

# Police kettle tactic was 'in proportion' says minister

By Tom Eden

TACTICS used by police at Cop26 were 'proportionate' despite allegations protesters were kettled for hours by officers, the Justice Secretary has said.

Keith Brown was challenged about whether he supported the use of the tactic, where demonstrators are kept inside an area by a police cordon, during Cop26 marches in Glasgow.

Green MSP Maggie Chapman recounted claims that protesters were kettled as soon as they arrived at Kelvingrove Park to start the march and a mother with a child in a pram was trapped within the crowd control measures.

Mr Brown praised the police's involvement during the summit. He said: 'I am satisfied that they have tried extremely hard to make sure that they have facilitated protests and that their response has been

## 'Protesters intent on causing violence'

proportionate. I am satisfied from all the conversations I've had with Police Scotland that they have tried to be as proportionate as possible to facilitate protests and certainly to work within the bounds of legislation set for them by this parliament.'

The Justice Secretary told MSPs that Glasgow 'lived up to its proud tradition of activism and of peaceful protest', describing it as a 'source of pride for the whole of Scotland'.

But Miss Chapman replied: 'I am concerned that some of the tactics deployed during Cop26 have not taken account of those important principles - the use of kettling tactics on peaceful protesters seems wholly disproportionate. I've read reports of journalists kettled for hours with no access to water or toilets, and of a young mother with a baby in a pram trapped in a kettle.'

Miss Chapman also raised concerns from demonstrators who were 'subjected to a police kettle from the moment they arrived at Kelvingrove Park without clear cause'.

Mr Brown said: 'The police refer to



Public order: Keeping control

that as moving containment and it also said that where they've done this is because - in one example - the protesters that had sat down in front of the march were stopping the rest of the march from taking place and presenting a danger to the public.'

During Saturday's march from Kelvingrove Park to Glasgow Green, 21 protesters were arrested and activists who had chained themselves to the King George V Bridge were forcibly removed.

A further 16 people were arrested after a demonstration on Monday evening, with Police Scotland deploying its Protest Removal Team to move them on from outside The Engine Works in the Maryhill area of the city.

The force said those arrested were issued with a recorded police warning and released.

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie said: 'As part of our facilitative and no-surprises approach to ensuring people's rights to protest peacefully are upheld, Police Scotland has been completely transparent in respect of deployments and engagements with protesters during Cop26.'

'The tactic of containment is used only when necessary by highly trained officers and, on this occasion, was a necessary and proportionate response to a comparatively small number of protesters intent on causing violence and disruption, compromising public safety.'

# Scandal of infants born into pollution hotspots

EIGHT out of ten Scots babies are being born in areas which breach World Health Organisation pollution guidelines, shock figures show.

Districts around Glasgow also feature the highest number of lung disease deaths in Britain, according to Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation Scotland.

The statistics are being used today to support calls for Scotland's leaders to set out 'bolder' clean air

targets to help climate change and improve the country's health.

Sarah Woolnough, chief executive of Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation, said: 'Air pollution is a health and climate emergency. There is no safe level to breathe.'

The organisations say more than three-quarters of care homes and 70 per cent of schools lie within areas which exceed recommendations for fine particulate matter.



By Gavin Madeley

IT was billed as the summit to save the planet. And over the past ten days, up to 25,000 delegates from 200 countries at the Cop26 climate conference have heard a cry for urgent action from distant communities on the brink of disaster.

Droughts in east Africa; hurricanes in the Caribbean; wildfires in Russia, Australia and north America; floods in rural China. Tuvalu's foreign minister filmed his speech to the climate summit while knee-deep in the South Pacific Ocean, to highlight the effect of rising sea levels.

But campaigners at the Glasgow summit warn that the impact of rising global temperatures is already being sharply felt right on our own doorstep.

Environmental scientist Angela Terry says extreme weather events including heatwaves and flash floods could soon be the norm in Scotland - devastating our homes, landscape and vital industries such as tourism and farming.

Miss Terry, who runs One Home, the UK's first consumer climate action hub, which offers advice on living a green lifestyle, said: 'Climate change is here in Scotland right now. It affects everyone and everything you love.'

'Quite simply, it's the biggest problem humanity's ever faced. And the science shows that the time in which we can take action is running out.'

The climate crisis is also a health crisis, with an estimated 2,500 Scots a year dying early due to air pollution.

Dr Lesley Morrison, a tutor at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, said most early deaths were from respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

'The statistics are shocking,' said Dr Morrison. 'Mentally, physically and emotionally, people are suffering right now.'

