



## Kingston Police

### Public Agenda Information Report

To: Kingston Police Services Board

From: Scott Fraser, Chief of Police  
Matt Funnell, Inspector

Subject: St. Patrick's Day 2024

Date: April 11, 2024

---

#### Recommendation:

**That** the St. Patrick's Day 2024, Report Number 24-16 is for information only.

#### 2023 in Review

In 2023 St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) fell on a Friday. Based on the previous year's events (2022) it was foreseen that the students would take advantage of it being on a Friday and plan for a consecutive day of revelry on Saturday as well. Based on this, Kingston Police were left with no option but to, once again, plan for two days of unrest in the University District. The following is a brief review of those two days' activities which year over year does have an impact on planning the current year's operations.

#### Friday March 17, 2023

In addition to the Police Liaison Team (PLT) contingent, Public Order Units (POU), and including Kingston Police Command Staff and neighbouring services, a total of 91 sworn members, 11 Special Constables, and 18 civilian staff were deployed during the day and evening.

Rain fell throughout the day and it remained uneventful until about 1:30-1:45 pm when the crowds started to gather. The crowd swelled quickly and in an organized fashion the students lined each side of the full length of Aberdeen Street from Johnston St. to Earl St. creating a path in the middle which facilitated the runway for what was promoted on social media as a "Ginger run." This was a coordinated effort advertised to happen at 2:00 pm and this movement happened in about 3 minutes. This event was advertised on the Canada Party Life social media site and was expected to have happened in as many as 6 university towns across Ontario.

PLT remained engaged with the crowd and the enforcement teams and other officers on the ground were actively enforcing applicable laws. The crowd slowly but steadily dispersed and after about 40 minutes the group had dissipated. For the most part the crowd remained in a celebratory mood and no major incidents occurred. No injuries were reported or observed. The streets in the University District stayed free of gatherings and no overt police response, other than continued patrols and enforcement was necessary. The Incident Command structure was deactivated around 7:00 pm with a contingent of officers staying on shift to help with anticipated calls for service related to the fall-out. The district was quite busy with noise complaints, large house parties, and pedestrian movement related to bar crowds / closing.

There were 4 arrests related to the event – 3 for public intoxication, and 1 for dangerous driving. In this incident a student aged male was driving about the Aberdeen Street / Johnston Street area with two people hanging off the passenger side of the vehicle. This was an alcohol related incident as the driver had initially been arrested for impaired driving, but the readings were in the warning range. This driver faced criminal code charges for dangerous driving, stunt driving, failing to comply with the direction of an officer, and being a novice driver with a blood alcohol level over zero. Provincial offences charges were also laid and the vehicle was seized for 7 days. The total police enforcement statistics for Friday March 17, 2023 were: 136 *Liquor Licence Control Act*, 1 Criminal Code, 2 *Highway Traffic Act*, and 3 *Other Provincial Offences Act* violations.

#### Saturday March 18, 2023

In addition to the PLT contingent, POU, and including Kingston Police Command Staff and neighbouring service, a total of 91 sworn members, 11 Special Constables and 19 civilian staff were deployed during the day and evening.

Saturday morning was similar to Friday, with some pedestrian traffic and various noise complaints in the district. At approximately 12:45 pm a post was made on the Party Life site that read “Aberdeen at 1pm!!” The crowd grew steadily and was considerably larger than Friday. A large gathering congregated on Aberdeen Street at William St. spanning in each direction, creeping nearly the full length of Aberdeen Street. It’s estimated the crowd was about 4,000 strong.

A measured, patient, and strategic police response was implemented which saw a nuisance party eventually being declared. Once the declaration was made, by-law and police continued strict enforcement, as well as PLT messaging, with the crowd quickly dispersing without any major incidents. There were instances of projectiles being thrown about, and one party-goer activated a green smoke bomb and threw it into the crowd.

The total police enforcement statistics for Saturday, March 18, 2023 were: 231 *Liquor Licence Control Act*, 3 *Highway Traffic Act*, and 5 Administrative Monetary Penalties. There were 5 arrests under the *Liquor Licence Control Act* for being intoxicated in a public place. Two of the arrested parties were students enrolled at Queen’s University.

On each day, once the large gatherings were dispersed or otherwise dissipated, a contingent of officers were deployed in vehicles to support the regular patrol shift with call volume and incidents related to the University District.

