

Chief Constable thanks 'fellow citizens' for 'overwhelming support and co- operation'

Police Scotland's Chief Constable Iain Livingstone has thanked 'fellow citizens' for the 'overwhelming support and co-operation' policing has encountered during this 'very difficult' year.

He also paid tribute to his officer, staff and their families for their 'outstanding commitment' to public service throughout 2020.



Speaking earlier today at the Scottish Government's coronavirus briefing he said: He said: "As we move toward the end of 2020, on behalf of policing in Scotland, I want to take this opportunity to thank our fellow citizens for the overwhelming support and co-operation policing has encountered during this very difficult year.

"A strong relationship exists between the public and the police in Scotland, policing by consent, to which the police service owes its legitimacy. Despite the adversity of this year, that bond of trust has been strengthened and as Chief Constable I am personally deeply grateful for that.

"Police officers and staff will be working 24 hours a day throughout the busy festive period right across all our communities, keeping people safe and playing a crucial role in

the national effort to combat coronavirus. I want to thank and pay tribute to our officers and staff and their families for their outstanding commitment to public service through 2020. They have undertaken significant, additional responsibilities responding to the public health crisis and have overwhelmingly discharged the new duties required of them with courtesy, common sense, and compassion.”

Mr Livingstone also urged the public to have respect for others and take a ‘personal responsibility’ to do the right thing to protect our communities and he said the his officers would continue to respond with ‘good sense, exercising discretion and of course taking enforcement action where required.’

He continued: “It’s absolutely critical everyone demonstrates respect for others and continues to take personal responsibility to do the right thing. Public health imperatives have meant significant restrictions on personal freedoms of association and movement – to ensure we protect ourselves, protect our families, and protect our communities.

“As the First Minister has outlined many Local Authority areas will change levels today at 1800hrs. It is vital to remember that, apart from legitimate exemptions, we should not travel in or out of level 3 areas. I’ve consistently said I do not consider it appropriate or proportionate for police officers to set up road blocks or routinely stop vehicles to enforce travel restrictions.

“However, where apparent breaches do come to our attention, officers will continue to respond with good sense, exercising discretion and of course taking enforcement action where required.”

He also warned of the dangers of drink and drug driving over the festive period, adding: “I can assure you, there will be dedicated, visible and proactive patrols and operations across

all our roads in Scotland to ensure vehicles and drivers are in a fit condition to drive. At this time of year, it is my duty to remind everyone that drink or drug driving can have devastating; life-changing; fatal; consequences. Drink and drug driving causes misery, misery over generations and is wholly unacceptable to the people of Scotland. There are significant personal and professional repercussions for those who drive while under the influence.

“If you have been drinking, you may still be over the limit in the morning and I would urge you to take a very cautious approach when deciding to drive. Don’t put others in danger. Basically, don’t risk it.”

Mr Livingstone concluded by reminding the listeners of the restrictions that will be in place/

He said: “The festive period will be different this year, with necessary changes to traditions. I hope that, notwithstanding these limitations, everyone has opportunity to take some rest and enjoy time with their family and loved ones.

“Although specific guidance is in place between 23rd and 27th of December for Christmas bubbles to reduce loneliness, it is important to remember that significant restrictions will remain in place. It is vital to underline that the rules now, and after that period, are clear. Unless legitimate exemptions apply, you should not be meeting in someone else’s home.

“House parties and house gatherings are not permitted, what we know over the last number of months is that such gatherings can have a significant influence on spreading the virus. With that knowledge, there can be no excuse for hosting, arranging or attending a house party or gathering. As the people of Scotland expect, where officers encounter wilful and persistent breaches we act decisively and will continue to enforce the law. As all of us know, sadly, Christmas is not a time of safety and peace for all. Particularly when

restrictions are in place, home, unfortunately, isn't a safe place for everyone and vulnerability of individuals can increase during the festive period.

“Protecting people at risk is a priority for the Police Service of Scotland. It lies at the heart of our values, it lies at the heart of our mission to keep people safe. I would urge anyone with concerns about a family member; a friend; a neighbour or anyone else to contact Police Scotland, your police service. We are, and we will always be, here to help.

“Please take care of yourselves and take care of each other.”