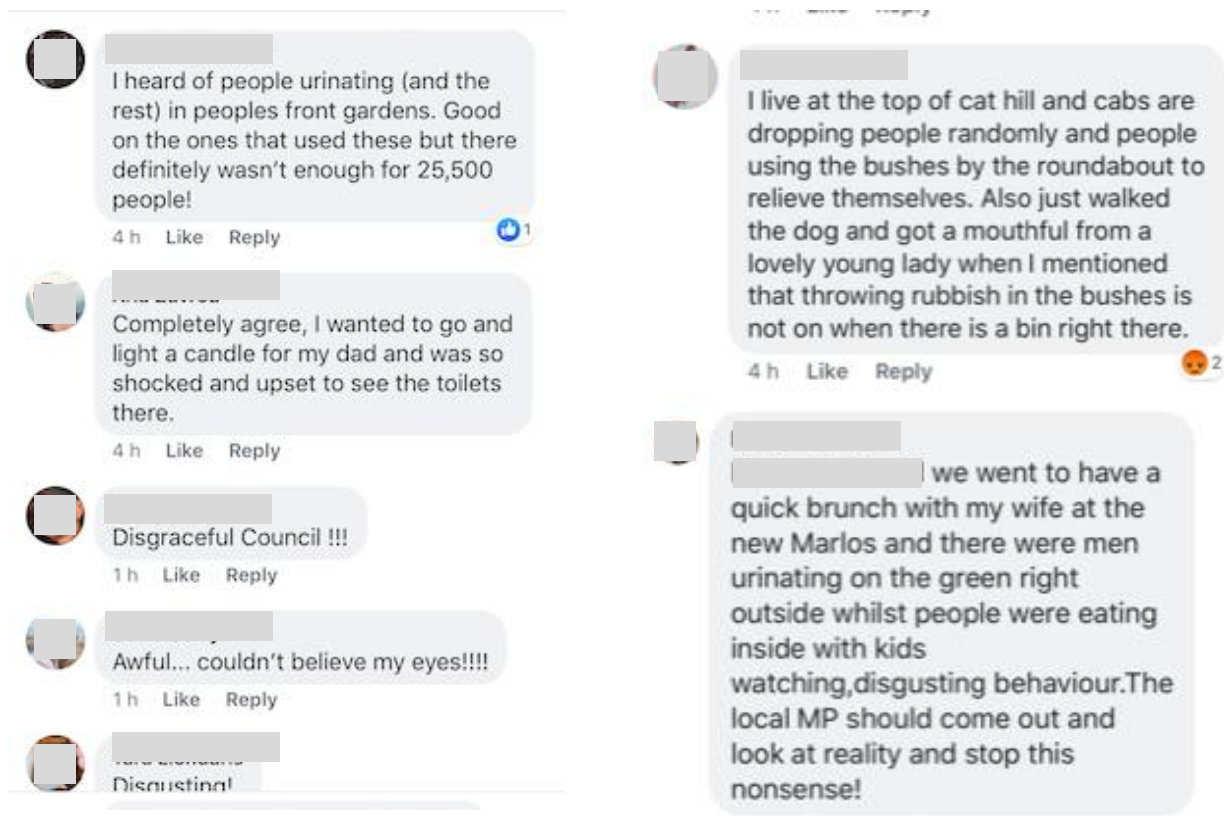
(Chalk Lane resident)

APPARENT DRUG USE AND OTHER CRIMINALITY

- 19 Residents received reports of a knife fight in the queue to enter 51st State event, albeit security guards apparently dealt with it. However, it is a fact that such behaviour, in the words of the Fairgreen East resident who reported it,

... is absolutely atrocious, and incredibly scary.





- 20 Inhalation from balloons and resulting litter, see photo below of discarded balloons by the War Memorial at the top of Chalk Lane and canisters collected locally.
- 21 The Cock Inn pub was a magnet for after-event drinking and general rowdiness after both events. Its car park was strewn with rubbish, including the silver canisters and balloons used for drug inhalation.
- 22 A quote from a Chalk Lane resident following the 51st State event:

I was not allowed through on the A111. In that time that I was imprisoned in my car, I openly saw drug dealing at the top of Westpole. Police were just standing at the top of Mount Pleasant.

It felt intimidating, frightening, and just basically, horrible.



LITTER

- 23 Photos of litter collected by a Chalk Lane resident are shown above and below. The balloons and cannisters were collected from the area immediately by the War Memorial in Chalk Lane.
- 24 Council workers made commendable attempts to clear up the litter and debris after the events but, such was the amount, the scale of the task meant many hours work and litter and debris continued to blight Cockfosters for several days after both events.
- 25 More importantly, it is unacceptable that such a quantity of litter should be deposited in Cockfosters in the first place.



TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND PARKING

- 26 Most of the many thousands attending the events travel by the Piccadilly Line to Cockfosters Station. Arguably, the numbers boarding and alighting from trains and entering and exiting the Station constitute a disaster waiting to happen. Unlike stations such as Wembley Park and Arsenal, Cockfosters Station is ill-equipped to cope with such large numbers of passengers.
- 27 There was open drinking and use of recreational drugs on trains, some passengers already seemed drunk. There was vomiting on the trains and platforms.
- 28 No transport police were in evidence to control this anti-social behaviour. Perhaps coincidentally, according to British Transport Police, Cockfosters had the highest number of reported crimes per 100,000 passengers of any Piccadilly Line station in 2019.
- 29 There is an apparent correlation between published crime statistics for August and British Transport Police figures.
- 30 Traffic on event days is chaotic. Cockfosters Road is known for its traffic congestion but this is almost brought to a standstill through event goers being dropped-off and collected and by event goers trying to park.
- 31 The closure of Cockfosters Road during the crowds' egress has been required for the last two years on recognised safety grounds. Nevertheless, this protracted closure of the main road is a major inconvenience to residents and through traffic.
- 32 Despite significant numbers of marshals, many of whom were clearly doing their best, closing roads to event goers seeking to park was not strictly enforced to the very real detriment of residents of those roads.

So, it's now 10.10 and the street marshals are in place. I went to speak to them and discovered they are totally unprepared and have not even been given the residents password!

Then whilst I was there a car of clearly non-residents tried to get into Chalk Lane by claiming that they lived in no. 16. Not the case.

The marshals were ready to let them through until I asked them for the name of the resident there. They didn't know.

I've now spoken to X and relayed all this onward.

(Chalk Lane resident)

I called L B Enfield and was assured access to Belmont Ave/Ashurst/Norrays etc would be limited to residents only during the full hours of the event through a "password" system (based on the post code) However, this was clearly not the case as the Mt Pleasant end of Belmont Ave was completely open until 20.00hrs. From about 13.30, the Cat Hill end has a barrier, but the Stewards are powerless to stop anyone entering the roads. I witnessed one young Steward trying to stop a car full of men, who just laughed at him and drove through. The result is yet again we have all these residential streets with end to end cars.

(Belmont Avenue resident: As these events have become ever larger, and events goers ignore requests to use public transport, traffic and nuisance parking have expanded into Barnet)

- 33 Large numbers of cars belonging to event goers were illegally parked and no action was taken against them. See below photos of cars parked illegally along Cockfosters Road and at the junction of Ashurst Road, Mount Pleasant and Belmont Avenue.



- 34 Several residents complained of cars being parked across their driveways.
- 35 Enfield Council had previously been asked to position a parking tow truck to remove vehicles illegally parked. A number of event goers simply removed traffic signs. Various offending vehicles, obstructing residents' properties could therefore not be removed during the events.
- 36 Our drive way was blocked by someone who was attending this event. It was blocked for more than 6 hrs and we had to park our car 4 streets away. Cars left obstructing clear views of drivers turning left or right.

(Gloucester Gardens resident re 51st State)

Dear

CPA letter CPAEf2019/5 says closures will be in force from 8pm. I have just (1pm) come from Leys Gardens / Heddon Court / Freston Gardens and the marshals have already blocked the road asking cars entering for their id /proof of residence / password.

Gloucester Gardens / Kent Drive and Sussex is not being marshalled and will only be blocked for entry id at 8pm. This is ridiculous because revellers for Elrow will be parking here and making a mess from 3pm onwards. Blocking our roads at 8pm serves no purpose because most of the revellers will be at the festival having parked on our roads from 3pm onwards.

Why do you give preference to 3 roads on the Barnet side of Cockfosters road and leave us on the Enfield side to put up with parking/litter problems?? We urgently need police cones placed for 100 meters on Gloucester Gardens from the Sussex junction to Bramley Road junction.

We have no yellow lines and people will be parking all over and blocking us again as they did at the last festival two weeks ago. Please please please – we need some assistance on Gloucester Gardens / Sussex Way and Kent Drive entrances as soon as possible. Police cones on the entry will deter people entering and parking.

