

5 NOVEMBER 2009

CHAIR: Victoria Borwick

Panel: Dee Doocey, Joanne McCartney, Valerie Brasse, Clive Lawton, Kirsten Hearn

Note: Identical initials for Valerie Brasse and Victoria Borwick.

VB ... (inaudible) isn't it lovely to have the sunshine? I'm very pleased that we've chosen this very special date and I think the fifth of November is a perfect day for people who believe in free speech to voice their views. Hopefully - I'm hoping you haven't got gunpowder in the basement of this building! But anyway. So today is all about listening to you. We have had several meetings where we have looked at what the police have done at a variety of demonstrations and we're trying to make sure that we use the powers of the MPA to ensure there is a difference between legal and lawful protest and, obviously, illegal activity. So, I'm sure people will be starting to continuing to join us during the day, so people will have a coffee and come and join us; this is not a formal event, in the sense that I'm very happy (inaudible) get up and wander about as, as they wish. I'm going to let my fellow members of my Panel introduce themselves, but the most important thing today is that we want to listen to you. We have to realise that in a year there are hundreds of demonstrations, many of which we're unaware of. So the point about today is that there's lots of good things going along and there are some, inevitably, some things have happened in April that were not as, as we would all have liked, probably. But we're ready to hear about any experience, from any demonstration. This – the whole topic of this is public order policing. It's not just on what happened at G20, so if any of you have experience of other events that you've been to, please would you share those with us. As you all know, probably, the Metropolitan Police Authority, which is who we are all representing today, sets the policy and the overall framework of policing. We don't, obviously, get involved with the individuals and the details of day to day policing; that's down to the police. But it's not a police day today. This is a day for you to talk directly to us and tell us what you feel about public order policing. Some of you have submitted questions in advance and to save time, we'll take those, first, but then I hope to hear from as many people in the room as possible. Anyway, my name is Victoria Borwick; I'm, I'm part of the – the – I'm the Chairman of the Civil Liberties Panel and obviously I have a couple of housekeeping points I do also need to say.

If we have to leave City Hall in an emergency, you'll hear an announcement asking to leave the building. There are two fire escape staircases, which exit at ground level. When you leave the building, please make your way to the assembly point on Potter's Field Park. Well, Potter's Field Park, in case you don't know, as I didn't when I came here, is the large park that you can see down there. The other thing is today will be webcast and it is available on the MPA Website. So first of all I shall pass to my fellow colleagues and ask you to introduce themselves. Joanne, perhaps we could start (inaudible).

JMcC Yes. Joanne McCartney, a member of the Police Authority and also a London Assembly member.

JJ Jenna Jones, a member of the Police Authority and an Assembly member.

DD Dee Doocey; I'm a member of the Police Authority and an Assembly member.

VB Valerie Brasse, member of the Police Authority.

CL Clive Lawton, an Independent Member of the Police Authority

KH Kirsten Hearn, Independent Member of the Police Authority.

VB Thank you very, very much indeed. Now - I'm very happy to answer more detailed questions, but actually today is not about me speaking; it's about listening to you. So we're going to cover it, I think, or try and break the day into three specific areas. I hope you've all got copies of the Agenda and also a questionnaire that has been sent out. If you know of other people who'd like to communicate or give evidence to us, separately or privately, please encourage them to do so.

We're going to start with planning for public order policing, planning for events. I know there are various of you who have given me indications that you think the communication prior to events is crucial, so we're going to first talk about the planning, then we'll move on to policing of events and those of you I know who have particular interest in what happened at G20 and also generally communications as a whole. Obviously I'm very happy to hear not just about G20, because this is about policing and public order protest. So, let's start off. I think the first question I've had submitted to me is from a **Mr Delahay**, if he's here? **Mr Delahay**, would you like to start us off today?

(inaudible)

VB Now may I ask those of you who do want to speak, to make it easier, so that it can be webcast and we can hear, if they could possibly stand up and say who they are, when they start. I'm very sorry, **Mr Delahay**; my fault. I should have asked you beforehand. Could you possibly stand up and speak into the microphone, (inaudible)?

(inaudible)

Oh, fine. Well, I've got a – I, I have been told that your questions are, What caused the Civil Liberties Panel to be created? What issues will it be considering, first, and what authority does the MPI - A have to drive change? Setting up of the Civil Liberties Panel was in train, actually, before April. We decided that, inevitably, after the events of April this should be our first focus and once we've concluded this report we'll be moving on to other, to other topics, for example, topics that have been suggested to us, for example that (inaudible), examining the DNA databases and possibly some of the cameras that are in London, so there's a variety of topics that have been suggested to us, but actually our main focus at the moment is trying to make sure that we do a useful report as far as improving the policing of public order demonstrations.

Okay, any other questions, so moving on to the planning for the event. Again, I've had a few indications that people would like to talk about pre-planning and work that went on prior to either G20 or any other event. Can I ask for some questions? Sir. And may I ask you possibly to stand up, so that we can all hear you clearly.

Yes, my name is **Kamal Siddiqi**. I Chair the Metropolitan Police Independent Advisory Group, (inaudible) and Member of Disability Group (inaudible). (inaudible) what I believe (inaudible) or anyone organised anything and in creating the Disability (inaudible) to come into the (inaudible) the police and other people must (inaudible) and (inaudible) protection to the disabled people. Lot of people can't walk; some people on the wheel chairs so (inaudible) arrangement and (inaudible) needed by particularly (inaudible) whatever happened I'd don't want to repeat, (inaudible) G20 (inaudible) so in fact (inaudible) these sort of things must be (inaudible) and fully aware and put down a special place but (inaudible) disabled people to come down and (inaudible) and the police must protect (inaudible) anybody (inaudible) but in fact if we (inaudible) and the organisation (inaudible) the special place and the special arrangements for those people then in fact (inaudible) and safety type and the safety is very important actually, so disabled people must be given equality in all aspects (inaudible) thank you.

Thank you very much indeed. I think that's extremely important. As you're probably aware, we have a member of our Panel who is also disabled and she's extremely good at making sure that we don't forget some vital and important parts that disabled people may have. Kirsten, do you wish to make any comments?

Yes, thank you. I, I think it's - one of the issues that's been coming up again and again and I think you've just demonstrated that, is, is that everybody has a right to, to protest and - but some people don't feel safe and we need to make sure that when we're policing protests, that we are actually taking account of the needs of disabled people, people with young children, older people and others who may feel vulnerable in large crowds but who still want to be there. And certainly you know, there's a lot of, lot of disabled people saying "Oh, quite afraid to go to the April demonstrations because they wouldn't feel safe" and I think when we're looking at policing we need to look at how we do so, to make sure that, that people are safe, who may find it more difficult to move around.

Thank you very much indeed. Okay, so a couple of other questions. Do people feel that they received information usefully before and let's talk about G20 (inaudible) any other event. Well, anybody who's planned a demonstration and want to talk about the communication they had with the police prior to an event? (inaudible) may we have a - (inaudible) - thank you. Perhaps I may ask you stand up and give your name.

My name's **Frances Wright** and I'm from the Climate Camp legal team and I was involved with G20 and then later the Climate Camp at Blackheath in the summer. For the G20 in probably about a month before, we emailed as the legal team, we met and asked for reassurances that some of the things that we'd experienced with Kent police the previous year at Kingsnorth would not be repeated and one of the assurances we were seeking were that police officers would wear, would wear their numbers. We also sought contact details too, in order that liaison could take place at the G20 with (inaudible) Commanders on the day and we didn't get a response. We emailed a week before the G20 - again, we didn't actually achieve a response, but we did manage to make contact through previous personal connections with (inaudible) Commander. So liaison was set up for the day. However, the Met were commenting in the press that some types of organi—protesters, including the Climate Camp, did not liaise with the police, so we did make contact and we did meet with Gold and Silver, the day before the G20 and I obviously I, I was at that meeting, I obviously haven't learned police speak, because I think we had very different impressions of what was conveyed to us. From a Climate Camp perspective, we organise and prepare for an event very openly and really much everything is open to all for information, including all Minutes of our meetings. So there's very little that we can convey, that's new to the police whom we meet. Nonetheless, we did give an estimate of, of numbers that we'd already given to the press and we had our usual discussion about location. I believe the Met believe that we

came out being clear that they were not going to allow the process to continue overnight. I have to say I came out being unsure whether or not they'd even allow the protest to take place, so – it was not clear, in terms of communication to us. And I've put that in contrast to Blackheath, where there was a very different style of communication that went on before the Camp. And I think looking ahead, I'd, I'd really like lessons to be learned from that. It was extremely helpful to understand each other's positions; we didn't always agree but we did explore our differences. It was extremely helpful to have a co-conversation and seek to reach some mutual understanding on areas where it was easy to do so, so yeah, I think we'll have some easy wins. We can talk about toilets; that's safe. We can talk about arrest places and where people would go if they're arrested and I think that is the basis for building up relationships for the future. It was also extremely helpful at the Met and shared their tactical plan, were very open about this, enabled us to go and see the training of police officers in public order and that actual-- that certainly, from our legal team's perspective, developed our understanding of what it's like for officers on the ground and I think actually has an effect in us not over responding to officers picking up sometimes. (inaudible) yeah, that's fair. Thank you.

VB That's very, very helpful indeed. Thank you very much indeed. Now, anybody else like to talk about prior, pre-event planning before we come on to events today? Yes, sir. May I ask you to possibly stand up and I think there's a microphone for you.

Yes. It's **Bob Hodgson**. It's not really about pre-planning; it's taking up one of the points from the previous speaker. She referred to the non wearing of ID on some officers who were involved in some of the incidents and clearly, in a democracy, when we give power to people like the police, we expect to be able to identify who it is who is exercising that power; it's fundamental. The other – the previous speaker also referred to lessons learned from the Kent protest when ID, similarly, was missing when protesters were mishandled or handled there. This goes back very deep into minority groups' consciousness. Blair Peach, the appalling case twenty years ago, when SPG officers jumped out of a van, beat up a load of black kids at a 'bus stop and then refused even to tell the Commissioner of the time, who had done it. Since then, vans were marked. Now we thought this issue had been sorted out, but yet again, both at Kent and at G20, we find officers sometimes in the thick of questionable-- questionable action, not having ID on, so (a) what's the MPA's position on that, which I can guess, (b) what do you do to enforce it and (c) what are the reasons for police in uniform not to have their correct identification on them?

VB Thank you very much indeed. I know, I think that **Chris Gidden** has asked a question on this – (inaudible) are you here, **Chris Gidden**? No, (inaudible) I know, we've had a quest— a similar question.

(inaudible)

VB Oh, fine. I'll come to you, **Nick**, (inaudible)

Maybe that's –

VB No, it's not.

Maybe that's –

VB No, no. (inaudible). I think we all absolutely know that of course all police should be identified at all times. Absolutely no doubt about that and in fact when we went down to Gravesend to see the – the training down there, we saw (inaudible) badly held on with sort of one strip of Velcro and you know, we actually saw a – a training session and even in the training session that we saw, we – they came off, so I mean, you know, and that was just sort of simulated, so I think the point is, you've got to sort out a better system whereby that doesn't continue but

(inaudible) I really do have to come back on that. If we ask police officers, the writ—my question was, what could have been the reasons for police not wearing it? Now, people in the community simply do not wear the fact that it was substandard Velcro. I mean, if you're telling us quite categorically it was,

VB That's right, I'm not

(inaudible)

VB I'm merely say—I'm sorry, I'm

Yeah

VB ..absolutely not and I absolutely agree with you and I think each of the Committee members here would agree with you, that the police should be identified at all times.

Right

VB But I'm merely saying

Yeah

VB That-- to tell you that having observed this, it's exactly what I believe;

Okay

VB I have seen the substandard Velcro, so they should do something about it, so one of our recommendations, as no doubt will be, that we cannot go on thinking that substandard Velcro is good enough, because

No –

VB .. it isn't.

No. Okay

VB We, we, we know it's not working.

My, my very last point. Minority groups who, who've had a history of difficulty with the police simply do not wear the business of substandard Velcro.

VB I accept that.

We suggest--

VB I'm merely saying that we actually witnessed it.

That's right; we suggest that if police officers are going to whack someone inappropriately, the reason for them not having the ID is they don't want to be identified.

VB Absolutely. I mean

Okay.

VB Absolutely we agree. I mean, we think it should be tied to every level of every clothing, including their underwear, in that sense.

The reason we're here today is not to defend the police. The reason that we're here today is to hear, to hear what you've got to say. We're not here to answer questions. We're making notes about how we can improve things.

VB (inaudible). So, the lady with the – the green shirt. Yes?

Hello. My name's **Anna Berger**. I'm from the Green Party and defend peaceful protest. My question is, is actually about police ID badges, so it's all (inaudible) on very, very clearly from the previous speaker. As there seems to be such a problem with police badges being covered up or lost during public order policing, wouldn't it make sense to use a different system for displaying police ID numbers? For the purposes of public order policing in particular, it would make sense if the police could wear bibs or similar, with their ID number on the back, or the front and the back, a style similar to that of a footballer's T shirt, for ease of identification. Will the Panel investigate this, along with other alternatives for displaying numbers, in order to resolve this problem once and for all?

VB Thank you very much indeed. Okay, we might as well take a few more questions on that, but then I do actually want to move on to other events of the day. Lady in red, please.

Martha Jean Baker, from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. And just on that, again on that issue, there seems to be a real disconnect between on the one hand, I mean this goes into the communication a little bit, but what, what, what the police and the Police Authority say is going to happen and what, what is ac—(inaudible) and how individual police act, and I have been in situations where I have seen people go up – up to police and I've done it myself and say, I don't see an ID on you. What is your number? And they have been quite belligerent and hostile.

VB Right. Now any other views on – to follow on from that? Gentleman with the blue?

Thank you. **John Turner**, from the National Union of Journalists.

Mm hm

Specifically on the – on the issue of briefing

VB Yes

..prior to events. We are aware that police officers at, at Inspector level are briefed on how to provide access to the media, presented with the press card so that they're aware of what the press card looks like and how media workers should be treated, but we find that in practice this doesn't translate to the officers on the ground,

Mm hm

..who quite frequency (sic) we don't recognise that that press card, we've never seen one of these before, how do we know it's genuine?

VB We don't recognise your press card?

We – we're saying

VB Fine

We, we've never seen this before, we, how do we know it's genuine, how do we - you didn't download it from the Internet, so there seems to be a difficulty between the information passing from Inspector level to the officers on the ground.