Here, the Scottish Daily Mail talks to five people whose lives have been directly affected by the devastating local impact of global warming.

## THE FLOOD VICTIM

ALMOST 14 years on, Gail Walker still shudders at the memory of her beloved home filling with floodwater after days of exceptionally heavy rain and snowmelt in January 2008, which caused a nearby river to burst its banks. 'When our bungalow flooded, there was nothing we could do to save it. We had to evacuate our house in 15 minutes with nothing more than our two cats and my handbag,' the 54-year-old said.

'It's hard to put into words the trauma of flooding. We lost all our furniture and so many precious personal items. It took years to get over it. Until you've experienced it, you don't really understand how gravely it affects you.'

Mrs Walker, a manager at a Citizen's Advice Bureau, and her husband, Michael, 53, bought the bungalow in Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire, in 2006 after a survey assured them there was no risk from the River Devon, less than 50 yards away.

When the river rose to dangerous levels one night, a fire engine came to pump away water from the road and they assumed things would be back to normal by morning. Instead, the water reached up to their windowsills.

'To my horror, the carpets started bubbling up under my feet,' she said. 'When a wave of water sloshed over the kitchen floor, we realised the property was about to be overwhelmed and we needed to get out.'

She said it was vital more people understood the risks they face from flooding: 'After it happened, I couldn't talk about it for years without crying.'

A 2019 Scottish Government report warned 284,000 homes

# Think Cop26 is away? Read the who all know th



Loss: Gail Walker's home was destroyed by a flood

and premises are at risk of flooding across Scotland, with that figure expected to rise to almost 400,000 properties by the 2080s.

Mrs Walker, now a board member of the Scottish Flood Forum, said a new pumping station on the Devon has cut the chances of fresh flooding for now.

But she added: 'This kind of flash flooding that we're seeing more frequently is linked to the changing weather patterns associated with climate change, which seem to be moving faster than our ability to respond.'

'This is why I hope for a meaningful commitment to come out of Cop26. We haven't got time for anything else.'



## THE ASTHMA SUFFERER

BRYCE Goodall, who suffers from asthma and autism, used to be a climate change sceptic until he noticed both of his conditions worsened when the giant Mossburn petrochemical plant was flaring near his home in Fife.

The 31-year-old Amazon worker from Dunfermline claims he needed to use his inhaler more frequently and suffered bouts of psychological distress, which he links to his autism.

Mr Goodall said he first made a link in November 2017 while in a supermarket car park, when he found a 'pungent, burning smell'

becoming 'overwhelming and distressing'. He contacted the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa), which confirmed that Mossburn, in nearby Cowdenbeath, was flaring and releasing petrochemicals into the atmosphere.

Mr Goodall said: 'Over the years, I'd had what I can only describe as psychological "meltdowns". At the same time, I would often also need to use my inhaler more than usual. When I tracked the timings, I realised these episodes coincided with the flaring at Mossburn.'

Like other residents, he made numerous complaints to Sepa and joined the Mossburn Action Group. He said: 'To be honest, I wasn't sold on the idea of climate change initially, but experiencing the effects of air pollution for myself forced me to wake up to the reality of our environmental situation.'

'So many people around the plant have health issues. When I smell the gas flare, I feel like I need to take refuge somewhere where I can breathe clean air. It's like my oxygen's being stolen.'

Last year, Sepa sought to prosecute Mossburn over claims of unplanned flaring, although the plant's operator ExxonMobil has always insisted it complies with laws and regulations wherever it operates.

Mr Goodall said: 'What I hope for is a just transition to a greener, fairer, cleaner world. I know it's not going to happen overnight but world leaders



# all about problems thousands of miles harrowing accounts from these five Scots at the issues are much closer to home...



# CLIMATE CRISIS IS ON YOUR DOORSTEP

need to help communities, like mine, which have been blighted by fossil fuel industry pollution.'

## THE FIREFIGHTER



IN his 14 years as a firefighter, Colin Brown was more used to dealing with flames than floods. But last year's August storms left Fife and Tayside suffering some of their worst ever flash flooding.

'It was a terrible situation, as our control rooms were overwhelmed with calls,' said Mr Brown, 43, from Perth. 'Some of our emergency calls were even re-routed to Northern Ireland; we simply didn't have

enough people or equipment to help everybody.

'When you become a firefighter, you want to help people. You don't want to have to choose between two different emergencies, trying to work out which one is more likely to cause greater loss of life.'

He even had to deal with a fire started by a lightning strike during those floods, at the same time knowing his family home was at risk of flooding.