(Gloucester Gardens resident)

Dear

Thank you for your email and I apologise for the issues you have encountered we have raised the issues with event control to deploy security to the area

Please do send any photos or contact the number as detailed in the letter you have received

Regards

Dear M

Thank you for reporting the parked vehicles located on the corner of Ashurst Road, Mount Pleasant and Belmont Avenue.

Please accept my apologies for the delayed response, but I can confirm that this was reported through to the Council's parking enforcement team to deal with appropriately.

Kind Regards

Park Activities Team

(Responses from Enfield Council staff)

- 37 Barnet Council have not been consulted in event planning regarding parking restrictions even though residents of roads on the Barnet side of the Barnet/Enfield border are significantly affected by this and all the other issues noted in this report.

EMERGENCY SERVICES ACCESS

- 38 Road closures, unmanaged traffic and free-for-all parking has potential impact far beyond residents' inconvenience. Cockfosters Road is the main access route for emergency services. By closing the Road at the end of the Elrow event, organisers and Enfield Council endangered residents in parts of Cockfosters. This suggests that the Council's risk assessment for the event was flawed or incomplete.



DAMAGE TO TRENT PARK

39 Foremost among instances of damage are:

- An event contractor's lorry hitting one of the Grade 2 listed gateposts at the entrance to Trent Park while manoeuvring through the narrow entrance. The foundation has been displaced and this and the gatepost will have to be dismantled and rebuilt. At the time of writing, six months after the event, the gatepost has not been repaired.
- Considerable damage to fabric of Trent Park, e.g. flattening of the Exhibition Table, scoring of the sub surface and by metal tracking being left in place for weeks.
- Damage to Limes Avenue road by heavy lorries during erection and dismantling of the event structures. This is to the detriment of young children using bikes, scooters and skates and to the detriment of wheelchair users.

40 We know that The Friends of Trent Park have made more detailed representations to Enfield Council about the damage.

41 Whilst undertakings to repair the damage have been given by event organisers, such events year-on-year will eventually and inevitably result in irreparable damage to the Park. (See photos below.)

42 Although bonds from event organisers were lodged with the Council, these are unlikely to meet the true cost of repairs.

43 The photo of the crashed car and quote from a Bevan Road resident following the 51st State event needs no further comment.

Air bags deployed and railing bent, must've been going at considerable speed. Could've killed any pedestrians!

CONFETTI

44 Huge amounts of 'confetti' were released at the Elrow event. Much of this escaped from the event site and was trodden into the ground or trapped in grass or undergrowth.

45 Assurances were given that the confetti biodegraded swiftly. This is not the case.

46 Both inside and outside the site confetti has been trodden into or otherwise become embedded into the ground with unknown long-term effects. It is likely that animals have ingested harmful amounts of the confetti with unknown consequences.

LOSS OF AMENITY

47 The main public area of Trent Park was effectively closed to the public for most of August, precisely the period during which many families with children wish to use the park.

48 Wheelchair users were particularly affected because of the articulated lorries using Limes Avenue. This is arguably contrary to the requirements of the Equality Act 1980 and must surely contravene the Council's own equality policies.

49 'Public parks and open spaces [...] are a valued asset for *residents*.' Enfield Park Events Strategy 2017-22 (Emphasis added)



NOISE

- 50 The noise level can be summed up by the complaint to Enfield Council reproduced below.

By 3pm today I have been driven from my home at Rookery Cottages by the persistent very loud boom, boom coming from the Elrow event in TCP. The inner panes of the double-glazed windows are vibrating in sync with this low frequency sound. There is nowhere in the house where I can escape the noise. With all the events in the park we have suffered it has never been this bad. As an engineer who has experienced some very noisy environments in my working life, I don't need to measure the sound pressure to know what is well beyond a reasonable environment. If it was a factory with sound pressures at these frequencies, there would be serious concerns for anybody working in the environment.

I am not going to complain to Elrow as they have patently set up their sound system to produce this level of base noise. After all the assurances we heard from the organisers at Stake Holder Group Meetings, it is audibly clear they had no intention of abiding by those promises.

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that these technical issues are in compliance. You are the responsible authority to ensure that we can enjoy our homes in manner set out in a number of statutes. The London Borough of Enfield in hiring out Trent Country Park to events cannot escape their responsibilities to their residents. This level of sound is neither safe or reasonable at the distance of my home from the source of the noise.

