OTAS LIVE

Supporting Events and Professionals at Every Stage

When a social post draws a crowd: pop-up events without a plan

A joust on hire e-bikes drew thousands to a park in Hackney after an online invite. What it shows about crowds, permission and who is in charge when a post goes further than planned

Correct as of 9 November 2026

A post can draw a crowd faster than a plan.

5,000 RSVPs within a day [2]



OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

The facts, as reported

5,000

RSVPs within a day [2]

90 min

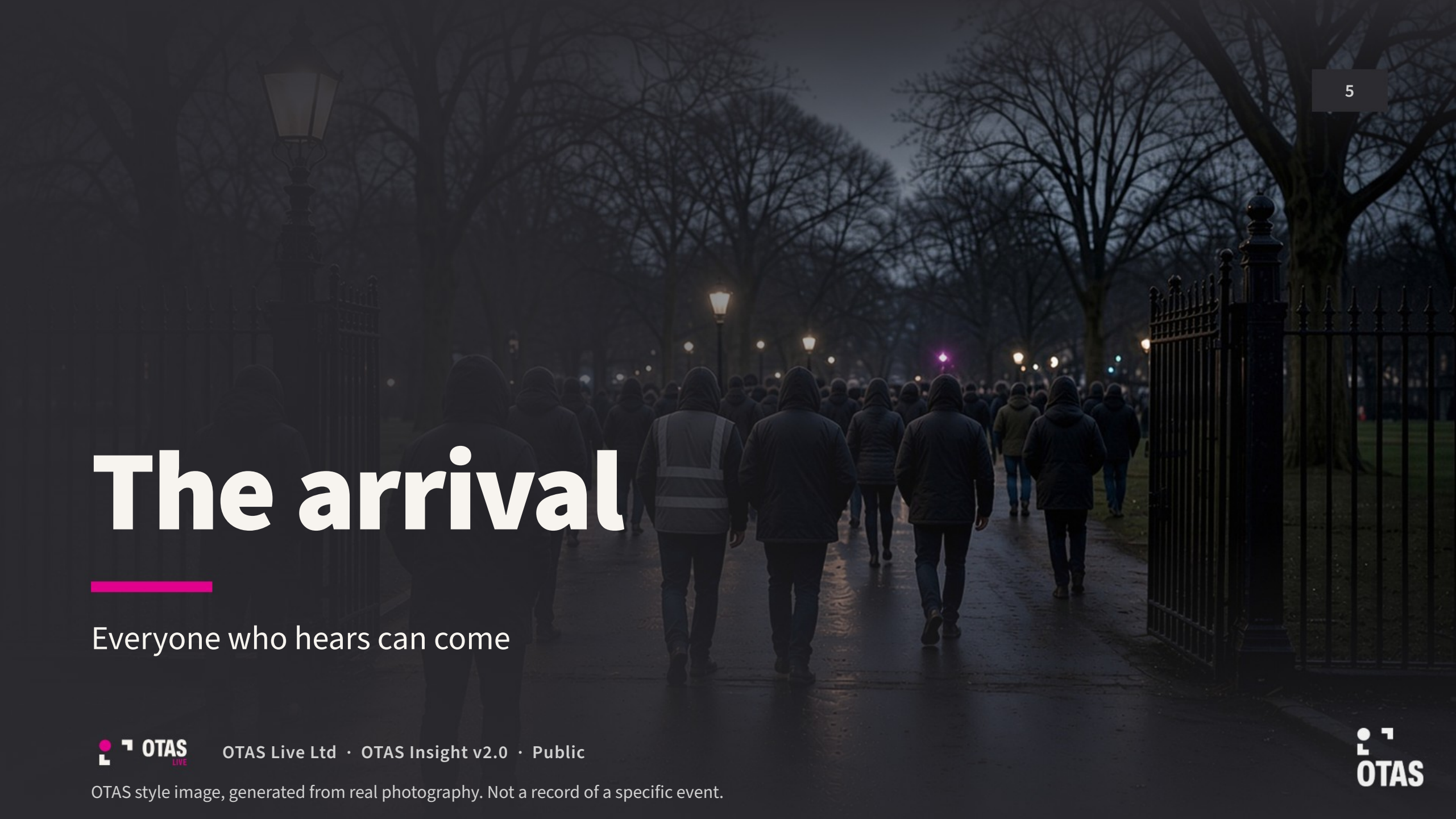
between reveal and start [2]

50+

people needs park permission [8]

