

## WITNESS STATEMENT

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

URN

Statement of: Chief Inspector Pete Dearden

Age if under 18: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation: Police Officer

This statement (consisting of Three (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: 30/09/2025

I am Chief Inspector p199946. I am a Chief Inspector based at MO6 Public Order Command and have been a police officer for the past 27 years. I oversee football policing for the MPS and have been in this role for the past 3 years. I have a vast experience working with the 17 London football clubs which includes the national stadium at Wembley. It is not lost on me or others that this is the most iconic stadium in the world that has a proud and unrivalled history attracting millions of young people to the area each year. This makes the area a rich target to those seeking to take advantage of this fact. Violence against women and girls is a key strategic element in the policing plan to make the area safer for all. The PSPO assists in this strategic direction by providing a valuable tactical option operationally.

As Chief Inspector within the Public Order Command and a regular police match commander at Wembley events, I am submitting this statement in support of the renewal of the current Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the footprint of the stadium in response to persistent anti-social behaviour that has had a detrimental impact on the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors in the area.

Over many years, we have received a significant volume of reports and complaints from members of the public, local councillors, and community groups regarding behaviours including street drinking, drug use, aggressive begging, vehicle nuisance to name but a few. This has been problematic on event days. These activities are not only disruptive but have created an environment where individuals feel unsafe and discouraged from using public spaces.

The current PSPO seeks to address these issues by introducing proportionate and targeted restrictions, including the prohibition of alcohol consumption in public areas. These measures are designed to prevent further deterioration of public order and to promote a safer, more welcoming environment for all.

The PSPO is enforced by authorised officers, including Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers, and is subject to annual review such as this to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

The PSPO has enabled a coordinated enforcement response involving Brent Council, WNSL, Wembley Park Ltd, and the Metropolitan Police. This includes:

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- Deployment of dedicated enforcement teams and Metropolitan Police Support Units across key ingress and egress routes.
- Use of digital signage, PA systems, and event-day totems to communicate PSPO restrictions to attendees.
- Provision of confiscation bins and toilet facilities to reduce street-level disorder.
- Issuance of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for breaches, with both overt and covert officers operating on event days.

So far in 2025, there have been a total of 45 events including concerts and football.

A total of 16,022 seizures were made by Police officers during this time which equates to an average of 356 per event.

This would be significantly higher without a PSPO to function as a clear deterrent, the local off licenses being engaged as they are and the ability to enforce. This has made the footprint much more pleasant and ultimately safer for the community – both those attending the event and those living on the footprint.

The effectiveness of the PSPO was particularly evident following the EURO 2020 Final, where the Baroness Casey Review highlighted alcohol consumption as a key factor in the escalation of anti-social behaviour. Since then, enforcement has intensified, resulting in a marked reduction in disorder and improved safety for attendees, residents, and businesses.

The PSPO also empowers civilian officers to act proactively, reducing reliance on police resources and allowing for more strategic deployment during high-risk events.

This order is a vital tool in maintaining public safety and order during major event days and in the surrounding public realm. The Wembley Park Estate and Stadium footprint regularly host high-profile events that attract tens of thousands of spectators. These events, while celebratory, have historically been associated with significant challenges including:

- Street drinking and alcohol-related disorder
- Ticket touting and illegal merchandise sales
- Urinating in public spaces
- Unauthorised drone activity
- Unregulated vehicle access and parking

Due to our experience on event days I support the implementation of new elements to the PSPO which are proposed as below;

### **Unauthorised Access into Wembley Stadium;**

No person shall attempt to gain, or successfully gain, unauthorised access to any restricted area within Wembley National Stadium without a valid event ticket and/or express permission. This includes, but is not limited to:

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- Entering or attempting to enter the Stadium via turnstiles, staff-only zones and other designated spaces without authorisation.
- Circumventing security measures including scaling fences, bypassing barriers, tailgating through secured entrances, or using false credentials.
- Using deceptive tactics such as impersonating staff, presenting counterfeit tickets, or misleading stadium personnel to gain unauthorised entry.
- Interfering with restricted areas by tampering with locks, doors, or security systems designed to prevent unauthorised access.
- Encouraging or assisting others in attempting to gain access to prohibited zones unlawfully.

Exceptions: This prohibition does not apply to:

- Emergency service personnel performing official duties.
- Stadium employees, contractors, and individuals granted prior authorisation by Wembley National Stadium
- Persons entering with valid credentials and permissions issued by the appropriate authorities.

