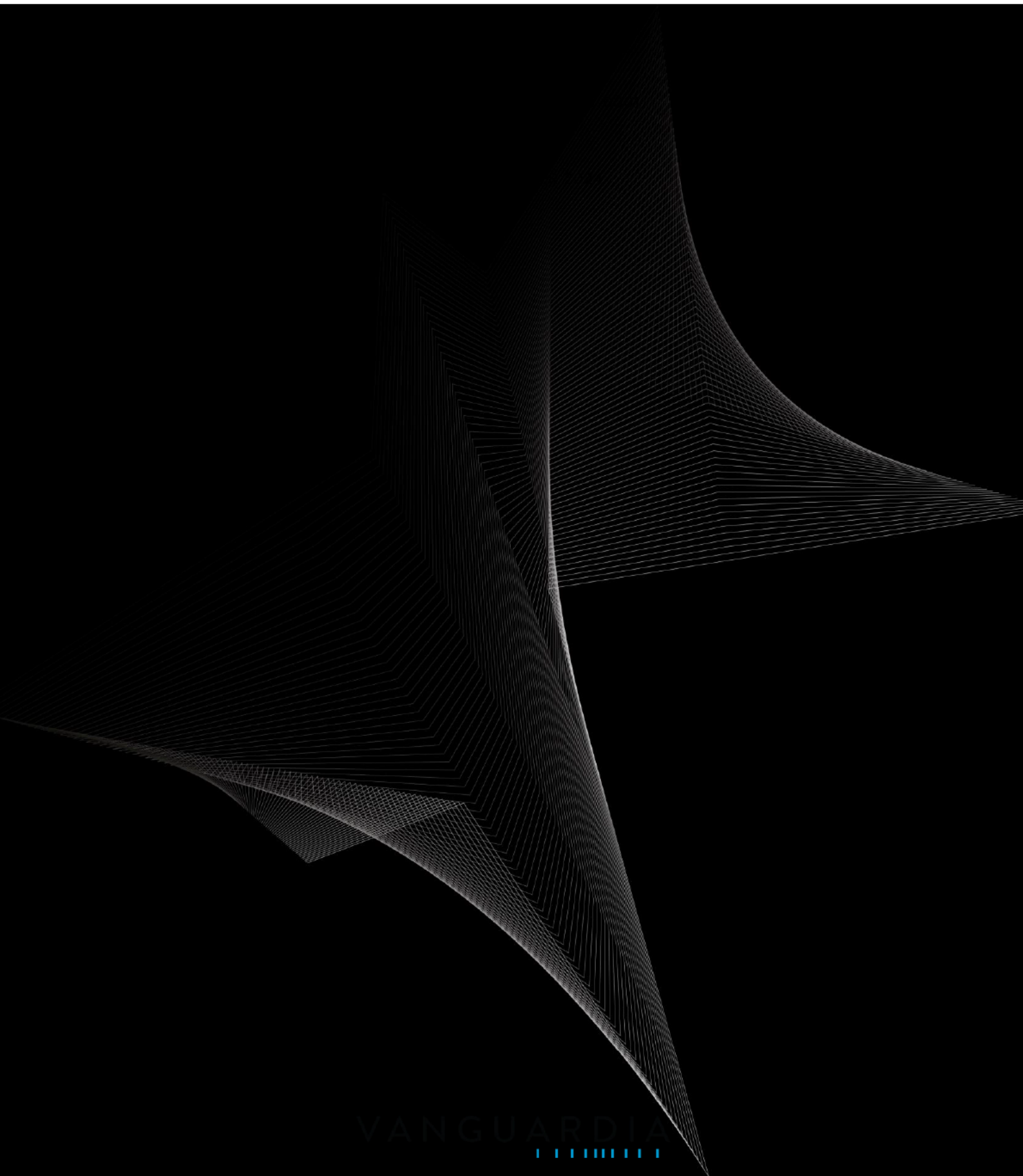


# POST EVENT NOISE REPORT

BROCKWELL LIVE & LAMBETH COUNTRY SHOW



VANGUARDIA



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Vanguardia Ltd was commissioned to support Event Lambeth by providing technical advice in relation to noise associated with the events in Brockwell Park, SW2 on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> May and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and the Lambeth Country Show on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
- 1.2. Vanguardia's main role was to audit and review the noise monitoring and management systems and processes to determine if they were suitable to ensure the LB Lambeth event noise policy and the premises licence requirements were not breached. Vanguardia also undertook sample noise monitoring independent of the organiser's consultants as a cross-check to ensure data being reported was reliable.
- 1.3. This report provides details of the actions taken in relation to noise management over the seven days of events.

2 . MUSIC NOISE LEVELS

- 2.1. The events in Brockwell Park are subject to noise music noise limits as prescribed in the LB Lambeth Event Policy, with the same levels adopted in the Noise Management Plan approved under the Premises Licence conditions<sup>1</sup>, of:
- 75 dBA Leq, 15 min - to control overall sound,
- And;
- 90 dBC Leq, 15 min - to provide a further cap on how loud low frequency “bass” noise could be.
- 2.2. The above MNLs apply outside any noise sensitive premises under “free-field”<sup>2</sup> conditions.
- 2.3. The NMP for the events approved under the premises licence included several fixed monitoring locations where noise levels would be monitored during each event by the acoustic consultants appointed by the event organisers (Electric Star). These locations are where noise levels were anticipated to be highest based on previous experience of events in the park and noise modelling of the specific events, and are considered representative of the worst impacts in the communities around the park. These locations are listed in the table below.

TABLE 1: NOISE SENSITIVE RECEPTORS IDENTIFIED IN THE NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Location	MNL limit LAeq, 15 min dB	MNL limit LCeq, 15 min dB
MP1 – Meath Estate	75	90
MP2 – Rosedale Rd/Norwood Rd	75	90
MP3 – Brockwell Park Gardens	75	90
MP4 – Lido/Dulwich Rd	75	90
MP5 – Brockwell Park Row	75	90
MP6 – Brailsford Road	75	90

Note: the above list has been amended year on year to best reflect stage locations etc.

