

Preston Park Community Engagement Meetings For Events 18th July 2025
Chaired by Cllr Birgit Miller(Cabinet member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism)
Notes by Lizzie Esson (Outdoor Events Assistant BHCC)
BHCC Attendees; Ian Baird (Outdoor Events Development Manager)
Cllr Liz Loughran, Cllr Kerry Pickett
Approx. 35 attendees

Agenda:

- Item 1:** Upcoming Events Overview
- Item 2:** Review & Feedback from Past Events
- Item 3:** New Outdoor Events Strategy
- Item 4:** Q&As
- Item 5:** Suggestions

Item 1: Upcoming Events Overview

You can view the full event programme online here [Outdoor events on council-owned land](#)

Pride on the Park

Ian Baird reported no major changes to the event layout from previous years, though one key change this year is a redesign of the entrances which are now located within the park rather than on Preston Road. This aims to encourage footfall through the park itself and, over time, reduce the need for road closures in the area. A pedestrian access route has been agreed to be maintained alongside the velodrome for an improvement to public access. This year, this access will extend halfway down. The children's play area will remain open as usual throughout

Barriers at Preston Road will be down on live event days, but the plan is to avoid a hard road closure. The planned closure window is currently 11am–1pm, but this is not fixed and will depend on the movement of the parade.

When it is safe to do so, access will be granted to pre-registered vehicles including carers and Blue Badge holders. A multi-agency communications group is working to share this information as widely as possible with local residents and those affected by closures.

ACTION: Ensure this information is included on the Preston Park notice board.

The NHS is contacting all local carer networks to ensure they are aware of access arrangements. There should be a vetting process for pre-booked vehicles requiring access during road closures, however, there will be flexibility within plans to allow emergency access where necessary.

Noise monitoring is always in place, though not directly by BHCC staff. An independent third-party monitors sound levels and reports back to Environmental Control (EC). Sound propagation monitoring involves fixed monitors that continuously track noise levels and identify the most sensitive receptor points as key measurement spots. The volume isn't

adjusted frequently during the event; any perceived changes are typically due to environmental factors such as wind. Mobile monitoring units can be deployed to specific locations where issues have been reported, allowing targeted noise assessment and management.

This year, some Environmental Health Officers (EHL) will be present in Kemptown and may conduct spot checks depending on circumstances.

Magic of Thailand

Feedback from previous meetings highlighted that noise levels were disproportionate for the event. In response, we've issued stricter noise limits for this year.

We've also addressed the quality of sound equipment used as lower quality systems often require higher volume to project effectively. The organiser has been directed to improve equipment standards to help manage sound more effectively and stay within set limits.

Coles Fireworks

Coles Funfair provides this event to Brighton & Hove for free. There will be two firework displays: a lower-volume display earlier in the day, designed with young children and those sensitive to noise in mind, followed by a larger display later in the evening.

While the funfair and bar on site are paid attractions, the event itself is open to all at no cost.

Item 2: Review of Previous Events

Comedy Garden

BHCC had previously shared resident feedback on noise sensitivity with event organisers. Meeting attendees reported no noise nuisance from this year's event, and BHCC Events received no complaints- which is positive and indicated that the feedback has been taken on board.

Cllr Liz Loughran reported the event as very well organised this year; noting that it started earlier, taking place inside the marquee, which significantly improved noise management. Noise transmission outside the marquee was much less noticeable compared to previous years.

A resident raised concerns about safety around 4pm on Saturday, when the crossover between evening attendees arriving and day attendees leaving wasn't well managed. They noted this may have been impacted by filming activity, which delayed the earlier event's egress.

ACTION: This feedback will be passed on to the event organisers

Foodies

Parking issues around Foodies-and other events-remain a concern.

We've shared the full event schedule with Parking Enforcement so they can plan for increased presence during event days.

We do request that event organisers arrange for their own on-site security, although this isn't always done-notably with Foodies. Where needed, the council can provide security support and recharge the cost back to the organiser, but a clearer system needs to be put in place to manage this consistently.

Item 4: Q&As

Q Why did police want no vehicle access at all?

A Although the national threat level remains 'substantial', the specific threat assessment for this event was rated as 'moderate'. Despite this, Sussex Police strongly recommended no vehicle access during key event hours. This position is based on the ongoing national concern around Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM), following incidents in other UK cities- including one in Liverpool- while this was not classed as a terrorist attack, highlighted the serious risk posed by vehicles in crowded areas.

