

**From:** [Laura Cutler](#)  
**Subject:** Expected parkrun return date  
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## THE PARKRUN CODE

#loveparkrun



Hi all.

An official announcement will be forthcoming from parkrun HQ on Friday, please see the email below received this evening.

Seven Fields currently only holds the 5k parkrun, the Junior run takes place at Lydiard Park. The Swindon Junior parkrun Event Director has indicated that SBC, being the landowner, may be reluctant to

allow resumption on the date given. I have mentioned that we may, with your agreement, be able to host on a temporary basis.



## Restarting parkrun in England

Dear all,

Please note, we are sharing the following information in confidence, please refrain from sharing anything publicly until our announcement has been published on our blog and national social media channels, we expect tomorrow afternoon.

Should you or your event be approached by any member of the press, please remember there is no pressure to respond immediately to a journalist. We're here to support you with any media interactions, please forward all enquiries to [media@parkrun.com](mailto:media@parkrun.com).

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Following the publication on Monday of the Government's roadmap for exiting lockdown, we are excited to share our plans to return both junior and 5k parkrun events across England.

It's important to note that the roadmap presented on Monday applies to England only and whilst we are excited to begin working towards returning events over the coming months, we are not forgetting about our other UK communities in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. As things stand we are unable to pinpoint a date for returning either junior or 5k parkrun across these three devolved nations, but we continue to work closely with relevant authorities and stakeholders to understand when it may be appropriate.

In the following update we've tried to be open and transparent; to provide event teams, landowners and participants with as much of the detail and rationale as possible that sits behind the decisions we are now able to communicate. There will undoubtedly be questions that we haven't answered here. But over the coming weeks and as we work towards reopening, we will be providing numerous opportunities for people to get in touch, to ask questions, and to guide our communities through the process of restarting parkrun events in England.

As a registered charity, with legally-binding objects, we have an obligation to support the reopening of our events as soon as it is appropriate to do so. However, there are significant differences between our junior and 5k series.

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### junior parkrun

We are particularly pleased to see the prioritisation of children's sport and activity in the roadmap, and due to the smaller number of participants and relative lack of tourism, we are comfortable supporting a phased return of junior events, helping teams to reopen when they are ready to do so.

The published roadmap for England states that, *"from 29 March, formally organised outdoor sports – for adults and under 18s - can restart and will not be subject to gathering limits, but should be compliant with guidance issued by national governing bodies."*

With 4 April being Easter Sunday it would seem sensible to delay a further week to the 11th.

**Our expectation therefore is that junior parkrun events across England will be able to return, from Sunday 11 April.**

This provides six clear weeks between an announcement this Friday and first events returning, and so from Monday next week we will be working through the same reopening process that we started in December last year.

As communicated last year, in the absence of our 5k events, we will be reopening our junior parkrun series for children aged 4-10 only. We have thought long and hard about this temporary restriction over the last six months, and for the following reasons believe that it is the only appropriate way to reopen junior parkrun at this time:

- In the absence of 5k parkrun events, the number of registered children eligible for junior parkrun (aged 4-14) would effectively double, from roughly

300,000 to 600,000.

- By temporarily limiting our age categories to 4-10-year-olds only, we would be reducing the number of registered and eligible parkrunners by around 50%, bringing it back to a figure (around 300,000) similar to those previously registered to junior parkrun.
- Whilst we know that not all older children would attend a junior parkrun event, it is likely that a significant number would, with a high proportion of older, faster, and more competitive children coming over from our 5k events, likely to negatively impact the youngest participants.
- In the absence of being able to limit or cap event participation in any other way, this change allows us to mitigate the risks associated with junior parkrun events doubling in attendance 'overnight'.
- From the conversations and discussions we have had so far with third parties, we also believe that local stakeholders will be significantly more comfortable giving permission for events targeted at primary-school-age children.

Importantly, we are committed to this change being temporary, and as soon as 5k events return, 11-14 year olds will be welcomed back to junior parkrun. In the interim period, we will strongly encourage parkrunners aged 11-14 to volunteer, spectate, or accompany younger siblings as they take their first parkrun steps.

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### 5k parkrun

Excitingly, for the first time in six months, we now see a realistic timeframe for the return of 5k events in England.

Unlike junior parkrun, which can return in phases, our 5k events need to all come back at the same time, with the definition of 'all' probably being something north of 90%. This is due to the relatively large attendances, and significant opportunity for tourism, meaning that if only a subset of 5k events opened they would very likely be overwhelmed with unmanageable levels of attendance.

Based on the published guidance, our 5k events could technically return from Saturday 4 April. However, due to the other national restrictions in place, the expected level of infection at that time, and a number of our 5k events regularly exceeding 1,000 participants, we do not believe it would be appropriate for them to return this early.

Our experience from the autumn also demonstrated that in the absence of other, similar, events taking place, it is difficult to generate the level of support and permissions required to return. We therefore don't think it would be fair or appropriate to attempt to return too early.

With all the available information, we have determined that Step 3 presents the most realistic time for our 5k events to reopen, particularly when consideration is made to the significant number of external stakeholders whose support we also need. At this stage, and with the return of other large gatherings at both indoor and outdoor events, we expect there will be a much greater confidence in, and support for 5k parkrun events returning.

**Our expectation therefore is that all 5k parkrun events across England will return on Saturday 5 June.**

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### What next?

**Event teams:** For the moment, please don't do anything. We will be in touch shortly regarding the processes for reopening, and will aim to prioritise junior events in the short term.

**Landowners:** We know it's been challenging for everyone over the last 12 months, and so please be reassured that we will not just assume our events can simply turn up on 5 June. Over the coming weeks we will be in touch with all of you with the aim of renewing permissions prior to reopening.

**Everyone else -** Whilst we're pretty experienced in starting and supporting the delivery of free, weekly, timed, 5k and 2k events around the world, this project entails reopening almost 900 different events, impacting over three-million registered parkrunners. We've never done that in 14 weeks before, and will be learning as we go, so please do be patient.

Over the coming weeks we plan to hold a number of Q&A sessions through our social channels, and we will continue to provide updates via our blog and weekly newsletters. For further information on this decision and the restarting process you can listen to Vassos and Tom Williams on Free Weekly Timed podcast airing tomorrow (Friday 26 February).

If you have any questions please do get in touch with us [here](#).

Bringing back parkrun events is a huge step for so many of us toward the return of normal life. Of course nothing is guaranteed and there is still, understandably, some uncertainty and trepidation within the community. But working towards these dates gives us all hope.

parkrun will be back.

Thanks for your continued support.

**Nick Pearson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**parkrun Global**



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All the best.

Phil

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