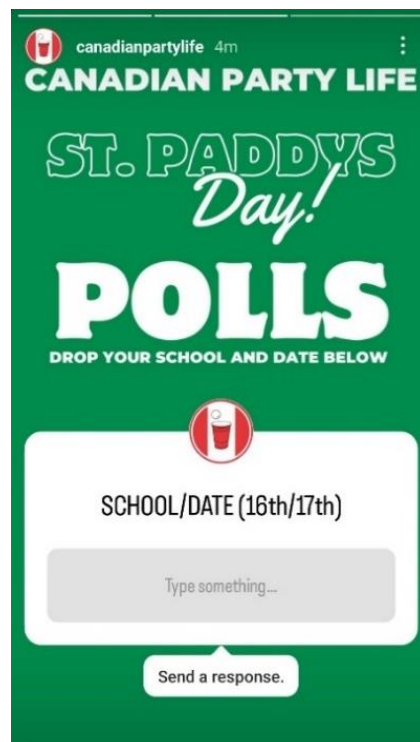
### 2023 Weekend Enforcement Totals

<i>Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019</i>	367
<i>Highway Traffic Act</i>	5
Administrative Monetary Penalty	5
Arrests – Public Intoxication	8
Criminal Code Arrest	1

### 2024

In 2024 St. Patrick’s Day (March 17) fell on a Sunday. With it falling on a weekend, and considering previous years’ activities, police were forced to plan for potential mass gatherings in the University District on Saturday, March 16, 2023 as well. Over the past few years, the trend has been for online polling to be conducted to establish what day is most popular for the largest party crowd. This, however, is not conclusive and when March 17 falls in proximity to a weekend, it has become necessary for our planning to consider the potential for mass gatherings beyond just the actual St. Patrick’s Day. The following examples of online polling and the constant influx of information and intelligence illustrates the fluidity of the event and the complications encountered when organizing appropriate deployment of police resources.

On February 19, 2024, the following was posted on Canada Party Life:



Further on February 19, sources from within the campus residences and other units that work closely with students reported the following:

“There is a high expectation at present of increased external student participation (friends from other colleges and universities) coming to town Friday evening, staying overnight, with the majority of activity occurring Saturday daytime (Aberdeen) into Saturday evening (Hub/downtown).”

On March 4, 2024, Kingston Police learned that the City of Kingston was planning to host a concert in Market Square on Sunday, March 17, 2024 from 11:00 am to 9:00 pm. The event would host various bands made up of Queen’s students, with a desired outcome of drawing students from the University District by giving them another option to the street party, thereby relieving some of the pressure in the area. With attendance numbers unknown, the impact of this event was hard to predict, and a contingency plan needed to be prepared.

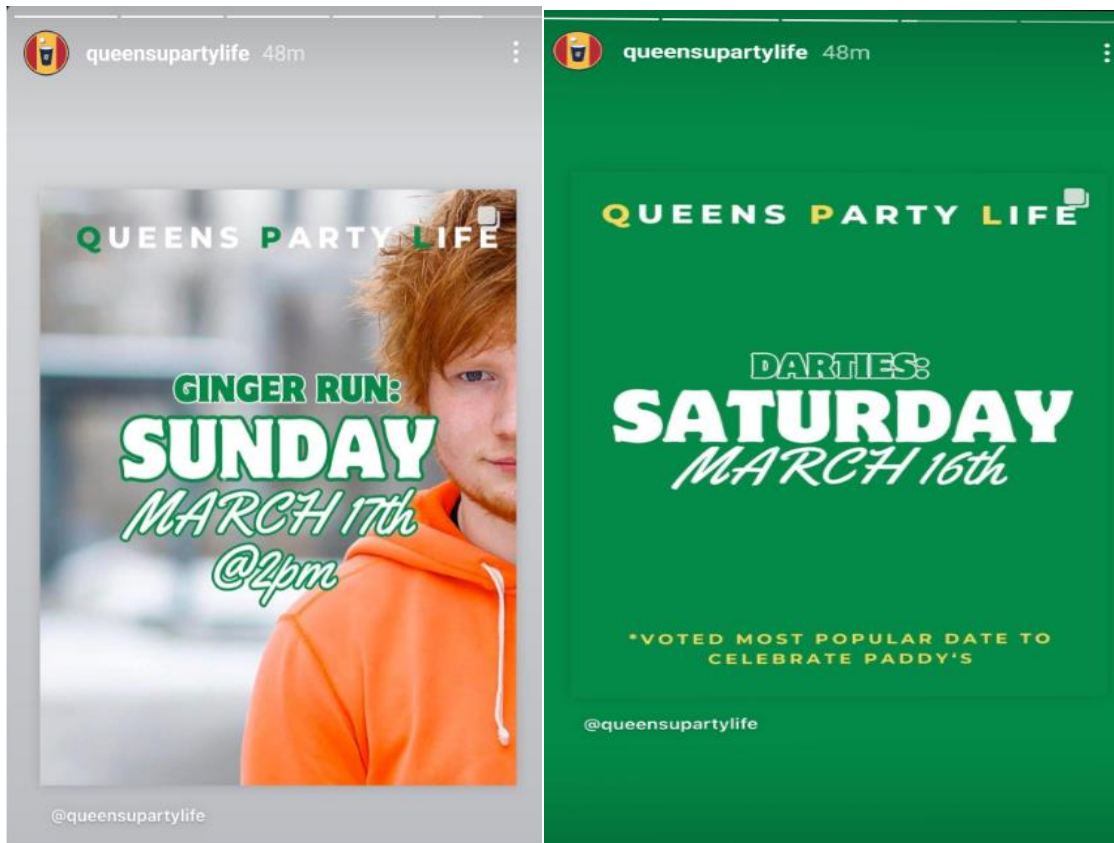
On March 7, 2024, the following information was posted on Canada Party Life:



