

Dear All, Its 1 o'clock in the morning on 1st October and the first groups of women have arrived for the first block so here's the last up-date before we begin! From here onwards we will be sending more frequent updates and do keep an eye on the website too. We have just received a letter from the Police (see below) and as a Steering Group we have replied (also below). Then there is a note from a local activist to give you a local perspective of disruption on the roads.....have a good read and good luck with all your preparations, love Angie.

Letter from the police

Strathclyde Police
'L' Division headquarters
Stirling Road
Dumbarton
G82 3PT

28 Sept 2006

Dear Jane

FASLANE 365 PROTEST ACTIVITY
HM NAVAL BASE (CLYDE)

I write in my capacity as Divisional Commander of Argyll, Bute and West Dunbartonshire Division of Strathclyde Police with responsibility for the policing in the vicinity of the Naval Base at Faslane. We have previously met.

As you are aware, I have been directly involved in the policing of these protests for the last four years and I am known to you and some of the other protest organisers from Trident Ploughshares, having had face to face meetings with you in the run-up to previous protest days.

As a general rule I have, throughout this time, taken seriously the democratic right which people have to protest and tried to balance that right with the paramount requirement upon me to ensure public safety and the right of other members of the public to progress unhindered about their business. I believe that the relations between Strathclyde Police and your protest group in the last four years or more would suggest that these rights on both sides have been fairly and impartially dealt with.

Given that the previous protests have been focussed on specific single "days of action" the policing arrangements I have put in place allowed a certain latitude to protesters which resulted, on occasions, in disruption to the local community, particularly in relation to traffic flow on the main route serving Garelochhead and the Kilcreggan Peninsula. For a single day of action, low level disruption has largely been tolerated given that the following day, things would be back to normal.

Clearly the intention of Faslane 365 is to disrupt the base over a prolonged period and therefore the scenario faces by me in planning a police response is wholly different.

There is no doubt whatever that blockading the gates at Faslane to prevent the entry of vehicles will cause significant disruption to other traffic in the vicinity of the Base,

preventing the local community going about its lawful business unhindered. I have already received representations from the local community via their elected representatives who are very concerned about access by emergency service vehicles to Garelochhead and the peninsula and disruption to school children and teachers who would be delayed in attending schools both on the Peninsula and in Helensburgh.

On no account can prolonged disruption of the community be considered acceptable or the safe workings of the Naval Base be compromised as a result of your protest activity.

To that end my purpose in writing to you as one of the organisers of Faslane 365 is to seek your cooperation in alerting the groups attending that certain restrictions will be necessary.

It is intended to have in place a designated protest area, behind barriers in the vicinity of the main access gates to the Naval Base. These barriers will be positioned sufficiently close to the gates to allow any protestors to congregate on the pavement and from behind which their protests can be made safely. Should any person leave the area behind the barriers and enter the roadway, either the access road bellmouth or the main public road, they will be asked to leave the road. Failure to do so, upon being warned, will render the person liable to arrest. Clearly persons sitting on the road either individually or locked to others, come into this category.

I have been concerned by the deliberate action taken by protestors during the period of the recent Peaton Glen camp, apparently after considerable debate, to block the main A814 road. I would urge your protest groups to reconsider any such action they are contemplating.

From the information on the Faslane 365 website, I note that it is intended that the protests will be non-violent. You will wish to be aware that the police response to the protest will be proportionate to the situation faced by the officers on the ground. I have previously reinforced to all officers attending Trident Ploughshares protests that they have been non-violent and will do so again as we prepare for the Faslane 365 protests. Should that situation change, however, I have a duty to protect my officers in attendance.

It is my earnest hope that your objectives of highlighting your cause can be achieved by an entirely lawful protest, and by setting aside a designated protest area for your use I am endeavouring to offer you that alternative. Any unlawful action which results in traffic disruption, however, will require to be responded to as indicated above.

I am aware you have recently been in conversation with Inspector Kenny Boyter from Helensburgh Police Office and should you wish in future days to discuss any aspect of the Faslane365 protest activity, he would be contactable via that office.

Yours sincerely

E M Roger

Chief Superintendent
Divisional Commander

Steering Group reply to police

Dear Mitch,

Thanks for your letter of 28th September to Jane Tallents asking us to help alert groups participating in Faslane 365 to the restrictions you plan in connection with the blockades.

While the organising of the blockades, including any liaison with Strathclyde Police, is entirely a matter for the autonomous groups who are participating in Faslane 365, we will pass this information on to the groups and we hope that they will find this indication of your intentions helpful.

Whilst In our role as facilitators of the involvement of these groups we are always willing to pass on any further information or suggestions you may have, we cannot speak for the participating groups. However, as you know, the guidelines to which everyone participating in Faslane 365 has agreed are the same as for previous Big Blockades, including that we will move as soon as requested to enable emergency vehicles to pass.

