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3. Venue & Site Design

3. Venue & Site Design

🗓 07 March 2014 🕐 27 March 2019   ⚙

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Please note: The information contained in this guide provides pointers to legislation and good practice that should be considered by event organisers. However, it is industry guidance and does not necessarily cover everything that organisers need to consider for a particular event.

KEY POINTS:

- Carry out a site-suitability assessment early in the planning process
- In that assessment, include the nature of the event, audience numbers and the infrastructure required
- Design the site layout to minimise risk, for example to segregate pedestrians and vehicles
- Identify a Principle Designer and Principle Contractor under CDM Regulations 2015
- Prepare a site and area location plan
- Establish emergency routes
- Liaise with key stakeholders, such as landowners, the local authority, local emergency services, neighbouring businesses and local residents

3.1 The general principle behind venue design is to provide an arena or location in which the audience can enjoy the entertainment in a safe and comfortable atmosphere, and to ensure that the health, safety and welfare needs of the workforce are also met.

3.2 The detail and complexity of the site and facilities will depend on the nature of the entertainment planned, the audience profile, the location, size of the event, the time of year (weather) and duration of the event. The site design will also need to take account of the existing geographical, topographical and environmental infrastructure.

3.3 The inflexibility of some fixed venues may limit the event layout and design as they are often built with another use in mind, e.g. football. The event will create new hazards and risks and there may be specific venue requirements to consider in addition to those referred to below. Venue management will be able to give advice about these.

3.4 This chapter gives an overview of the site-design process and highlights key safety factors that an event organiser should consider. Other chapters expand on many of the highlighted factors.

Knowing the event

3.5 It is essential to understand what the event is and what is involved in it. The size and nature of an event can vary greatly, as do the venues and sites in which they take place, so it is important to have fully considered:

- what is it that is being organised and what is involved in terms of entertainment and infrastructure?
- where is it taking place and how will the characteristics of the site and its location affect the event?
- when does the event take place and what impact will the time of year have on the site and/or activities?
- who will be attending, both in terms of the number of people and their characteristics, as well as how will their anticipated behaviour affect how the site is designed?

Pre-site design data collection

3.6 Properly knowing and understanding the event and its audience is an important precursor to successful site design (see Chapter 13 (/index.php/the-purple-guide/93-13-crowd-management) on Crowd Management). It means having a detailed grasp of a range of factors including:

- duration and time of year that the event will take place
- the proposed event activities and whether they are indoors or outdoors
- the audience type/profile for these activities
- whether the audience will be standing, seated or a mixture of both
- the proposed audience capacity
- the circulation of the audience within the site
- access onto and around the site
- the structures and facilities that will be required
- workforce to support the event and breakdown
- emergency plans for these aspects of the event

Example: The Audience Profile

- Knowing the audience profile will help in the effective design of the site to ensure the crowd can be managed safely
- Gather information about the audience in terms of age profile, gender ratio and expected behaviour pattern
- An audience for an antiques fair will be different from a rock concert; family groups will behave differently from non-family groups
- Depending on the profile, tailor facilities to the needs and behaviour of the audience. For example, the sale of alcohol at an event can affect the audience profile and behaviour – the bar area might need to be in a separate, controlled area

Find more advice about audience profiling in The Purple Guide Chapter 13 (/index.php/the-purple-guide/93-13-crowd-management)on Crowd Management

Assessing site/venue suitability

3.7 Once a clear understanding of the event concept has been established, a visit to the venue or site to carry out a preliminary assessment will determine its suitability. The factors to consider include:

- available space
- viewing space – this can be enhanced by use of video screens
- traffic and pedestrian routes, and emergency access
- ground conditions
- position and proximity of noise-sensitive buildings
- geographical location
- topography
- location and availability of services.

3.8 Obtaining a plan of the site should be an early step. Try and get one to the best quality and the best scale available.

3.9 It is essential to walk the site at different times, study maps and seek advice from landowners and users.

Venue capacity/available space for the audience

3.10 The capacity of a venue generally depends upon the available space for people (the audience, staff and contractors), taking account of the event infrastructure/temporary structures, the number of emergency exits and the sight lines for the audience to view the entertainment.

