

# West Bromwich Neighbourhood Policing Team

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*Entries in this publication generally relate to events that have occurred over the previous 6 days. Personal details of individuals related to our dealings are not disclosed, in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998). If you have any further queries, please email the team, and we will get back to you.*

## KISAAN RALLY

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December, a large Kisaan rally took place across the West Midlands, with a large congregation gathering at the Guru Har Rai Gurdwara in West Bromwich, to form a procession and drive towards the Consulate General of India, in Birmingham.

As a result of the rally, traffic around West Bromwich town centre, Junction 1 of the M5 and around the Expressway became gridlocked for over four hours, between 09:30 and 14:00. While the force had been aware that the rally was due to happen - and had organised units to be in place for it - there was no identified organiser for the event. This prevented the force from working alongside the event to ensure it was conducted both legally and safely.

## REACTION FROM THE FORCE

Whilst the majority of the rally followed police instructions when required, there were a few incidents throughout the day. Across Sandwell and West Birmingham, officers on the ground prosecuted a number of drivers for road traffic offences including careless driving and issued directions to leave to more than 1000 people. Furthermore, three people have been issued with a £100 fixed penalty notice after refusing to comply with regulations following a direction to leave. A press release from West Midlands Police reads:

*“Although Birmingham and Sandwell are no longer in lockdown, both areas remain on very high alert in tier three, and strict regulations introduced by the Government remain in place to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus.*

*People are reminded that the current situation means that these types of gatherings pose a risk to public health. Personal choices matter and we simply ask people to act responsibly, and to work with us wherever possible, in order to protect others from harm”.*

## STATEMENT FROM SUPERINTENDENT SARAH BURTON, LEADER OF THE POLICE RESPONSE FOR THE RALLY:

Knowing that the rally was going ahead, and that prior information suggested the rally would draw attendees from other counties, Superintendent Sarah Burton was designated as lead for the police response. She provided the following statement in the aftermath of the rally:

*“While we absolutely respect and support the right to demonstrate, there are requirements that need to be met by law. An organiser needs to be identified and the police should be notified in advance. It’s very unfortunate that didn’t happen today, and we will be taking steps to identify the people responsible.*

*“Unfortunately some smoke flares were thrown from moving vehicles, putting other road users in danger and as part of the post incident review CCTV, drone, body worn video, and camera footage will be reviewed to identify any offences, and those involved will be prosecuted retrospectively.”*

### LARGE KNIFE RECOVERED BY OFFICERS

Following one of our regular patrols around the town centre, officers found a large kitchen knife, stashed close to the Metro lines. The weapon was uncovered during a regular sweep on the morning of Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December, and has been taken to the station for destruction.

The consistent undertaking of weapon sweeps around the town centre is something that occurs all year round, although the sweeps are intensified during term time for local schools, colleges and sixth form, in a bid to combat under-25 violence. Police Community Support Officers can often be seen patrolling around the Metro lines and town centre, searching for any weapons/illegal substances that may have been stashed.



### ACTION TAKEN AGAINST PROLIFIC OFFENDERS

Over the past few days, significant progress has been made in an effort to combat a group of offenders, responsible for a number of incidents around West Bromwich Bus Station in recent months. After liaising with Safer Travel, British Transport Police, Sandwell CCTV control room and Sandwell Council's Environmental Protection Officers, the main offenders have been identified and given Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) or Community Protection Notices (CPNs) for their behaviour. The group have also been issued with a multitude of fines in recent months, although these CPWs and CPNs will allow officers to provide more substantial fines, or even arrest members of the group, should they breach the conditions imposed! Furthermore, the issue of these documents will prove to be vital when officers seek an injunction from the courts.

### COVID ENFORCEMENT

As has been seen for several months now, members of the neighbourhood policing team have been tasked with patrolling the town centre, paying close attention to shopping centres, along with any locations where we expect large groups to congregate. Given how Sandwell, and the entirety of the West Midlands has remained as a 'Tier 3' area for Covid-19 following the government meeting on 17/12/2020, we believe it is essential that these patrols continue, and that people continue to comply with social distancing guidelines. This is particularly important in the run-up to Christmas, as supermarkets, shopping centres and other indoor spaces become particularly busy with people attempting their Christmas shopping.

By continuing to wear masks in public, maintaining social distancing and keeping good personal hygiene – for staff and for customers – it may help to get Sandwell out of Tier 3 sooner than it would otherwise!

### SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES!

#### Twitter:

@WestBromwichWMP

#### Instagram:

@BlackCountryPolice

#### Facebook:

Sandwell Police

*Do not use the social media pages to report crime. All crime should be reported via 101, or 999 in an emergency.*