'Thankfully, in the end, we managed to avoid flooding,' he said.

He has seen extreme weather block roads and trigger landslides, hampering emergency response vehicles. 'Scotland's fire service infrastructure isn't ready for climate change,' he said. 'And extreme weather events are only

going to get worse, and more frequent, as temperatures rise.

'It is becoming a real problem for firefighters.'

Mr Brown added recent summers have become hotter and drier, spelling a further danger of an increase in wildfires. He attended one wildfire in historic woodland at The Hermitage, near Dunkeld, Perthshire. 'Because the summer had been so unusually dry, the fire took hold really quickly. We had to drop water from a helicopter to get it under control,' he said.

Scotland's peat bogs are also under renewed threat 'They capture and hold so much carbon, it would be a disaster similar to Australia's bush fires if they caught alight. But climate change is making that more likely every day.'

He added: 'I want the public to recognise that climate change is not some faraway problem affecting ice caps, but something that's happening here and now.'

## THE ISLANDER



OFTEN called 'Scotland in miniature', the isle of Arran's growing coastal erosion and flooding are a microcosm of the issues facing the country at large, according to life-long resident Russell Duncan.

The keen golfer and retired hotelier fears the popular Clyde resort's vital tourist trade is under serious threat from climate change.

His beloved golf course at Brodick now regularly floods due to extreme weather events and erosion, exacerbated by a decision to remove 6,000 tons of golden sand from Brodick Bay in a 1970s business deal.

'Over the past 40 years, I've watched the situation get worse and worse. Sadly, the projections for Scottish coastal flooding are stark when it comes to Brodick,' said Mr Duncan, 77.

By 2100, they're expecting high spring tides to rise to such an extent that all of Brodick Bay will be at risk. The golf course, putting

## Extremes: Wildfires and other devastating events are becoming more common

green, bowling green, children's play area, tennis courts and numerous people's houses could all be regularly underwater.

'We're an island dependant on tourism and this flooding issue is putting so many of our attractions at risk.'

He also cites the Arran Coastal Way, a scenic path that winds around the entire island, much of it beside beaches. 'These sections are already being destroyed by rising seas,' he said. 'We've put up wooden walkways but it's only a matter of time before the sea will engulf them too. It's such a shame.'

Of his 16 grandchildren, ten of them live on Arran. Mr Duncan said: 'My worry is that they won't be able to enjoy all the things I've been able to enjoy on this wonderful island. As a community, we have to make some serious decisions about what we do to save our beach, pathways, tourist facilities and golf course.'

'When it comes to the bigger picture, I want politicians at Cop26 to agree on real cuts to global emissions because it's rising temperatures that are causing the seas to rise. Melting ice-caps are having a grave effect on Scotland here and now.'

## THE FARMER



Food supply concerns: Farmer Amy Geddes, 43

AMY Geddes is the fourth generation to run her family's 790-acre arable farm at Wester Braikie, near Arbroath, in Angus. The mother of two grows cereals such as spring barley and wheat, as well as potatoes, peas and beans, but unpredictable weather has made planning the yearly crop cycle a major headache.

'Last October, one downpour deposited 104mm (4in) of rain on our land in one go. Crops don't grow well in waterlogged fields and one field was just so wet we couldn't sow the crop we had planned,' said Mrs Geddes, 43. 'We just had to leave it to dry out over winter.'

'This obviously is far from ideal, both in terms of our finances and - on a larger, longer-term scale - in terms of supplying enough food for everyone to eat.'

She worries food is not on the Cop26 agenda: 'In Scotland, we're used to there always being more than enough to eat and a huge choice of foods - and yet climate change poses real challenges for food security going forward.'

'This issue should be central to any agreements about the climate and environment. British farmers only provide 60 per cent of the food we eat in the UK, so we are reliant on produce from other countries too. We're all in this together.'

She said the pandemic highlighted weaknesses in food supply chains and said people had lost touch with how food reaches their table. 'It wasn't that long ago that my village had its own bakery, butchers, post office and grocery store. Now we just have a convenience store. We need to work out how to build back some links between people and the food produced in their local area.'

Mrs Geddes added it was vital farmers are supported in introducing eco-friendly production methods, such as restoring hedgerows, planting woodlands and sowing grass margins and wildflower areas alongside fields to encourage wildlife diversity.

'We can do it,' she added. 'It's all about giving space to food production and nature and prioritising measures that help the climate and the natural world.'

■ *One Home offers advice on steps for a low-carbon lifestyle. Details at [www.onehome.org.uk](http://www.onehome.org.uk)*