May we also point out that we have no intention to impede ordinary lawful road-users travelling to and from the Peninsula. Having been involved in the past with mass blockades at Faslane, we are aware that the level of disruption suffered by lawful traffic is particularly affected by the response and tactics of the police to our intentions to peacefully blockade the gates of the base where nuclear weapons are being deployed, in contravention of international law. We therefore hope that in choosing the police response and tactics you will also commit to minimising disruption for through traffic.

We also trust that you will take into account the level of distress the continued existence of the Trident element of the Faslane base provokes within civic society in Scotland and beyond. This is shown by the diversity of the groups that will participate in Faslane 365, as a look at the website will show. Included are church groups, parliamentarians, groups from urban and rural areas, artists, journalists, writers, academics and many others.

In peace

David Mackenzie, Jane Tallents, Rebecca Johnson, Angie Zelter, Anna Linnea Rundberg, Adam Conway.

Steering Group Faslane 365

Comments from Faslane 365 Steering Group on Police Letter 28 Sept 06

It was always to be expected that the police would respond in some fashion to Faslane 365 differently from one-off blockades — it is meant to be a bigger challenge to the Trident system.

We are encouraged to see that Chief Superintendent Roger has an understanding of our commitment to nonviolence and recognises the right to peaceful protest, albeit a more limited one than we would argue for. He has also understood that Faslane 365 is being organised by autonomous groups and that the Steering group are not liaising with the police about any individual blockade.

He says that going onto the road and refusing to leave when asked will result in arrest. This is no change to the way it has always been. In practice the amount of time until the

warning is given will probably depend on how many police officers are available and what is happening at other gates – and possibly how creatively you have been able to blockade.

The proposed barriers around a ‘designated protest area’ are new to protests at Faslane. It means that anyone who is coming to support who doesn’t want to risk arrest can be fairly confident that they will be safe behind the barriers. The police haven’t said how they will respond to people who don’t want to be behind the barriers but are not in the roadway. In the next few days we will find out – and let you know! Our local Procurator Fiscals have always argued in court that we have the right to protest anywhere so long as it’s not in the road so any arrests on the pavement or verge will lead to some interesting legal arguments if it does happen.

- **Local Helensburgh Police Contact**

The local police inspector, if you wish to do police liaison before you arrive is called Kenny Boyter and his contact details are - Tel 01436 633600 - kenneth.boyter@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk

- **Faslane South Gate Vehicle Access Times**

In the last few weeks a sign has appeared at the South Gate saying that vehicle access is limited to the following times (see below).

Monday -Thursday
5.30am - 9.30am
4.00pm - 5.30pm
6.30pm - 9.00pm

Friday
5.30am - 9.00am
3.00pm - 9.00pm

Saturday/Sunday
No vehicular access

This is probably linked to the demolition of old accommodation and mess blocks near to the South gate.

- **A few thoughts from a local activist**

When Faslane 365 is mentioned in the area around Faslane the first issue to come up is always the disruption to local traffic. Those of us who live around here always try to get people to recognise that it is the price locals pay for having such a controversial base in their midst. We also point out that an accident at the base which releases radiation will be a great deal more inconvenient not to mention the ‘inconvenience’ of a full scale nuclear war!

That said, the disruption to locals was considered in the original decision making about whether we should go ahead with Faslane 265. Personally I often find that discussions

about traffic hold-ups opens a door to debating the whole issue of nuclear weapons with my neighbours. I would, however, ask blockading groups to take local people who have no connection to the base into consideration when planning their actions.

If possible please try not to blockade the public roads. The A814 which passes through the roundabout at the North Gate and continues past the turn off to the South Gate is the main route between Garelochhead/ the Rosneath Peninsular and Helensburgh and beyond. There are other routes around but they involve a detour of about 10 miles. School children are bussed into Helensburgh passing Faslane around 8.15am

If the police make it impossible to be anywhere else but the public road then that is their call. They have been told that stopping people getting to the gateways usually results in the A814 blocked being blocked. If you are blocking the gateways and the build up of traffic waiting to get in is holding up local traffic please point out to the police that in the past they have had places for base traffic to park up out of the way.

If you engage in conversation with local people who are stuck in traffic jams please give them a hearing. Just because they are unhappy at being held up doesn't mean they necessarily like having a nuclear base on their doorstep.

- **Legal Working Group**

We would love to hear from more Legal Support Teams from blockading groups even if you are just getting started (and even if your Team consists of one person – if fact especially then!) E-mail us on legalworkinggroup@faslane365.org

The Legal Working Group will try and be available on a mobile phone day and night from now on to deal with questions which that groups own Legal Support Teams can't answer. During your blockade we are there to support your Legal Support Team and would especially like to hear if there are any new developments on the legal front from the police or the courts.

You can contact us on 07768 312 678 (international ++ 44 7768 312 678)

We have reorganised the legal section of the Faslane 365 Website and added a briefing about Stop and Search powers. The resources for Legal Support Groups now includes model Bust Cards and Registration Forms and also a Useful Contact Sheets and maps of courts and police stations.

And we have up-dated the briefing for Internationals with a bit about bail addresses