What was reported

BEFORE	ON THE DAY
First joust drew hundreds [4]	Hundreds to thousands came [2][3][5]
5,000 RSVPs in a day [2]	Police approval before the reveal [2]
Rematch post shared 20,000+ times [5]	Council: no permission given [1]



The arrival

Everyone who hears can come

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Scope of this Insight

WHAT IT COVERS	WHAT IT DOES NOT
Gatherings that start as a post	Judging the organisers
Permission and planning	E-bike safety
The person in charge	Legal advice

03

Who has a say

THE GROUND	OTHER BODIES
Over 50 people: apply [8]	Councils enforce safety [10]
Police and council review it [8]	TEN: up to 499 people [12]
Plan, insurance, risk assessment [8]	Police powers on assemblies [13]



The person in charge

Known to everyone

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

Who to ask

BEFORE YOU POST	AND
Landowner or council [8]	Safety advisory group [15]
Police	Owners of kit or brands [4]
Council licensing [12]	Answers in writing

05

Who owns what

ROLES	ON THE DAY
Organiser: the plan and stop	Steward lead: the edges
Landowner: the ground [8]	First aid lead: the hurt
Police: public order [13]	One name per role

From a post to a planned gathering

1 Idea posted ▸ **2** Ground agreed ▸ **3** Crowd planned ▸ **4** Edges held ▸ **5** Site cleared

OTAS guidance, drawing on the council's events process [8] and HSE [11].



The edges

Where the crowd meets traffic

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

OTAS

Signs a post is drawing more than you planned

Drawn from the joust reports and two 2023 crowds.

01 RSVPs hit the cap fast

02 Shares outrun invites

03 A late reveal

04 People arrive early

05 Traffic in the crowd

08

Go, hold or stop

GO OR HOLD	STOP
Within plan: go	People in the road
Growing fast: hold	Vehicles in the crowd [2]
Post an update	Disorder or injury

