

Religious Activity in The Royal Parks

Policy Statement

The Royal Parks does not permit collective acts of worship or other religious observances in The Royal Parks' estate, either in their own right or as part of a demonstration, event or other activity. This includes spoken or sung communal prayers or other events that are primarily religious in focus. Exceptions are only made for annual acts of remembrance at pre-existing memorials within the Parks, and to facilitate events of national importance at the request of Government.

As a public body, it is not the place of The Royal Parks to make value judgments between one religious observance and another. We must either permit all collective religious observances or refuse them all. Our approach is to continue to refuse all such observances on the grounds that they are not traditional recreational park-related activities. The Royal Parks has an important responsibility to promote the use and enjoyment of the parks for the widest number of people as possible. We know from research that visitors mainly come to the parks for recreational purposes. It is felt that the disadvantages to the public at large of allowing them would almost certainly outweigh the benefits to adherents of a particular religion or belief. The policy extends to the construction of structures within the estate with a religious significance. This policy applies to the eight Royal Parks.

This policy only relates to collective acts of worship. This policy does not extend to informal and unorganised private worship and prayer. This could include small groups of friends or a family unit. However, this is on the basis that no infrastructure, public speaking, or advertisements take place.

Cultural events that do not include collective religious activity are permitted subject to the standard approval process.

Enforcement of the Park Regulations is a matter for the Metropolitan Police.