

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: SG statement
Date: 19 March 2021 13:24:16
Attachments: [redacted]

[redacted]

We spoke – here is our statement which will issue shortly.

Thanks

[redacted]

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf has confirmed that the fixture between Celtic and Rangers on Sunday 21 March will go ahead.

He said: “Ministers and officials have had extensive engagement with both clubs, the SPFL, Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council ahead of the game.

“Celtic and Rangers have strongly emphasised to their supporters throughout this week that they must stay at home and not gather. I welcome their positive and constructive approach to working with us to ensure the game can safely take place behind closed doors.

“Police Scotland have confirmed there will be a significant police presence in the area and any disorder or gathering of fans will be dealt with.

“I urge the fans to listen to the messages from their clubs, the police and government to stay at home.

“I also encourage Celtic and Rangers – and all other clubs in Scotland – to continue to encourage their supporters to stay home during games until they are permitted to return. With a number of high-profile games scheduled for the remainder of the season, it is important there is no complacency and pressure is maintained to ensure we continue to suppress the virus.”

Mairi Gougeon, Minister for Public Health and Sport, said:

“I am grateful to both clubs for the efforts they have made to reinforce the important stay-at-home message. We are still at a crucial point in the pandemic, and it is absolutely essential that everyone observes lockdown restrictions and avoids mass gatherings. To do otherwise seriously jeopardises the huge progress we have made as a country to tackle the virus.”

[redacted]

[redacted]

Active Scotland Division

Directorate for Population Health Improvement

Scottish Government
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From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Media [OFFICIAL]
Date: 08 March 2021 09:05:54

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[redacted]

Morning initial read out below are the lines the division issues late yesterday, as you might expect with such large numbers our ability to issue FPN's was really limited, I will update you further after our 0930

Alan

Alan Speirs
Assistant Chief Constable
Professionalism & Assurance

Tel: 01786 [redacted]
Mob: [redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 08 March 2021 09:00
To: [redacted]; [redacted]
Subject: FW: Media [OFFICIAL]

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ACC's.

Media line for info...

Cheers

[redacted]

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland, Divisional Commander for Greater Glasgow Division, said:

"On Sunday, 7 March, 2021, a pre-planned policing operation was instigated after Rangers FC were confirmed as league champions."

"Despite the coronavirus regulations and the prohibition of gatherings, our officers were faced with a very difficult set of circumstances as many thousands of supporters gathered to celebrate across a number of different venues."

"Our priority was public safety and this included reducing the risk of disorder, road safety and effective crowd management among the complexities of a vociferous crowd. This included

established crowd control measures to prevent serious disorder in multiple areas and protect the public.

“An appropriate policing response was in place throughout the day and officers continually engaged and encouraged compliance with coronavirus regulations.”

“Over the course of the day a number of minor injuries were sustained by members of the public, some of which were as a result of intoxication.”

“Where it was appropriate to do so officers moved to enforcement for a variety of offences including breaches of coronavirus regulations, acts of disorder, pyrotechnic use and a number of arrests for assaulting police officers and sectarian related breach of the peace.”

“In total, 28 people were arrested and seven people were issued with a fixed penalty notices or will be the subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal.”

“I am grateful to our officers who showed great commitment and professionalism throughout the course of the day, many of whom put their own health at risk during a challenging set of circumstances.”

[redacted][redacted]

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agus cuir ?s dhan phost-d.

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Subject: Briefing [OFFICIAL]
Date: 08 March 2021 11:53:28
Attachments: [Post Event Briefing 08.03.21.doc](#)

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Claire,

As discussed,

Malcolm

Deputy Chief Constable
Crime and Operational Support
Police Scotland

T: 01259 [redacted]
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Disclosable under FOISA 2002		No	
Author/Contact	Supt Emma Croft/ Chief Supt Mark Sutherland	Department / Unit	Specialist Operations Greater Glasgow Division
Date Created	08.03.21	Telephone	
Attachments: None			

Rangers FC SPFL Title Win – Events 6/7 March 2021

Background

Whilst the decisions to allow the Scottish Football League to continue during the pandemic could not have necessarily predicted what stage Covid-19 would have reached by the conclusion of the season, it was always predictable that most likely Rangers or Celtic would win the league, and this would be a significant occasion for large fan groups in either scenario.

Prior to the weekend of 6/7 March 2021, Rangers FC held a significant lead in the Scottish Premier Football League. Police Scotland sought to work closely with Rangers FC, Glasgow City Council and Scottish Government in preparation for a title win and planned a proportionate policing response as a contingency should the title be won on Sunday 7th March.

In the lead up to these events Rangers FC did not accept responsibility for the response of their fans in the event of the season concluding with a league win for them, instead encouraging celebrations through various fora, including statements from leaders within the club.