### **Vehicle Restrictions through Road Closures**

No person shall drive, operate, or manoeuvre (unless pushed) any motorised or non-motorised vehicle through areas restricted by Hostile Vehicle Mitigation - HVM (road closures) unless they have prior authorisation from Brent Council, relevant landowner and/or other relevant authorities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle through barriers, bollards, gated checkpoints, or restricted zones protected by HVM measures.
- Riding bicycles, scooters, carts, or similar non-motorised vehicles through restricted HVM areas.
- Bypassing security restrictions using unauthorised routes or alternative access points.
- Attempting to disable, tamper with, or obstruct HVM barriers to gain unauthorised vehicle access.
- Using fraudulent documentation or false representation to circumvent access restrictions.
- Assisting others in unauthorised vehicle entry or attempting to evade enforcement.

Exceptions: This prohibition does not apply to:

- Emergency service vehicles performing official duties.
- Vehicles with pre-approved access credentials issued by relevant authorities.
- Maintenance and operational vehicles authorised by relevant authorities.

### **Stadium Concourse – Access Restriction**

No person shall enter or remain on the concourse surrounding Wembley Stadium unless they hold a valid event ticket for the specific event taking place at the stadium on that date. This includes, but is not limited to:

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- Loitering\* on the concourse without a valid event ticket.
- Gathering in groups that obstruct pedestrian flow or access to stadium facilities.

Exceptions: This prohibition does not apply to:

- Stadium staff, security personnel, or emergency service responders performing official duties.
- Individuals with pre-arranged authorisation from Wembley National Stadium Ltd or stadium management.

\* For the purposes of this prohibition, 'loitering' may include but is not limited to mean: -

- Linger – staying in an area without a clear purpose.
- Idling – standing around without engaging in any specific activity.
- Gathering – assembling without valid reason related to the event.
- Occupying – remaining in a space without proper authorisation.
- Congregating – forming groups that obstruct movement or access.
- Hanging around – a more casual way of describing loitering.
- Coaches / Other Vehicles obstructing the highway

### Parking Prohibition

No person shall, at any time, or at 30-minute intervals following a previous non-compliance under this prohibition, park or leave a coach or similar large passenger vehicle in a manner that:

- Obstructs the highway or pavement;
- Blocks access to properties, driveways, or designated emergency routes;
- Causes danger or nuisance to pedestrians or other road users;
- Is parked outside of designated coach parking or waiting areas

The Terrorist threat to the stadium remains a concern and I am aware of a number of active hostile reconnaissance investigations relating to persons attending the footprint who pose a significant threat to the public safety of persons in a crowded space. These PSPO measures would help mitigate some of these concerns by allowing for persons loitering in the area to be challenged. The access to the area by vehicle or on foot without a ticket is a growing concern and currently isn't incorporated into the PSPO. All allow for the demarcation of the legitimate persons attending to be facilitated and those otherwise dealt with by enforcement. This can only further target harden the event.

For many years the MPS found policing of Wembley Stadium to be a challenge due to the high levels of street drinking and subsequent 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, we have witnessed many 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.

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There is a clear 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 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 gather 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, multi-agency 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 alcohol, supporters are less inclined to loiter on the footprint reducing the flashpoints that were previously a problem. This reduction in the readily available 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.

The MPS 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. International police delegations, peer review teams and key partners such as UEFA & FIFA have all commented on the vast improvement the area now is as a supporter experience. This attracts world class sporting events such as the UEFA Champions league Final and concerts such

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as Oasis, Taylor Swift and Coldplay. The footfall is in the millions, the worldwide attention is immeasurable, and the economic benefit is astronomic. We must not return to the disgraceful scenes we saw in 2021 when ASB/disorder was prolific in large part due to the prevalence of street drinking, drug misuse, ASB and ticketless supporters overwhelming the footprint. The culture has shifted for the better, it has changed forever, and we mustn't relax this posture for the greater good of the people who live, work and attend the venues in the area. These shameful scenes at our national stadium must never be repeated. I feel a relaxing of the PSPO would see this mentality and behaviours creep back in which would undo 4 long hard years of joint hard-working to get to this position.

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 problem should not be underestimated with the potential injuries sustained because 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, Northwest 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 documents 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, often referred to as 'Jibbing'. 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 new proposed PSPO conditions directly address these recommendations by:

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- 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.

In conclusion, the PSPO in its current form is a necessary, proportionate, and evidence-based measure that directly contributes to the safe management of Wembley Stadium events. Its renewal is essential to uphold public order, protect vulnerable individuals, and ensure Brent remains a welcoming borough for all. It is my strong view that the continued implementation of this PSPO is a necessary and proportionate response to ongoing anti-social behaviour. It reflects our commitment to safeguarding public spaces and enhancing community wellbeing. [REDACTED]

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