

14 March 2010

NOGOE PRESS RELEASE

# NOGOE

**No to Greenwich Olympic Equestrian Events**  
17 City Business Centre, Lower Road, London SE16 2XB  
[www.nogoe2012.com](http://www.nogoe2012.com)

## **HISTORY REWRITTEN, RULES BENT, AND SAFETY COMPROMISED**

Greenwich Park is not suitable for holding an Olympics equestrian event. LOCOG doesn't agree, and their determination to fit 'a quart into a pint mug' would have **serious implications for the technical aspect of the sport**. Moreover, to justify their case, LOCOG has omitted crucial information from, and made a misleading statement in, their submission to Greenwich Council for planning permission to use the Park for the Olympics equestrian, Paralympic and modern pentathlon. The Application is to be considered on 23 March 2010.

**1. Misleading Justification:** In order to give the impression that there are no other suitable venues in London, LOCOG stated in the Application that, at bid stage, the 8 venues considered included Windsor and 4 other well known venues - Badminton, Burghley, Blenheim, and Stoneleigh - up to 100 miles away from London. These 4 venues would have contradicted their 'compact' Games policy, if it were true. **But it is not**, because, according to the British Equestrian Federation Feasibility Study 2003, the 4 venues were **not** considered and Windsor, while considered, **was not visited**. In truth the 8 venues that were considered **included 5 other options in London**. It was also discovered, under FOI, that no cost-benefit analysis was carried out on comparative sites, and NOGOE has calculated that **Greenwich Park would not be the cheapest option**.

**2. Non-compliance with FEI Regulations:** LOCOG is failing to comply with the Federation Equestre International's technical specs for Olympic Parks.

Facilities for stabling and training are fewer than that set out in the specification. It was initially stated that only one discipline (eventing/, showjumping or dressage) would be staged at a time, involving 50-80 horses. **Scheduling now shows that dressage and showjumping will run concurrently, resulting in up to 130 horses all trying to use the limited supply of training rings for 6 days**. (See Technical Appendix for further details).

**It would not be the perfect environment for athletes to compete.**

**Patrons:**

**Dame Jennifer Jenkins, Blake Morrison, Dr David Starkey, Jonathan Sumption QC,  
Margaret Tyzack CBE, Sir Willard White**

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### **3. Compromises, Compromises:**

A) Most importantly, **public safety would be compromised** by the presence of underground conduits, which could cave in under the additional strain of construction work, spectator movements and the race itself. An acknowledged expert has submitted a chilling warning in his submission to the planning office, which can be read here: <http://www.nogoe2012.com/appendices/2010-01-27-NOGOE-objection-annex-B-conduits.pdf>

B) **The spectator experience** would not match up to the expectations at traditional equestrian venues. More details can be read in this submission to the planning application: <http://www.nogoe2012.com/appendices/2010-01-27-NOGOE-objection-annex-E-spectators.pdf>

C) **Getting to Greenwich would be a nightmare.** Extensive concerns have been expressed about the **public transport chaos** that competitors and spectators would have to undergo. The competitors' route would involve the Blackwall Tunnel, which features daily on traffic reports. Spectators coming by train would have to use crowded London interchanges. As the cross country is on a Monday, 75,000 spectators would be competing for seats on public transport with commuters.

Two local societies have raised these problems in their submission to the planning application, which can be read on their websites:

<http://www.greenwichsociety.org.uk/newsdetail.asp?newsid=177>

and

<http://www.blackheath.org/Olympicsannexes.htm>

Even an adjacent Council raised similar fears (read the article below), resulting in LOCOG issuing a response, saying that train capacity would be increased. However, Southeastern has said that no discussions have taken place on this issue as yet.

<http://www.greenwich.co.uk/andrew-gilligan/02816-lewisham-council-worried-about-park-olympics/>

D) **Downsizing.** The FEI requirement at the time of the Bid was for a cross country course of 6.3km. Although the whole site is 71 hectares, it has now been set in less than 40 hectares and appears to have benefited from a recent FEI rule change which allows it to be run at just 5.8km.

NOGOE Coordinator, John Hine, said that, should planning permission be granted, it would be too late for the equestrian community to say "we didn't know"; and added

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that from an equestrian perspective this competition would come to be known as **“The Compromise Games - compromises to the training and exercise facilities for the competitors; compromises to safety and security; compromises to the spectator experience; - and all because LOCOG wanted an urban, iconic setting”**.

ENDS

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. NOGOE is a community-based group campaigning for these events to be moved to an existing equestrian venue where sustainable facilities could be left as a legacy for the sport, as opposed to Greenwich Park where all the facilities would have to be installed and then removed. **WE ARE NOT ALONE**. We have 700 active supporters, and have collected 13500 protest signatures. We have produced a comprehensive objection to LOCOG’s planning application (see [www.nogoe2012.com](http://www.nogoe2012.com) ) and note that **2063** objections have been received by the planning office. **Among those who are critical of LOCOG’s submission are: 4 local societies; independent expert organisations such as: Historic Garden Society, Woodland Trust, London Wildlife Trust, ICOMOS-UK; and government agencies such as English Heritage.**

2. Attached is a letter sent by NOGOE to Greenwich Council and LOCOG about unanswered equestrian questions. Apart from the lack of information about the training facilities, no details are provided about the method of construction of the field of play and other training surfaces. Expectations are for the ground to be levelled, then covered with a hardcore layer, followed by a thin layer of membrane, and on top of this a riding surface. However without knowing where the training areas are to be located in relation to the trees, it is difficult to assess their impact. A request by NOGOE to meet in the Park to discuss these issues was refused by LOCOG.

### **Please read the attached Technical Appendix**

3. The proposed legacy of introducing riding to a new urban audience is unsustainable, unrealistic and a token gesture. Two riding centres in the vicinity recently wrote to *Horse and Hound* about funding difficulties.

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