Saturday 6th March 2021

Following the home match at Ibrox a large crowd of several thousand formed outside the main entrance to the Stadium to welcome the players and Manager on his arrival. This was supported by a pre-planned Community Policing response with national resources and mounted officers. Officers engaged with the crowd and maintained public safety over a prolonged period, during which a significant number of pyrotechnics were set off. The crowd although in celebratory mood was dense in nature, the vast majority showed no adherence to social distancing.

The priority for officers was public safety and the safe arrival of the team, dispersal of the crowd was not a safe, achievable or proportionate option at that time and police cordons were put in place to ensure the team arrived

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safely while supporters were encouraged to return home using the stay at home message.

On conclusion of the match a small number returned to continue the celebrations, the Rangers Team engaged the crowd through gates and by hanging out of open windows despite assurances from the Club that no such activities would happen. 2 arrests were made during the event for minor disorder.

On conclusion of the event engagement with Police Scotland and Rangers FC continued to encourage the Club to strongly support a stay at home message. Whilst assurances were given this did not materialise. Further engagement did not result in any further statement relating to fan behaviour or responsibilities being issued, despite numerous statements encouraging celebration, including from the Manager. Both the Manager and players actively engaged from within the stadium with fans gathered in disgraceful displays of encouragement, in solid opposition to the public safety issues arising, to their responsibilities given the privileges under which football operates, and to the commitments they had made around public communications.

Sunday 7th March 2021

A significant pre planned policing operation was in place to support the subsequent events of the day including a medium sized Public Order operation.

The Celtic match finished 0-0 making Rangers FC champions and the policing plan at Ibrox Stadium and George Square was instigated.

A significant crowd in the thousands formed outside Ibrox Stadium in a celebratory mood. Numerous pyrotechnics were again emitted, with no adherence to social distancing or personal protection measures placing police officers at risk.

At this time a large crowd in the thousands also built in George Square, of Rangers Fans in a party mood. Throughout the day this crowd built to approximately 7000 individuals in possession of alcohol and a significant number of smoke emitting devices and pyrotechnics. Again, there was no adherence to social distancing and although officers continued to engage the numbers and conditions presented made this very challenging.

While vociferous there was no significant disorder or disruption to the community and fans while being permitted followed police direction, other than the stay at home message.

At approx. 17.00 hrs Police Scotland officers escorted a large group from Ibrox to George Square. In doing so the police were able to control this crowd maximising their safety and that of the public. This also provided Police Scotland with an opportunity to reduce the number of venues to just George Square with the remaining supporters dispersed from Ibrox Stadium.

It was assessed that any attempt to prevent the crowd gathering or subsequently to disperse the crowd would result in significant and prolonged

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serious disorder and would lead to similar outbreaks of disorder elsewhere across Glasgow.

Again the priority for officers was public safety and the safety of those gathered, dispersal of the crowd was not a safe, achievable or proportionate option at that time and police cordons were put in place.

The operational tactic was to tolerate the gathering and to mitigate where possible using engagement, encouragement and enforcement where practical.

In total, 28 people were arrested and seven people were issued with a fixed penalty notices or will be the subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal.

When the numbers in George Square reduced to a manageable level officers implemented additional cordons to prevent new supporters joining and slowly dispersed those present.

The community impact of such celebrations is being considered and reviewed.

In terms of outcomes, the potentially deleterious impact of the celebrations by fans on Covid-19 transmissions is highly regrettable. The policing operation rightly considered these within the wider bounds of public and officer safety, and prevented escalation. There were no serious injuries, no significant damage, and no significant outbreaks of disorder, which is a credit to the officer involved in making such judgements.

Looking forward Police Scotland will re-engage with Rangers FC, Glasgow City Council and Scottish Government to debrief the incidents, wider implications for football, and consider the events of their forthcoming match against Celtic FC on 21st March which will likely have significant implications for further celebrations.

A full debrief with Officers and staff involved in the various operations will also take place to ensure their support and welfare.

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From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Policing approach to Rangers gatherings [OFFICIAL]
Date: 08 March 2021 10:35:00

Thanks Malcolm – anything pre-emptive PS wishes to add re the Old Firm game next weekend may also be useful – as in working with the clubs and GCC etc.

Clare

Clare Hicks
Deputy Director,

Police Division, Safer Communities
Scottish Government

I am currently working from home and you can contact me on: [redacted]

From: Graham, Malcolm
Sent: 08 March 2021 10:00
To: Hicks C (Clare)
Subject: RE: Policing approach to Rangers gatherings [OFFICIAL]

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Will do my best

From: [redacted] [@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)
Sent: 08 March 2021 09:55
To: [redacted] [@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.pnn.police.uk)>; [redacted] [@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.pnn.police.uk)>;
[redacted] [@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.pnn.police.uk)> **Cc:** [redacted] [@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk);
[redacted] [@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk);
[redacted] [@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)
Subject: RE: Policing approach to Rangers gatherings [OFFICIAL]

Thanks have sight of the statement which is really helpful. We need to get briefing up by 11.15 so before then would be ideal. I think briefing is just after 12.