VB Okay. Anybody else like to talk about the – lady with the – the middle, please?

Thank you. **Rhona Freedman**, from Bindmans. I've got a question which goes to planning and briefing and also will impact, when we talk later about the events of the day and that's the tension between what seems to have happened at the G20 protest, which was planning at a high level for potential widespread disorder and planning for peaceful protest and how those two things can be effectively managed and there seems to have been, arguably, lip service paid to planning for – facilitating peaceful protest, in accordance with Articles 10 and 11 of the ECHR and more gearing up to and expecting and – and that's reflected in the public pronouncements from the police before the event, for criminal offences, widespread disorder and, and when we get into talking about the detail of what happened on the day, the cordoning, the distraction and violence, that's where that problem was visited and I think we're going to re—return to that later on.

VB Thank you very much; well (inaudible) as you probably know, some members of the HMIC are actually here and they are producing the more detailed report from us – no doubt they will also be listening to those comments. Gentleman in the blue.

Andrew Nay, (inaudible) Peaceful Protest. I'd just like to follow on to that, because (inaudible) actually had experience in – as an employee put close to Bishopsgate (inaudible) actually worked for a charity rather than one of the businesses that, that obviously received some quite alarming advice. But I'd just kind of like to follow on to say that I think in terms of planning as well as on the day, the (inaudible) the advice offered to business and media also seemed to be on you know the worst case scenario and my works offered, offered considerably alarming advice over the demonstrations, prior to it and on the day; I think we

were advised not to attend and obviously and obviously I'd – friends who worked very close to the situation in Bishopsgate and were told to come in plain clothes and - and I think there's some real questions to be raised, really, about why there's this constant planning for a worst case scenario and people aren't, you know, peop-- people aren't engaged properly and, and in terms of it being explained to us as to why people are going (inaudible) protesting and (inaudible) come up with this rather dangerous scenario, where there's, there's likely to be violent disorder rather than being properly briefed on exactly, exactly the kind of – the full range of outcomes that could happen on the day.

VB So, just (inaudible) said, you work locally.

(inaudible)

VB That's a very good point. Thank you. Okay, a few more on this (inaudible) 'cause I know we must move on, time-wise, to actually talking about events on the day. Yes, (inaudible) could we just have the microphone? Thank you.

Hello. **Leo Murray** from Plane Stupid? I've a number of observations to make about the – the policing in, at G20 but I would restrict those questions to the, to the planning. This is going to sound like a small point, but it's not. I would like the Panel to ask the Met for the details of their communication with the Bank, the branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland which was not boarded up in advance of the G20. Now, all of the, all of the surrounding businesses were and RBS was a – there was a lot of anger towards RBS at the time, amongst protesters and I think that very, very well known and recognised and from – from my perspective, that looks to me very suspicious. It looks to me as though they were deliberately not asked or – to board up the – the property, or, or perhaps asked not to board up the property, in order to provide a very clear opportunity for – you know, op-- opportunistic criminal damage to the, to the building which could then be photographed and, and was in fact the - the main photograph that, that was used in coverage of the event and, and given that all of the other surrounding businesses were boarded up, I, I, I think there's definitely a – a genuine question to be answered there, so I'd, I'd love to hear the details of that communication with them. Thank you.

VB That, that's very interesting. We hope we are actually sort of speaking to a number of senior police officers as part of the investigation and also to the Gold Commanders at various so I think that's a very (inaudible) point and we can certainly ask what actually happened there, because I have obviously no idea and we're here to take your views. I am keen that we

move on to the day if-- unless there's something really specific people want to talk about, about pre-planning, 'cause I'm mindful of the time. Fine. Well then, if we could move on to the day, then I think the, the first question that we've, we've had suggested or, should I say, the first views, I think are **Mr May**. Who's going to speak? Are you going to --

Yeah, I've got two questions in relation to kettling. And I hope the Panel agree that the – the policing tactic of kettling or containment of the, and control of the police (inaudible), peaceful protest has been counterproductive and potentially harmful to vul--, vulnerable members of the public. During the G20 protest, thousands of people were held against their will in an atmosphere of unprovoked, unprovoked vio—police intimidation and violence, many of whom were subsequently and unnecessarily traumatised or injured, so I'd ask, (inaudible) ask, like to ask the Panel, whether they believe that Articles 10 and 11 that's freedom of movement and freedom of opinion and expression of the ECHR, were violated during the G20 and whether they're explicitly state in their recommendations that kettling should never be used against, by police against demonstrations where the vast majority of protesters are protesting peacefully and (b) should be a tactic of last, that kettling should be a tactic of last resort confined to use against serious violent disorder, rather than a pre-emptive measure of control? I've got one other question, so do you want to – (inaudible) that one first?

VB Yes. As I have no doubt that the policy of containment and kettling will be of interest to a number of people here and we are here to listen to your views, perhaps we'll just talk about that first. Would anybody else like to talk about their evidence of that on the day? Could we give a couple of the other audience a chance to ...

Right, thank you.

VB The gentleman ... okay, well, fine, I've been trying to get some new (inaudible) faces and voices. Anybody else? Okay? Yes, please.

Hello. My name's **Kat Reynolds** and I attended the Climate Camp on the day?

Mm hm

I wanted to – to say a little bit about my experience of the Camp so the context of the question makes, makes sense.

Yes.

On the day - you know, I've attended other demonstrations around London in the past and I can only describe the atmosphere during the day time, from the sort of mid-day or one o'clock, whenever it started, as – as almost like a community festival; really quite relaxed; in the Climate Camp, certainly, there were stalls and entertainment and people playing games and, and, and lots of food and that sort of thing. And real, really that kind of atmosphere. Unfortunately, around seven o'clock, the atmosphere completely changed and what, what you found is that previously, where you had this community festival type atmosphere, people were coming and going, relatively freely, at seven o'clock the Camp was shut down,

Mm hm

..in, in what's generally called a kettle and, and most people that have been in kettles or situations where kettles have (inaudible) will, will fully recognise it as a kettle. Now this kettle was unequivocally a kettle where no-one can move in or out and it was maintained for four hours, at least – four hours from seven o'clock to around about eleven – between eleven and one in the morning, when I think the Camp was finally disp—dispersed and cleared, quite violently. Now, that's quite distressing in itself. No-one was allowed to come in and out. The police have said that people were allowed to come out and categorically I can say not true from my own personal experience of trying to get out, many people who were more vulnerable than me, who had child care issues, who had health issues, had disabilities, trying to get out – all were categorically refused to exit. The – the Climate Camp, kettled as it was at that time. Now, more disturbingly than that, around seven o'clock, not only was a kettle formed, but all the people, just after the kettle was (inaudible) all the people trapped inside with nowhere to go and quite compressed together in – in a tight space, were then violently charged, from certainly, certainly the south end of Bishopsgate and possibly the north end as well – I, I can't be definite on the north end 'cause I s—I witnessed the south end and have watched the videos subsequently, as well. Many of the (inaudible) people I know and their, their response was to largely hold their hands up in the air, shout: "This is a peaceful protest; this is not a riot" repeatedly and, and complete – I mean I have complete respect for that level of discipline that I saw. Nonetheless, many of them, and as we witnessed in the media and the many videos that have come out from the day, which don't really tell the half of it, suffered quite severe injuries, bruising, you know, mo-- more severe damage, punches to the face, batons to head, arms, wrists, all these things; I had friends who had back of their heads smashed with the edges of shields, quite

deliberately - all these things are on video so it – it's you know, it's not just my anecdotal evidence. Although they – they really did have no way of defending themselves. They, they held their arms in the air – from previous experience of not wanting to be accused of being violent, said: "This is not a riot. This is a peaceful protest" and they were, they were beaten. Obviously, that's horrible in itself, people suffer injuries but subsequently, many have suffered post- post-traumatic stress and they've been unwilling to attend further demonstrations and they've -- you know, really, you know, had quite significant impact on their lives, not just on the day and their subsequent recovery period from the immediate injuries. So, so obviously this is, this is a question for the re- for the review, review, but my question would – was ask, would ask the Met, what is an appropriate level of self defence for those people? What, what can they do in that kind of situation, where they're being faced with the violent police aggression? Now, I'd also like to add that this is not a new level of aggression; this, this leve—this level with this kind of policing has been around for probably about ten years. You know, it's different before that, but probably around ten years, so many seasoned activists, people that are regularly attending sort of (inaudible) things, I'm not surprised by this. They've totally (inaudible) internalised that. The only reason this has – it has come to light in their minds and – and many people's minds, is that Ian Tomlinson was caught on video, being killed, in effect. Now, if Ian Tomlinson hadn't died, the police would be patting themselves on – on the back the -- for an operation well done, as they were the next day and bemoaning the violent protesters. So my question remains, what do the Met, Met accept as a – appropriate level of physical self defence against violent and aggressive policing, such as we saw at Climate Camp and at the G20 in general?

VB Okay. Well, these are very good questions to (inaudible). Now, let's talk about - has anybody else either want to talk about their experience of containment at G20, or any other event that you've attended, for example you know, Climate Camp, Tamil protest or any of the other events that happened round London? If I may go to you first, sir, 'cause I know that a microphone is near and then we'll go to the back and then here. Thank you.

Sorry I can't stand. **Lord Dutton.** On the actual day of the G20 I was on a 'bus. We'd gone over London Bridge and we got stopped at Gracechurch Street, Fenchurch Street and told to get off the 'bus so I got (inaudible) I'd carry on, on the road and I actually gone about ten yards and got stopped. (inaudible) said I can't go any further so when I asked why, I was told quite pleasantly, "It's unsafe. There are a lot of rent-a -mob causing trouble and it's not advisable for you to go through, so go back. "

VB Thank you for that. Well. First lady (inaudible) if you could go that same way, so (inaudible) it's easier for the microphone and do the lady in the (inaudible)

Jane Grant. (inaudible)

VB (inaudible) Could you (inaudible) stand up? I think (inaudible)

Sorry; my name is **Jane Grant** from the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom. Mine really is a question, having listened to these accounts of atrocious policing and to say do you think, or can you tell us, whether there is actually a deliberate - is it del—a dib – a deliberate attempt on the part, this sort of policing on the part of the police, to deter what they would call rent-a-mob or (inaudible) getting on the street so (inaudible) so people actually are frightened from protesting in future. So is, is that the intention?

VB Well, as I say, we're not here to (inaudible)

No, but I mean--

VB (Inaudible) evidence, to then put to our report and (inaudible)

But I know that you would know, and I mean maybe in your position you would actually know that (inaudible)

VB I don't think the – I think the police are well aware that they obviously, that the protest can be lawful but, as I say, we're not here to answer the police; we're here to listen to people's experience of what happened -

But it would seem to be an attempt to actually deter, wouldn't it?

VB I – I couldn't possibly give a view on that. (inaudible)

Dave (inaudible)

VB Thank you for – thank you for picking me up on that – you’re quite right. I think, you know, protesting is lawful and we should be allowed to protest.

Unlawful protest (inaudible)

VB Yes. You’re quite and we should be more careful of our language! Thank you very much; good point. Now, somebody we haven’t heard from at the back – please, the lady in the back? Please. Thank you and I think a couple at the back, so maybe we can do those as a group; it’s easier for the microphone. Thank you very much indeed.

Sarah Coates, Green Party. We were actually asked to submit questions but I just wanted to clarify when we’ll actually get the answers to the questions that we’re asking today, ‘cause I’m just mindful that a lot of people are asking questions and not really getting answers and I hope we will get those at some point.

VV Yes, I’m sorry – I know that you didn’t realise at the very, very beginning. I did explain at the very beginning this is an evidence gathering session and obviously we’re happy to put individual questions to the police, but this is a, a, a meeting where we can hear everybody’s views, you can talk directly to us, give us your views on what you think that we should be looking at in our report. We’ve obviously seen members of the police, ma-- many different police officers, Borough Commanders and obviously we’re talking to a great number of people who’ve been involved with all sorts of public order and other events (inaudible) a full year, not just G20 ‘cause the topic of this is policing public protest.

Sorry, (inaudible)

Yeah, my suggestion is ‘cause I, it’s natural to ask questions but what’d be very useful if you would do, is please ask your questions but actually explain what led to you asking the question, what was your experience in leading you to ask that question. That would be really, really helpful as well. Thank you.

VB At the back, you’ve got a comment or a view first, I --

Well, I've got a comment which hopefully will lead into what you're looking at, which is not just the policing towards the end of the demonstrations, but actually from the very start.

Yes

The police started attempting to

VB (inaudible) to give us your name --

Oh sorry. My name is **(inaudible)** and I was working as a journalist at, at the G20.

VB Thank you.

The police started attempting to kettle people in small groups from the very beginning. The nature of the protest was four different groups, coming together in one place and the police beginning at the Tube stations attempted to stop people doing that, leading to, in front of the Exchange, a very dangerous situation for the police, for there was a single line of police trying to stop two very large groups converging, for no obvious reason and when they finally pulled back they were scrambling up the wall of the Exchange which from their own point of view, I think, is very bad policing and very dangerous for those individual officers. Then also add the point in relation to the point that was made earlier about the RBS, 'cause the nature of the policing in front of it which was around three lines deep of police and the nature of the police that were behind it. Leading to the situation where the demonstration pushed through the three line, three line of police; again leading to a more dangerous situation for the police 'cause there was no wall they could climb over, getting to the RBS very easily and then suddenly finding there were riot police and horses and everybody else, set up behind the windows, obviously prepared, waiting for the pictures to be taken of the windows being broken, which was an obvious thing to do. I'd like to point out to the, the thing that was used to break the windows was a loose bollard at the – at the car park next door to it.

Mm hm

Obviously the safety check had not been done properly because this thing was very easy to remove and then used to smash the windows. We had a (inaudible) only what? Fifteen,

twenty minutes after that happened, suddenly a huge amount of police came in from behind the Bank. Working as a journalist, my final point, is how the kettling was used to restrict journalists from covering this. There was one place and one place only you could be, to cover what was going on and that was in front of the police lines. The kettling was set up so that you weren't as a journalist allowed to go round the back, around the sides, you had two places you could be – either one, in front of the riot police as it started to charge, or two, right out the other side of a – out by the Tube station. I did challenge the police at a couple of points, saying, "I'm a journalist, I have my press card, I'm allowed to go and cover this from a different point of view", and they said, No but there had been a breach of the peace, and that I simply wasn't allowed to go through. There was only one place I was allowed to go through and that was at the (inaudible) station, meaning I was completely out of the action until later on, when I accidentally found myself back inside the kettle.

