

Threatening behaviour and Protests Policy



- **Violent, abusive, or threatening behaviour**

The Royal Welsh Agricultural Society reserves the right to refuse entry to or remove from the Show anyone, including exhibitors or competitors, who are intoxicated, abusive or offer threats of violence to any person regardless of the circumstances. In such situations the Police may be called and the person or persons responsible will be removed from the Showground and may be excluded from future Show's and other events organised by the Society.

- **Protests**

It is the responsibility of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society to manage any protests that materialise during the three main events organised. Any protest that occurs during an event whereby the premises have been contracted to an external organiser, are obligated to manage this within their own establishment.

On occasions prior to an event taking place, sources of intelligence are raised or sent directly to the RWAS that indicates an increased likelihood of a planned protest. In the event of such occurrences, such information no matter how insignificant should be escalated directly to the Dyfed Powys Police through the below link:

<https://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/report-something-else-btp/>

Most protests are peaceful. However, the current climate has changed significantly, with specific protestor groups targeting high-profile public events. Pre-assessment planning with Dyfed Powys Police (2023) has raised this issue which has been identified as a potential risk for the Society.

This protocol seeks to provide clear planning and guidance in respect to a 'protest' and is aimed for the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, its staff, stewards, and Directors who will be expected to initially manage the situation. It must be emphasised that any given situation will be considered as a unique circumstance and managing such situations will require a sensible and proactive approach.

- **The Right to Protest**

The Human Rights Act 1998 and Article 10, '*Freedom of Expression*' and Article 11, '*the right to freedom of assembly and association*', means that the Police and others have a positive duty to safeguard the right to protest. Protesting is legal in England and Wales, the right to protest is protected under the European Convention of Human Rights. In the event of a peaceful, non-confrontation protest, this right of opinion will need to be respectfully considered.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-11-freedom-assembly-and->

[association#:~:text=Everyone%20has%20the%20right%20to,the%20protection%20of%20his%20interests.](#)

Such 'rights' to protest come responsibilities, whereby allowing Police and others, to impose conditions upon assemblies. Those engaged with lawful protests must do so within the law stated. This identifies expected behaviours which protestors need to abide to if they wish their right to be upheld within that environment.

Offences by protestors who act outside of their privileges are stated below which are deemed as the **most likely** acts, to be committed by those engaged in protest requiring escalation for Police presence:

- Being threatening or abusive in a way that is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress. [Section 5 Public Order Act 1986]
- Causing fear or provocation of violence. [Section 4 Public Order Act 1986]
- Aggravated trespass. [Section 68 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994]
- Criminal damage. [Section 1 Criminal Damage Act 1971]
- Wilful obstruction of the highway. [Section 137 Highways Act 1980]

Primary responsibility for dealing with any alleged breaches of the criminal law rests with the Police, however a basic understanding of the relevant legislation should help to inform our own decision making and justify the need for Police assistance to any incident.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-order-bill-overarching-documents/public-order-bill-factsheet>

- **Royal Welsh Agricultural Society safety measures**

Dyfed Powys Police recommendations (2023) have raised the need to provide random bag searches at the main public gate (A). This will have a dual effect, a deterrent to any potential person(s) bringing any weapon/ item viewed as a risk to the public/event (Martyn's Law). Also, a potential deterrent to protestors, who may have material on their person that would raise suspicions and concerns.

Security contractors have been fully briefed by the Head of Operations, raising this possibility. If there is evidence of a potential protest through a bag search this will be raised to the Head of Operations, through Show Control. Those persons will be denied entry into the show.

- **Response to a Protest**

The event site has been broken down into Private and Public areas. Areas such as the various livestock rings, main ring, council area, estate yard, etc. have been designated as Private.

This distinction has been made to facilitate decisions relating to the criminal offence known as '**Aggravated trespass**', described as '*Intentionally obstructing, disrupting, or intimidating others from carrying out 'lawful activities'*'.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/section/68>

In the event of persons engaged in protest in any area the following action should be taken:

1. The Senior Steward in that area should immediately inform Show Control who will in turn inform the 'Show Administration Committee', Hon Director/Festival Director, Chief Executive/Head of Operations/Head of Administration and Police.
2. All persons above will be notified and instructed to attend the area whereby the Protestors are presenting. A nominated person from this group should engage in dialogue with the protestors to establish their intention and ask them to leave the Private space, offering a public space instead (see Appendix 1 map). These appeals to the protestors should be reasonable and proportionate. A record should be made of the requests to leave, noting the time and persons in discussion, as well as any responses or conduct (see Appendix 2 incident reporting form).
3. Security officers contracted by the society, will be notified of protestors by Show Control and the area of which they are present. Their role is to provide public safety and separate the public from the protestors, ensuring no direct harm to either party and that no altercations occur.
4. If the protestors vacate in/near the livestock area, the Animal Marksman needs to be notified (Show Control to contact), as well as all livestock Chief/senior stewards. This is to ensure that no animals are harmed, unsettled, or used to aggravate the intentions of the protestors.
5. Protestors should be directed by the Show Administration Committee, Hon Director/Festival Director, Chief Executive/Head of Operations/Head of Administration to an area outside of the Private area (public areas indicated in on the zone map) where lawful protest may be permitted. This should be undertaken in a professional and reasonable manner.
6. It is likely, that there will be a delay prior to Police attendance and therefore, any dialogue and actions in the initial response should remain controlled and calm.
7. In the event of a refusal to leave the area only the Police may exercise powers of arrest and remove protestors, using proportionate and reasonable force. If the actions displayed are likely to lead to the following:
 - Intimidating people to deter them from carrying out their activity.
 - Obstructing their activity, or
 - Disrupting their activity.

Only the Police or trained SIA security staff should attempt to remove protestors.

No member of the Royal Welsh Staff or volunteers/stewards should attempt to lay hands on or physically restrain any protestors.

- **Protest in Public Areas**

In the event of a protest in a public area of the showground, the Public Safety Stewards on behalf of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, will facilitate lawful protest whilst considering any actions that would denote to breaches of the law. If such thresholds have been crossed, then an escalation for Police control, with the aid of SIA security officers will be instructed. (See flow chart Appendix B)

Whilst this policy is aimed to endure a consistent and respectful approach in dealing with protestors, it also considers the protection and safeguarding of the public and all of those persons representing the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society.

Whilst it may not always provide definitive guidance on the law and guidance relating to protest. The aim is to provide clear guidance to inform actions and ensure a safe approach is taken for all involved.

The act of protesting aims to seek public attention, raising their cause and heightening an awareness conducive to their cause. Amongst this need for media attention the behaviours may inadvertently, seek to provoke others into taking action that will create greater publicity and could be viewed as a negative reaction. Therefore, it is important that this protocol is adhered to in view to roles and responsibilities, so that people understand their remits. No person should react to antagonistic behaviour of any kind and should avoid any action that may impact negatively on the reputation of the society as well as, their own personal safety.

Such messages are reinforced within the pre-planning phases of the shows.

- **Acid attack and burns**

Burns caused by acid, alkaline or caustic chemicals can be very damaging and need immediate medical attention. In the event of an acid attack or what could be perceived as an acid attack, the following should be undertaken immediately.

This should be reported immediately, irrespective of the locality by those responsible with that area at the time (staff, stewards, chief stewards) who should contact the show control, to alert medical attention and also call 999 for police assistance. Call 999 and ask for urgent help.

After calling 999, to help prevent severe injuries from a chemical burn:

- try to carefully remove the chemical and any contaminated clothing
- rinse the affected area using as much clean water as possible

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/acid-and-chemical-burns/>

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