3.11 Emergency exits and circulation capacity are limiting factors in capacity calculations, and should be included in the Risk Assessment. Others include:

- accessibility to the site in terms of transport and parking
- times the site is open to the public
- number of entrances
- the expected flow rate through the entrances, which in turn is impacted by security considerations around searching of individuals.

3.12 In the audience capacity flow chart, figure 1 below, the S and P factors are control calculations identified in The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (The Green Guide) (http://www.safetyatsportsgrounds.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/green-guide.pdf) and determined by risk assessment. In order to calculate the holding capacity, each part of the venue's viewing accommodation should be assessed according to its physical condition. This assessment is known as the (P) factor. Similarly, each part of the venue's viewing accommodation should be assessed according to the quality of the safety management of that area. This assessment is known as the (S) factor.

NOTE. As stated in the Safety at Sports Grounds (The Green Guide), the mandatory discounting of an exit may be unreasonable, particularly in the case of events held in Stadiums where the pitch is used as a viewing area, need for discounting an exit should be evaluated in accordance with the risk assessment and fire risk assessment.

3.13 The rates of escape that are recommended are those in The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds 5th edition (The Green Guide) (http://www.safetyatsportsgrounds.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/green-guide.pdf) published by DCMS. These are based on BS EN 13200-1:2003, which advises that, for a width of 1.2m:

a. on a stepped surface 79 people can reasonably exit in 1 minute (equal to 66 spectators per metre width per minute)

b. on a level surface 100 people can reasonably exit in 1 minute (equal to 82 spectators per metre width per minute)

3.14 Higher evacuation rates should only be used if specifically justified by the event risk assessment. The risk assessment should also take into account other significant factors in the audience profile, including behavioural matters such as alcohol and drugs and physical matters, such as the presence of child buggies/prams.
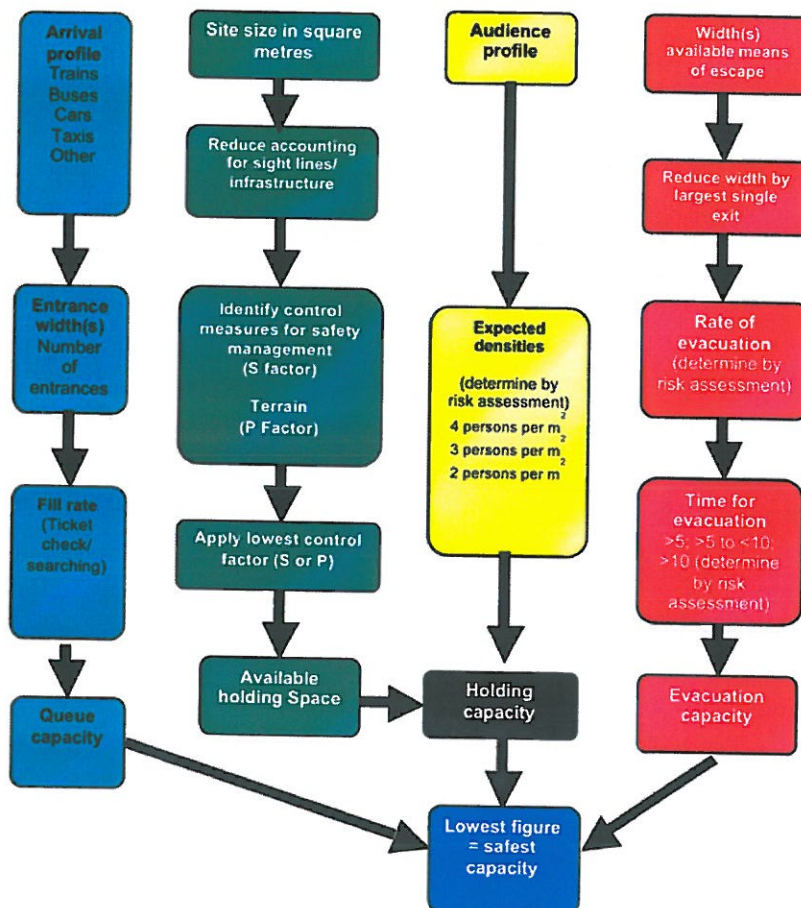
Figure 1: Audience capacity flow chart

Roads and bridges

3.15 Ensure any roads and bridges to the site are structurally sound and able to withstand the additional load of heavy vehicles and potentially large numbers of people at the construction and dismantling periods as well as event days. For further information, see Chapter 7 (/index.php/the-purple-guide/99-7-transport-management) on Transport Management. You should also pay attention to Construction and Design Management Regulations that are applicable to the events industry. For more information see http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm.htm (http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm.htm)

3.16 Identify any bridges on site in the safety plan, and highlight those that are key to ingress and egress or are needed as emergency service routes. Ensure they too have clearance or loading required.