VB Okay. A few other questions then, while you're there. Obviously, as a journalist you will have covered other police and, and, and protests and events throughout the year. Can you give us any experience of where it was different, or – you, you know. I mean was the (inaudible) gather evidence. We want people who've been to different events and as (inaudible) said, you know, we need you to – to tell us your ideas of what's happened so that we can put a useful report together. So if you've got other evidence of, of --

As it happens, I – I don't cover them that often, in the UK. I won't say who I work for, but not necessarily (inaudible). But actually the previous major demonstration was at the – the Pride March in Rega, which was pol—which was policed by police who'd been trained by the Met, who did things in - so much better, it was incredible. Because in fact they were – they were dealing with a situation where the, as a counter-demonstration where some of the vilest people you could imagine who are - literally talking about people waving swastikas, shouting racial and – and other forms of abuse at people. However, they managed to police the thing with a lot of policing to keep the situation down, not kettle people; in fact they set the policing up to protect the people who were marching, in a way. Now it was fairly contained, but it was, it - it's something really, I think, the – the police in Latvia have actually developed in a much more difficult and much more challenging situation and I actually think it's now we have the situation where the Met have learned from the people they've trained, a few years ago.

VB Thank you.

Can, can I just ask you, before you let go of the microphone, just to understand your experience of the day - if I recall, the – the demonstration that you're referring to converged from four different points, I think and presumably the police were to come – were

accompanying each of these groups as they came together. You're suggesting that there was an attempt at the point at which they came together, to keep them apart, so four groups converging, but the police remaining between the four of them?

By this, by the stage where everyone converged, three of the groups had joined up before, really, they'd got to the area in front of the Exchange, but the final group was just coming actually from the area where the – the Royal Bank of Scotland was, were blocked off. The way it was set up, there was a se—selection of, of barriers, kind of at the side of the steps, so there was the steps, with a lot of police on them, there was a large group in front of it where three of the horsemen were and then the final group, which I think was an anti-war group, were coming in from the back of Bishopsgate, gate. So there was the – the placards, the - the barriers there, then there was a single line of police, trying to stop one group of probably around a thousand peo- couple of hundred people, joining up with another group and there was a chant at the time, were "Let them through, let them in. We just want to join up." Well, as I said, a single line and then when that line broke, there were ridiculous pictures of the police scrambling up the side walls, backed up on to the steps of, of the – of the Exchange and you know, there was – there were bottles being thrown at them. I remember one picture was, one police officer was climbing over and a bottle hit him in the arse, basically.

And, and – and again, just to understand. It, it's your observation that this line of police were not just sort of caught, accompanying the group, but that they were formally trying to keep them apart.

Yes.

Right.

Yes. Ab, absolutely. They, they, they said that, when they were challenged. They were (inaudible) a single line in front of hundreds of people on either side and they were just saying, "We're not letting you through."

Thank you.

VB Okay. I've got a couple of other observations I think, people from there. Is a **Mr Wood** here? No. I've also got a question submitted by **Christine Berry**, no, fine, I'm just, I'm sure there are other questions will come up. I just want to make sure that those who – who've put in questions, have a chance of – of raising them. **Paul Talbot Jenkins**? Sir, would you like to...

(inaudible) founder member of Frame 97 which is Fellowship Against (inaudible)

(inaudible)

Can you hear? Yes, you (inaudible) Fellowship Against Financial Exploitation. Myself and other members of our organisation attended the G20 meltdown demonstration, aboard my Routemaster 'bus. I want to quote from the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, MAPPA, Guidelines. It says: *Consistency in the way we communicate public protection work to the public and we all recognise the difficulties in explaining this complex but important part of our public service*. The important words are "public service". I've got an ad—I've got an advertisement here which the Metropolitan Police Authority put in the newspapers. I'm sure many of you've seen this. It's a pun on: You have the right to remain silent, but they've put the word "not" in the middle. And this was in national newspapers and on advertisement boards in the on, on street furniture in the, in the City.

VB G20?

Yeah. No, well it was all around London.

VB (inaudible) I've enquired for the Panel here, so--

Yeah, it - it was about that time, yes. You know, "You have the right not to remain silent." So that's why we were protesting, because we don't wish to remain silent. And we were protesting because neither the police, the courts, the politicians nor any public service agency, is prepared to ensure that we get any form of just outcome for the grossest of wrongs perpetuated against us. The police refused to investigate crimes of fraud, perjury and theft practised by banks and lawyers in particular. Generally the courts will even dismiss claims involving such crimes, where banks and lawyers are involved. Our part in the G20 demonstrations ended when I was ordered, under threat of arrest, and of my 'bus being impounded, by a menacing, aggressive police Sergeant, to move my 'bus. At first I reasoned

with the Sergeant that it was an, a dangerous manoeuvre, due to the crowds of people and police in close proximity to the 'bus. After repeatedly intimidating threats of arrest, another police officer said that he would clear the way and direct me to reverse the 'bus into Sherborne Lane. The 'bus sustained considerable damage to impact with a steel bollard and I have sent a report to the IPCC which is that thick and, luckily, we had people with cameras taking pictures of the police officers so we were able to obtain their numbers. The City of London Police responded to my complaint with a four page letter denying any responsibility for the accident. That letter contains fabricated statements and contradictions which are classed as hearsay. I have not seen any of the police witness statements for which I have asked. Threatening and intimidating behaviour by police officers and witnessed at the G20 demonstrations cannot be tolerated. We were told that the --

(end of Side A, Cassette 1)

Side B Cassette 1

.. 'bus posed a potential hazard to the health and safety of police and demonstrators, as it was obstructing an escape route in the event of a public disturbance, yet the 'bus was turned around as I was told to park it in almost exactly the same place, to await the arrival of traffic police who would take statements. We waited a further two and a half hours, without any further order to move. The 'bus had now apparently become invisible. This indicates to me and other members of our group that this indis—incident was deliberately staged by the police. The Authorities promise public protection, but we know these are just hollow words. When I reported perjury to the - in the Royal Courts of Justice to the police I was fobbed off with a letter telling me that they could only investigate such a crime on the Judge's orders. On more than one occasion, police officers have told me, "We would like to help, but we have to consider our pensions." What does all this do, to contribute towards the public's perception of how you communicate public protection work to the public? I have an article which I downloaded from *Times Online*. The heading reads: Arrogance, ingrained arrogance in the police leads to miscarriages of justice. It is written by a lawyer, a QC, no doubt. Quote: *Instinctive reactions of some officers to doctor the facts indicates that a deep seated corruption in policing still prevails.* Quote: Self righteous arrogance within police forces that they are above the law. It leads to attitudes that have led to manipulation of evidence and wrongful conviction. Referring to judicial myopia and the Birmingham Six, Lord Denning said, If the six men win, it will mean that the police are guilty of perjury, that they are guilty of violence and threats. In my own experience I have witnessed police statements taken, without tape recordings, that's contrary to PACE and I have rejected statements written by police because they've written things that I have not said and it does not stop with police. In May 2000 I witnessed a Judge at a morning briefing in the Royal Courts of Justice, tell a lady barrister that he gave his order to her opponent not on the merits of the evidence, but because it was the other chap's turn to win. How on earth are we going to correct such a culture? Thank you for listening.

VB Thank you very much indeed for a, a thoughtful point for the – for this morning. Obviously, you know, if you have a - very important that you shared your experience with us and I do hope that (inaudible) to get your complaint addressed by the H, the IPC and the City of London Police 'cause obviously it's very, very serious. I've - obviously it's important to hear that, but may I ask generally if we can keep our evidence as short as possible, in order that we hear from a number of people. I've also had a – a comment to be submitted by is it **Rachel Blue**? Are you here? No, fine. Okay, I just wanted to make sure. Okay, there's a couple of other hands went up. (inaudible); yes. Yes. certainly and then I'll come to you yourself, if I may.

Yes, sorry it's me again. I'm here, I'm asking a question because I can't see anyone from Stop The War here and it's about the Gaza demonstrations in January.

VB Good.

I, I've got personal experience of two. One on January the tenth which actually did end up in some significant disorder outside the Israeli Embassy and the consequent kettle in very, very inhospitable temperatures for about three or four hours. But a--, as legal observer on that day, I can tell you about events a number of hours before that violence broke out in front of the Israeli Embassy, where there was a line of riot police and what I could observe was riot officers hitting people on, on the front row who were being shoved from behind, up against the metal barriers with the bottom edge of their riot shields and I subsequently spoke to a – the Vice Chair of, of South Wales CND who's a Councillor in South Wales – Councillor Jones, who - a seventy-nine year old peace activist, who was knocked unconscious and, and subsequently wrote to **Paul Stevenson, Paul Stevenson** and asked for an apology. So my first question is on behalf of **Ray Jones**, what was the outcome to that correspondence with Commander **Stevenson**? Secondly, other personal experiences on the day. There was a, a problem with – and this feeds back into the question that was asked earlier, about vulnerable people, including children and – and parents. There were a lot of young families on that march that day and probably people who haven't been to many demonstrations before. There may have been a problem with the route planning; it was a very, very narrow aperture, say in front of the Israeli Embassy and there was a huge squash and myself and another member of the demonstration – I had a bib on, so I looked semi official, were approached by a – a young mother with three small children of various ages between about three and seven, who were quite frightened by the crush and were trying to get out to the side, on to the pavement and every officer we asked on, on her behalf and she was asking as well, to be let out because her children were crying, would not let that family out and were sending her to the back of the demonstration; we then took them to the back of (inaudible) demonstration carrying the children; we were then sent back again to the front bit of the demonstration in front of the Israeli Embassy, until finally we managed to, with an officer's

help, get them lifted over the barrier, but they were stuck in what was for them a very frightening situation for about twenty or thirty minutes and it was just the, the kind of bovine like kind of attitude of the police officers. They, some of them seemed quite junior but even the Sergeants wouldn't take responsibility for this family and it was very much not a public service situation. They didn't want to help this family, who needed police assistance and, and – and there seemed to be a, an attitude on that Gaza demonstration that, that the demonstrators were “them” and the police were “us”. And, and, and that's I think something that needs to be looked at. As, as (inaudible) there was another thing on the Gaza demonstration, the Saturday before and I spoke to people who had that experience and I know that **Chris Nyman** of Stop the War has made a com—a complaint about this. There was a baton or shield charge, in an underpass on Piccadilly and I don't know whether that has ever been fully investigated. There is some Youtube footage of it and I know that if Stop the War were here, they would want to raise that and I, myself as legal observer the following weekend, spoke to young people in their teens who'd been baton charged the Saturday before and, and I'd like that to be raised with the Met, because that was a very serious, potentially very dangerous incident, under an underpass, where obviously, out of view and that was a very, very worrying thing that happened on that day.

VB Thank you very much indeed. (inaudible)

Excuse me, could, could I just ask

Yes

..for some further clarification on that? You raise the matter of small children at a demonstration. Now, clearly I understand that if there's a demonstration like say Climate Camp, going to go on for several days then you either attend with your children or you don't attend, as it were, do groups here and individuals here, feel that it is a desirable thing, if you've got small children, to take them along and see, participate in demonstrations? I'm talking about time limited ones, a march or something like that? Or, or that it's an undesirable thing to be doing, that it's a foolish thing or there's no value to be placed on it? I mean, is there a feeling about the presence of children at demonstrations?

Could I have a (inaudible) question specifically (inaudible) with, with reference to, to Gaza (inaudible) various speakers on platforms and

We can't hear.

Is that better?

Yes, thank you.

There've been various speeches in the platform at Hyde Park before, highlighting the plight of children in Gaza and, and, as, as people know, it's been verified, there is a – a high casualty rate and death rate, proportionately, of, of children in that conflict and I think that people who came along who felt very upset and angered by what was going on, wanted to come as a family and I think it would be wholly shaming in, in, in, in, in, in, in, in - in terms of public discourse, if we get to a situation where people feel that they can't bring children to what should be a peaceful demonstration.

Thank you very much.

VB Okay. Just wanted to check, I've missed **John Tona, Roy Mintoff, Mintoff** and **David Hoffman**? Yes, (inaudible) you've got a question, I think, now. Yes, I just wanted to make sure.

Thank you. I was actually going to try to answer the question you, that you put to (inaudible) you asked (inaudible) if his experience of

Yes

.. being penned was typical for journalists. This – this has been a long running sore and (inaudible) we're not condoning the kettling of anything else but I have a need to represent journalists so that's what I'm going to address. This is a long running sore for going back ten, fifteen years (inaudible) where the police have typically kettled journalists along with protesters. Why this is important? Well, a demonstration is a matter of public interest and the only reason that the – the media are present is to report on the demonstration for the public to inform the public, of the nature of the protest and the reasons behind the protest. If you throw the press in the kettle, along with the protesters, it makes it bloody impossible for them to tell the public what's going on, so it's in the interests of the public, it's in the

interests of the protesters, that the press are there and do their job and record the event. It's also part of a – a more, more widespread harassment of, of the press, (inaudible) typically, the police will put their hands over cameras, they will stand in front of cameras. There will be threats of assault. The--, we have incidences of, of photographers actually taking away from safe vantage points and put, put in a, a location that is neither safe nor a good vantage point and my co—and my colleague (inaudible) actually has a sh—a very short video, a fifty second video which he's, he's offered to show in, in the interval. All these things continue as a matter of routine at public order events. I'm not suggesting the police always have an ulterior motive, other than it's easier just to lump the press in with the protesters, or simply that some police officers just don't like the press around. But there may in occasions be ulterior motives, too.

VB So, so what would be, what would be better, in order that we can make recommendations, what would be better?

What, what we, what we want is for the police to understand that media workers are there to do a particular job and they should be provided access to do their job, which is to record the event and not be treated as protesters.

VB Sorry, can I – can I just ask, did it work better, then, in the Climate Camp in the summer?

Yes. We – we had a lot of discussion with the police before Climate Camp and, and – and all of our members report that this, that, that the policing of that event was much improved.

VB So lessons were learned.

Lessons were learned, but I have to point out that the policing of the Climate Camp at Kent last year was, was one of the worst events we've, we've ever experienced. So – there could only have been an improvement!

