

Dear licensing committee,

London Oktoberfest has been a well-established event in Millwall Park since 2012. This means for more than 8 years we have welcomed more than 15,000 people each year over two weekends uniting the entire community to one of the most appreciated events of the year. From 2012-2016 we worked with a time limited premises license. Meaning each year we had to apply for a new license but there was never a need for any hearings and nearly no objections occurred in this time period. After multiple years of running the event without any accident we applied for an (time unlimited) license in 2017. This license has been granted without objections from either the police, local residence or any councilors.

The event has from the start on experience high appreciation from the local community. As we welcomed a large number of visitors this also boosted business for many surrounding local business profiting from the attraction in Millwall Park. Moreover, we helped to establish a great reputation for the area around Millwall Park helping to shift the area away from a bad reputation with gangs. After careful evaluation of ticket sales we can clearly see that most of our visitors are from surrounding zip codes meaning we are not only a London wide event but also welcome a lot of members from the community. Over the years we contributed to Tower Hamlets budget with more than 350,000 pounds in hire fee and charges.

In 2017, on an early Saturday evening we had an issue with one of our beer pipes which led to the fact that we could not keep up with the demand. We had no choice but to close doors early and offer ticket holders a refund. As we had to turn ticket holders down with a complete refund this lead to some complaints about the event and the police started to evaluate the event differently. (Please not this beer problem was fixed after a few hours and we had no similar issue before or after that date).

Despite not having any major accidents despite this one evening requirements set by the police increased significantly. This can for example be seen by the number of security officers demanded. And as outlined below we see these requirements and interferences as one of the main issues that now led to the objection.

Year	Capacity	Number of security officers
2012	2500	30
2013	2500	30
2014	2500	30
2015	3300	35
2016	3300	35
2017	4000	52
2018	2200	57
2019	2500	62

What happened?

As one can see despite reducing the capacity of the event significantly the number of security required nearly double. We believe that with too much security at the event minor accidents maybe got evaluated more carefully and in conclusion maybe lead to bigger problems. Moreover, the police required that me the event manager Carsten Raun that lead the event successfully for many years should give the control to an external event manager. Despite having picked experienced event mangers together with the council the lack of experience with such an unusual large scale event lead to more problems than it helped resolve.

In the SAG meeting for Oktoberfest 2020 Kathy Driver from the Licensing department said that she thinks that revoking the license is not needed but additional requirements should be put on this license. We are happy with adding these extra requirements to our license. Some of these could be

1. No standing on tables and benches
2. cctv in operation all event opening times
3. No sale of steins after 22:00 from 22-22:30 (bar close) only 1 pint or 1/2 pint
4. Refusal logs controlled by a refusal manager at each bar
5. Saturday evening only pre booked tickets with food included (to make sure no gang just turn up and buy entrance tickets only)

Moreover, for 2020 we suggested a complete makeover of the current event concept leading in our opinion too less incidents and bring the event back to the positive developments experienced during 2012-2017. The concept can be found as an attachment. Since 2018 Carsten Raun was not allowed to be the event manager for the Oktoberfest but with 11 years of experience in organizing Oktoberfests and more than 300 Oktoberfests organized and managed by him we suggest in lifting the requirement of an external event manger.

Comments to the police arguments:

The constant demand for alteration and increase in security numbers and welfare officers from the police is the reason why there have been changes to the event management plan all the way till September. The original well drafted EMP has been ready since April 2019. **The first planning meeting was in February** and the last on the 2nd August.

The Oktoberfest has unfortunately been terrorized by gangs twice:

Ones in Finsbury Park as a fight was provoked by 5 people filmed and send to the Sun newspape. The participants of this fight left the event directly afterwards and did not wish to get the police involved.

2019 a Millwall gang (known by the police) of about 30 people visited the event with the main purpose just to start a fight and make trouble. Our security got the gang out of the tent but outside the gang wanted to fight the security. The happening around that gang accident are the main arguments by the police.

More than 15,000 people did visit the event 2019 and seen from this number of guests the numbers of incidents are lower than for any normal club in London.

The lady seen in lederhosen in a very bad condition is due to fact she brought herself a bottle of vodka and did drink this (**we don't sell vodka and people are not allowed to bring and drink external drinks to/at the event**). We found the empty bottle close to her. These situations that people preload before the event and then get denied entry are very unfortunate but out of our responsibility.

In 2018 and 2019 we implemented all requirements from the authorities even though we knew some of the demands were out of common sense. As mentioned some implementations lead to more trouble. Too much security lead to more trouble as people tent to feel provoked by too much security around.

In the debrief meeting where the police brought up their concerns other authorities were rather chocked. The health and safety officer even commented “did you go to another event than us?”. Most other authorities were happy and ok with the Oktoberfest event 2019.

Kathy Driver from licensing also partially agreed with some observation mentioned by the police but instead of being radical and revoking the license she commented: “there are no conditions on the license what so ever at the moment” we can look at this. This has unfortunately not been mentioned in the report by the police.

We are happy to implement conditions to our license to make sure the event will work better for the community with less incidents in the future.

Kind Regards,

Carsten Raun