Local amenities

3.17 Assess the site's proximity to a hospital, fire station, public transport, parking, major roads, and local services and facilities.

3.18 Among other things, the location will influence the level of services required to make the event safe, for example, water, sewage, gas, electricity.

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25. Working in a Safety Advisory Group

📅 11 May 2015 ⏲ 27 March 2019   ⚙

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Please note: The information contained in this guide provides pointers to legislation and good practice that should be considered by event organisers. However, it is industry guidance and does not necessarily cover everything that organisers need to consider for a particular event.

Key Points:

Whilst this chapter will inevitably be beneficial to members of Safety Advisory Groups, it is also intended to be a useful source of reference for event organisers and others who may work with such groups in relation to their own, or others', events.

- While SAGs are advisory and have no legal status, they are considered good practice;
- It is important to establish the terms of reference for a SAG;
- It is important to ensure that members of a SAG are competent and appropriate;
- SAGs can operate without necessarily holding meetings

25.1 Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) have been in existence for many years, to some extent as a consequence of the recommendations of Lord Justice Taylor following his inquiry into the HillsboroughTragedy of 1989. Whilst this encouraged the establishment of SAGs in relation to football it was also recognised that there are also potential advantages in terms of SAGs for a broad range of other events.

25.2 In the absence definitive guidance a variety of approaches have developed with consequent inconsistencies.

25.3 Forming and retaining the SAG is not a legal requirement. However, they are considered a good practice, as recommended in several national guidance documents.

25.4 A SAG may be formed in relation to a specific event, a venue or with a broader remit in relation to a range of events. In either case, it is important to ensure that a 'constitution' exists which sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities attaching to it, the membership and the policies which may underpin how it is to function.

25.5 What should be vital is to ensure that a quality assurance process is in place in terms of the safety arrangements for events. Whilst there may be alternative means of achieving this, such as third party or peer review, the option of having a SAG comprising competent individuals scrutinising the safety arrangements must be the preferred option.

Terms of Reference

25.6 An important element of the constitution will be the terms of reference. These should accurately reflect the key role of providing a quality assurance advisory process for the safety related aspects for any event(s) and venue(s) falling within this role. It is stressed that the functions of this group should be distinct from the planning group for such events, and indeed it should not be confused with the arrangements for the management of the event(s). It should also not be used as a process for the authorities to enforce their statutory powers

25.7 Agreeing these terms of reference is a matter for local determination. However, the following examples may assist in this process. These may be either generic or specific according to the nature of the role at this local level. Generic terms of reference may include:

- To promote clarity of roles and responsibilities relevant to the event(s) within the SAGs remit;
- To advise the local authority and/or event organiser in order to ensure high standards of health and safety;
- To promote the principles of sensible risk management in safety and welfare planning;
- To promote a consistent and co-ordinated, multi-agency, approach to event planning and management;
- To advise the local authority and/or event organiser with regard to forming appropriate contingency and emergency arrangements;
- To advise the local authority and/or event organiser in respect of relevant legislation and guidance;
- To encourage arrangements to be made to minimise disruption to local communities;
- To consider the implications of significant incidents and events relevant to their venue (s) and events;
- To consider the implications of significant incidents and events relevant to the surrounding areas and facilities;
- To receive reports relevant to debriefs, visits and/or inspections of the venue or event.
- To consider an event in the context of other events that may be happening at the same time and any potential cumulative or combined impact

In some cases it will be relevant to consider specific terms of reference in addition to these generic examples. These may include:

- To advise the local authority with regards to its functions in relation to safety certification;
- To advise the local authority with regards to its powers under the licensing legislation.

25.8 In some cases it has been determined that a SAG will only consider certain categories of event, such as those on local authority land. Of course, the reality is that this could preclude consideration of other events, which may involve higher levels of unrecognised risk.

