

Written evidence submitted by Councillor Joanna Reynolds (SAF0020)

1. I am one of the local councillors for Clapham Common ward. I have lived in the ward for 35 years. Sarah Everard disappeared at the end of my road.
2. I was meeting a friend on Clapham Common at 5pm on March 13th and it was clear there were many people - mainly women - heading for the bandstand. Just before 6pm, we came over to the bandstand and I asked the police, who were mingling with the crowd, whether I could ask for a minute's silence at 6pm as it seemed clear there was a sense of expectation.
3. The police said yes. I went onto the bandstand. Most of the people around the bandstand were masked, socially distanced and holding messages for Sarah or other women/girls who are missing or have been killed. There were flowers everywhere. On the bandstand there were a number of photographers and possibly journalists and a man slowly playing some drums.
4. I said to them all that I was going to lead the silence and asked the photographers to move as I would need to remove my mask and wanted distance. The man stopped playing the drums.
5. I said to the crowd who I was and that we were going to have a minute's silence for Sarah. At 6pm we did. I then said some words about Sarah and how our hearts went out to her family and friends. Also that 40 years ago women were vigiling to reclaim the nights, here we were 40 years later having a vigil to reclaim the streets. Things need to change to create safe streets for women and girls. I said something about when you disperse, please do so peacefully, but I am sure you will.
6. It was a very moving and emotional experience. Most of us were close to tears - or in tears. It is difficult to remember exactly what I said as I hadn't intended to speak, had no script and was emotional.
7. There was no sign of any friction while I was there. As I left the bandstand people clapped for a minute. The atmosphere was emotional but calm, fundamentally sad.
8. I said thank you to the police for letting me speak.
9. I then walked my friend to the other side of the Common and wandered home away from the bandstand, passing a number of vans holding police in Windmill Drive. I didn't go back to the bandstand.
10. It seemed so unlikely that anything would become violent.

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