

Events on Clapham Common in 2022

Letter to Clapham Society Members.

On Friday 18 February 2022 we took the highly unusual step of emailing you to alert you to Lambeth Council's plans for large scale events on Clapham Common again in 2022 and beyond.

We want to start by acknowledging that the society does not object to events of a charitable or small scale nature or indeed those held (within reason) on the hard standing 'circus' site. We also appreciate that some society members may welcome large scale events on the Common or recognise that their attendees do.

However, it was clear from the survey of our membership last year that the *vast majority* of our members considered recent events on Clapham Common to be too large, too long and of an insufficiently broad appeal to justify the disruption, anti-social behaviour, noise pollution, littering and strain on local services that such events create. Furthermore, whilst we also accept that Lambeth Council receives no doubt much welcome revenue from hosting such events, in the context of its c £330m annual budget this revenue is immaterial. Besides, the vast majority of money raised from the large scale events on Clapham Common will not be ring-fenced purely for reinvestment into Clapham Common. **We simply refuse to believe that a well-run council needs to rely on this sort of revenue to fund core services.**

The Clapham Society, working with our CCMAC partners, the Friends of Clapham Common and the Open Spaces Society, has been successful in reducing the impact of Lambeth Council's events in recent years. Winterville – whose presence during the winter months caused nine months of devastation on the Common a few years ago – has not returned to the grass site. We have also reduced the total number of days that a large part of Clapham Common will be fenced off for events to a maximum of 30 days. Most importantly, we forced Lambeth Council to accept that it will also seek Secretary of State approval for each large scale event on Clapham Common, in line with our interpretation of current planning law. Despite this undertaking, Lambeth Council went ahead with the Yam Festival last summer without obtaining the relevant consent. Consequently, and as a result of the sheer number of objections received for the 2021 event, HM Planning Inspectorate will be holding a public inquiry into 2022's planning application. **We urge all our members to provide their feedback to the Planning Inspectorate.**

This year Lambeth Council is again seeking approval for an area of Clapham Common grassland equivalent to c10% of the entire Common to be fenced off from 16th August to 3rd September in order to facilitate four events days from 26th to 29th August. **Thus over 1km of 3.4m high solid steelshield perimeter fencing will be erected around the event site, not only blocking off that area for local residents and visitors to Clapham to enjoy, but blighting the beautiful far vistas available from so many parts of Clapham Common.** In particular, as currently envisaged, the fenced off area will cover a vital diagonal public pathway from Clapham Common Northside (A3) to The Avenue, which cuts the Common from north to south. We question (to put it politely) Lambeth's claim of benefits to local businesses; in our experience local businesses have suffered a *loss* of revenue during event days as local residents stay away and the events attendees spent little if any money in any of the independent small businesses of the area.

The Clapham Society is extremely concerned that should Lambeth Council obtain approval for this event, it will follow through on its publicly stated aim of expanding the number of days that the area will be fenced off to 30, with an indeterminate number of events held during that period.

Should that happen, we see a very high probability of the grass area yet again suffering serious damage, requiring substantial restitution time, which is expensive and involves fencing off the area again. Lambeth Council appears in thrall of Live Nation, the event organiser, and we fear unless the local community can translate its widely known views into an actual planning rejection, Lambeth Council will impose ever more events on Clapham Common, to the detriment of the quality of life of our society's members. Lambeth Council has wisely held off signing its preferred five year contract with Live Nation pending the outcome of this inquiry. **This may be our only chance for many years.**

Please find further information at: www.eventlambeth.co.uk/news

and open this link: [2022 festival republic common land consent application](#) to read more about the Article 12 Application on the Event Lambeth website.

Please send your comments to the Common Land Casework team by Friday 4th March, ref 'Clapham Common'. Email: commonlandcasework@planninginspectorate.gov.uk.

Many thanks,

Andrew Summers

Committee member for Clapham Common and Open Spaces, on behalf of The Clapham Society

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Email letter sent to Clapham Society members, Friday 18 February 2022

Please see [Clapham Society News](#) for our latest updates and news.

Note: The Society hopes that some of you will also be prepared to come and express your views at the May/June Public Local Inquiry.