

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27. 2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B

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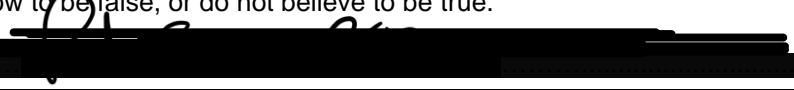
Statement of: Paul Jennings

Age if under 18: Over 18

(if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: Police Officer

This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Witness Signature: 

Date: 20/09/2025

I am the Dedicated Football Officer for Wembley Stadium and Central London, working in the Central Football Unit within MO6 (Public Order Command) of the Metropolitan Police Service. I have been working regularly within Football Intelligence deployments since 2004 and have been working full time as a Dedicated Football Officer since 2010. I have been the Dedicated Football Officer for Wembley Stadium since November 2021. Since Wembley Stadium officially reopened in May 2007, I have been deployed at the majority of football fixtures there, in an intelligence or Operational Football Officer role.

For many years I found the policing of Wembley Stadium to be a frustrating role due to the high levels of intoxication and the resulting elevated levels of antisocial behaviour that is a direct result of the alcohol consumption amongst a significant number of supporters. The correlation between levels of intoxication and patterns of behaviour including antisocial behaviour and pockets of disorder are clear to see.

Over the years, particularly at the large, more high-profile fixtures, I have witnessed a large number of problems that were either directly or indirectly related to the consumption of alcohol around the Wembley area. This included large gatherings of supporters drinking in public places, such as Olympic Way, Market Square and the green at Wembley Hill Road at the bottom of Dagmar Avenue. I have witnessed a high correlation between this street drinking and antisocial and low-level criminal behaviour. This includes verbal abuse and other low level public order offences but, on many occasions, this escalated into pockets of disorder. Where supporters gathered to drink, they had little incentive to move on. These gatherings would often lead to large quantities of alcohol being consumed in a relatively short period which resulted in littering, public urination and large vociferous, boisterous groups of fans who presented significant challenges to the policing operation.

There were flash points along Olympic Way when groups of fans passed opposing supporters who had congregated to drink and sing. Regularly this quickly deteriorated into heated verbal exchanges and often descended in pockets of disorder as groups came together. It was not uncommon for

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these groups to utilise cans of beer or glass bottles to throw at each other. This often happened for prolonged periods at the raised pedestrian way, at the end of Olympic Way, leading up to the stadium.

The problem caused by groups drinking, at the green at Wembley Hill Road at the bottom of Dagmar Avenue, was so severe that on more than one occasion, Brent council used temporary metal fencing around this green area to prevent fans from gathering there.

During England's EURO 2020 fixtures, supporters gathered in large numbers in open spaces to drink alcohol bought from supermarkets and off licences. These gatherings saw high levels of drunken antisocial behaviour taking place including 'beer fights', street furniture being climbed, pyrotechnics devices being let off, missiles being thrown and people openly taking class A drugs.

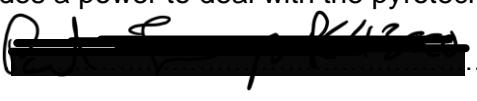
February 2022 saw a new joined up, multiagency approach to the enforcement of the PSPO. This new approach and a more concerted and consistent enforcement of breaches of the PSPO has had a huge positive effect on the area and the whole Wembley experience for the vast majority of supporters. Information on the PSPO has been disseminated via many routes, including supporter and club engagement meetings, Transport For London, train companies and social media accounts of various agencies.

The reduction in alcohol on the Wembley footprint has seen a reduction in gathering of supporters and a huge improvement in the behaviour of fans both inside and outside of Wembley Stadium. Without the availability of cheap alcohol, supporters are less inclined to loiter on the footprint reducing the flashpoints that were previously a problem. This reduction in the readily available, cheap alcohol has also seen a significant reduction in the levels of intoxication. There is a clear link between levels of intoxication and antisocial behaviour and disorder. The lower levels of intoxication and the reduction in groups of males loitering to drink, has seen a significant decrease in pockets of disorder outside the stadium and the skirmishes and infighting so often seen before in the stadium itself.

Police have received much positive feedback on the look and feel around Wembley since the PSPO has been actively enforced and have experienced surprising little pushback from supporters when alcohol has been seized.

Ticket tout activity has always been prevalent around the Wembley area. This causes problems inside the stadium with supporters being in the wrong areas of the stadium, leading to pockets of disorder. The PSPO is being utilised effectively, particularly by the council, in disrupting, deterring and preventing ticket touts.

The PSPO has been used to combat the use of pyrotechnics outside of the stadium. Unfortunately, the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol) Act is limited to entering the stadium or within view of the pitch. The PSPO provides a power to deal with the pyrotechnic problem outside the stadium. The

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problem should not be underestimated with the potential injuries sustained as a result of pyrotechnics including loss of limb or fingers, severe burns due to temperatures up to 2000°C, breathing problems due to smoke inhalation and loss of hearing or sight due to explosive power. The high profile and high stakes nature of many matches at Wembley Stadium, results in the use of pyrotechnics being more common than at other stadiums. The use of pyrotechnics at football matches presents a significant danger to supporters, police and event staff. Earlier in the year, at a football match at Anfield, North West Ambulance Service stated that 30 people presented to them, reporting burns as a result of the pyrotechnics. This included 8 juveniles and a police officer. A smoke emitting pyrotechnic was set off at the FA Cup Final at Wembley resulting in a father and son being burnt in the row below.

Powers to prevent obstruction of the public highway allows for swift enforcement against those causing obstructions, ensuring clear routes for crowd movement and emergency access. This would allow for the safe ingress and egress, especially during high-attendance events.

There is a well documented history of issues caused by fans forcing or attempting to force entry to the stadium as well as fans attempting to gain entry without tickets by other means. This presents significant safety issues due to overcrowding and a breakdown in segregation. Additional powers to disperse ticketless fans on the concourse and powers to deal with those attempting to enter via nefarious methods would greatly assist police in ensuring crowd safety.

Baroness Casey's review found that:

- Alcohol misuse, ticketless fans, and lack of robust enforcement were key contributors to the disorder at the Euro 2020 final.
- There was a "collective failure to plan for the worst-case scenario" and a need for "toughest possible action" against anti-social behaviour.
- The review recommended stronger penalties, better coordination, and proactive use of legal tools like PSPOs to prevent recurrence.

The proposed PSPO conditions directly address these recommendations by:

- Giving police and partners the tools to prevent and penalise the exact behaviours that led to the Euro 2020 incidents.
- Enabling multi-agency collaboration and clear lines of responsibility for enforcement.
- Creating a zero-tolerance environment for anti-social and criminal behaviour, as called for in the review.

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