

Discussions held about antisocial behaviour in The Meadows

Scottish Labour politicians hosted a crisis meeting on Friday to discuss the violence and antisocial behaviour witnessed in The Meadows over Easter weekend.

Daniel Johnson MSP and Ian Murray MP chaired a virtual community crisis meeting regarding the problems of last weekend and what could be done to avoid it happening again.

The discussion centred around the anti-social behaviour, including the assault and widespread breach of Covid restrictions.

Last Saturday, an Edinburgh police officer was taken to hospital with facial injuries after responding to reports of mass gatherings and fighting there.

A video, shared on social media, was taken by a Scottish rapper on his Instagram account @jaad_rapper and shows the scenes which include police breaking up fights by wrestling people to the ground.

At one point, a man was smashed over the head with a glass bottle by someone he had been fighting with.

Local stakeholders, councillors, affected businesses, representatives from the University of Edinburgh and the police all took part in the online event.

The meeting was attended by over 40 speakers and streamed live on Facebook, and is set to be followed up by a further virtual public meeting next Friday, given the strength of feeling from local residents.

Those attending discussed the need for an increase in toilet provision, a more visible police presence, a way to strengthen the enforcement of covid restrictions, and better visible signage throughout the Meadows.

Tonight on The Meadows there is a massive police presence with officers walking around the maze of walkways, and grassy areas and while a few people have gathered there was no behaviour such as that witnessed last weekend.

The forum also discussed whether some by-laws, regarding public drinking and police powers, need to be revised or strengthened.



9th April 2021 Edinburgh – Police increased patrols at The Meadows in Edinburgh following a weekend of disorder over the Easter weekend. PHOTO Live Edinburgh News

Mr Johnson said: “Those scenes from last weekend were truly unacceptable.

“I share the concerns of all those I had the chance to speak to regarding the widespread breaking of covid restrictions, the violence, anti-social behaviour, the public urination and the piles of rubbish left behind.

“It was encouraging to see such a positive discussion at the meeting and I look forward to even further engagement with local residents at my public meeting next week, whose concerns I can then outline to the council and police.”

Ian Murray MP said: “What we wanted to do was bring together all the key community stakeholders to ensure a proper action from the police and the city council to tackle this before the

remaining lockdown measures are eased and also to address historic issues.

“We can’t let our precious green spaces be spoiled for everyone each and every weekend.

“Daniel and I are committed to making the Meadows an enjoyable experience for all its visitors and users of all ages.”



9th April 2021 Edinburgh – Police increased patrols at The Meadows in Edinburgh following a weekend of disorder over the Easter weekend. PHOTO Live Edinburgh News

Alex Orr, an SNP list candidate for the Lothian region, first floated the idea of the ‘Meadows summit’ after personally witnessing the chaotic scenes over the weekend.

Mr Orr said: “Any discussions that generate potential solutions are to be welcomed.

“Police enforcement of regulations and increased litter collection can however only be a short-term solution.

“Greater provision of bins and toilets is something that many, such as myself, have been campaigning on for some time and which I am aware the council is progressing.

“However, much more work needs to be done to address the complexities which are at the root of anti-social behaviour.

“The work of youth groups, such as 6VT, and their activity in the Meadows is to be greatly commended.

“We clearly need greater investment in youth services as well as in educational and mentoring programmes in schools. It is pleasing to see the council also progressing this.

“There is no one single solution on its own that will address these issues and there must be a package of measures implemented.

“The Meadows is a much-loved and appreciated resource, and we must all act to try and keep it that way.”

The summit follows an Edinburgh City Council and Police Scotland ‘Meadows action plan’, which was published on Thursday – including plans for a dedicated policing operation, a council surveillance van and park ranger patrols – to deal with the antisocial behaviour and violence witnessed during recent good weather.

The Edinburgh Reporter understands that no councillors attended the meeting as their IT prohibits them from joining a Zoom call.

by Joseph Anderson Local Democracy Reporter

The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency : funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector, and used by qualifying partners. Local Democracy Reporters cover top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.

