



Sussex Police
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1 August 2013

Dear Resident,

You will be aware of anti-fracking protests currently taking place in the village and I wanted to write to you to explain Sussex Police's role in policing them.

Officers working at the site have to balance the absolute legitimate right for people to protest peacefully but also uphold the legal right of the company to operate and we are doing all we can to keep this balance right.

Our aim is to keep policing resources at the site to a minimum while ensuring that the safety of those protesting is not compromised and that we are protecting people's rights. This is a very complex thing to judge and is changing on a daily basis.

Our primary tactic is to talk to people and officers are going to great lengths to explain why police are there and what is acceptable behaviour in terms of their own safety and the safety of those working at the site.

When we police these kinds of demonstrations we will always look for a negotiated response. We would much rather talk to people and persuade them to move than use coercion.

It is difficult to police in cases where protestors are blocking accesses, climbing or standing in front of lorries and putting themselves and others in danger. We have, unfortunately, seen arrests as part of the policing operation.

Some pictures in the media look dramatic. What they often don't show is the length officers have gone to to persuade protestors to move. If protestors block the way and it is lawful for the company to operate then they need to move. If they are repeatedly asked to move, and at times are putting their own safety at risk, some level of coercion has to be used. There are a range of tactics that officers are trained to use and the use of pressure points is one of these. This technique is considered proportionate and uses the minimum of force necessary.

It is clear that this protest looks like it may go on for some weeks and I realise that this may have an effect on everyone in the village. You will see officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Team out in the village talking to residents in the coming days and weeks and I would encourage you to speak to them if you have any questions or concerns.

Some people have asked how much the policing operation has cost but we don't have the cost at this time and it is changing every day. We will be transparent when we are in a position to do so.

If you would like to talk to someone in relation to the policing operation in the village please call 101 and ask for a member of the Mid Sussex Neighbourhood Policing Team or email midsussexnpt@sussex.pnn.police.uk

Chief Inspector Jon Hull

Mid Sussex District Commander

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