<sup>1</sup> Similar limits apply at several other parks in London e.g. Victoria Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, Hyde Park and Beckenham Place Park.  
<sup>2</sup> “Free-field”, in acoustics, is a situation or space in which sound is assessed with no or only minimal sound reflections from the vertical plane e.g. building facades, boundary walls or fences.

- 2.4. The above MNLs apply at all sensitive locations e.g. residential properties, at any distance around the Park. Consequently, the nearest residential locations become the Critical Control Points (CCPs) because the levels at locations further from the event are normally lower than those at the CCPs nearest to the event.
- 2.5. Wind direction and speed can cause refraction of sound waves causing the pathway of the sound wave to bend upwards when upwind of the source or downwards when downwind. Refraction is caused by wind closer to the ground moving slower than wind at higher altitudes because of all the obstacles on the surface, such as buildings, trees and hills etc. The difference in velocity creates a wind gradient, causing a sound signal traveling downwind to bend downwards, while sound traveling upwind will bend upwards relative to the sound source. Therefore, a person standing downwind of a sound source hears more sound, while a person standing upwind will hear less sound. The effect is not symmetrical with the upwind suppression of noise propagation being greater than any downwind increase. The scale of this effect can increase over longer distances and higher wind velocities. But the sound still decays as normal over distance i.e. there is no “amplification effect”.
- 2.6. In addition, under a minority of weather and atmospheric conditions e.g. an “inversion”, parts of the sound waves emitted from an outdoor event that would normally not be heard at ground level can be refracted so that they are bent back down to the ground. This can mean people who hear nothing or very little from an event hear something or hear a little more.
- 2.7. Consequently, controlling levels at noise sensitive CCPs nearest to the event so they are below the licence requirements, also means the levels everywhere else comply with the licence requirements further from the event even if weather is having an effect, as the increased distance means the levels are lower than at the CCPs closer to the event.
- 2.8. In the period between the two weekends of large music festival type events a series of smaller community focussed events and activities took place. Vanguardia advised that the following noise limits should apply to these events:

“As the midweek events are smaller in scale and scope they can successfully operate at reduced levels off site as fewer arenas will be used, the nature of much of the entertainment/activities means a lower audience/participant MNL is adequate, and attendance will be significantly less than for the large events. Consequently, we advise that the maximum Music Noise Level s(MNL) shall be no more than:

- 65 dB L(A)eq 15 minutes (free field) outside any noise sensitive premises.

And,

- 75 dB L(C)eq 15 minutes (free field) outside any noise sensitive premises.

In locations where the above levels are already exceeded e.g. by traffic noise, the noise from the event shall cause no more than a 3 decibel increase in the typical LAeq,15 min or L(C)eq,15 min (free field) outside any noise sensitive premises.

The above levels are equivalent to a halving of loudness overall and a more than three times reduction in the loudness of low frequency “bass” sound compared to the large events.



### 3. MNL MANAGEMENT DURING THE EVENTS

- 3.1. Vanguardia staff liaised with the officers scrutinising the event on behalf of LB Lambeth and with the personnel from Electric Star who were monitoring and managing the MNLs on behalf of the event promoter as required by the premises licence and park leasing agreement. All three parties shared data and information to facilitate continual and comprehensive assessment of noise levels and rapid adjustment if necessary to avoid breach of the licence requirements.
- 3.2. Consequently, no breach of the licence requirements occurred.
- 3.3. Vanguardia cross-checked the noise monitoring and our measurements agreed with those carried out by the event organiser's consultant's.
- 3.4. Vanguardia also visited a number of complainant's or the vicinity from where complaints were made. Measurements made during these visits confirmed that noise levels were below the permitted levels.

#### **Effect of wind direction on the spread on noise**

- 3.5. The receptors in table 1 above are closest to the park at distances between around 125 metres to 700 metres from the main stage and at approximately 0 to 270 degrees axis i.e. directly in line with the main PA<sup>3</sup>, behind the main PA to perpendicular the main PA. At such distances wind direction and strength has little impact on the noise levels at these receptors. These locations are therefore Critical Control points (CCPs) that received the highest noise levels for these events, with locations further away receiving lower music noise levels, albeit influenced by wind strength and direction.
- 3.6. During the Brockwell Live events the wind direction and speed varied from day to day and weekend to weekend. Consequently, on some event days the wind was a significant factor influencing the general location of noise complaints with the majority coming from areas that were downwind of the event. As these locations heard low levels of music noise or slightly more music noise compared to similar events in previous years or even different days of this series of events when the wind was from a different direction.
- 3.7. For the first weekend the wind direction was from the north-east and noise impacts beyond the park perimeter were greatest towards the south west of the park. For the second weekend

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<sup>3</sup> PA = public address system. A sound amplification system comprising in its simplest form a microphone, amplifier and speakers.



the wind was from the south and noise impacts beyond the park perimeter were greatest towards the north of the park

- 3.8. As described previously wind direction and strength can affect the distribution of sound from events, particular at the more distant locations. In these circumstances, the general perception can be that the event must be louder than 'normal' and people are therefore more likely to complain. The complaint in such a case is usually based on the audibility of the source i.e. that it can be heard at all, rather than on its apparent loudness, and it must also be borne in mind that, at these distances, the laws of physics dictate that the sound level must be significantly below the permitted limits which apply in the immediate vicinity of the park, so the complaint is typically driven by perception rather than any form of legal nuisance.
- 3.9. The noise management team for the event of Electric Star consisted of at least four and often five staff, based on site and off site. Permanent continual noise monitoring was provided that was wirelessly linked back to a dedicated control point on site. These continual monitoring locations were positioned adjacent to the site steel fence, immediately inside the fence, and were located approximately to the north, south, east and west. These provided reference points against which levels on site at each stage and at the offsite monitoring points could be correlated so that effective control of noise levels could be maintained throughout each event.
- 3.10. Most front of house event sound engineers were compliant with noise management requests and effectively self-regulated the levels, consequently the noise management team had to intervene only a few times to ensure the off-site noise limits were not exceeded.
- 3.11. The method of noise monitoring and number of management staff reflect good practice as seen at many other events across the UK and were sufficient to manage the noise appropriately and should be repeated as a minimum for future events of a similar nature.