Q On Preston Park Avenue Avenue road closures are shown on signage to be in place from 9:30am Saturday 2nd August to 1am Sunday, and again from 11am 1am on Monday 4th - why are they so lengthy?

A These may reflect a worst-case scenario to allow for flexibility.
ACTION: We will seek clarification on the timings

Q What is the Pride phone hotline number?

A POTP has a dedicated phonenumber to address questions from local residents. Contact: 07539 179481 During these hours: Thurs 31 July & Fri 01 August- 9am to 5pm Sat 02 & Sun 03 August- 10am to 11pm
BHCC's feedback forum will go live next week, which will be actively monitored and used to respond to any issues in real time. This can be accessed by searching "Your Voice" on the Brighton & Hove City Council website, or via this link [Outdoor events forum | Brighton & Hove City Council](#)

Q When will the GreenShield barrier fencing go up this year?

A The GreenShield fencing will go up around the same time as in previous years.

Q Was a reduction in Greenshield barrier fencing considered?

A Although a reduction was previously discussed, the decision was made to maintain the current level based on safety requirements.

Cllr Birgit Miller noted that it is a legal requirement to maintain a sterile site under construction industry regulations. There is an obligation to secure the perimeter, and due to the scale of the event, nature of the threat, and level of risk, a different grade of product is required for effective safety management.

Q Could the build and break for Pride be done faster to reduce park downtime?

A The amount of infrastructure involved means it takes time to set up and dismantle safely. This year, a new production team is delivering Pride- we can discuss whether the southern part of the park can be built first to keep half the park open for longer in future years.

Q **Pride has scaled up over the years- originally the Sunday event was intended for locals, and residents were offered discounted tickets for Pride's events- why is that not the case now?**

A Pride on the Park is primarily a fundraising event for community organisations across the city- its main function is to support these groups. Previously, some community funds were supported by Central Government funding, but this is no longer the case.

There is a long-term hope to return St James Street to the community and develop a more community-led event there.

Pride CIC has faced significant financial losses-around £2 million over the past few years due to factors such the pandemic, rail strikes, and poor weather. This year, the focus is on rebuilding.

ACTION: We will check if any discount schemes or similar support are available for residents this year.

Q **After Pride, the area in front of the Main Stage was left covered in cigarette ends- why is this not thoroughly cleared?**

A A fine pick will continue for six days following the event, so litter sighted immediately after the event should be dealt with soon after.

Q **If volume from 3rd party noise monitoring team is determined to be too loud, what happens?**

A If the independent monitor reports that the volume is too loud, they inform Event Control (EC). Should the event organisers fail to respond or reduce the noise, the noise monitoring team will contact us directly as the license holder. We have the authority to cut the power to the event if necessary- this action has been taken on previous occasions.

Q **Residents raised questions around the commercial viability of the event, as many tickets are given away freely- will Foodies Return next year?**

A Foodies have submitted an application for next year, though we haven't finalised the events programme yet. Their model appears to work- described as a "papering the house" approach. They have no issues with paying our fees.

Q **What is the set daily fee?**

BHCC have published fees for small to medium events. For larger events, typically those with capacity above 5,000, pricing is negotiated individually. This approach is

commercially sensitive and allows us to secure the best possible deal based on the specifics of each event.

Q Where does the money go?

All income from events currently goes into the council's general fund. This helps pay for essential services such as adult social care, temporary accommodation, and keeping public toilets open.

Q How can communication around road closures and access during events be improved? During last year's Brighton Marathon, some road closures were missing from the published map. For example, Marina Road had conflicting closure times—letters stated 12:00, online information said 12:15, but the road remained closed until 12:30. Stewards also appeared unclear on timings, and marshals were not fully informed about access and egress routes.

A All events should provide accurate and timely road closure information in advance, with clear communication to the public and well-briefed staff on the day.

ACTION: This feedback will be shared with organisers and addressed during the marathon debrief.

Q Why doesn't Amex host more events?

The Amex stadium is privately owned. Their available windows for events are quite limited, and currently, they're not interested in expanding their event hosting.

Q Why isn't Pride's park event held in Stanmer Park?

Stanmer Park is the second largest green space in the city, and Boundary Festival already uses it. Large areas of the park have been rewilded and form part of the South Downs National Park. Pride's origins and purpose are about visibility and being at the heart of the city- which is why the event remains centrally located.

Q Is the Food Market at Preston Park a homegrown event, with plans to grow?

This is currently a test case as we explore market-style events to see where they best fit within the city. The company running the market isn't locally owned or managed, although some of the food providers are local.

Q Will we add more events?

There's no intention to increase the number of events.

