

The Freedom Association

122 Winchcombe St, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 2NW,
Tel: 01242 235 333 e-mail: andrew@tfa.net www.tfa.net

Ms. Katy Bourne,
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner,
Sackville House,
Brooks Close,
Lewes.
BN7 2FZ

27 November 2017

Dear Ms. Bourne,

I am writing to express my concern about the policing methods used outside All Saints Centre in Friars Walk, Lewes, where protesters had gathered to protest against an appearance by Katie Hopkins on the evening of Saturday 25 November 2017.

As someone who has organised a number of protests over the years, I know how important the right to protest is. But we also have a right to free speech, and as Lewes Speakers Festival had invited Katie Hopkins to speak at the festival, and members of the public wished to hear her speak, that event should have been allowed to take place as planned. That it did not concerns me.

Having looked at a video taken of the protest (posted on Twitter), it is clear that protesters were allowed to effectively block the entrance to the building, making it very difficult for members of the public to enter. They were hitting the windows, and it is also clear that it was their intent to forcibly enter the building. The protest must have got out of hand for Sussex Police to advise the cancellation of the event because officers could not guarantee the safety of Ms. Hopkins.

I am therefore asking you to order an investigation into the policing methods used outside All Saints Centre on Saturday 25 November 2017. I would like you to find out why the protesters were not kept back from the main entrance, and why, after it was clear the protest may turn violent, the police officer in charge did not call for the presence of additional officers, in order to, if necessary, forcibly move the protesters away.

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As a result of this event being cancelled on the advice of Sussex Police, a clear message has now been sent to anyone who wants to organise similar intimidatory protests that Sussex Police will tolerate the removal of the right to freedom of speech, and that it will not intervene to protect the right to freedom of speech.

I am sure that you will agree with me that this is not acceptable.

I look forward to receiving your reply in due course, and as a matter of courtesy, wish to inform you that I am releasing this letter to the media this afternoon.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Allison,
Head of Campaigns
The Freedom Association

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