Membership Of The Safety Advisory Group

25.9 In his report, Lord Justice Taylor refers to statutory, non-statutory and invited members of a SAG. For the purpose of this guidance, however, only core and invitees will be considered. A core member can be expected to attend all meetings and all agenda items whereas an invitee may only be expected to be involved in respect of specific events, meetings or agenda items.

25.10 It is extremely important to ensure that the representatives and members of a SAG are credible, competent and of an appropriate position within the organization they represent. It will also be crucial for relevant organisations to be represented if suitable and sufficient review of an event proposal is to take place.

25.11 Core membership of a group is likely to include:

Local Authority (may be at County, District/Borough, Metropolitan and/or Unitary levels - this could include Licensing, Environmental Health or others as determined appropriate on a local basis)

- Building Authority
- Police Service
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Ambulance Service

25.12 Invited members may include:

Other local authority representatives as deemed appropriate (this could include Event Team, Emergency Planning, Highways, Health and Safety)

- Event organisers/promoters
- Venue owner/operator
- Health representatives
- Stewarding/security
- Traffic/transport providers
- British Transport Police
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- Harbour Authorities
- Medical/first aid providers

- Resident/community representatives
- Highways Agency
- Crowd safety managers

(Note: These are not intended to be exhaustive lists)

Chairing Of The Safety Advisory Group

25.13 It is most common, though not exclusive, for the Chair of a group to be a local authority appointed representative. In some cases it has been determined that they should be an independent appointee. What is vital, if the group is to function effectively and efficiently, is to have someone with the appropriate skills and competencies for this potentially demanding role. These are likely to be more focused upon competencies in communication, diplomacy and interpersonal criteria rather than detailed legal or subject matter knowledge.

25.14 The Chair should be able to absorb and evaluate the detailed arrangements for events whilst maintaining an objectivity of approach taking into account the views of the group members.

25.15 In many situations a SAG, chaired by a local authority representative, may be considering the arrangements for one of their own events. In such cases it is important to be able to demonstrate a transparency in the groups' processes. It would be appropriate to avoid suggestions of bias, by the Chair declaring a conflict of interest if necessary, in order to avoid such allegations. As already suggested some have recognised the benefit of appointing an independent chair, possibly from another authority.

25.16 Key responsibilities for the Chair of a SAG will include:

- Ensuring that the group discharges its responsibilities fairly, effectively and proportionately
- Ensuring, where practicable, appropriate representation on the group
- Ensuring that all members have an opportunity to participate
- Ensuring that an audit trail of group processes is maintained

Policy to Underpin Safety Advisory Group Procedures

25.17 There can often be a fine line between what might be deemed to be part of the terms of reference and what could, perhaps, be better regarded as an underpinning policy. It will be appropriate to consider the terms of reference to be focussed upon what a SAG does, the policy may be deemed to be more about how this is done. Such a policy may consider:

- It is the policy of this Safety Advisory Group to, so far as reasonably practicable, offer advice in order to ensure the highest possible standards of public safety at events and to encourage the wellbeing of those that could be affected by such events. In this context this could include those attending the event, but also those in the surrounding areas that may be affected by the impact of it.
- The Group is not responsible for review of safe systems of work of event organisations/crews. However, it will be relevant to consider the consequences of work related incidents during periods of public access.
- The Group does not make any decisions on behalf of the local authority as its role is advisory and as such it has no authority to either approve or ban events.
- The decision-making authority is typically delegated to the local authority possibly via the Chair of the Safety Advisory Group. Where other agencies may exercise their own statutory decision-making authority, it is stressed that this is the determination of that authority and not the Safety Advisory Group.
- The overall responsibility for the safety of persons at an event will lie with the event organiser, venue owner/operator and management team.
- Members of the Safety Advisory Group must declare any material conflict of interest in relation to any matters put before the Group, prior to any discussion on that matter. Should this interest be considered prejudicial, then that person should consider withdrawing, to be replaced by an appropriate party agreed with the Group.
- The Group will have arrangements to ensure that appropriate records of procedures and meetings are maintained.
- The lessons learned via the Group's processes and procedures will be applied for the benefit of all events within its area of responsibility.

When should a Safety Advisory Group consider an event?

25.18 This has been an area where there have been high levels of inconsistency between SAGs. Some have determined, for instance, that they will only consider events on local authority land, whilst others will have a broad variety of criteria. Many will consider events where anticipated attendees will exceed a trigger figure. Whilst this has some merit, the levels of risk associated with an event may be greater with events that may not reach this 'trigger' (e.g. the profile of the audience is as important).