## 4. ACTIONS

- 4.1. Vanguardia led on the process of responding to complaints fed through from the Lambeth/Brockwell Live community hotlines. Most received a visit within an hour, often less, with data collected outside but near to their property.
- 4.2. Face to face conversations took place where callers wanted this to happen. In other cases, these conversations took place on the phone. The following information was provided to residents:
  - The fact that events were licensed and a brief summary of noise limits in the licence;
  - The results of the monitoring and the fact that the event was complying with licence conditions (which in all cases it was)
  - A reminder of the number of events and the licence times and also the voluntary (earlier) curfew times
- 4.3. In all cases these were calmly and professionally delivered conversations, and residents were generally appreciative of the response.
- 4.4. As additional commentary, from these conversations it was evident that the majority of complaints were not solely or specifically about noise, but about general disturbance, often traffic and parking, and perceptions about damage to the park.
- 4.5. It is also worth recording formally that, whilst Vanguardia staff were offsite monitoring noise, there were far more unsolicited positive conversations with passing interested residents than complaints. Vanguardia staff were not approached to say how bad the noise was, but how good the events were, and how supporting as individuals they were about the use of Brockwell Park in this way, especially for the Lambeth Country Show which was near universally commented upon positively.
- 4.6. As was evident during the events, the location of complaints was largely driven by wind direction, with locations downwind of the park on any particular day generating the most complaints. This reflects the broad trend for the spread of noise from these types of events to be suppressed upwind of the site and moderately increased down wind. Complaints are discussed in more detail in the next section of this report.

## 5. NOISE COMPLAINTS

- 5.1. There were 91 noise complaints over the 7 days of events.
- 5.2. In Vanguardia's experience such a number of complaints is towards the bottom of the range typical for these types of events.
- 5.3. Complaint numbers were modest and similar to previous years, and were a very small proportion of the 10,000s of people who will have heard the music.
- 5.4. The majority of complaints were not from areas that were most affected by noise and several were from considerable distances from the park where impacts were self-evidently minimal. This is common and reflects the varying noise sensitivity of individuals and the willingness to tolerate this type of use of public open spaces in the population at large.
- 5.5. From interaction with complainants, it was clear that misconceptions around the events and the audiences, the overall benefit to the park, damage to the park and the cultural and social value of the events to the individual complainant significantly influenced attitudes to the events and the propensity to complain about noise.
- 5.6. As is common for events that occur from year to year there were allegations that the event was louder than last year or that stages A had been re-orientated to cause more noise off site. These allegations are not borne out by the objectively measured noise data. These types of claims tend to reflect the volatility of subjective response to noise over time rather than any actual quantifiable change from previous years.
- 5.7. Several complainants were persistent in repeatedly calling the hot line. The noise levels at their homes were modest, often masked by local noise events, and were more a reflection of the caller's greater than average sensitivity rather than any meaningful impact.
- 5.8. The table below provides a breakdown of the number of noise complaints for each event day.

Event Name	Number of noise complaints
Project 6	2
Wide Awake	12
Cross the Tracks	22

City Splash	12
Mighty Hoopla 1	16
Mighty Hoopla 2	19
Lambeth Country Show 1	4
Lambeth Country Show 2	3
Unspecified	1

### Complaints as indicators of impact

5.9. Simply weighing the numbers of complaints as an indicator of impact can be mis-leading.

5.10. Local Authority complaint statistics gathered across England invariably show that a substantial majority of the noise complaints they receive are not evaluated as public or statutory nuisances.

