

# Statement from Chief Constable and PCC following Bristol disorder



Police and Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens and Chief Constable Andy Marsh.  
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- **21 Mar 2021: Statement about ongoing disorder in Bristol**

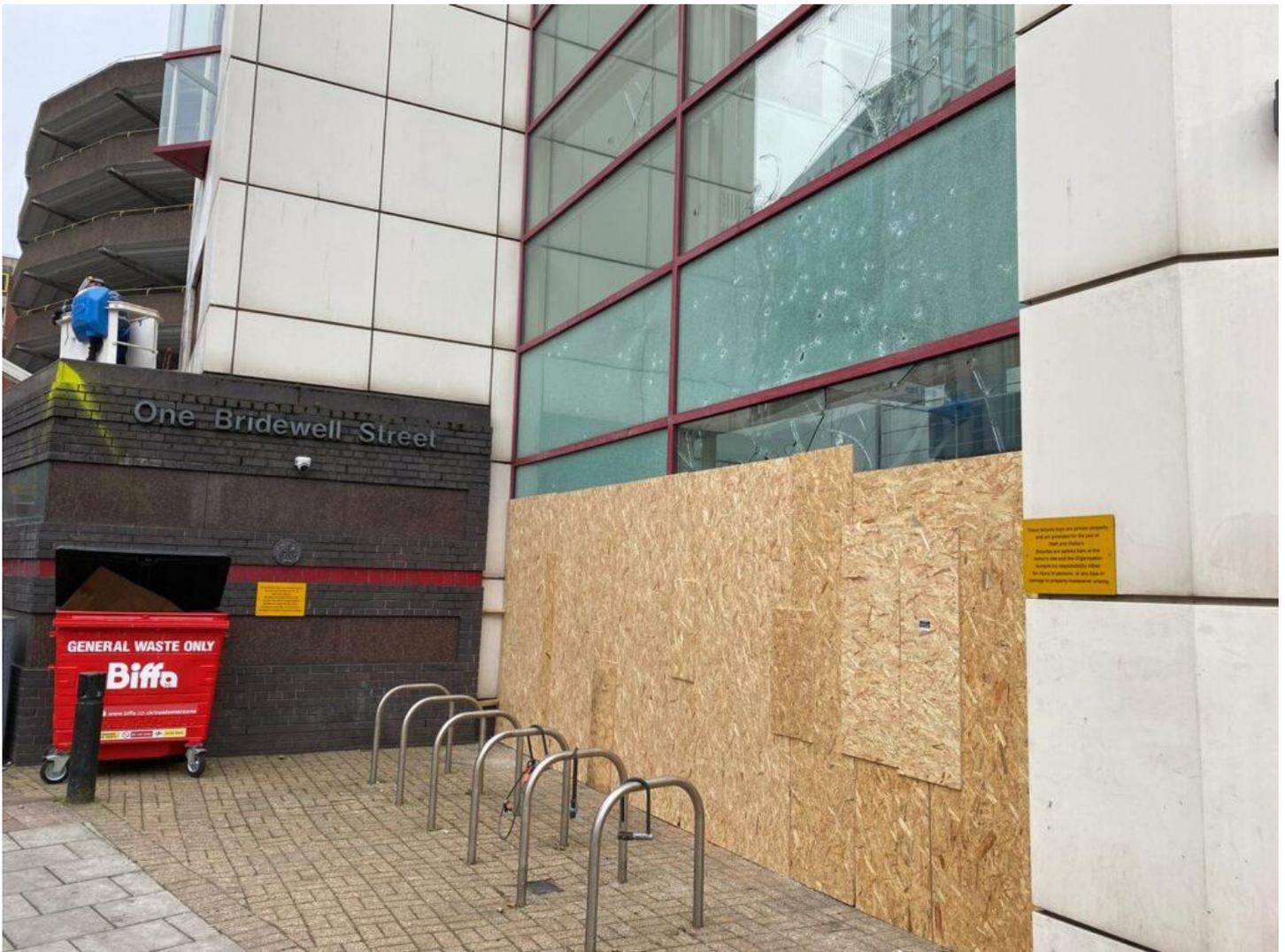
Chief Constable Andy Marsh and PCC Sue Mountstevens have condemned the disorder which took place in Bristol city centre last night.

Following a protest in the afternoon, several hundred people gathered outside Bridewell Police Station in Bridewell Street.

Some of those gathered engaged in violent disorder, causing damage to police vehicles and the outside of the police station.

Overnight seven arrests were made – six for violent disorder and one for possession of an offensive weapon – and a full investigation is now underway.

A total of 20 officers were assaulted or injured and two of them were taken to hospital after suffering broken bones. One of them also suffered a punctured lung.



Damage caused to Bridewell Police Station

**Chief Constable Marsh said:** "Let's be clear, the wanton violence and destruction had nothing to do with protest – it was committed by those looking for an excuse to commit disorder. The scenes we witnessed yesterday were shameful and I know will be condemned by the whole city.

"We've received messages of support from across the policing, emergency service and political landscape. No-one wants to see police officers abused or attacked in this way. These men and women put their safety on the line every day to keep the public safe, and do not deserve to be on the forefront of this abhorrent criminal behaviour.

"20 of our brave officers suffered various injuries – including two who suffered more serious injuries which needed hospital treatment. I was at a Bristol station last night and can tell you the feeling of anguish was felt by all our officers and staff at seeing colleagues injured while on the frontline.

"Ahead of every protest or significant gathering, we assess the appropriate level of policing resources. There was no prior intelligence that violent acts would be committed on this scale. No specific organiser was identified prior to the event but we did engage with a number of organisations who had expressed an interest in attending to discourage them due to the current COVID-19 restrictions. We hoped stressing the sacrifices the Bristol community had made over the past year would deter people from attending.

"A tactical decision was made to deal with these criminals retrospectively and not make a significant number of arrests last night, which would have impacted significantly on our resources at the scene and created a greater risk of damage to property and injuries to the reduced number of officers left to deal with the disorder.

"What the public will see now is a huge police investigation in which we'll be gathering evidence from CCTV, Body Worn Video, social media content and images/video sent in by the public. We are appealing for people to send in footage so all those responsible can be identified – full details of where to send these will be issued on our website and social media later.

"This will undoubtedly lead to one of the biggest appeals for wanted suspects that we've ever done. There will be significant consequences for behaviour like this and we will leave no stone unturned.

"The cost of policing this operation, carrying out the subsequent investigation and repairing and replacing our vehicles and damage to our city centre station will run into the millions. This is money which could have been spent on safeguarding and protecting the most vulnerable in our society."

**PCC Sue Mountstevens added:** "I cannot condemn enough the scenes of violence and destruction that we witnessed yesterday and I know these feelings are felt by the majority of the city and beyond.

"20 officers were injured last night and this is unacceptable. These men and women went to work yesterday with public safety as their number one priority and still faced a level of violence that cannot be justified. Such a violent demonstration is shameful at any time, let alone during a pandemic that has seen local people make many sacrifices.

"I support the police's tactical decision to deal with these criminal incidents retrospectively and a police investigation is now underway to gather CCTV, Body Worn Video, social media content and other photos and videos sent in by local people.

"Those who clearly acted with intent to cause damage and destruction showed reckless disregard for the safety of local people, police officers and the general community.

"The financial cost of this to the public is also going to be substantial."