VB **Anna, Anna Bragg** had some, I think, made some points earlier and you have an additional point she wants to make on this section, is that right?

Right

Come up.

It's in relation to the comments earlier about whether or not you should allow children to come to protests, whether that's a sensible decision. Think that was your ques—your question. I –

I think we did clear that – I, it is a genuine question. I don't have a value view on it at all.
(inaudible)

Yes. Well, it just, it just made me think about the general right to protest and I think that everybody, whether you're a child, whether you're disabled, whatever your age or background, you should feel that you can go to a protest. I think everyone has the right to peaceful protest, without risk of harm by police, whether that's using tactics like kettling or whether it's by being hit. If we'd lose that right then we no longer live in a democracy. We're talking about people's conscience, who want to come and exercise their right to protest. I think it's really important that we protect that now; this an opportunity now – this is a wake-up call and I think we need to use that and I hope that the Panel will listen carefully to what's being said today and try and do everything they can to make sure that the Met take this on board.

VB Thank you very much indeed. Can I (inaudible) the gentleman in the back who hasn't spoken yet, (inaudible) coat, thank you and then I'll come to the lady in red and then (inaudible)

I'm sorry to have to disagree with that. I would never consider taking my seven year old son on a demonstration. (inaudible) too much.

VB May we hear who you are, just to set the scene.

Sorry?

VB May we know who you are?

Sorry, **Johnny Bucknall**, Camden Police Consultative Group. I accept that kettling is - without discretion - is controversial, but on the other hand the police are asking us for alternatives and we should reminisce on the poll tax riot, several decades ago where there was no kettling and I think the country was quite shocked at the level of violence and the inability of the police to contain that violence. I do, however, wonder if there's any way the police could let the public know, by loud hailers, hailers in helicopters, that they consider the situation is becoming violent. We used to have the Riot Act; I think it's been repealed, but the police did let people know at that point that the situation might become violent and that it would be an appropriate juncture for peaceful protestors to leave and I wonder if there's any - if there's any worthwhile debate we could have on warning people that a protest could become violent.

VB Thank you - that's (inaudible) I think one of my colleagues want to speak and then I'll go back to (inaudible) Okay. The lady in the red?

Well, I guess it's good that I'm following you because I, I not only would but do – did and have taken not only my children on, on demonstrations and protests but my grandchildren and nieces and nephews and – and friends' children, because I think it's a democratic right to do this; I think it's very important, I think it's an important lesson for children to learn, that this is, this is something that they have a right to do, that is a part of their life and they should, they should exercise it and not be intimidated by anybody, the police or anybody. I have a question in here about you say this is evidence. What is – what is happening with this evidence? And 'd like to know more completely, you – you say you're not the police, well what does the Metropolitan Police Authority do, you, if you don't speak for the police, who, who is going to answer the questions that we've been asking? And then I just wanted to say something about kettling. I think ket- first of all, I think kettling from, from my own experience, but also just from what I've heard, is a very bad idea; I think what, from what I heard from the journalist, there should always be exceptions; I think it should be avoided except in the most dire of circumstances and where the police are considering if there should be some kind of warning, there should be sensible exceptions for, for people with children, for people who say, I've got to go collect my child from nurseries, or, or, or sensible exceptions for people who are desperate to use the loo, whatever. There should needs to be, I think and I also think that there, that there are many occasions when I, I wasn't there but I think the, the Royal Bank of Scotland think sounds like, where, where the police may be the provocateurs and – and provoke the violence, that the demonstrators are not there to create or, or – or, or participate in.

VB (inaudible) was anybody here from the, the Tamils? Did anybody go to the Tamil demonstrations? Was, were there any --

(inaudible)

VB Yes, fine! All right. You, you went to the Tamils?

(inaudible)

VB Yes, (inaudible) I just (inaudible) making sure that, because of the – this is our one chance today, to listen to as many of you give evidence so that we can put our report together. I'm sure many of you may have already contributed to the HMIC report and we certainly absolutely support, as do the police, their initial findings. But I just want to make sure that anybody who's been to any other demonstrations, we can talk about them as well, as a whole.

(inaudible)

VB Oh yes, sorry. The M, the MPA are there as a – as a, as sort of scrutineers, we're not here (inaudible) as I (inaudible) at the beginning, I didn't want to repeat it again to all those who had missed it at the beginning. The MPA were here to sort of scrutinise and to drive policy and overall work of the police; we're not – we're not police, but this particular panel is set up like we have many panels, set up to the MPA where we can scrutinise a particular area of work, we will then - we've been visiting other – you know, training sessions, we've been talking to the HMIC, talking to many different police officers involved and then the end of that, we all put a report together which will then be discussed at the Metropolitan Police, full authority with the police, probably in January or February of next year and as a result of which, hopefully, we'll weigh all the evidence which you're giving us, you know, today and the evidence we have from the other sessions and that will, you know, give us some good recommendations to put to the police and then we're going to be able to monitor the effect of, of, of those recommendations and how they're input. But remember we're not the only people. The people who are actually doing a detailed report are the – Her Majesty's Inspectorate and they're here and I'm sure they can talk briefly as well if they'd like to, about the sort of work that they're – they're actually doing (inaudible) the more detailed review of the – of the policing. Okay, so any other – anything else about other

demonstrations people have been to and (inaudible) give their evidence? Tamils, anybody from Tamils?

I don't represent the organisers in any way, but I went along two separate occasions to observe and in a bit-- in a very different environment, obviously for the Tamils it was a, it was a genocide our people; it was an incredibly sensitive environment and just for my, just for brief observations, I mean things like the ID situation, they've been much more carefully monitored. I couldn't see any police I, ID there, but obviously that was in an environment where being extremely adverse media comments and there was only really a couple of controversial incidents when they spilt out on to Westminster Bridge Road. As I say, you mean I – I just (inaudible) to my, to my knowledge there wasn't any really excessive instances of police force that I have witnessed. There was a couple of complaints from Tamil protesters and I'd be happy to – happy to contact details still for some of the organisers so I'd be happy to pass those on if the MPA wants to get some further ev--, evidence on that.

Some of you (inaudible)

Hello there. My name's **Paul**; I'm **Ian Tomlinson's** son. There's been four reports on this - demonstration of the police (inaudible)at the G20. We just want to know why. Neither is the dog bite, that the dog that bit **Ian**, the baton strike and the push to the floor hasn't been mentioned in any of their reports. He was an innocent, innocent man on his way home – you know, we've lost our Dad. **Ian Blair** made a comment saying that it wasn't the first person and it won't be the last, so there's going to be more violence towards other people. Yeah. We just want to know, just want to be in your report, next one.

VB Obviously, it's a very, very distressing thing that happened and I think all of us here regret it. Unfortunately we're not here – we're not police and not one of the people who've actually - you know, so I can't actually find out why those haven't been addressed. Unfortunately, it's not the, the remit of this – this Committee, although inevitably, we will be talking about the death of your father as one of the points to put into our report, (inaudible) obviously should be avoided for the future. We're - nothing any of us can say, that unfortunately going to reverse the situation that happened last, last April and I'm obviously extremely sorry as I'm sure all my colleagues are, here. And we've invited you (inaudible) here today to give us their first hand experiences of both the G20 and the other demonstrations that people have attended, so that hopefully, through that process, we can avoid such tragic incidents happening again.

Thank you very much.

VB Thank you. Can I take one perhaps who hasn't spoken before, first? Yes, sir, and then may I come back to you here, sir.

My name's (inaudible) from Friends of the Earth?

Yes.

I wanted to speak about (inaudible) quite a few people from Friends of the Earth attended several climate camps in an informal capacity. Both Friends of the Earth here but also Friends of the Earth Europe. I think (inaudible) were Blackheath, Kingsnorth and the G20 (inaudible). First of all, general observations that there seems to be, I'm not sure if it's a trend or in, ingrained approach to policing that speaks to the question of children. That a policeman's job is not to facilitate the right, the freedom of assembly from speech or the right to protest, but to constrain and pre-emptively police possible disorder situations, which comes back to the emphasis on the worst case scenario. And it – as a father myself, I think it's not so much, it shouldn't really be, the onus shouldn't be on someone exercising their rights, (inaudible) assembly of speech to (inaudible) situation of whether or not you will escalate into a violent situation, quite often escalated by the only people who can usually come to protests prepared for violence, i.e. the police, they should, the onus should be on the police to facilitate those freedoms and those rights. Two particular examples I think which illustrate the danger of pre-emptive policing – one of the – the G20 protest last year – as the gentleman referred to previously, there were attempts to contain and disperse protesters before they'd even assembled, at Bank. (inaudible) the worry of this is that where there are attempted kettles or baton charges, as there were, prior to the assembly at Bank, what we have is policing that is prior to any public disturbance, tending to contain and disperse and limit people's freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. Now police may consider any public assembly a public disturbance, but I think this an error in their understanding of the law, especially our, our, our statutory rights. So I think that's my first concern, based off the behaviour during the G20. Speaking more specifically around children and their – and sort of, I suppose it would be (inaudible) their rights at protests, I witnessed a incident with some friends of mine who brought their three year old to Kingsnorth. They came during the day, they didn't attend any of the protests, they came for the Camp itself. Their three year old was frisked and searched three times, going back and forth into the camp. Their stroller was searched, they were searched, we were searched, including my pregnant wife, multiple times. Now, I'm not sure if that was lawful or not, but it certainly couldn't be considered facilitation and I think if I had a question, it

would be what right do the police have to pre-emptively disrupt or contain protest and what onus is on them to facilitate people's freedom of assembly and freedom of speech?

VB Okay. Thank you. That's a very good point. Coming back to the lady in the front here...

(inaudible) my daughter, who isn't here but would love to be here, I'm sure. I, I have three children and I took two to the Climate Camp in Kingsnorth which, whilst I accept is outside of the Met area, actually involved a significant number of Met officers, giving mutual aid. And the reason why I want, want to focus there is because I think under, underlying all of my experience of police, policing of protests is – is, is a concern that I have about the police attitude towards protest and protesters. And certainly for my daughter, what she came away with, in contrast to my son and I'll explain he's a – my daughter came away wi- with the view that police officers lie, are disingenuous and – and she really didn't want anything more to do with it. And that's a great shame, because in my locality the people put a great effort into community policing, had put police in the school, in teaching assistant roles and it has transformed her attitude towards the police and she is very angry and very cross and very disillusioned and in contrast, her twin brother never wishes to go near a protest again. And as their mother, I wouldn't take them near a protest, especially in (inaudible) where I can expect to see the TSG and they haven't featured in this conversation and I would like them to feature, because I have (inaudible) significant concern about their training and their selection process, in particular, because I think underlying all of this is this concern that police officers trained for public order come to a public order event expecting there to be a problem and policing on that basis and they treat protesters not as someone who's ex--, exercising a civil liberty but someone who is about to commit criminal offence.

VB Okay, that's all some for a new topic. Shall we talk about the (INAUDIBLE) when we are (inaudible) talk about the (inaudible) I'm sure there are going to be comments - somebody we haven't heard from. Yes. Oh, I (inaudible) if you have - sorry, you're quite right. It's the Territorial Support Group and they're the sort of specialist trained officers, I think, (inaudible) probably the first – anyway, do put your question, anyway. Sorry. I'm trying to make sure we hear from as many voices as possible.

My name's **Julia Francome** and I worked at Index on Censorship but I'm following on speaking as a parent of a protester and I joined her, I joined my daughter on Bishopsgate at the Climate Camp. And I can completely endorse the, the atmosphere was extremely relaxed and, and informal and – and I was very impressed by the – how informed the activists were, how, you know, they really knew their rights, they were really – they were really - found it very, very important that they were there, making that statement peacefully and – and my daughter, who's sort of you know with face paints and (inaudible) and by the

end of that day, she was incensed. She was really, really angry. She'd had a personal interaction with a – with a, with an officer who told her to fuck off and she said that, you know, her whole attitude to protest and what she's doing and why she's there have completely changed and I felt that both in the lead up to – to the protest there was – sort of felt slightly like a conspiracy between the police and the media to make this look as ugly and as violent, you know, there is, there are terrifying levels of violence anticipated and, and I don't know where that spirit of, of, of reporting came from, but I'm sure it – it, it was in part in the way the police were preparing for the event. And – and so I think that whole point about the parents and about escalation and provocation was absolutely part of my experience and my daughter's, of the whole lead in and the whole experience of the thing and, and the fact that it's triggered her anger in a way that she'd never, she never felt it before. I think it's – is a, is a terrible thing, to, to, to lay at the police in (inaudible)

VB Thank you. (inaudible) you (inaudible) question.

I just wanted to ask (inaudible) when you were actually going down to G20, to join the protest, were any of you stopped prior to getting there and asked your names and addresses or any – do we have any instances like that?

VB Do you want to (inaudible)

Even at for that (inaudible)

Yeah. I'd like to speak to that and a few other police tactics which I think should be questioned by the – by the Panel. I wasn't stopped, partly because I've been stopped so many times previously at the Kingsnorth Climate Camp that I took great pains to avoid the police at, at all, getting there, because I didn't want to have to go through the rigmarole of that and the humiliation of a police search, as I did many, many times going in and out of the camp at Kingsnorth. But what I would question is, is mu—worse than that, is, is the policy and tactic of pre-emptive arrest; that is, people that I know were followed into bars, restaurants, when they were waiting for the, for the demonstration to start and told that they were committing some offence and that they were being arrested for it or it – first of all they'd be asked for their names and addresses, sorry, then, if they refused, they would say, which they had sort of legal right to do so, if you, you legal right to refuse any, any details. If they refused they would then be charged with some offence, or arrested for some offence. Immediately upon being arrested, they would then legally be required to give their details. Soon as they gave their details, they would be de-arrested and they said "Maybe we'll send

you something in the post". Obviously nothing ever, ever arrived and it was a deliberate tactic to get the names and addresses of people just possibly thinking about attending a demonstration.

VB Sorry, can I just ask what sort of offences would they be charged with?

Well, I'm sure you're – you're aware that what, what I found is that these days almost anything you do in the City of London c-- could be an offence, if the police deem it such.