5.11. Regarding complaints, it should be noted that Defra sponsored research into attitudes to environmental noise from concerts<sup>4</sup> reports that:

- *"Whilst 9% of all respondents were fairly or very annoyed by the music noise, it should be noted that only 1% of residents actually complained about the noise disturbance."*
- *"The most common reasons for not making a complaint were that they "had nothing to complain about" (53%) or "event did not have sufficient impact to complain" (33%). This finding is similar to many other areas of impact where simply being annoyed does not necessarily trigger a complaint."*
- *"It also appears that a significant percentage of the population will form an opinion on the music's subjective annoyance irrespective of the actual level of music."*

5.12. Furthermore, Vanguardia's experience of 1000s of outdoor concerts shows:

- There is a weak correlation between physical acoustic measures and the propensity to complain e.g. similar levels of the same music noise provoke wide variation in the numbers of complaints from equally affected but different areas; and complaints are often made at different locations with widely varying music noise levels.
- It is not unusual for more complaints to be made at the lower levels further from the festival than at the higher values closer to the event.

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<sup>4</sup> Research into attitudes to environmental noise from concerts, DEFRA report NANR 292 Final 2011

- Perception of sound and attitude to an event/artistes/audience appear to be strong triggers for complaint rather than any form of public or statutory nuisance.
- Complaints regarding noise are often linked to other elements e.g.
  - Access to free/discounted tickets.
  - Traffic management, parking and litter.
  - Perceptions of festival goer behaviour.
  - Opinions on festival organisers motivations.
  - Opinions on use of public space for events.
  - Perceptions on damage to park space and facilities.
  - A dislike of the music played.
  - No or low cultural and social value of the event to the complainant.
  - A preference for other types of music.
  - Antipathy towards regulatory authorities' and their decision making.
  - Expectation of control over the conditions in a locality.

5.13. The use of the park for concerts was featured in a news item by the BBC which included interviews with persons critical of such usage who made various unsubstantiated claims of a range of adverse impacts. It is common that complaint numbers increase if communities are influenced to take interest in the noise by suggestion from third parties e.g., by way of publicity and social media. An influence of this type will be difficult or impossible to quantify, but the effect on perceptions and subjective response can be strong and lead to increased numbers of complaints compared to the absence of such influences.

5.14. The above indicates that although complaints may reflect the response of suitably motivated individuals, they are a poor indicator of wider community noise impact, as they can be significantly biased by highly variable personal subjective and non-acoustic factors, and therefore over-estimate the magnitude of impact.

5.15. A conclusion that the number and distribution of complaints is not a reliable indicator of community impacts is reasonable based on the above and considering that 17,000 mailshots were sent out before the events to residents around the park and there was a community information website set up for the events. Both communications measures invite residents to contact a complaints telephone or email hot line (residents can also contact the Council if they prefer). Even so, the total number of complaints is a tiny fraction of those persons actively canvassed by the event organisers to complain. Which further indicates that overall, the noise impacts on the public were not unacceptable.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. Music noise levels were controlled in relation to the requirements of the Noise Management Plan approved under the premises licence, which in turn reflects LB Lambeth's adopted event noise policy.
- 6.2. Continual measurements were made at reference locations during each event at five critical control point locations representative of noise sensitive receptors around the park as highlighted in the noise management plan for the events.
- 6.3. Supplementary measurements were made at or in the vicinity of complainant's properties.
- 6.4. No breaches of the licence requirements were established.
- 6.5. The distribution and distance of complaints from the event was different on each day. This was primarily due to wind conditions leading to changes in distribution and intensity of music noise levels beyond the park perimeter from day to day.
- 6.6. Notwithstanding the effect of wind direction and speed, the music noise was consistently below the limits specified on the premises licence and in the Lambeth Event policy.

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