- 51 The bass speakers could be heard notably to the South in Queen Elizabeth's Drive in Southgate, but also to the East in Oakwood and beyond, to the West in Cockfosters, East Barnet and Hadley Wood. Although sound limits are defined, with agreed measurement locations and events staff and council staff monitoring sound levels, this is insufficient to prevent nuisance to the community with the consequence that sound disruption cannot be mitigated as enforcement is, in reality, post facto. Many residents feel captive in their homes with the windows closed on some of the most liberating summer days in the year.
- 52 It cannot be the case that the agreed sound levels were adhered to, even allowing for the variable effects of the weather.
- 53 The conclusion can only be that (a) agreed sound levels were simply ignored, or (b) that Enfield Council did not, could not nor would not effectively monitor them.

POLICING

- 54 Police numbers are limited, a team of only 18 constables attended.
- 55 Events police have stated in Stakeholder Meetings that they recognise the disruption and discomfort caused to residents by large events. Nonetheless, limited police resources, allied with the limits on the activity of event security staff and marshals mean that there is precious little moderation of the conduct of large crowds.
- 56 Numbers attending the events were like many football crowds and arguably there should be a similar and proportionate police presence.

- 57 No consideration appears to have been given to emergency services access along Cockfosters Road after the large events are in progress.

LACK OF REAL CONSULTATION

- 58 The Enfield Park Events Strategy 2017-22 states that:

The Council consulted widely on this Strategy [...] ensuring [events] are managed positively.

- 59 CLARA and The Friends of Trent Park have consistently raised reasoned objections to the events in Trent Park and these have been consistently ignored. The use of the term 'positively' rather than 'effectively' is telling. The concerns of Barnet residents, Trent Park is on the Enfield/Barnet border have been ignored.

We [...] now have four categories of major, large, medium, and small events

- 60 Major events are defined as 'those attracting **5000** or more people per day'. In 2020, 51st State and Elrow are licensed for **85,000** over two weekends. (The capacity of Wembley Stadium is 90,000.) The descriptor 'major' cannot be considered appropriate for these events. 'Mega' would be more appropriate as they are arguably different in kind not merely degree.

In summary, our aim is to [deliver] a range of events that add to the vibrancy of the borough, generate income that will help the Council to maintain our wonderful parks and open spaces.

- 61 If only this were true. On event days Cockfosters is shutdown as far as normal life is concerned and the Council has consistently failed to provide any evidence whatsoever that income generated by the events has been used to maintain Trent Park, including failure effectively to answer Freedom of Information requests about its net profit, if any. (See 'News Flash' below.)

*If Enfield's events profile reflected the profile of the wider spread of commercial events in London, we **estimate** that the economic impact of 65,400 visitors would be £13.52m, **based on** an average spend of £207.52, and support around 173 local jobs. **Adjusting** this [...] the total impact is therefore **estimated** to be £6,804,000, and the number of jobs supported [...] in Enfield is 87 FTE jobs. (Derived from Wish You Were Here (WYWH) reports published by UK Music, a music industry promotion organisation.)*

- 62 Note that the only commercial justification put forward uses the 'research' of a music industry umbrella organisation with conclusions so qualified (emboldened) as to make them risible.

- 63 Currently, a 'consultation' is being undertaken on Enfield Council's Events Strategy. The objectivity of this consultation is open to question given that: (a) the consultant is itself an Events Management company; and (b) the associated public questionnaire does not probe the key questions on the impact of events but rather seeks to avoid difficult issues.

A clear and documented understanding of which parks and open spaces can support events of different sizes (One of five event principles in the Strategy.)

- 64 An 'understanding' must also include the infrastructure of and effect on the locality in which parks and open spaces are located, especially if 85,000 will be attending over two weekends. Enfield Council's 'understanding' is very different to ours.

Allowing residents greater time to raise concerns through a simple consultation process.
(Extract from Consultation process)

- 65 This does not answer the more important question of whether these concerns are taken into account. In our experience, they are not.

[For]... any playing of live and pre-recorded music [...] organisers will be expected to put in place measures to manage all impacts of the event. This may include traffic management [...] noise levels and requirements for the disposal of waste. (Extract from The Overarching Process)

- 66 Note that this extract uses 'expected' rather than 'mandatory' language. There is overwhelming evidence from this and the previous years' events that organisers have not abided by this overarching process and/or Enfield Council has failed to monitor its own process. Enfield Council is failing to take account of this evidence when considering future events in Trent Park.

INEFFECTIVE EVENT PLANNING

- 67 CLARA has been given numerous complaints about ineffective event planning, many concerned traffic and parking management.

i) I now understand I should have had further correspondence from the event organisers giving me a 'password' to gain access to my road - I did not receive this, I wonder how many other residents are effected (the result is that unless I had called I would not have been allowed access to my own house.)

ii) The road closures are from 20.00 to 02.00 Sun - but that is far too late. The event is advertised from 12.00 to 22.00, we already (14.00 hrs) have many cars parked up the road, so the restrictions clearly are not working - someone has clearly not thought any of this through!
Belmont Avenue resident about Elrow London Town

- 68 Many such complaints were forwarded to Enfield Council and/or event organisers. Below is a typical response.