The above images provide evidence of the planning and organization that occurs on the part of the student body prior to an event such as St. Patrick’s Day. The above posts appear to indicate that students at Queen’s University and other Ontario Universities plan on celebrating St. Patrick’s Day on Saturday, March 16, 2024. Further, it appeared that Saturday’s celebrations will include the popular “Ginger Run.”

As noted previously, the 2023 Ginger Run drew a large crowd to Aberdeen Street. The street was taken over by students and took 40 minutes to clear. Intelligence gathered from the Canada Party Life Ginger Run post suggested that the Kingston Police would be required to manage similar issues again this year.

On March 15, 2024 – just two days before the traditional date of St. Patrick’s Day, the following was posted online declaring Saturday March 16 to be the main party day, and Sunday March 17 the Ginger Run; which was a change from what the initial information was suggesting.



In our quest to provide effective and adequate policing for the event and to maintain public safety, our mission and operational objectives remained the same as previous years.

### Mission Statement

“Using an integrated response, the Kingston Police, along with policing and City partners, will keep the peace, enforce legislation and maintain public safety for the duration of the 2024 Queen’s St. Patrick’s Day Event with the utmost respect to the individuals Charter of Rights and Freedoms with priority on community and emergency services personnel safety and wellbeing.”

## Objectives of Operation

- Protect lives and property of our citizens
- Protect citizens right of lawful assembly
- Prevent a breach of the peace
- Perform tasks using reasonable force
- Ensuring public safety with professionalism
- Enforce all levels of law

Consistent with previous years, we utilized a number of strategies.

### Corporate Communication and Media Messaging Strategy

Messaging was broadcast via social media prior to and continuously during the St. Patrick's Day events in support of the mission statement to discourage illegal behavior, unsanctioned gatherings, and educate people on the negative impact these have on the Kingston Community.

### Police Liaison Team Outreach Strategy

PLTs are a key part of police planning and response to major events. The teams focused on proactive relationship building as a means to assist in resolving issues and educating the student population. From about the first week of March through the two days of St. Patrick's Day celebrations, PLT members worked to establish and maintain open and transparent lines of communication with all stakeholders who might be affected, directly or indirectly, by this event.

### Enforcement

The enforcement strategy was to conduct early and continuous alcohol interdiction, and firm enforcement of municipal, provincial and federal statutes by police and City partners, related to noise, fire safety, *Liquor Licence and Control Act*, *Trespass to Property Act* and criminal offences. The strategy involved using discretion sparingly when encountering liquor and other offences, and lay charges where applicable. A dedicated Enforcement Team was deployed for firm enforcement of *Liquor Licence and Control Act* Violations.