(inaudible)

Under, some examples – you know, lingering in the street too long, suspicion of such and such, suspicion of almost anything at all, actually. You know, wearing something that is cons—wearing a hood or a hat, sunglasses, something that might be used to conceal - I mean, it, it's farcical, really, that anything can be made up to justify temporarily the - we need to, you know, arrest you for something and, and this was what was happening – not just at the G20 but at lots of demonstrations, there's been a tactic that's been ongoing for a while, so for example I was once stopped in a blocked street, the police had blocked the street at one end and some demonstrators had blocked it at the other end and I was riding my bicycle, I wasn't even part of it. I was, I, I'd turned around and went up the other way to get away from, from what was happening and I was arrested for going the wrong way up a one way street that was completely at a standstill on my bicycle, no traffic. It, it was a farce that was used to collect my details; I never received any penalty notice for going the wrong way up a one way street. That, that's my point, it -it's a deliberate evidence gathering tactic and I'd like to quickly bring up a - a couple more tactics which I think need you need to be seriously reviewed. One is the use, the unrestrained, pretty unrestrained use of police dogs and we heard that mentioned earlier and several people I know have got police dog bites resulting from the G20 and other, other demonstrations. Now, dog bites are particularly scary because it's one thing, (inaudible) by a police officer that maybe you can see their number and maybe, theoretically, you can hold them to account, but a dog is a, is an animal trained to, to hurt you, by the police, with a sort of – dis – disconnection to the, the police officer actually controlling the dog, is incredibly scary, incredibly scary. And it is routinely used by the police to scare people away from demonstrations or to actually hurt them and it's used in two ways, one on the lead and one - and sometimes, in other circumstances, off the lead, for which they always deny. And the third, the third tactic that I would like to question, I'd like the panel to consider, is the use of Tasers. In the – at the convergence space for the G20, one of the convergence spaces was raided without any opportunity for the many, many people sleeping inside to negotiate or come out peacefully, you know and, and they were all, all that happened and, you know, again, video footage of this is that riot

police were lined up outside, people tried to negotiate and the doors were knocked down and they were all – you know, raided in, in a very forceful manner, but my particular point you know, it's bad enough, but particular point is that they were raided with Tasers drawn, with the red dots that these Tasers produced on people's chests when they came in the room (inaudible) I, I can't imagine how scary that was. And (inaudible) really Tasers was they pulled and they could have been the likes of a – of a gun as well. So,

VB Okay, that's

Use of Tasers and, and the, the lights that come with them need to be seriously considered as, along with the raids and all the rest

VB Yes. Oh, certainly we'll be looking at the use of Tasers and (inaudible). Could you possibly just give (inaudible) the man immediately behind you?

Thanks very much. **Roy Mintoff**, National Union of Journalists Legal Officer. I think it's undeniable that police have a difficult job. They have, however, been criticised by the Home Affairs Select Committee, the Joint Committee on Human Rights and also by HM Inspectorate. And the, the importance of, from the journalist's point of view, is that the police recognise the vital public watchdog role that's recognised by Parliament, by the European Court of Human Rights and by the Government as well and that the, that role is special and distinct from the role of protesters and, and the general public. It's in the interests of the public and of the police and of society as a whole in a democratic society that that public watchdog role is recognised and that the police allow that to – to happen. There are guidelines that existed before the G20 and as a result of – of, of the G20 and, and – and the complaints about that and the NUJ has, has put in complaints and taken some legal action against the police and has received some apologies, also, as a result of which those guidelines have now been improved. What is important is that those guidelines are not merely paper guidelines but - and, and I think this is one of the roles that, that you as the MPA may have, is to ensure that those guidelines are complied with

Mm hm

It, it's – not sufficient merely to be on paper, and, and those guidelines in implementations need to be reviewed, they need to be - the police conduct needs to be monitored and checked and, and, and guidelines and that behaviour needs to be altered if necessary. The

guidelines for the - not just the conduct of the police but also media towards the, the, the, the, it, it's a mutual code of conduct, if you like and the media have to recognise and do recognise their rights and responsibilities; it's important that the police do likewise. Our Members have suffered from assaults, from threats, from being prevented from filming, from taking photographs, from reporting and, and, and they have also suffered, effectively by being prevented from carrying out their work, from lack of freedom of expression and, and not being able to earn a living, by being detained by the police at, at for example it – at, at Kingnorth, on several occasions our Members would be asked their names, would be searched, back and forth, back and forth, by which time events have, have, have, have, have moved on, they're not able to, to get their photographs and reports – they're moved from one area to another, they're not allowed to go to certain areas and, and they've been kettled. It, it is important that they have that freedom of movement to report. If,if they don't have the, the freedom of movement to report, you as an Authority are not going to be able to know what's going on. It not the (inaudible) also reported.

VB Mm. Absolutely. No, I think that's a fair, fair comment.

I, I, I, I, I would ask specifically that, that you as an Authority try to ensure that those guidelines, which are very important, are complied with and, and, and reviewed and checked, as necessary.

VB (inaudible) I think we may well come back to you with a – to a- to ask us some other questions after, but that's

Thank you.

VB Can I just remind everybody there is tea and coffee, water in here, so if anybody needs to take a break, we've all - we can take a break but I – there may be a bit of a queue, but if anybody wants at any time to go and - you know, have a coffee and tea, please do so and the, the loos are also here. This is supposed (inaudible) informal session to us to ga—gather evidence, so please don't feel you have to sit here in serried ranks, all morning. Can I take a few questions from people who haven't spoken before first? The lady in the back, in the yellow? Brown. Thank you. May, may I ask – may I ask you to introduce yourself first, thank you.

(inaudible) and I represent (inaudible)

VB I'm very, very sorry. It's not your fault, but we didn't hear a word of that. I'm very sorry.

My name is **Sylvia Maharaj** and I represent (inaudible). I'm here to say that we are here for civil rights (inaudible) Thank you. I'm here to say that today we are here for civil rights and also people's right of to protest. The police, after all, are human beings are we are and I've heard a lot about what's happening to members on the ground, members of the community. I also happen to know that the police also get injured in situations like these. My question is, why is it the police do not let the community know what happens to members of the Committee or members of the policing force? I, as I said, I happen to know police officers who got severely injured in some of these protests as well, but there's no way that we are told what's happening on the inside as well and I really think it's important for us to have that feedback.

VB Absolutely. I'm certainly we can include that in our, in our evidence and, and, and questions. Okay. May we just do a couple of questions first and then a break? Couple of questions of people who haven't spoken already? Do I see a – lady with a scarf, a green scarf, did you want to – okay, yes, fine and then – and then one of my colleagues wants to ask a question. Yes, sir.

I'd just like to make a couple of points about the police acting generally over demonstrations. And we come down to London maybe three or four times a year with a 'bus to demonstrate. One time in Parliament Square, we were stopped and two police officers came on board and they did a Section – I think it's 42 or something, under the Anti-Terrorism Act. And an inspector came along and he said, "You're demonstrating in a Serious Organised Crime and Police Act area. And I said, "I beg your pardon?" He said, "Serious Organised Crime and Police Act area". And I said, "Well, where is it?" And he gave me a map and it goes from Southwark Bridge on the east side of the area to the Millennium Bridge on the other side, from Southwark Road on the south of the river up to, sort of, St James's Park. Whoever knows that that's a Serious Organised Crime and Police Act area and why has it been designated so, that you can get done under that Act for being in that area and demonstrating?

VB Okay. Well, we'll certainly think that. Now, I see that we've far more questions and I suggest that we have a five minute break for people to freshen themselves up and then we, we continue on. However, I've a question from one of my colleagues here, I think, for the Tomlinson family.

I – I just, I wondered if the Tomlinson family could tell us about how they feel they've been treated by the Met.

It's fine if (inaudible) if they want (inaudible) not in public session (inaudible) I'm sure you would, too if it's too upsetting (inaudible). I, I sorry - can I just suggest that, that you know, I think that was sprung on you and I, I think in fairness that what we ought to say to you is that we are very interested in hearing your views and perhaps, if you'd want to give them in writing you can or confidence to give them in writing, then we can address them or perhaps you can talk to us all individually, when we have the break, which is in about two minutes' time.

(inaudible)

Yeah, while we're on the subject of specially tracked trained TSGs, as you are aware that it was a TSG officer that assaulted my father and that also it was a TSG officer that assaulted **Nicola Fisher**. My father was his hands in his pocket walking away, was an innocent bystander, wasn't a protester, on his way home from work. How do you, how do you'd explain TSG specially trained and assaulting my father? (inaudible)

VB That's a very important point, thank you. Yes. Let's have a quick break, then, five minutes if you want to stand up and - you know, feel better and –

Fifteen minutes.

.. have a coffee and come, come back and because there're still a lot of questions, if we could keep it to a short amount of time, 'cause I know there are a lot of hands that keep going up. Thank you.

CASSETTE TWO

Thank you so much. I'm sorry, there's so many here.

Would you like a written (inaudible)

Yes. Really helpful. That really does help.

I think the more written submissions we have, the better. Then we can sit down and calmly read them.

(inaudible)

VB Ladies and gentleman, as I know there are lots more questions, if you'd like to bring your coffee with you and sit down I'd be most grateful.

(inaudible)

VB Okay, ladies and gentlemen, please bring your tea and coffee with us so that we can ask a few more questions. Now I know there were quite a number of people here, so if there's anybody here who would like to talk about any other policing activities in the sense of – of protest or any other things that they – they've seen or witnessed elsewhere, so it's not just the G20 but any other ideas - if you haven't got a chance this morning, of making your comments, then I hope that you will obviously submit things to us afterwards, as this is not going to finish today, in that sense. We're looking to receive ongoing input and views from all of you. So, just a quick question, slightly controversial. Would anybody like to talk about any incidents they've been to, where it's been successful, where they've enjoyed it, where the – in fact that the, it's passed without incident and what was good and could lessons could be learned from that? May I take you first, please, sir?

(inaudible) microph—

VB Have we got a microphone and may I again ask you (inaudible) first.

Hello? Yes, that is working. **Leo Murrigan** from Plain Stupid? I just wanted to very quickly contrast my experience at a Climate Rush Protest from the protest in June and it was in the midst of the controversy surrounding the G20 protest and which I'm sure had an impact on how the, how the protest was policed. The officers that were policing the protest clearly felt they had a mandate to facilitate it. They were assisting cyclists whose, whose bikes were breaking down and things and it culminated, the Climate Rush, it culminated in an unlawful protest. It culminated in a one or two hour blockade of Westminster Bridge and there was a sit-down, peaceful sit-down protest, people had a picnic in the road and it, it did blockade the traffic and how the police responded to that was – was to, you know, slightly begrudgingly, they then they closed, they closed off the road and they went to the other end of the bridge and they started informing drivers that they weren't going to be able to cross over the bridge and that they needed to turn round and – and then they, they stood around and they – they actually mediated between angry commuters who were wanting to cross the bridge, who were remonstrating with protesters, they facilitated the protest and I, I, I, I'd recently read the HMIC report at that stage and af—following that protest(inaudible) this I, I wrote to, I found out who the Commander in Charge was on the day and I wrote to him to, to congratulate them on appearing to follow the advice of the HMIC and – and its (inaudible) earlier, which is I, I, I, I, I hope that there is clarity from this Panel that - that there is a distinction between the lawful and peaceful, when we're talking about protest. You know, Plain Stupid, we're very, we're very well known; you know, I personally have taken part in a number of unlawful protests. They've been always peaceful and you know, we were avowedly peaceful, they're accountable protests and –there is this per- pervasive conflation of lawful and peaceful protest and – and I just want to be clear that – that this Panel is also addressing how protests which may be unlawful, but remain peaceful, what is the legitimate way to pr - to, to police those types of protest, you know, is violence against, against peaceful yet unlawful protest, is that, is that legitimate, is that a legitimate way to police those protests? But yes, that was a very well policed process, the Climate Rush in June. Thank you.

(inaudible)

The suggestion before the demonstrations that there was going to be trouble an- and people's convictions and I guess that must be true about everybody here, people's convictions that they were turning up, intending to participate in peaceful protest. I certainly became conscious beforehand, not only of people talking up the possibility of violence, but actually seeing a leaflets and so on which certainly seems to be intending to provoke violence - advice as to how to bring down a police horse, or whatever it may be. What I want to know is, when people decided to join whichever demonstrations they did, were they conscious of this potential element, did they believe it to – to exist? D- they think there was any, actually any issue to be dealt with? Or did they think that it's a fabrication or, or whatever?

VB Any questions that - to take those, okay, so take those first, (inaudible). Anybody who's not spoken already (inaudible) on the basis of, of (inaudible) discussion here?

My experience not on the G20, from other place, the politicians (inaudible) organising demonstration against (inaudible) someone of my Committee told me you will (inaudible) explain the (inaudible) . I was very careful when more than hundred surrounded and they smashed the windows, then I rang up to the police and luckily within two, three minutes' time (inaudible) arrived, although they don't want to wish to take action against the protester and this was a actually unlawful (inaudible) happen and politician (inaudible) and they were there and the police gave the warning upon my request to them, "If you break the law, we will arrest you" but in fact police haven't taken any action against that and they run away, after one hour's time (inaudible) and they're continuously last week they smash four windows of mine and I rang up to the police, fifteen minutes they were restrained there and the (inaudible) in my property, police never, ever arrived. Never ever arrived, when I rang up (inaudible) that is, it seems to me, to be contrary to the (inaudible).

VB Okay, sorry, I've (inaudible). The lady next door to (inaudible)there, and then there's (inaudible) one and then the other (inaudible).

You asked for examples of

(inaudible)

..of good policing. I just want to endorse what everybody's said about the Climate Camp in Blackheath. I live in Blackheath and Blackheath was very nervous in advance, but in the event, that (inaudible) with the whole way the camp (inaudible) giving a lot of criticism here but I wanted to (inaudible)

VB Thank you very much (inaudible)

Okay; in terms of a, a good example and then to answer your question, I participated often in I think it what was it called - Single Lone Demonstrations in Parliament Square, that - where we all had to submit our individual applications for individual demonstrations? That

was, the - some of them were very large; there was a police presence; the police were in a very good humour, that was a lot of fun, it was a carnival kind of atmosphere and the police would - would, would, would, would chat with us and wanted to know what we were doing but not, not in, in an intrusive way but in a, in, in the spirit of the fun of what we were doing and I think that, that's an example of - of both a well organised in, good protest and also one that the police were, were well behaved. Now, to answer your question, it's in my experience which goes—I've been involved in peaceful demonstrations, some lawful, some unlawful, going back very many years since I was a child, in my experience the people who advocate violence almost always are the people who are the infiltrators, are the people who - who are the police clients or the, or the Intelligence pla—are people who are really, who are saying, people were saying, "We're going to go march here" and they say, "Oh come on, let's break some windows or, let's do this" and they almost always turn out to be the people who are, shall we say, the provocateurs from the police, or some similar organisation.

