

COMMUNITY UPDATE

COVID-19



10/06/2020



It feels like we've been living in lockdown for a long time now and more recently we've been getting to grips with more freedoms as restrictions are eased further. No one could have imagined at the start of this year we would be facing such drastic measures to stop the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

While we've been offered greater freedoms, with further coming next week in the re-opening of the high street, it is important to remember coronavirus is still with us and restrictions remain in place on gatherings of more than six people and any overnight stays.

In Norwich this weekend, hundreds of people attended Black Lives Matter protests in Eaton Park, where about 350 gathered while around 1,000 went to the Forum. My colleagues and I stand alongside those who have been appalled and horrified by the killing of George Floyd. It is totally understandable that people want to make their voices heard and the right to lawful protest is a key part of any democracy and we, the police, have a duty to uphold. I would however encourage people taking part in demonstrations to remember why these health restrictions are in place, they are here to protect you and everyone else. Please remember social distancing to protect yourselves and others.

The country's response to the coronavirus outbreak has affected everyone, that is one thing we have all in common. However, our experiences of this crisis will all be relative to our own situations, and some better than others. Adjusting to the new 'normal' has been a challenge for us all in different ways; shielding ourselves, those we love, protecting children, supporting neighbours, missing family and friends; we will have all been through ups and downs and longing for a return of our usual routine. It's often the simple things we miss the most, I for one can't wait for a hug from my mum.

Another challenge I've become all too aware of through colleagues and friends is the pressure school closures have had on families with parents playing the role of teacher on top of work and their normal parenting responsibilities. For some this has led to a crisis of conscience over a decision to send children back to school (for the year groups that can return), while others have been counting down the days and longing to drop the children off at the school gates!

Every aspect of lives has been affected and we now find ourselves on a pathway towards some degree of normality...the re-opening of the high street will be one of the first major signals of this and we will have policing operations in place to support this, providing a visible presence in our city and town centres. This by no means suggests life is back to normal...social distancing remains key. Retailers will need to demonstrate they can operate safely for the benefit of both staff and customers. This pandemic is not over, we are still in the midst of a public health emergency and while it's been a long road to date, it will be even longer if we don't follow the government advice and maintain social distancing. As parts of our lives return to a new normal its important to remember we all have a role to play in going about our business safely, sensibly and considerate to others.

Many thanks - **Temporary Assistant Chief Constable , Julie Wwendth**



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