### Resources/Activities/Outcomes/Charges

On both days the operation was carried out under the Incident Command Model utilizing a significant number of Kingston Police sworn and civilian personnel, supported by members of Gananoque, Brockville, and Smith's Falls Police services, as well as a full 52 member POU from the Ontario Provincial Police. The OPP PLT was utilized (along with members of the Kingston Police CORE Unit) in the days leading up to the event, as well as on the Saturday and Sunday.

### Saturday March 16, 2024

In addition to the OPP PLT and POU contingents, and including Kingston Police Command Staff and neighbouring services, a total of 98 sworn members, 8 Special Constables and 18 civilian staff were deployed during the day and evening of Saturday March 16, 2024.

Compared to last year, the Saturday which had been declared by the online poll to be the main party day was much less chaotic. Officers noted a much better-behaved crowd which by all accounts was respectful, more informed of consequences and behavioral expectations, and exhibited a noticeable reduction in open liquor offences. As expected, an increase in the pedestrian traffic in the University District did begin to grow in numbers just before noon. Officers continued their efforts to keep crowds moving and avoid congregating in large numbers but by about 1:50 pm, the crowd had swelled and a nuisance party was declared on Aberdeen Street. A measured and cautious police response was implemented by the Incident Commander which involved members from Kingston Police, including PLT and the OPP POU methodically dispersing the crowd with charges being laid as appropriate. As part of the clearing strategy a nuisance party declaration was made to deal with large numbers who had gathered in the back yards along Aberdeen Street, but they too were dispersed without any issues. By about 3:15 pm the crowds had been dispersed and the nuisance party declarations lifted. Throughout the remainder of the afternoon and into the evening, police foot and mobile patrols continued dealing with pedestrian movement and various house parties. Police resources were dismissed based on ongoing assessments between Incident Command and the Ground Commander. The OPP POU was released at about 7:15 pm and the Incident Command operation was deactivated at 10:30 pm. An extra contingent of 5 officers with a supervisor remained on-duty to assist patrol with anticipated call volume in the University District. This Saturday March 17 evening and night shift was described to be a little busier than normal, but no major issues ensued.

### Sunday March 17, 2024

Like Saturday, in addition to the OPP PLT and POU contingents and including Kingston Police Command Staff and neighbouring services, a total of 91 sworn members, 8 Special Constables, and 21 civilian staff were deployed during the day and evening.

The actual St. Partick's Day was noticeably calm, except for the expected Ginger Run, which occurred at about 2:00 pm. This year's Ginger Run did not draw an overly large crowd and was smaller than last year. Students converged on Aberdeen and lined the street in the area from Earl St. to William St., creating a pathway for the run. The run participants did their sprint, and very soon after without any major police response dispersed and left the area. Other than the Ginger Run, the area remained relatively quiet, as did the concert in Springer Market Square. Like Saturday, police resources were dismissed based on the ongoing assessments of the area, and by approximately 3:15 pm Incident Command had been deactivated. As was the case Saturday night, a

contingent of 5 officers with a supervisor remained to assist patrol with anticipated call volume in the University District.

**Summary**

Enforcement interactions with the crowd were dramatically reduced this year. As noted above, in 2023 there were 367 *LLCA* charges, 5 *HTA* charges, 5 *AMPS*, 8 arrests for public intoxication, and one criminal code arrest. In 2024 over the two days, there were a total of 100 charges laid: 98 *Liquor License Control Act* related, and 2 for *Highway Traffic Act* offences. There was only one arrest related to the event, and no criminal code charges were laid.

The 2024 St. Patrick’s Day festivities were much different than 2023. Those in attendance were much better behaved than years past. There were no major incidents or injuries and officers experienced a much more respectful and educated crowd. This noticeable change from last year is being attributed to strides made by positive outreach by our PLT, effective messaging through social and traditional media, as well as the impact of a strict and consistent enforcement strategy.

**Costs:**

The exact cost of the 2024 St. Patrick’s Day event is not finalized as some final invoices are not yet received. However, with the known expenses (and estimates of what is yet to be finalized), the approximate cost for the 2024 St. Patrick’s Day mass gathering deployment was \$175,570.

**Weekend Enforcement Totals**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<i>Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019</i>	367	98
<i>Highway Traffic Act</i>	5	2
Administrative Monetary Penalty	5	
Arrests – Public Intoxication	8	
Criminal Code Arrest	1	

**Contact:**

Scott Fraser, Chief of Police

613-549-4660 ext. 2213

Matt Funnell, Inspector

613-549-4660 ext. 6240