We've just responded, my name is **Susan** (inaudible) from (inaudible) Community Safety Board. We've just responding to your question. I believe in most cases the police is not just pre-empting it. Most of what they have, most of the information or intelligence that were gathered. What we should be asking ourselves is - is it right for the police to make this informations public to - for us to know, or is this giving the opportunity to - to people who are just going there to advocate violence - is this giving them or, or, the ability, the opportunity, to go there and destruct all the peaceful protestors?

I've been on numerous (inaudible) demonstrations, basically just with a camera and one of the better ones was the Country - Countryside Alliance?

Mm hm.

The atmosphere was absolutely brilliant. The police were very good and another one was when Bush came over here, dare I say with me. It started off very, very good but half way through the, the, the back of the crowd, there was a rent-a-mob, which did cause trouble. The three points of the march, there was children, dogs, all sorts of - and it was, it was fanta--- the at, atmosphere was really good and the police atmosphere was good, but I mean, you do get that element of rent-a-mob that (inaudible) go to cause the trouble.

VB (inaudible) further back, so could I take the, the gentleman at the back as well, (inaudible) . Thank you.

Thanks very much. Yeah, example of good policing, I think is all the Safer Neighbourhood policing. In my particular ward in south London, it's transformed the way the kids and the residents look at the police; it's absolutely wonderful. You know, we know the Sergeant by name and the PCSOs. It's just sad when that advance is spoilt, as we heard today, by the sort of gung-ho attitude of some members of units like the TSG and I think that's a terrible shame when that happens, because kids see police as police; they don't differentiate. My real point was to try and get on – that is my, one of my real points, the other point to get on the agenda or into your evidence is the issue of Tasers

Mm hm

..so that you look at that clearly when, when you come to do your report, or you do further investigating. I mean, in general, although they're sort of electric shock machines or whatever, they are quite a good device, because if someone's out of control individually, either getting jumped on by six police officers or hit over the head with a baton or sprayed with CS gas, all of those things are quite injurious. A Taser does give the police to act at a distance; it does give them a chance to use their communication skills and it does give them a chance to diffuse tension. As far as I understand it, they are not at all appropriate in public order situations – I - quite whether the gentleman before was referring to that, I don't know, they're also not appropriate, as I understand it, in crowded situations where there are multiple people who need to be dealt with, because these darts fly all over the place, so that's what I would like you to just investigate or put in your report and clarify to the police; if they're used in public order I think it's a disgrace; it - I think it's disciplinary. The third issue I've got here which I'd also like to record, as far as I also understand it, they are not supposed to be used in red dot mode, to try and threaten people. There's a specific use for Tasers which they're good at, but they're not supposed to be used to threaten people. The threatening bit has another issue. If the Taser is discharged, then a lot of our issues about identification are covered because they, it's logged on a computer, you can find out who did it, who had it etcetera. But if they're not discharged and they are used to threaten, that audit trail, as I understand it, doesn't exist, so we shouldn't be. Last point is the only people who were authorised to use Tasers up until fairly recently, were trained armed police officers, member of CO19. That has been rolled out to another group and that group is the TSG. When asked why, well, because they're disciplined and highly professional.

VB Thank you for that. Okay, (inaudible) we've got one more on this side and then we'll go and do the questions on this side. Yes, sir.

My name is **Justin Moore** and I am the Chairperson for the Tower Hamlets Police Community Safety Board. I do have (inaudible) experience in the (inaudible) borough which

is Newham, who are actually – spend most time in both boroughs in community activities. A good example, I would say, in Tower Hamlets, we have a good liaison role with the police officers and community groups. Now, this is positive on the one hand. But the difficulties they have, that happen sometimes, is the fact that you have various policing, from different sections so perhaps the Borough policing that you work with it's not the CO19, it's not the (inaudible) police officers and sometimes there seems to have a breakdown of comm--communications and I think that's an area that needs to be looked at very closely and (inaudible) public disorder, you may have a group of officers who are training that particular area and the people who are (inaudible) demonstr—protesting would have very little communication or alliance with these officers, because they're coming from a new, new (inaudible) group and I think that seems to be a problem. However, we're unfamiliar with the S, SPG I'm going many, many, many years ago, a Special (inaudible) group, we know exactly because it didn't change, because it was changed for changing's sake, it was changed because at the time it was not doing a very good job in terms of police community relations. However, the PSG now have taken over from the SPG; what I would like to ask, what is the measure of success, or what have they learned since that changeover taken place? Thank you.

VB Okay, (inaudible) there's a number of questions on this side, shall we start at the front with you and then I'll work our way n back. Thank you.

Thank you.

(inaudible) I'm a member of Police State UK, which is a civil liberty (inaudible) site. As the (inaudible) Climate Camp in Blackheath in (inaudible) as an example of positive policing, the police are largely conspicuous by their absence; both of the peaceful protests I've been at, which are policed well didn't have visible police officers present; there was one I was at, at Parliament Square and also at Blackheath, the police stayed out of the way. I think this is a primary factor in things going as well as they did. Climate Camp I don't believe changed any of their strategy when (inaudible) G20 or Kingsnorth and the Blackheath Camp. The only differences is in the MPS's response, so the difference there clearly shows that the culpability was with them, I think. The engagement from the police at Climate Camp was still very one sided. They did put in a lot of effort to have a (inaudible) and make announcements on their Web site (inaudible) with Climate Camp but as **Samantha** said earlier, Climate Camp's information's always been very open source; you could always find out what their point of view was, why they're asking questions. All the Met would say is, that we've met with them and given some (inaudible) answers without saying what those answers were, (inaudible) discuss this or very close about their information. So I think possibly communication could still be improved, although I appreciate their that efforts have been made.

VB Thank you very much. Now, working the way (inaudible)

(inaudible) again from the Climate Camp Legal Team. I'd just like to obviously endorse that previous example of good policing, but also just to focus on there's a particular problem around the police engaging with what I believe they would see as unorganised protest,

Right

.. and for a non hierarchical group, as the Climate Camp is, it's very difficult for us also to engage with the police. There's also a reluctance to negotiate over our right to protest . So I think that's an area where significant creative thought is needed, to see how that can be navigated.

VB How would (inaudible) take it forward, because I think realistically (inaudible)

Okay, well let me (inaudible) take an example of, of the G20 and the dispersal that occurred after the kettle. Late night, no media around, incredibly violent from our (inaudible) experience. And one of the things for me about that was, we hadn't police liaison on the ground, it was broken off. It was in many events one way. One of the things that was going on was that protesters were engaging in decision-making meetings sitting on the ground using a sound speaker to facilitate that meeting and the sound speaker was broken by the police during that demonstration and it – it effectively put a stop to that kind of decision-making process - process on the ground to the protestors and I do think weighing the balancing up the rights of protestors and the right of the general public at that point in time, there, there was the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the protestors and to see if the footprint of the protest could be reduced, in order to facilitate the public and the access to the road, without the necessity to disperse the Camp in, in the way that it did. And I think there was a missed opportunity for dialogue and I think it was possible to do that, but it's going to ch - require a change of attitude.

VB Okay, fine, thank you, (inaudible).

Thank you. **Roy Mintoff**, National Union of Journalists. It, it's important that it's recognised that the media has the right to cover a protest, whether it's a lawful protest or not a lawful protest.

VB Yes. I think you did say that before.

I think that, that has been said, but it, it, it, it's worthy of repetition. The – a – a journalist will carry a press card which is instantly verifiable and the police need to be able to understand that; it, it's not always understood and, and too, too often the Police don't realise what it is, don't understand,

VB I'm very sorry, but we have made both those points before, so to be

Thank you

VB ... and we want points we haven't made before.

It, it's important

VB We were taking notes up here, you see, so you know.

Thank you. It's important also that the training that the police receive is filtered through from the top level right the way through, down to the police at the ground and that that training is – is not just a one off,

Mm hm

..but it's – it, it's given on, on frequent occasions. The NUJ has been able to participate more recently in some of that training and, and we welcome that. We welcome that dialogue and that opportunity. It's, it, it is very valuable. It's important that the leadership and supervision i- is, is there to ensure that the – the training and the actions are, are then

properly, properly supervised. Following on from the – from the point that, that has just been made, as, as to what can be done to, to improve that, that liaison, certainly in advance of, of events it, it's important to have that – that briefing, that training, that dialogue to – to work out ways of – of xxx as far as the media is concerned to understand what the police are going to be doing and, and ways in which the, the media can – can cover the events properly, thoroughly, safely.

(inaudible)

As, as, as far as the liaison is concerned, there needs to be a means - and I haven't got an easy answer - of, of having that also available on the day, whether that's by texting to a Media Liaison Officer or, or, or, or mobile 'phone and that's also available to get through to the officers, the Supervisory Officers at the time.

VB Okay – thank you very much indeed. (inaudible) back (inaudible); thank you.

Yeah, just got really just a quick question for the Panel about - it's communications after the event and really the accountability issue, because I also understand that princip—primarily they're here to hold the Met to account, but also you – after the event, there's been over 250 IPCC complaints and only actually 27 charged with offences by the police, but there are a lot of the communications after the event, really involve different agencies; I just hope that the Panel will be kind of within their (inaudible) in evidence gathering will be finding out exactly what's been happening with some of those other IPCC complaints, because it's been very hard, certainly from my point of view, when trying to research it, to find out, yeah, all, all of these kind of issues in terms of accountability, both for individual officers and for senior officers on the day, there, there's very little information out there and it's now – you know, six months on and, really, you know, I think particularly for members of the public and protestors who were there, that were there on the day, that they want to not only hear about how the – the Met's going to go forward and change its policies, but, you know, actually see some accountability for what happened and the police holding up their hands and admitting that they've made mistakes, because previously, at MPA meetings, there've been certain officers who advise the MPA you know, as a, the main meetings who – who really don't appear to be taking on board in some instances all the issues and have made several factual, factually inaccurate statements – for instance on Climate Camp, the access and egress and - (inaudible) there was a claim that there's a four way high, highway that has been blocked rather than two way and there's a number of other (inaudible) publicised basic mistakes. I, I really hope that the Panel (inaudible) take on board this issue of accountability and also look to other organisations like the IPCC to include that in their evidence gathering.

VB I can't make specific (inaudible) comments on individual cases but let's go (inaudible) as many questions as possible before our individual Panel members who want to speak.

Yes. To, to address the, the question (inaudible)

VB Could you possibly stand up, sir and give us your name?

Yeah, sorry, (inaudible) and I'm a journalist for the (inaudible). To (inaudible) on the point of the (inaudible) for acts of violence in advance, I think sometimes there's a breakdown of understanding between the different groups – and a massive failure of sense of humour in some cases. There was no intention, for example, to actually storm the Bank. However, the posters and the demo was (inaudible) on the Bank but there was a humorous old picture of people attacking a bank. There are often elements of that within some of the propaganda that comes ahead of demonstrations, which are not meant to be taken 100 per cent seriously, as they - as they are. There's also - leading up to it as well and I think this is a very important point for journalists. There's often a choice between what information the police put out and, and the media. The media's often culpable in publishing material from the police directly and we saw that immediately after G20, but that's obviously a breakdown in the relationship that exists there and journalists expect the police to tell them the truth; they will then publish it. If, if the police tell them that something is not the whole truth and if that gets published it, it leads to a breakdown in the respect of both, both groups. But if you look back, this is an issue that's been going on for a while. You look back to the coverage of the Wombles, for example, who came out around 2000, 2001 who were portrayed as a v—as a violent group, aiming to cause violence. Actually, if you had (inaudible) what the Wombles were, they were specifically defensive group, who, who were non armed, yet most of the portrayal from the media and from, from the police – and this relationship between them – was of this violent group and allegation of the connections to GKK came out, which was totally unfounded and nobody's quite sure where that came from, but, there is a propaganda war and there's often a – a lack of understanding between both sides as to what's going to happen. There was never a plan, for example, to hang any bankers outside of the Banks; (inaudible) that was reported by the police as justification for their actions as a result of r—reports in the media. There was an off the cuff comment on a radio interview by one person who was not necessarily representative of anybody. He made the comments himself, yet that became a threat and it (inaudible) became a justification. That needs to be looked at and it's to be looked at what kind of dialogue is possible beforehand between a diversity of groups and a – a sense of reality brought into it, as to what's really going to happen and what's a very deliberately exaggerated threat.

VB Okay. So if we can go on now with a (inaudible) and then yourself after that, maybe.