Q Do events such as the market at Preston Park the market count as an event, and therefore be included within the 28 day change of use?

BHCC Events are working closely with the planning team to define what constitutes a change of planning use. The current view is that the market remains accessible and doesn't constitute a change of use.

The 28-day change of use allowance will now include both the build and break periods for events. This effectively brings the commercial use of Preston Park to around 56

days. As a result, planning permission will be required in future to maintain the current event schedule- giving residents the opportunity to oppose. This will apply to next year's programme, with planning applications expected to be submitted in the autumn/winter.

Q Were the owners of the café consulted about the Preston Park market

ACTION: we will ask if they have been affected

Item 5: New Outdoor Events Strategy

Strong engagement from other internal departments has led to pushing the timeline back to allow for more thorough development. The new strategy focuses on 8 to 9 priority areas, all of which will be made available online to encourage ongoing engagement and feedback. Each priority will have measurable actions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for effective tracking.

For the new strategy, we plan to engage with a variety of groups- schools, working-age residents, event attendees- to get a broad range of views.

The new strategy will be drafted and made available to view on Your Voice before it goes to Cabinet for final approval.

Key priorities include:

- **Homegrown events:** Supporting and nurturing local events to grow organically. BHCC are focused on improving community ownership of events. Ideally, events would reflect what communities want in their area, rather than simply mitigating the impact of events imposed on them.
- **Fair and inclusive events:** Ensuring accessibility standards are met and working closely with accessibility groups to maintain minimum standards.
- **Increasing yield and revenue:** While the events industry is under pressure, Brighton is bucking the trend with a strong market position, allowing us to insist on higher standards and pricing. Our goal is to maintain larger-scale events because their income helps support smaller community events. This doesn't mean excluding smaller events; rather, we want to help them develop and grow. Striking the right balance is key.
- **Environmental protection policy:** Testing different sustainability approaches across events to identify best practices. We have been accepted into the second phase of the National Green Event Code of Practice (NGECP) pilot, Vision 2030, which includes full sustainability tracking for events.

This year, we have a new contract with New Timber. Reinstatement funds are held until the ground is ready to accept repairs, with costs agreed in advance. These funds are separate from the land hire income. This year we experienced the driest, hottest spring, which has affected reinstatement work. During recent gas pipe repairs, digging

was necessary, but seeding cannot take place in June. Ideally, areas should be reseeded, but with the current drought conditions reseeded isn't effective, so some areas will remain awaiting recovery for several months.

- **Healthy lifestyles & active travel**

We're aiming to improve healthy food options at events and provide secure bike racks and helmet storage to encourage active travel.

- There's a proposal to retain a fixed percentage of event income within the local area to fund local projects. The challenge lies in identifying the rightful beneficiaries, and this is something currently being worked through.
- We will review policies in key areas including noise, waste management, and unsanctioned events- this priority was added due to strong community feedback at meetings

Concerns have been raised about the wear and tear to road surfaces caused by event traffic. We've spoken with the Active Travel Team, and there are discussions underway regarding potential reinstatement works, including the option to deliver this through social value commitments within event contracts. Additional repair work has also recently been carried out at Monument Gate.

Item 5: Suggestions

- To recruit volunteers who want to get involved with events and build skills-helping with tasks like letter drops, engaging with local businesses, and more. Consider appointing an ambassador for each area to support events by sharing local knowledge and facilitating community connections.

Suggested Events for Preston Park

- Classical music performances
- Shakespeare in the Park-style theatre
- Acoustic acts from local venues (e.g. Camelford Arms) – minimal set-up, low impact
- Jazz & blues sessions, ideally daytime or early evening
- More events designed for children and families
- Budget-friendly options with low or no ticket cost
- Sport and exercise-based events

ACTIONS

ACTION: Ensure information about pre-registering carer/ blue badge vehicles for access to Preston Road is included on the Preston Park notice board.

ACTION: Feedback on 4pm egress/ingress from Comedy Garden will be passed on to the event organisers

ACTION: Flag with Trevor Mutton that better traffic calming is needed at Preston Park Avenue

ACTION: We will seek clarification on the timings of Preston Avenue Road Closures

ACTION: We will check if any discount schemes or similar support are available for residents this year.

ACTION: Poor marshalling re access/ egress routes to be addressed with the Brighton Marathon organisers during the debrief

ACTION: we will ask if café owners have been affected by the Food Market at Preston Park

ACTION: Feedback on lacking road-closures information and marshalling to be passed on to Brighton Marathon organisers during debrief