25.19 It is important to develop a protocol which will assist in this process and safeguard those making these decisions in term of their liabilities. Of course, referring an event to a SAG does not necessarily imply lengthy discussions at meetings, as there are 'smarter' ways of discharging the responsibilities. It is also, however, important to ensure that relatively small events involving low levels of risk are not subjected to unnecessary bureaucracy.

25.20 Determining whether or not to refer an event to a SAG does require a consistent approach. This should be based on a risk-based approach, and be determined by considering a combination of:

- Numbers attending (at any one time);
- Levels of risk with the event: and
- Events of an unusual nature
- Other events at the same time that may increase the impact and risk

The level of SAG input will appropriately be proportionate to the size, scale and risk of the event and/or activity involved. It may also be relevant to consider the cumulative consequences of multiple events within a local area.

Note: Many SAGs have developed protocols to assist in this process with some identified in the EPC guidance (Appendix 'C' - Examples of Good Practice).

25.21 Many events will fall outside of the regulatory arrangements, such as licensing, and consequently will not automatically come to the attention of a SAG. Members of a SAG should, however, ensure that there is a focal point at which details of events they become aware of can be collated.

25.22 It should then be possible for an event organiser to be contacted in order to obtain further detail on which to base the decision regarding referral to the SAG. This is relatively easily achieved and managed via local authority websites and on-line eForm facilities. Whilst in the first place this may only require basic event and organiser details it should be sufficient to inform SAG members whether more detailed information is required.
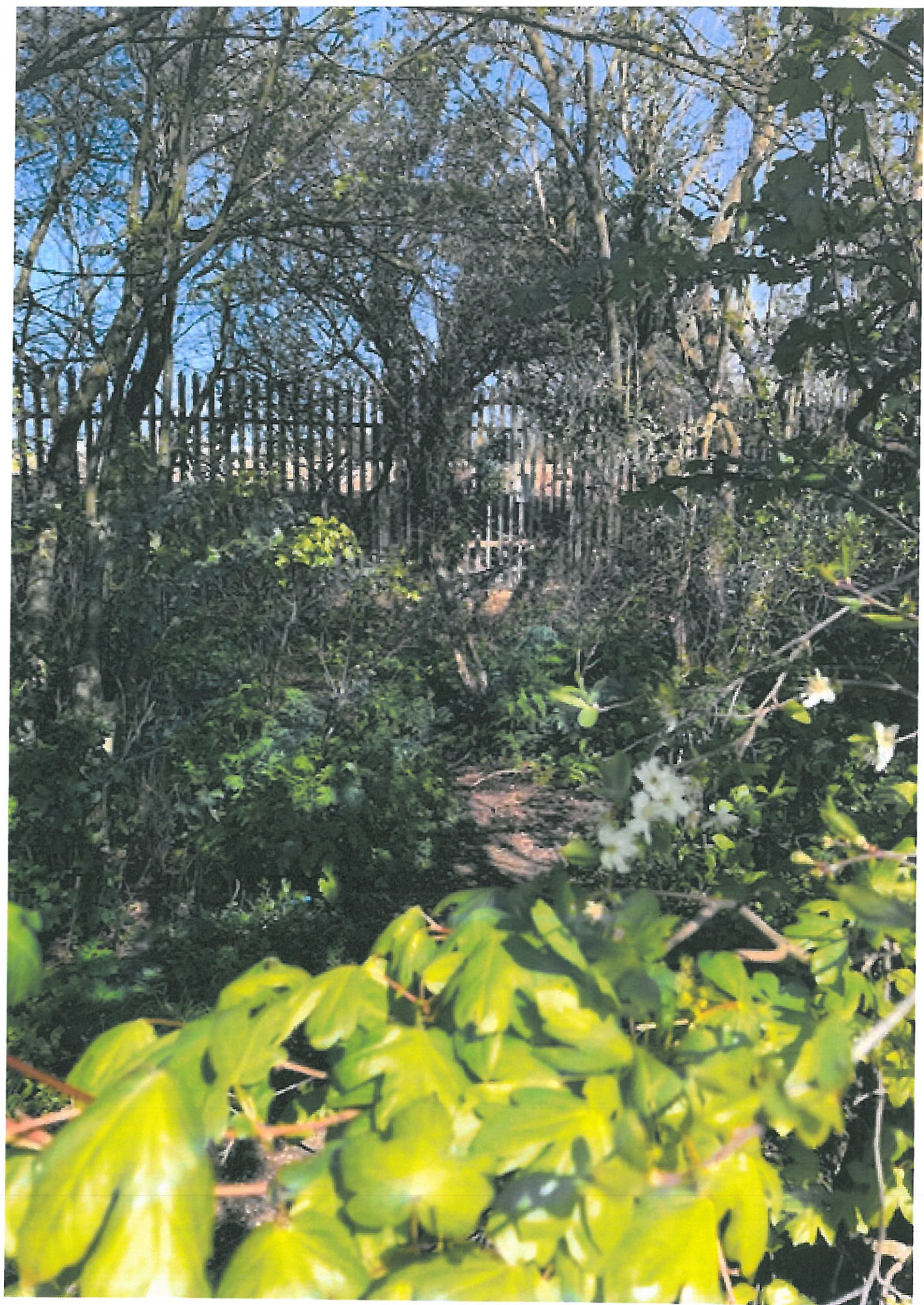
25.23 It will be important to encourage co-operation from event organisers to ensure timely notifications and availability of relevant documentation. It is important to seek to establish a culture whereby it is recognised that working with a SAG is a positive and beneficial experience. It should also be considered that some event organisers may also be working with tight timescales.
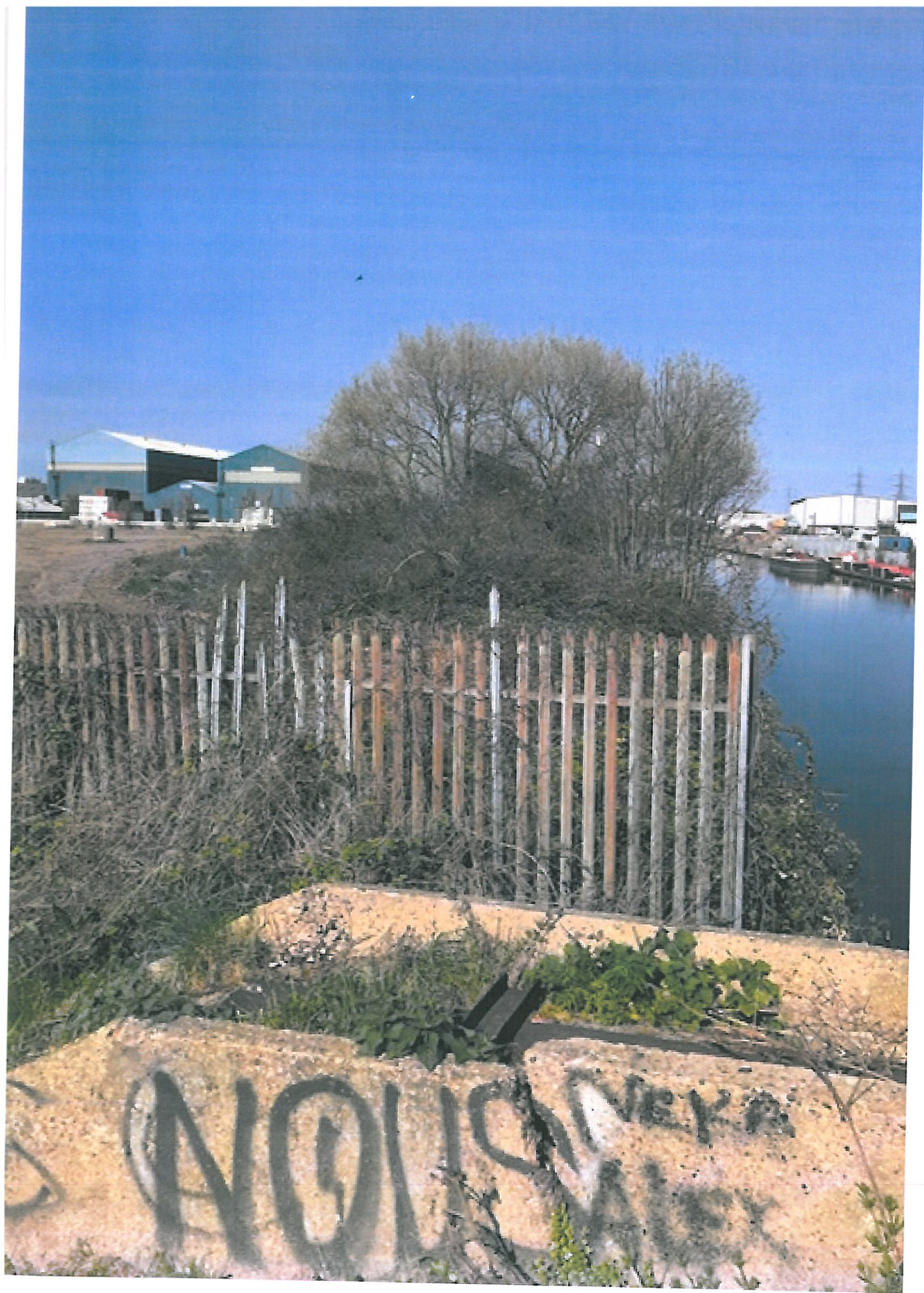
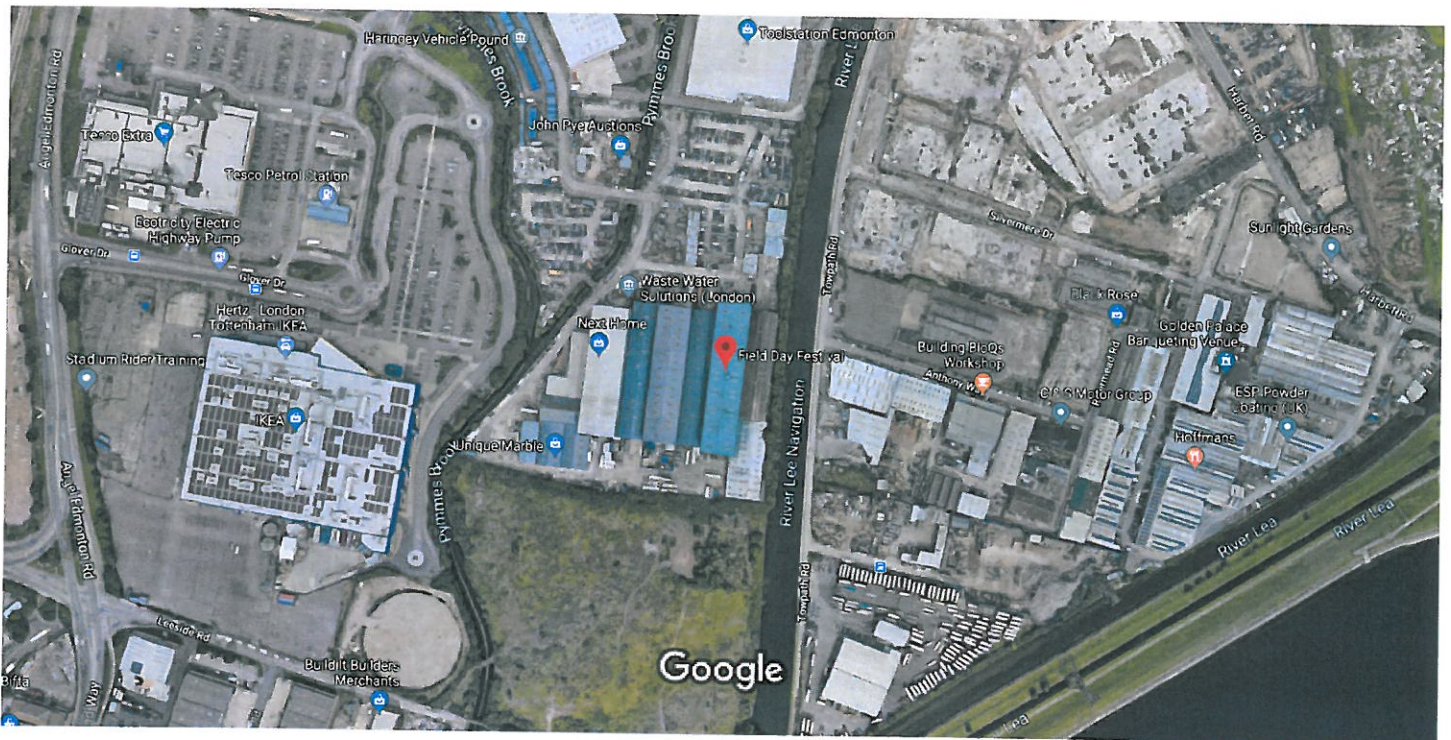**Buy Tickets (https://fielddayfestivals.com/tickets)**