I just want to follow on from that point around the use of communications. Just to directly answer the question now of (inaudible) that came across from Europe, young (inaudible) of Europe who were totally shocked, (inaudible) to be baton charged. I have never experienced anything like it in, in on the Continent. Many of them come from France, Belgium, Germany, where the policing of (inaudible) situations are usually, can be quite heavy and so - but they were quite shocked to find themselves at a Climate Camp being kettled and baton charged. They also quite, speak English very well, are very media aware so they're very – they had access to quite a lot of information. But I think it does speak – the question does speak directly to the point of police communications and I think the atmosphere of fear that was created beforehand and then it does speak directly of (inaudible) circumstances surrounding any information that came out around (inaudible) speaks to what mandate do the police have, to engage in proactive communications or spin, rather than conveying the facts of their being examined and recorded. I think there is, there is, there needs to be and I'd like to see the report go into the role of police uses of communications and I think it speaks, comes back to the role that the police have in terms of facilitating Press access, whether clearly the Press's role in a democratic society is to record events and to reporting events. They need to examine the police, they need to engage in – in news gathering on the ground. But what role do the police have in conveying partial facts, rumours, or it, or, or suggestions or opinions, prior to an event and then, for an event before the facts have come in, surely the Police's role is to facilitate the freedom of expression, convey the facts as they have been recorded or judged and then finally to facilitate information gathering, not to – to create atmosphere of fear, to pre-empt possible outcomes from an event or to misreport events as they unfold, as they did with the circumstances surrounding Ian Tomlinson's death, as there are multiple reports of police blaming protesters, police (inaudible) protesters, (inaudible) violence, this, that and the rest of it. (inaudible) true and they - possibly if they're responsible, should decline to comment until the facts have been established and I think that's a very important

VB I'm sorry, (inaudible) speak but I think that's a very good that you make. Maybe I can (inaudible)

I'm **Joanna** from Friends of the Earth and I've been organising some demonstrations and rallies and stuff, ever since Newbury in fact. Quite a lot on the coalitions of people like Stop Planet Chaos and the Play Justice movement as well. And I think I'd like to make an observation also about communications and not so much about the propaganda type, across the kind of communications between organisers, police. And I would say that probably most of the demonstrations and organised events that I've worked on in advance, in the planning stage, the police have facilitated, they've been very willing, by and large, they've been

helpful and it's quite easy to work with them at that stage. Everything inevitably seems to change when you actually get on the ground and you find that you're not dealing with the people that were involved in the planning stage; you're dealing with the people who are (inaudible) on the day. You often don't meet them, they often make arbitrary decisions on the day, so you don't know what's happening; they stop treating you as an organiser who they're respectful of, and talk about your rights and they're here to facilitate and start treating you like a slightly bumptious and tiresome ten year old who's in their way, particularly if you're female, because I do find there's that level set for them and I also think that you, when you are in slightly more sort of hairy situations and I'm not now quoting something like the Trade Justice Movement march or whatever – I'm thinking more about what happened in the G8 in Edinburgh, where some of the events around that - not the actual Stop - Make Poverty History march, which was (inaudible) inspirational but an org – this is to do with an action that we had organised at Grangemouth and we were there as Friends of the Earth Scotland with some of the community, with the community and the people in Planet and the student groups and about 100 demonstrators and we're working for local police round Grangemouth – we'd actually gone and spoken to the community as well; we'd said, Look, we're not trying to affect your jobs, you know, it was very, very strong lines of our communication. Everything was cool and the demonstration was going on, it was very happy, there were kids in costumes, it was - it was great and all of a sudden, completely out of the blue, about thirty riot squad, mostly from forces outside of, I think, it was – was it Liverpool actually – all drove up. They lined up behind Grangemouth and they kind of lined up all wearing riot gear and all of a sudden you moved from these local police who were themselves intimidated by the riot squad and they were sort of saying, Look, we can't answer for your safety from these guys. Now that is really, really unacceptable and I was, I was (inaudible) and that leads me to say also, I think when it goes back to policing, at what stage should the police be wearing this kit? Because the minute you, you are talking to probably a perfectly reasonable 22 year old, when he suddenly looks like Robocop and he's behind helmets and visors and you can't see any numbers and (inaudible) kit, he's no longer a human being, he's not engaging with you as a human being and I think that that – that really does, then, escalate because people get frightened and it's dehumanising. I think uniforms are very (inaudible).

VB One more at the back, I think we've got a question there and then I know my various colleagues (inaudible)

Anna Berger, from the Green Party. I just want to go back to what some people were saying earlier on, on the floor and echo their concerns expressed about police in (inaudible) reporting misinformation and what appear to be open lies on occasion. I want to ask, how can we trust them in intelligence gathering? I have a question here that's from somebody who's unable to attend, his name's **Guy Aitchison** and I agreed to ask this question on his behalf. This is the question: The panel will be aware that *The Guardian* has been running an

investigative series in some networks of databases used by police to track and monitor so-called domestic extremists, a category invented by the police to describe campaigners who might engage in civil disobedience, regardless of whether they have committed a crime. The three national police units who manage the databases are apparently run by the Terrorism and Allied Matters Committee of the Association of Police Officers, that's ACPO. Will the Panel look into what guidelines are given to police on who should and who should not be on those databases? Who has access to these databases? Who is the information shared with, both in the public and the private sector and how long is the information going to be retained on these databases? Thank you.

VB Thank you. Well, obviously I (inaudible) some more investigation on that. (inaudible) DNA databases as well - a future piece of work for (inaudible) these ideas (inaudible) incorporate some of those questions into – into this review. Now I'm mindful that one lady hasn't spoken over there, then I know that some of my colleagues would like to speak, as well.

(inaudible) and I wasn't (inaudible) Bishopsgate but (inaudible) people who were and overheard a few things and (inaudible) and I've taken an interest ever since. One of the things I (inaudible) was read the vicar's blog at St Ethelberga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, where he says when at ten o'clock he came out of his church and the atmosphere had changed totally, of course, from what it was earlier on when he had (inaudible) this festival demonstration. It had now completely changed because of the kettle; he saw a *Guardian* reporter, I think it was, who told him that the police are waiting 'til the journalists leave; they will then move in and then a policewoman got hold of him by the elbow and steered him out, because she said: "There will be violence." And he said, "I see no violence" and she insisted, "There will be violence." So it was clearly coming; there was also a report I read, that one policeman had told pro-- protestors, "We have a surprise for you." There was of course a change of shift, later in the evening. The other thing I wanted to say is that two months before, about two months before, some high ranking police officer forecast in a lecture that this would be the year in which the middle classes got clobbered by the police (inaudible); I can't remember his wording. Anyway, he forecast trouble and he forecast it specifically at the G20 and it's evident from looking at various blogs and so on by police officers (*cassette ceases to record here*)

CASSETTE 3, SIDE A

(INAUDIBLE) identification numbers on, that's supposed to be caught by their cadre on the ground and reported, is there any way we're going to find out or if any of those kind of reports that (inaudible) made (inaudible) G20 where we can look at the videos and we can

see dozens of officers without identification, how many were reported for it by their senior officers?

(inaudible) certainly it's something (inaudible) identification that Sir Paul Stevenson's obviously spoken (inaudible) new initiative so I hope

He has and that's – that's good word from the top

Sure

But not (inaudible) the bottom and it's the people just above the bottom I'm interested in

Yes and I think that's the main question (inaudible) today

..is the – is the internal report (inaudible) or are they covering up for each other?

The chain of command on the ground, (inaudible)

And I wanted to mention a few people cited Climate Camp in July, as an example of good policing. It was nice nobody got hit; that was lovely. The (inaudible) were still there, wearing CCTV badges on their uniforms so (inaudible) just taking continuous camera footage of peaceful protesters, there was a giant CCTV camera on a crane, which I was fairly well aware of. The – this kind of intelligence gathering I think is still contrary to the encouragement and facilitation of peaceful protest. It's going to deter people turning up, it makes some of the people who do turn up inclined to cover their faces which then makes them look like hooligans

Mm

..whereas in fact it's a reaction to an over the top policing policy so that's a counter point to (inaudible) the Climate Camp was good and the last point I want to make, is just a (inaudible) there's been a lot of talk about how we're going to set policies or guide policies going forward from here. There's also some fairly clear innocent (inaudible) of policies not being adhered to in the past. Is anything going to come of those in any, any action taken against people who are in charge of that operations, is there even going to be an apology for how horrendous and mismanaged the G20 protests and the previous Climate Camp protests were, or do we just have to strike those and move on?

I think the HMIC have of course preparing the first part of their report and will (inaudible) with the second part of their report, publishing. The HMIC's in (inaudible) Constabulary who have been here this morning and listening to us and I've no doubt and they have said quite clearly if any of you have particular evidence which you'd like to submit to them in more detail, to the report please talk, talk to us afterwards. I mean for example, the first part of the HMIC report has said, which the police have agreed with is that the HMIC states: If containment – kitting – is deployed there should be no surprises, a release plan to allow the exit of vulnerable or distressed persons or those inadvertently caught up in protest, easy access to information, clear signposting to basic facilities and amenities and awareness of recognition of the UK Press Card. Now, the police have already said that they take those on board and as part of the work that we're going to be doing at the end of today when we've gathered your evidence, the evidence that we've – of all the other people that we are meeting with and the reports that have been written in and again, can I remind you, if you haven't already filled out your questionnaire, or want to talk to us or talk to it, give it to us over the 'phone or some other method, we're very happy to take it, all the members of our Committee are here to help, we're all here to facilitate listening to, to your advice. So what's going to happen at the end of all of this? At the end of all of this I should think probably at the end of the year, we're going to be putting together all the evidence from the range of people and organisations that we have spoken to and then that will go into firm recommendations that the MPA will do; those will be discussed at full authority and again, you can come back here and see that discussion taking place and then following on from that, we will go on having appropriately either quarterly or half yearly to see how the recommendations that we have put forward the HMIC and other bodies have put forward, to actually make a difference. There's no point us all giving our time today, unless each and every one of us whose ideas are considered the best are taken of them and actually there is a difference to the policing and the freedom of – within this country that we enjoy. I am mindful of the time; I know there are a couple of other people who want to ask questions. I'm (inaudible) ask them (inaudible) going to be some sandwiches here as well and all of my members (inaudible) here would also like to – to speak for a few moments. So I'm going to take two more questions and then I'm going to invite my fellow colleagues here to speak. The gentleman here who has so I'm going to take it from two people who have not spoken, okay?

Hello. Paul Lewis, The Guardian.

(inaudible)

Sure. As the – as the morning has gone on, you've done, given some indication as to which as—aspects of the evidence given you're going, you're going to look in to and as a specific question was put to you as to whether or not you would look in to the alleged cover-up of the death of Ian Tomlinson. I'd remind the Panel that the, the video evidence came out six days after he died; the police were aware of photographic evidence of their involvement in his death less than 24 hours after he died. So can you give us a – a specific response as to whether or not you will look in to that question of a cover-up?

(inaudible) after the other official investigation we've been told of this inappropriate for us to do so as you said there were a court case just about to start so we won't be doing anything til after that completed and only if it comes within the remit of – of, of

So, so you won't do it until after the, the trial of the officer, is that what you're saying?

Well we – (inaudible) my understanding is the IPCC are due to report.

No, the IPCC has handed the file to the CPS. The CPS is considering whether to bring charges. I mean to be honest, with all respect that's a disingenuous answer. The question as to whether or not the police officer was culpable for manslaughter is one for the CPS and then one for the courts

Mm

Question as to whether the Met misled the public over his death or their knowledge of involvement in his death, is a question for the Met and it's a question for you as well.

Well, it may – the MPA as a whole might decide to take that on, but that's not the remit of this particular committee at this particular time. That's not saying that we won't investigate

it in the future, but it's not the remit of this particular committee at, at the moment, which is when we were set up, to look at all policing of, of protest, looking at the work of the HMIC and you – you know, Tamils, the Gaza demonstrations, the Oxford Street demonstrations and the other freedom of (inaudible)

That's a No, then, that's a No.

No; I'm not, I've not said that, at all. I said the MPA may well decide to look at it, but it's not going to be the focus of this particular work today.

Right, I mean the question was whether or not you, this panel was going to consider and, and look into whether or not

I'll have to ask them, I'll have to ask them – my colleagues; at the moment we're – we're talking about the things here but that's not saying that we wouldn't – we wouldn't do that, I, I – I can't speak for my colleagues but they are going to all speak in a few moments' time. So that will be a sensible thing. Okay, could I have somebody else who hasn't spoken before, first, please? Gentleman at the back? You haven't spoken (inaudible) sorry could I do the gentleman at the back please 'cause he's not spoken before. Okay, were you going to start first then with a summary of our (inaudible) ?

Yeah, hi. Richard Harry from BFC solicitors; I've been on numerous protests over the last thirty years. I currently represent two clients in the G20. I just want to try and summarise some points from this morning's session. It seems to me that the key, two questions are for the MPA to demand from the police, I mean if – if you are a police authority, you must have some hopefully authority over the Metropolitan Police as a body. It's absolutely essential that the public order training at Dartford is completely (inaudible). I've been there myself, it's farcical. Their training for a situation that happened in 1985 when petrol bombers were thrown in a riot in London. That has not happened since. If there is any police unit who need to be trained for that, as a contingency it could only be the PSG I presume. I don't see any reason for the TFG to be deployed on the street in any political protest unless it reaches the stage of petrol bombs or serious violence. I also think that the – there needs to be complete new guidance in terms of public order policing and it's clear that everybody wants the police to be permanently identifiable, front and back. There's absolutely no reason at all that can't be done and in a manner that prevents the police themselves from removing that identification. It's quite clear that press and legal observers with photo ID, NUJ cards or I mean, we ourselves have cards that are issued and it says at the bottom, in c—in

conjunction with the Metropolitan Police. We should be allowed free movement in political protest; we should not be prevented from seeing what's happening under any circumstances, unless there's a real risk of – of danger. It also seems to me that there should be no deployment of dogs. At all. This is reminiscent of Nazi Germany and the Stasi. It's completely inappropriate; I can't see any point for that at all. There shouldn't, I don't see any reason for horses to be deployed. They're extremely dangerous beasts, they're rather large and they can crush people and one of the first – well, many years ago I had to prevent my child, who was only eighteen months old at the time, from being in the line of a police charge in a contained area and that was at the Poll Tax demonstration. Fortunately there were the steps of the church at, in Trafalgar Square where we escaped it. And I, I'm certain question of Tasers. These should be completely outlawed from any idea of public protest. I actually don't see why police officers should be dressed in these NATO uniforms. Routinely deployed so quickly. All the police are equipped with those extendable batons that can be, give you quite a nasty injury in any event. And, and to be fair 99 per cent of all protesters are utterly non-violent. Some people may talk up the idea of violence, but actually as somebody pointed out some of the police themselves are quite happy to talk it up, as well. And you've only got to go to Dartford and sit in the canteen and see those shaven headed officers sitting there and you can see they love it and they, they, they're quite happy to see those petrol bombers thrown at them and, and I mean, they mainly young men; they're probably quite – quite looking forward to a protest on that level. But there's got to be a complete overhaul of that training and there's got to be at the end of the day accountability and I think it's very important the issue that's been brought up about the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and at the highest levels lying about what happened to Ian Tomlinson and this is not the first time. This is routine and the lying has got to stop and it's really got to – the Commissioner should be resigning when he's caught out lying when a man's died. It's outrageous and the MPA's really got to hold the Commissioner to account for that. And, and I wonder if the MPA shouldn't actually look at the role of the, the, the press office because the Metropolitan Police, they have a w—way of putting out lies into the media and, and I think it's, it's extremely dangerous and unfair.

(inaudible)

(applause)

Now we're going to turn to my fellow Committee members who are going to, to, to talk because we haven't heard from (inaudible) and they also obviously have views on civil liberties. May I start with Dee Doocey please?

