

NOGOE

No to Greenwich Olympic Equestrian Events
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HOODWINKED.
HOW LOCOG MISLED THE ESTABLISHMENT OVER GREENWICH PARK
OLYMPICS

“We will not damage the Park”. “We will return the Park to its pre Games condition”.

This is what LOCOG has been saying all along. And everyone, except NOGOE, believed them. Local MP, Nick Raynsford stated publicly that he would not have supported this choice of venue if he felt that there would be any long term damage. How did he know before any Environmental Assessments were conducted? Greenwich Council Leader, Chris Roberts, added his conviction that no damage would be done and so did Royal Parks. They all trusted LOCOG to deliver on its promises. NOGOE’s protests were denounced as spreading misinformation or scaremongering. However it would appear now that NOGOE has **underestimated the impact**.

With the submission of the Planning Application, the truth is out. LOCOG admit: there **will** be damage. Moreover what’s remarkable is the degree of risk that would be taken with heritage features to the extent that they would be unlikely to deliver on the second promise as well. It says in the Environment Statement: **Some heritage features could suffer permanent loss or partial loss. As a last resort some heritage features will be “preserv[ed] by record”.**

Risk of accidents from construction work would also be likely from 42,000 vehicle movements, including 6,400 lorry movements, cranes, bulldozers, JCBs - all this in a fragile World Heritage Site rich in archaeology that is only inches below the ground, waiting to be discovered: **like, for example, the new find of what might be the remains of a Tudor building**. There is also a public safety issue concerning the underground conduits, which could collapse if provoked by the construction work, spectator movements and the race itself.

Even Park closures would be worse than expected: the focal point of the Park, the area where the plan is to build a 23,000 seat stadium after ground levelling, would be out of bounds for **2 years**. The 6 km cross country track, winding its way round the Park, would be fenced off for **2.5 years**, and some parts, for reinstatement of acid grassland, closed for **5 years**.

Based on soundings from our supporter base, NOGOE is expecting the objection count to be around **2000**, probably a record for Greenwich Council planning applications. Moreover many independent experts in various fields have made their concerns known to the Planning Board. Some have objected; some have advised that permission should not be given; some have suggested placing binding conditions on permission being granted; **all** have remarked on the lack of crucial information regarding the trees, the archaeology, the wildlife, spectator movements,

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transport assessments and the construction of a temporary stadium. **One of the statutory consultees, a government body, would place such strict conditions on permission being granted that LOCOG would find it difficult to comply with them.**

NOGOE has carried out considerable research to produce a robust objection to the planning application. Our comprehensive case appears in documents which can be read on our website: <http://www.nogoe2012.com/planning-app.html>

John Hine, NOGOE Coordinator says, "The risks to a leading World Heritage site are disproportionate. The disruption to the lives of local residents and the inconvenience to the millions who visit the Park every year is unreasonable. There are perfectly satisfactory alternative venues where the Games could be hosted without the massive damage and inconvenience that the Olympic authorities would inflict on Greenwich".

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. NOGOE is a community-based organisation who oppose the use of Greenwich Park for the equestrian Olympics because of the risk of damage to a World Heritage Site, the extensive closures of a public and vital green space, and the disruption imposed on residents in a densely populated location.

2. Assurances by LOCOG have proved to be worthless. NOGOE has always maintained that the Park is too small but LOCOG disagreed, and maintained that there would be no necessity to use Blackheath. First, compromises have been made to the cross country course (shorter and twistier) and to the number of spectators (75,000). Now they plan to use 24 acres of Blackheath Circus Field for stabling, training, parking and depots. **NOGOE maintains that it is illegal to erect an enclosure on Blackheath, and that the Secretary of State does not have power to close Greenwich Park.**

3. LOCOG maintain they did a proper evaluation of alternative venues but the "evaluation by equestrian experts" involved a mere one-hour each visit to established equestrian sites. Windsor was considered but not actually visited, according to original BEF evaluation **so it is misleading to say evaluations were made at the time.**

4. The local authority (the London Borough of Greenwich) has a target for a decision to be made by Council members within 16 weeks of the application being received. The application was received in early December 2009.

5. Please visit our website to read planning responses made by expert and independent organisations.

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