



Tuesday 25th February 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you about a planned protest event on Friday morning at College Green. I am sure you will have seen or heard that Greta Thunberg is visiting Bristol and will speak at a Bristol Youth Strike 4 Climate event from 11am.

I have been asked by a number of Secondary and Primary schools for information so they can provide their own school communities with advice about the day.

We have seen a number of these themed protests over the last year however this one will be significantly larger and therefore I wanted to share some information with you and your children so that you can make your own safety and safeguarding arrangements.

The Police and Local Authority are unable to accurately predict how large this event will be however we have confirmation of people travelling from across the UK by car, bus, coach and train. Social Media has gone viral with interest which leads me to believe it will be thousands of people. I am told that in Hamburg approximately 60,000 came to see Greta speak. Whilst I am not suggesting it will be this big, you can see the scale of the potential attendance.

We are in contact with at least two of the organisers but I think it is fair to say that the event has grown so large that the usual controls, stewarding and safety measures that are routinely put in place are unlikely to be scaled up adequately therefore those attending will need to make their own informed decisions.

Working with a range of partners we have decided to close Park Street and the City Centre by the fountains to try and mitigate the risks associated with a crowd too large for the College Green open space. I know that some of you may have been sent correspondence advertising the event promising areas suitable for both Primary school children and the disabled. My experience of large scale 'organic' events is that this will probably be unachievable.

The organisers are also talking about a march around the City Centre to Broadmead and back to College Green. This added to the road closures is likely to cause significant traffic disruption for the whole city from the morning to evening busy commuting periods. Also, with so many unplanned coaches we are unable to create or support an effective traffic management plan for arrival, parking and departure which is likely to be problematic.

We will however do our best to keep the traffic flowing wherever possible. If you are local and attending I strongly suggest that you walk or cycle rather than drive.

In terms of big crowds, they are dynamic in nature and there is the potential for trips, slips, falls and crushing. People can easily be separated from their friends and family. Mobile phone signals can be intermittent due to saturation on the communications masts and so I suggest you make alternative arrangements for contact in these circumstances.

Police will be present within the City Centre throughout the event.

The Local Authority will endeavour to provide some portable toilet facilities and there are some clean water taps on and near College Green. It is unlikely that there will be enough provision for the numbers because we ultimately don't know how many will come and the short notice of this event. Those attending will need to be prepared for this eventuality.

I hope you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'A' and 'B'.

Supt. Andy Bennett
Bristol Police Commander & Force Hate Crime Lead

Avon and Somerset Police
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