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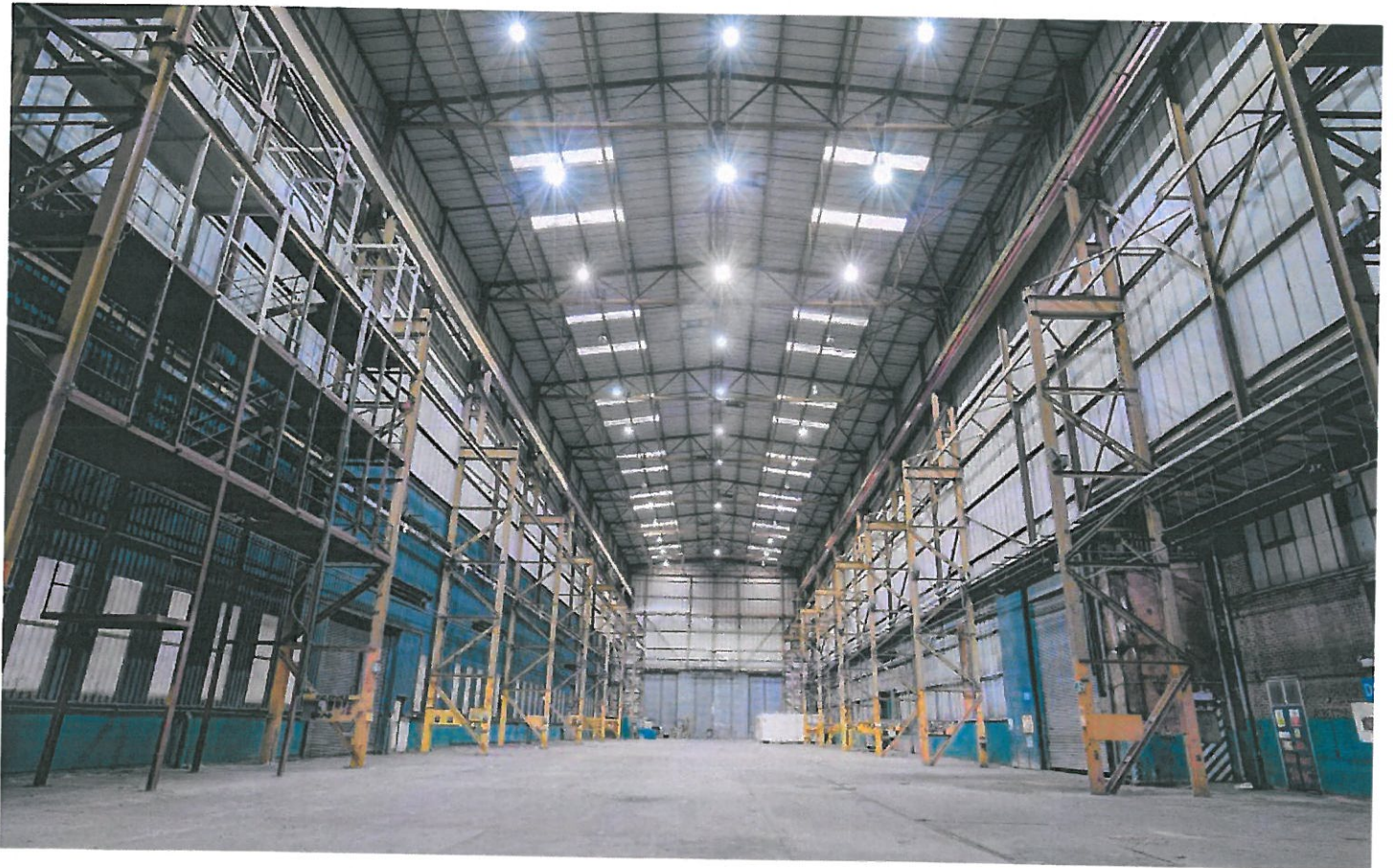
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