Five stages, from the idea to the clear up



STAGE 1

Ask

Landowner first

STAGE 2

Size

Plan for more

STAGE 3

Staff

One person in charge

STAGE 4

Run

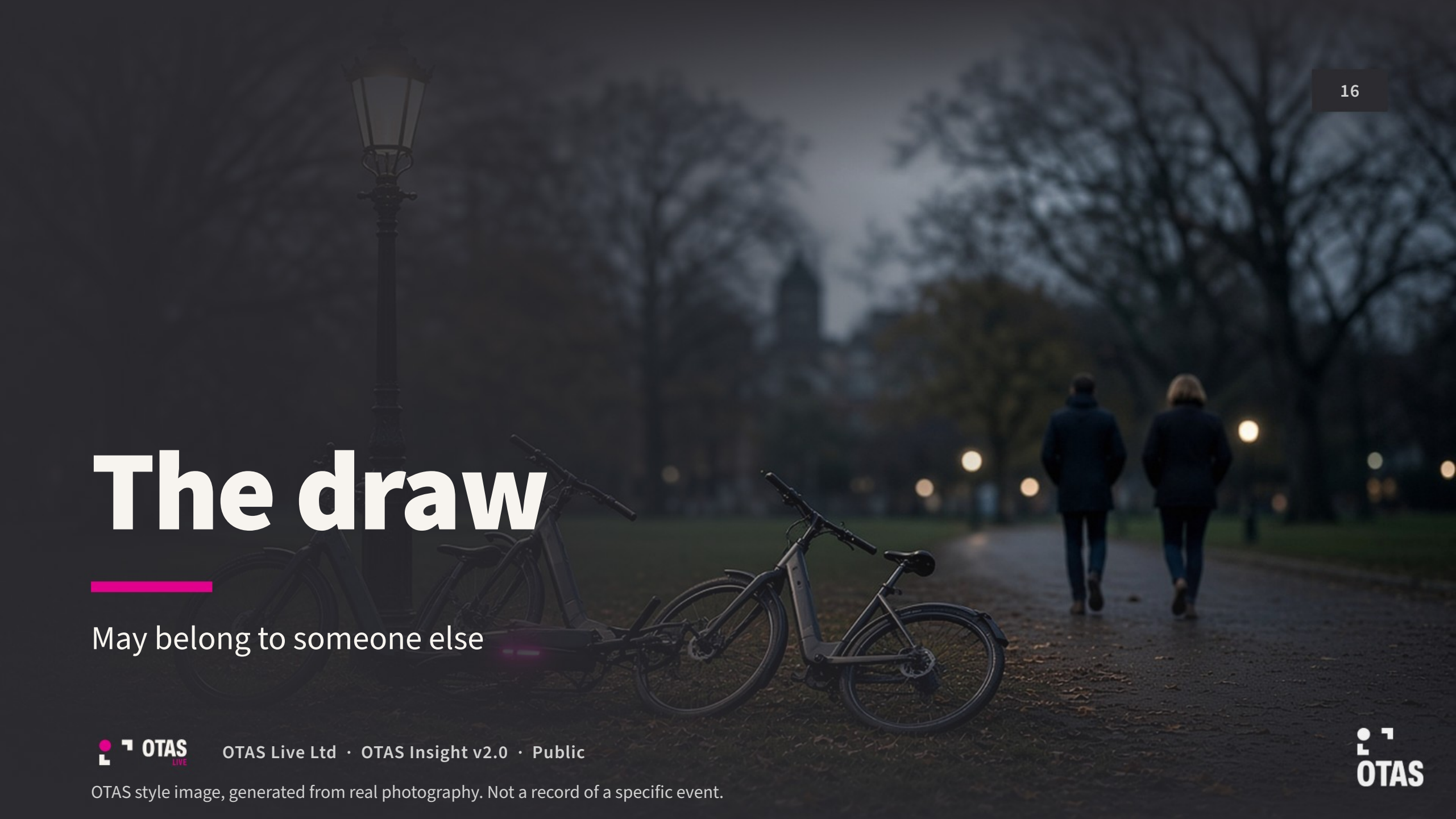
Edges and traffic

STAGE 5

Clear

Leave it clean

From the plan in this Insight. OTAS guidance.



The draw

May belong to someone else

OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

What to do at each level

Operational

Know who is in charge

Keep off the road

Watch the edges

Tactical

Mark edges and routes

Crowd and traffic apart

Ready to stop

Strategic

Landowner first

Plan for more

Name who is in charge

11

Readiness

BEFORE YOU POST

- Landowner asked
- Police told
- Licence checked
- Person in charge named

ON THE DAY AND AFTER

- Watch the limit
- Keep roads clear
- Clear and report back

“

We went from 300 kids to a couple of thousands of kids in minutes.

New York police chief, August 2023, as reported by CNN [20]

Where the facts come from

1	BBC News, organisers say e-bike jousting is performance art, 1 November 2026	bbc.co.uk
2	LBC, thousands turn up to watch round two of an e-bike jousting event in east London, 31 October 2026	lbc.co.uk
3	The Telegraph, e-bike jousters defy warnings from the operator, 1 November 2026	telegraph.co.uk
4	BBC News, hire e-bike operator says its bikes are not for jousting, 19 October 2026	bbc.co.uk
5	North East Londoner, second e-bike joust draws thousands, 7 November 2026	nelondoner.co.uk
6	LBC, hundreds gather for e-bike jousting event in east London, 18 October 2026	lbc.co.uk
7	The Observer, these bikes are made for jousting, 26 October 2026	observer.co.uk

Where the facts come from

8	Hackney Council, holding events in parks, green spaces and streets	hackney.gov.uk
9	Hackney Council, parks and green spaces events policy	app1.apply4.com
10	HSE, event safety, frequently asked questions	hse.gov.uk
11	HSE, event safety, put crowd controls in place	hse.gov.uk
12	Home Office, revised guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003, chapter 7, temporary event notices, updated 3 November 2026	gov.uk
13	Public Order Act 1986, section 14, conditions on public assemblies	legislation.gov.uk
14	Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, section 35, directions excluding a person from an area	legislation.gov.uk

Where the facts come from

15	The Purple Guide, safety advisory groups	thepurpleguide.co.uk
16	Cabinet Office, Understanding crowd behaviours: guidance and lessons identified	gov.uk
17	BBC News, nine arrested after dispersal orders in central London, 9 August 2023	bbc.co.uk
18	LondonWorld, what happened on Oxford Street, August 2023	londonworld.com
19	CBS News New York, officers attacked and crushed during a giveaway crowd, 4 August 2023	cbsnews.com
20	CNN, giveaway post draws crowds to a New York park, 4 August 2023	cnn.com
21	The Guardian, arrests amid a social media robbery campaign in central London, 9 August 2023	theguardian.com

Where the facts come from

22 **HSE, event safety guidance for organisers** hse.gov.uk

Web sources opened 9 November 2026 and labelled with their publisher.

OVER TO YOU

If a post drew ten times the crowd to your next event, who would be in charge, and where would the crowd stand?

If you need support with planning a pop-up or free gathering, reach out to us to see how we can support you.

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