I have reviewed the Traffic Management Plan and can confirm that there will be a presence at the Belmont Avenue and Heddon Court Avenue (Cat Hill end)

In terms of access you should have received a letter from the event organisers with details of how to access these roads, please contact community@amaad.co.uk if you have not received your letter.

- 69 The risk associated with the closure of Cockfosters Road has been noted elsewhere.

SIGNAGE

- 70 Signage put up by Elrow outside Cockfosters shops suggests that the organiser anticipated anti-social behaviour.

- 71 On the day before the Elrow Town event, signs were attached to lampposts in Bevan Road and Mount Pleasant, among other roads, directing people to High Barnet station. We understand that the intention was to provide a route to an alternative station if Cockfosters Station were to be closed or otherwise unable to cope with those leaving the event.

- 72 We are not aware of any prior consultation with residents or Barnet Council about these signs nor of any marshalling or police provision if the route had had to be used.
- 73 The signs were, in any event, far from clear.



COST : BENEFIT

- 74 CLARA's contention is summed up in the following quote from a letter to Cllr. Nesil Caliskan, the Council Leader by the Chair of The Friends of Trent Park.

'No amount of rhetoric and repetition of the council's financial needs will offset the cost to this community and the many who value the park and the right to enjoy its amenities in peace with their families. It remains a fact that the net worth of these two events to LBE after all costs is disproportionately small.'

- 75 Enfield Council refuses to disclose the relevant accounts despite being pressed on the matter on numerous occasions by numerous people, including Enfield councillors. It is reasonable to conclude that the Council does not wish to disclose them because they support our contention.

- 76 **News Flash** – In February 2020, the Council went on record, stating:

In terms of income received for all events in Parks and Open Spaces for the period January to December 2019 [the figure] is circa £200k

Event Organisers have been recharged in the region of £55k for damage/litter on site as a result of events in parks, it is worth noting that a high proportion of this fee is as a result of one particular event.

- 77 Note that the figure of £200k is *before* the Council's internal costs have been deducted. It is probable, therefore, that the Council made a **net loss on its programme of commercial events**.

- 78 This statement is telling, particularly considering the research used by Enfield Council noted above under 'Lack of real consultation' arguing that the 'economic impact' would be £13,520,000. Accepting that 'economic impact' and 'income' (£200,000 less internal costs) are different things, the monetary difference is 'substantial'.

IMPACT ON LOCAL BUSINESSES

- 79 Local businesses are currently being surveyed to assess the economic impact of the events on them.

- 80 Contrary to Council assertions that the events will bring business to local shops, we know that several businesses chose to close early.

- 81 The Park's concessionary businesses have stated in stakeholder meetings that they have suffered substantial loss of business on the event days and that property and equipment has been vandalised.

- 82 A wider concern for regular Park Users and Residents is the impact on both the amenities within the Park but also on concessions within the Park and the environment of the Country Park.

ELROW TOWN 2020 AND 2021 AND THE PANDEMIC

83 From the Elrow Town website for 2020:

Having outgrown the Olympic Park our new home is Trent Park in North London. The geography of the hugely expanded new site means there's "so much room for activities!" And we do like an activity. Our new home also means we can ramp those volume levels higher than E-V-E-R! 'Cos louder is better, right?

No corner of the parkland or inch of grass will be spared as we fill Trent Park with our unique brand of off-beat shenanigans, high jinx games and peripheral entertainment. And inflatables. Oh yes, there will be inflatables.

84 Is this going to be allowed – seriously!

85 Elrow Town 2020 has been postponed because of the Pandemic and a new date confirmed: August 2021.

We know that all our elrow fans and family had been waiting for elrow Town London and the chance to dance amongst the craziness once again. The response we've received and the unconditional support has been immense.

86 What unconditional support? Elrow and Enfield Council have simply failed to acknowledge let alone address the massive opposition to the event from local residents.

87 Anyone who is a regular in Trent Park will know that 2020 has seen a massive increase in its use, particularly by families. It has been a lifeline for many and a safe place to come together. This has significant health and well-being as well as social benefits. It is truly concerning that access to the Park will be severely restricted in August 2021 in order to host an event opposed by the vast majority of local residents and bringing little if any financial benefit to Enfield Council.