

Enter Man, who approaches the front desk of a police station, and meets a police constable.

MAN Hello officer, we are holding a protest on Saturday 1st. I thought you ought to know.

CONSTABLE Absolutely. Nothing wrong with protesting, but we need to keep people safe. What are you protesting about?

MAN The government are closing the local hospital. They say they have to save money.

CONSTABLE Ah yes, I heard about that. When and where is the protest, sir?

MAN 12 until 2. Starting at the town hall, up the high street, through the market, finishing at the hospital.

CONSTABLE How many people?

MAN We are hoping for at least 1000 people. Many people feel very strongly about this.

CONSTABLE They certainly do, sir. OK, I've logged all of this information for you. Now will you be paying by cash, cheque, or on card?

MAN ...I'm sorry?

CONSTABLE How will you be paying, sir?

MAN Paying? For what? It's a protest.

CONSTABLE Exactly. If anyone wants to hold a protest, they need to pay the costs of policing it.

MAN Policing the event?

CONSTABLE Yes, sir. We have to close the High Street to traffic, put up barriers, pay for overtime.

MAN I am grateful for all of that, but we are standing up for what we believe. That's our right!

CONSTABLE It certainly is, sir, but policing protests is expensive. There are so many these days. And we need to be at all of them to protect people.

MAN But isn't that the point of the police? To protect us. We shouldn't have to pay extra for that.

CONSTABLE It's you who's decided to protest, sir.

MAN Well, we haven't *really* decided. The cuts to the hospital funding means we have to make our voice heard.

CONSTABLE The cuts to policing mean I have to charge you. How will you be paying, sir?