Clare

Clare Hicks
Deputy Director,

Police Division, Safer Communities
Scottish Government

I am currently working from home and you can contact me on: [redacted]

From: [redacted] [@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.pnn.police.uk)>
Sent: 08 March 2021 09:54
To: [redacted] [@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)>; [redacted] [@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.pnn.police.uk)>; [redacted] [@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:[redacted]@scotland.pnn.police.uk)>
Cc: [redacted] [@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)>; [redacted] [@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)> **Subject:** RE: Policing approach to Rangers gatherings [OFFICIAL]

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Clare,

Should have this to you by midday latest, what time is the briefing today? There is a media release with arrest and FPN numbers out this morning already.

Thanks

Malcolm

From: ^[redacted] @scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Sent: 07 March 2021 18:04
To: ^[redacted] @scotland.pnn.police.uk; ^[redacted] @scotland.pnn.police.uk; ^[redacted] @scotland.pnn.police.uk
Cc: ^[redacted] @scotland.gsi.gov.uk; ^[redacted] @scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Subject: Policing approach to Rangers gatherings

Hi Malcolm/Alan

Following up my text to Alan, Ministers would be grateful for information tomorrow morning setting out policing activity over the weekend re Rangers activity under covid restrictions. It would be very helpful if that included the number of FPNs and/or arrests etc.

I understand DFM will be doing the daily briefing and anticipates this will come up.

Many thanks

Clare

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Subject: Topical question from Sandra White as discussed
Date: 09 March 2021 09:29:00

Malcolm

Question from Sandra White MSP below along with potential supplementaries – would be helpful to have a quick word re responses:

1. Sandra White: To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Police Scotland regarding the incidents at George Square and Glasgow city centre at the weekend, including what safeguards will be put in place to ensure that COVID-19 restrictions are followed and there is no repeat of such behaviour. ([S5T-02697](#))

Sup 1: Call for an independent inquiry into the handling of the situation which flouted all restrictions including what discussions Police Scotland had with Rangers FC regarding their responsibility in discouraging fans from gathering.

Sup 2: With another football fixture in the next couple of weeks what lessons will be learned and what measures will Police Scotland and the football clubs put in place to ensure these scenes are not replicated.

Clare Hicks
Deputy Director,
Police Division, Safer Communities
Scottish Government

I am currently working from home and you can contact me on: [redacted]

**CSJ WEEKLY CALL WITH CHIEF CONSTABLE AND DCC GRAHAM – 11
MARCH 2021**

Attendees:

- Humza Yousaf, Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Chair)
- Iain Livingstone, Chief Constable
- DCC Malcolm Graham, Police Scotland

- Clare Hicks, Deputy Director
- Murray McVicar, Police Division (note)

Scottish Premiership celebrations

- The policing of the weekend's celebrations of Rangers winning the Scottish Premiership was discussed. The Chief Constable said that, while this had been a challenging situation, he was confident on the appropriateness of the handling. It had been a dynamic situation, with judgements taken on the ground by those closest to the events and best placed to decide what response was required. In these situations, judgements are based on training around legality and proportionately, balancing legitimate interests and rights. He welcomed the public comments that had been made by the First Minister and CSJ.
- It was agreed that the Independent Advisory Group chaired by John Scott, was the appropriate forum to examine the policing response.
- It was agreed that it important to maintain good relationships with football clubs, given the influence they are able to exert on fans.
- The policing of the upcoming Old Firm game was also discussed. This would be challenging, with possible interventions required to maintain public order and safety. The Chief Constable was clear that interventions to guarantee public health would be more challenging were large numbers of people to gather together. There is a great deal of preparatory work underway, including a session with both clubs on the afternoon of 12 March. There will additional resources and contingency planning in order to provide a robust response if necessary, recognising that the wider policing of Scotland will still need to be in place. The events of the past weekend will be considered in this context.
- CSJ thanked the Chef Constable for the update and said that he hoped recent remarks made by himself and FM would provide assurance that policing had been placed in an invidious position by the recent events. He also accepted that it is legitimate for questions to be asked in Parliament and elsewhere and for the IAG to consider these issues. The meeting with the clubs would be crucial in ensuring that there is a concerted effort to ensure that fans do not congregate for the Old Firm game. CSJ said that extremely clear external

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communications would be necessary from both clubs through the following week if the match is to go ahead.