

shopping centres staff to be ready to close and secure their entrances if necessary.

Has there been any violence in previous protests?

There have been clashes between the EDL and UAF in previous protests. Both groups have been violent towards the police in the past. There have also been outbreaks of violence within the EDL itself. There has been little evidence at previous protests of shops or their workers being targeted.

What has happened in other towns that have had a protest?

Dudley saw nine arrests and Bolton fifty. Thames Valley Police are looking at best practice and from the experience gathered at these other protests.



Supt List, Aylesbury's police commander

Will there be any road closures/diversions?

Yes. These will be confirmed in due course.

Will the railway station and bus station be operational?

This will be confirmed shortly.

Will escorting the protestors stop any splintering off within the town?

Our strategy is to keep protestors contained, which is why it is likely that police escorts will be used.

Will there be a protest in Kingsbury?

No event organisers have made a formal request to use Kingsbury. However, it is likely that Kingsbury will see considerable footfall as a consequence of events taking place in Market Square.

A final message from Superintendent Richard List

This will be a challenging day for us all. A national issue is being played out on our local stage. It is important that we all work together to maximise safety and minimise the disruption to our town.

Many of the above arrangements are provisional and I will seek to confirm these as soon as possible. Information and communication is vital, so please visit our websites or e-mail protestenquiries@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

We are a tolerant, successful and proud town – we all need to remember our tremendous strengths at this difficult time. I would like to express my sincere thanks to you all.



Protest by the English Defence League (EDL)



A briefing note for Aylesbury residents

Dear Resident

As I am sure you are aware, The English Defence League (EDL) are planning to hold a protest in Aylesbury town centre on Saturday 1 May.

Aylesbury's many different communities enjoy very good relationships and the town is not typical of the locations the EDL have chosen to hold previous protests.

The protest will present a major challenge for the town.

However, Thames Valley Police, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Town Council and representatives of the different community groups are working together to make sure that the protest is well managed and peaceful.

We want to minimise the impact this event has on our town both on the day

and afterwards.

The police have developed two distinct strategies to deal with this event.

The first is the tactical plan which is about the policing of the protest on the day. This will involve significant police resources. Secondly, the police are working with partners on a community reassurance strategy which seeks to provide information and address the natural concerns of local people.

This note is part of the reassurance strategy, and provides the basic facts about what is planned for 1 May and explains the actions the police and partner agencies are taking. It also responds to a range of questions which residents have asked about the event.

As with any event of this nature, things can change and with two weeks to go before 1 May, plans may change. The latest information will appear on the web sites below and please also look out for updates via the local media.

www.thamesvalley.police.uk

www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

If you have any other queries, please e-mail
AylesburyTownCentreNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Who are the English Defence League?

The EDL are not a banned or proscribed organisation. They describe themselves as “a counter-jihad movement.” They have held several demonstrations in recent months in Manchester, Bolton and Dudley.

What is the role of the police?

The role of the police will be to facilitate peaceful protest while protecting the local community. They will minimise the risk to the safety of anyone affected by any protest activity and seek to minimise disruption to the daily business of our town. They will prevent and detect criminal offences and gather evidence to support prosecutions..

What is the EDL planning to do on 1 May?

EDL are planning to hold a protest in the Market Square on the afternoon of Saturday, 1 May. It is expected for the protest to take about an hour, during which a two-minute silence will be held. They will probably meet outside of the town before the protest and it is possible that the police will decide to escort them into the Market Square so as to minimise the risk of disorder. At the end of the protest, they will probably be escorted away from Market Square for similar reasons. There may well be several hundred EDL supporters arriving.

Various other groups, including Unite Against Fascism (UAF), are also planning events on Saturday, 1 May - either in or near Market Square.

These groups wish to express opposition to the EDL. Police are in contact with these events organisers and are instructing them to contact the local Safety Advisory Group.

Details of what they are planning and numbers likely to attend are unclear at this time.

Will the police or the council seek the Home Secretary’s intervention to ban this protest?

The Home Secretary’s intervention can only be sought when a procession or march is planned. In this case, the groups involved are planning assemblies. While we respect people’s right to protest peacefully, the safety of the community is paramount and anyone who behaves in a way that might create disorder, or disrupt people going lawfully about their business, will be dealt with. Anyone who would want to exploit this demonstration by behaving in a criminal, racist or anti-social way will also be dealt with appropriately.

Why don’t you just stop the protest?

The police do not have powers to ban static protests, which are legal as long as they are peaceful. Thames Valley Police recognises the democratic right to protest. The police and the council are, however, instructing all event organisers for assemblies in the town that they must work with the local Safety Advisory Group to ensure that events are safely planned, properly marshalled and held in accordance with specific requirements made of them.

Can the protest be controlled?

The police do not have powers to ban people from coming to the town and protesting. Under public order legislation, the police can place restrictions on demonstrators, such as when and where they can protest, but they cannot prevent the protest taking place.

A significant policing operation is being planned. While details of resourcing levels are not going to be released at the stage, it can be disclosed that the cost of extra police resources to be available on 1 May currently amounts to around £300,000.

How will any disorder be dealt with?

In addition to a large deployment of uniformed officers on the day, Thames Valley Police is taking steps to gather all available evidence of offending. When offences are disclosed, arrests will be made at the time if it is safe and practical to do so. Matters that cannot be dealt with at the time will be subject to a post-incident investigation that is being led by a senior investigating officer.

Why are the EDL coming on a Saturday?

The EDL has made this decision for themselves. The police and the local authority have made it clear to the EDL that Aylesbury is not suitable for this protest.

In particular, Saturday is very problematic as it is a market day. The EDL has ignored this view and have decided to come on a day that they choose. Although the police are in contact with the EDL and the UAF, we need to make it clear that we are not collaborating with them to organise the events for them, and any statement by the EDL or the UAF that we are doing so is false.

Is it safe to come to Aylesbury that day?

Thames Valley Police and all the partner organisations want to reassure everyone who lives, works and socialises in the town centre that the police operation on the day will be tailored to ensure that residents and visitors are able to go about their business. However, our intention is to put information into the public domain so that people can make their own decisions, and some people may choose not to come to the town whilst the protest is taking place or at any time during the day.

Will shops and business be closed?

This has to be a decision for each shop or business. The police and partners are working to minimise the impact of the protest on the normal activity of the town, but it not possible to advise which shops will be closed or for what period on the day.

Will it be safe to visit the town in the evening?

We can’t confirm by what time the town should be cleared but we anticipate that there shouldn’t be any reason why the town will not be operating as usual in the evening.

Should we come to the town?

Please don’t come as spectators. In the morning, it is expected that some businesses will open as usual. During the time of the protest, the town is not a good place for children and they should be accompanied by an adult.

How is the town preparing for the protest?

A number of sensible and practical measures have already taken place. The market will not be in operation that day and there will not be any street trading. Non-fixed street furniture will be removed including tables, chairs, A-boards and bins. No other public events have been organised in the town centre for 1 May. While EDL members are not expected to congregate in pubs, either before or after the protest, as a precaution, all licensed premises have been given advice regarding extra security and the use of plastic glasses.

Initially, the police and the council asked the Friars Square and Hale Leys shopping centres to close and secure their Market Square entrances before the protest. We no longer believe this to be necessary due to boundaries and other control measures. However, we have advised