DD Ye—yes. If, it's quite difficult. First of all, thank you so much for giving us your views and for, for giving us your time and spending so much time here today; we're very grateful. It's unusual for us, as politicians, to be listening and not speaking and I've been biting my tongue for the entire morning. I'm not going to try to summarise on everything; I'm just going to pick what I consider to be the – the key points. I think first of all, the role of the Metropolitan Police Authority is still not clear. Our job is to set the overall policy for the police, to make sure that policy is implemented and then to hold the Metropolitan Police to account. So we inform and influence; we can't and in my view should not interfere in day to day policing matters. I would personally be very, very concerned if we were to ever try to say to the Commissioner, you should use Tactic A or Tactic B for this particular set of circumstances, because I think it would be totally and wholly inappropriate. I'd just like to pick up on for me the – the key issues. First of all, kitting. I would start as I think all of us do on this panel, from the assumption that it's an absolute given that demonstrating is a right. It, it is not something that it ought to be allowed because somebody is happy to allow you to demonstrate. It's a democratic right. Everyone should have the right to demonstrate. I also believe that police have an obligation to facilitate peaceful demonstration. I am totally and absolutely anti- a closed kitting system. I think it is just counterproductive, apart from anything else. You've got to discriminate between the different, between peaceful protest and – which is a vast majority of people and the tiny minority who do want to cause disturbance and there need to be different tactics for those two groups. The next one that I feel particularly strongly about is numerals. You will appreciate that we have taken evidence from a number of people - a number of senior police officers, junior police officers; we've taken evidence from virtually everyone and we've heard a variety of reasons why the numerals fall off. Either the Velcro isn't working very well, the pins are not very good and we've seen them demonstrated as, as Victoria said earlier but to my mind, there is absolutely no excuse and there never can be an excuse for why numerals fall off or can be pulled off and the police must sort that out. I don't care what it costs or how it is done. I'm not interested in a police uniform committee. I think what we need to do is we need to have police action on this and it needs to be sorted and it needs to be sorted now. The other thing that I feel quite strongly about though is it was suggested here this morning that the Royal Bank of Scotland was somehow colluding with the police to make sure that the Bank was trashed so that the police could film it. I must tell you that I would need an awful lot of convincing that the Board of the Royal Bank of Scotland were actually sitting down, planning a raid on the Bank in order for it to be trashed and evidence that we've had from police has suggested that all of the businesses in the area got exactly the same information about the of—the necessity and the desirability to board up their premises. Some took it and some didn't and I think finally the major, major thing that's come out of this is communications. I think there was a breakdown of communication on almost every front and I think it's essential that this is addressed. We will be making I think quite far reaching recommendations. I would be very surprised if the recommendations weren't accepted by the Met and we will be making sure that those are implemented. Thank you very much indeed. (inaudible)

Thank you - good morning everybody. It's really good to see you here and it has been great hearing what you've got to say. There were a few things that didn't come up today but – for example Rona I think did mention distraction violence which, which didn't come out but perhaps just put that in writing and we can include it in the report. Now I've been a protester, a demonstrator for forty years. I first protested in 1968 and I'm horrified that I'm still protesting (inaudible) in forty odd years we would have a better government, we had a better world and you know there would be no wars but I was optimistic and I still am optimistic. But I (inaudible) on the day of G20 because I have tried over the (inaudible) police authority to go out with the police particularly to see how their operations try to understand it from their point of view because as a – as a diehard protester sometimes it's difficult to appreciate the police's viewpoint and I have done my best to understand it so and I've understood that, when, when a lot of those officers wake up in the morning they do think they're going to face violence, they don't know if they're going to end up in hospital in the evening, so it – it is a quite scary situation and these and so the pre planning and the pre information is an incredibly important component. If you ramp up the possibility of violence, everybody gets more frightened and violence is more, more likely to happen. On, on the day of G20 I was out with another Assembly member another Police Authority member and we were taken round by the police to various places. And we saw Climate Camp and it was so lovely. It was music and dancing and lots of kids and it was a- you know and picnicking in the street; it was great. And then a short time later of course Bishopsgate happened and I was outside the kettle as it closed in and I asked the officers I was near to get me through the cordon so that I could be inside and understand what was going on and they refused and I said, but I really want to go in and they said, No it's going to be too dangerous. So the police were telling me it was dangerous being in the kettle and, and wouldn't let me through. On the issue the, several issues have come up today; I think one of them's absolutely crucial one is, is about the misuse of the law. We have some stupid, horrendous, repressive laws that have been passed by (inaudible) by this Government and – and they ought really ought to be repealed, they should be you know struck off the books but they are there. The police have a duty to police them but they have a duty to police them properly and I think what we have seen is the misuse of many of the powers that they've been given and it's time that they were properly trained you know section 76 is only of the, you know, dreadful laws that are being misused by police at the moment. On the issue of databases, our (inaudible) going to ask what the police have got about me on their databases; it will be extremely embarrassing if they have me on their database because I do think of myself as a domestic extremist and – and, and you know and lots of my f—my friends are, too. So you know, we can, we can find out about those databases. Many of them should not exist and we should be making sure that – you know, one of our recommendations I hope will be about the use of, of databases and finally, kitting. Over the years I first saw kitting used in 2001 at the May Day protest and you know, over the years I've tried to suggest ways that they could be better – you know, water for people and loos and all sorts of things. I finally decided kitting was a tactic that cannot be used in a humane way. It reduces, it takes (inaudible) civil libert – liberties and should not be used. I'm coming at this from a very particular point of view and I'm, I'm very much hoping our report will include as I'm it will, include all the things that you've mentioned today. Thank you.

Thank you very much indeed. Joanne, may I pass to you please?

Yeah. Can I just say though than you for, for coming and sharing your experiences and certainly I think the G20 protest certainly in my constituency bag I represent part of London, I got a number of complaints about the way it – protesters so I think as a politician it, it comes to us that way as well I mean and, and I approach this that the police have a fundamental duty to facilitate peaceful protest. And I'm very concerned and the view Jane has put in in a motion about it, it (inaudible) the results of the Blair Peach Inquiry but I'm quite, it's quite disheartening I think to hear that many protesters here say that we've been here before and things haven't changed and I think hopefully this could be part of the process that will mean that things will change and have to change, because we know that if policing a public protest is not right, it can have implications that are enormous and have got Tomlinson family here, that are testament to that. There are a number of issues that there's (inaudible) have raised; I just want to quickly go through a couple of the issues. One is police identification numbers. There's clearly no excuse for them not to be identified and it's ironic it's the TSG who've just invested the money to embroider it on to their kit so if it's, you know, it, it can be done and – and they are doing that and I think it's (inaudible) recommendations that the rest of the Force do that and communications obviously important and one of the last (inaudible) we had raised the issues about the Met's own press communications which I think is a very valid one (inaudible) last week we had the Commissioner accepting that the news stories about armed police on the street came from and misinformation that was given by the Met police office and (inaudible) and put out their press release so that's something that we certainly do look at. The NUJ submissions I think were spot on. You know, journalists are there as a watch dog the benefit of the public and may have to be (inaudible) facilitated. The (inaudible) about the legislation. I'd agree with a lot of that. I think a lot of it is about proportionality the police use in compiling legislation and I think if there's a you know, there's instances when they get that proportionality wrong and which again comes down to what are training issues that have been raised 'cause I think we'll all use and we've had examples (inaudible) very good team, give a very good impression of policing in London and yet the Robocop image as demonstrating as policing demonstration is the exact opposite and there's this big gap in the middle and what we train of officers on negotiation skills and conflict resolution and that is something we certainly have to look at but the thi—I think the two things that I think are key and they, they've been raised a number of times today. One is how the police approach demonstrations in the first place. Do they approach them with a view that people are going to be peaceful and they're just there to facilitate, or do they start from the approach that there's going to be trouble therefore we have to prepare for that to start with? I think that can dictate the tactics that the police use quite early on. Secondly as the point that Mr May made that we need to look at, is the (inaudible) between lawful and peaceful protest and whether the police have got that right. As soon after the G20 we saw the Tamil protest when there seemed to be a much softer line about that peaceful but not strictly lawful, if you like,

protest and the police used a lot more discretion there. I think that's something we need to be looking at.

Thank you very much indeed. Kirsten, may I turn to you please.

Yes. Thank you very much. I've heard some really helpful things and I really want to thank you all for coming along. I know that a number of you submitted questions we've not heard. We've got them and I think it's really important if you've got more things to say then do come and say them to us, so we can collect evidence. Something's coming up for me the first thing is about openness. And I think if there's a police culture which finds openness rather difficult, it's part of a nature of, of policing that there's, there's a – a bit of an anxiety around it. And I think there's the contrasting differences between the two, the Climate Camp, the Climate Camp situation shows when you can be more open you actually get a better result and so I'm very interested in looking at what are the culture change issues that will, will affect the way in which the police will, will work to support peaceful protest. Some keys just coming up. My colleague said many of the things so I'm not going to repeat them. I'm quite concerned about how police training happens. I know we've, we've got the kind of what I call the butch stuff, they do down in Gravesend and, and the I think it's extremely important that that the police are trained to deal with violent and difficult situations because if they're not and it happens and they run off, what use is that? But actually what I think we've lost and need to do much more round if from what you've all been saying, actually is, is the softer skills of communicating; of learning how to communicate with people and actually perhaps the biggest and most telling point that was said today was the talking about how Climate Camp communicates, that you communicate by consensus and that when the police take away your microphone and your, your loudspeaker system you can't communicate and if that's the way in which you make decisions in order to work out what's the next thing to do it seems completely stupid if, if that is denied you and I think that, that we're used to hierarchies and the police are a very hierarchical organisation, it's finds it very difficult to understand circular and consensus decision making because that's not where it comes from and I think there's a big piece of work to be done around beginning to understand that much more because it's perfectly possible to make rational and sensible communications in a consensus, circular kind of way although I know that that perhaps police might find that really difficult and (inaudible) always know who was in charge 'cause of course that's the question they always ask. And as somebody who's been a protester all my adult life, I, I've certainly had some experiences of – of interesting encounters with the police, which have been rather difficult. I want to finally turn to the point of recognising the diversity of protesters and actually being sure that we're not treating everybody the same because not everybody can stand up for hours or run away or see what they're doing or hear what the police are saying and a big area of training and of recognition and of understanding for the police is actually (inaudible) at our protest will be very diverse – that there will be children there. That there will be disabled people there, older people there and people who

find different ways to communicate, people whose first language perhaps is not English, so shouting kind of like through megaphones ain't going to work. And to actually recognise those things, to begin to use those at the understanding of those things is a better way of policing. I think that's all I need to say, actually.

Thank you. Clive.

First of all, I have to say I, I've found this certainly extremely helpful and I appreciate the comments, questions and viewpoints that I've heard here. And I think at this point, from my own part, there's only one opinion I'm not prepared to countenance which is anybody who says about any of this, Oh, it's perfectly straightforward. Because my strong impression is that almost every stance, entirely legitimate, has a counter stance which also has a lot of legitimacy to it. So for example I don't feel that I can say never should one use kitting or containment. I think there must be times when it makes very good sense and then how subtle and intelligent is anybody going to be about that? It's pretty clear to me too that the police by virtue of the fact that, unlike most of us, spend nearly all of their time with criminals or crime are predisposed, probably, to suspect that people are lying and they might cause trouble and so on and so forth so do we believe that the police talk up to create conflict or are predisposed to worry about and expect and fear that it might be there, in a way in which decent people most of the time don't (inaudible)? So I think this is very tricky, very tricky stuff indeed and I hope that what emerges is something which enables a greater level of subtlety and discretion intelligence and competent training but I'm very conscious, the minute I say that, that that then allows for a lack of coherent system and clarity and knowing where people are going. So at this stage, we're still in the process of thinking all of this through. I've found this tremendously helpful and I'm grateful to everybody for it. I hear my colleagues' points and I've – hear you know and I'm with them pretty well on all of them. I would just mention that I'm Chair of the Community Engagement Citizen Focus Sub-Committee and I would encourage all of you to recognise that engaging with your police, not just on a demonstration or whatever but by getting involved in the various structures that exist, to get engaged I think is one of the important things that we can do to try to ensure that the police do listen to ordinary folk in ordinary circumstances in constructive ways, so if you're not involved in such things yet, I would encourage you to find ways to do so.

Thank you very much indeed, Clive. Valerie, may I turn to you.

Just finally, I wonder if I could start with an apology because I had inadvertently managed to spill an entire jug of water over one of the ladies sitting in the audience here and I just wanted to give an assurance this was not me trialling out some new tactic for dealing with public order policing! So – like Clive, I mean this is really, really a tricky area and some of the

things that came up today I found interesting, new slants that I hadn't thought of before. And in particular the person who said and asked the question, What is a proportionate response from someone on the line

Mm

..who has been beaten by a police officer? And I hadn't actually thought about that issue before it is something for us to take away and to think about – it is very tricky, very complex, lots for us to deal with. The other thing that I've been very concerned is, about the transition that starts at a table and strategic planning exercise and then comes down to actually what happens on the line. And something we haven't really talked about today and I want to explore a little bit more, is what is good supervision on the line? Now how many examples were there of good supervision did anyone actually see any? So I need to get a – a feel and a better grip on that. I'm also with the person who was talking about (inaudible) of the public order training 'cause I was very conscious when we went down there that the training that culminates in the incident with petrol bombs being thrown, you know, as you say, when did this last happen? Broadwater Farm in the 1980s. So if you're gearing the police up to do this and that's what they're getting when they do public order training, where is the sort of softer approach? Where is the let's talk this thing down. If they're going in with that framework, mindset how are you expecting them to deal with it on the day, on the line? I won't say any more at this stage; I think my colleagues have spoken admirably at this point and I would (inaudible)

Well thank you all very much indeed. I'm delighted we have (inaudible) quite openly here today. As you know we're continuing to gather evidence so this is only one stage, so please, please make sure if you buy the (inaudible) questionnaire or there's other ways you want to give us evidence, written submissions, posters, other things, emails, we're very, very happy. All of us are here and we've met each my Committee members, so you know that I've got a great Committee. But the most important thing is to say thank you. Every day goes past and the most of policing is reasonably peaceful but obviously there are improvements to be made and I thank you for giving us your time so that, hopefully, we can actually make a difference so thank you again and please have a sandwich and talk to any of us you'd like to and any other evidence you want to give us, we'd (inaudible) to hear from you. Thank you again.

(Applause)

Minute: 32.09