

Mark Kennedy 'played key role in forming green movement in Iceland'

Undercover police officer made himself indispensable to movement, activist claims



📷 Undercover police officer Mark Kennedy was allegedly keen to share everything he knew about campaigning with the Iceland activists. Photograph: Guardian

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Iceland's environment movement had barely established itself when [Mark Kennedy](#) appeared on the scene in 2005.

Campaigners had the determination to fight environmental threats but little experience of effective protest - so Kennedy's help and knowledge was welcome.

But his activities - under the pseudonym Mark Stone - are coming under scrutiny in [Iceland](#) after his unmasking as an undercover police officer by the Guardian. Green activists describe him as a key figure in creating the Iceland movement.

On Monday, Ogmundur Jonasson, the interior minister who is also in charge of the police, will begin an investigation into where exactly there was collaboration between the Icelandic government and the British authorities regarding Kennedy's presence.

Birgitta Jónsdóttir, an MP for the Movement party, has called Kennedy's activities "a complete mockery of democracy" and challenged the UK police to hand over details of his operation in Iceland.

Jónsdóttir said: "It is unacceptable to pre-persecute people and try to make them guilty by initiating a course of action that might not have occurred to them without the agent's influence.

"I challenge the British authorities to hand over the information to clarify how they came to send an agent to this country to try to destroy an environmental movement which is trying to raise public awareness in a perfectly democratic manner."

Back in 2005, Olafur Pall Sigurdsson, founding father of Saving Iceland, the country's first direct action network, set out across [Europe](#) in search of expertise to build an effective green movement.

His "international SOS" tour was a success. Sigurdsson raised international awareness of Iceland's problems, forged links and met Kennedy.

The undercover policeman played his part to perfection. When Sigurdsson introduced him to Iceland in early 2005, members of the embryonic network were delighted: not only did Kennedy have an enviable list of contacts and

friends in activist groups across Europe, but he was keen to share everything he knew about campaigning and protesting.

"Mark was instrumental in forming activism in Iceland," said one activist who knew Kennedy for many years. "He made himself indispensable. He was one of the key people in the early years. He helped nurture what was an embryonic movement and helped it evolve. He played a big role in furthering the movement.

"When he went to Iceland, Saving Iceland was very young. Mark was very willing to encourage people to participate, and to share techniques and tactics that had been very effective in the UK."

Saving Iceland sprang into life to protest against the building of the Kárahnjúkar dam in the island's east. Kennedy quickly became a vocal and key decision-maker.

But although the campaign - the first direct action protests the island had experienced - were big news, Kennedy thought the network could go further.

At public meetings Kennedy was often on an "adrenalin rush". The activist said: "He was very keen to play a very decisive and key role in all aspects of organisation and participation. He was always more likely than the average member of the group to suggest radical actions that could be perceived as aggressive by the mainstream media and the police."

It was during this campaign that Kennedy showed the Icelandic activists the techniques of "lock down" - when protesters attach themselves to an immobile object - and how to block roads by constructing tripods from scaffolding, placing a protester at the apex.

But the Guardian has seen private emails suggesting Kennedy was at the same time trying to drive a wedge between the group's members. In one email, he suggested a prominent member of Saving Iceland had become a liability.

"[A prominent member of Saving Iceland] was once again annoying," he emailed. "I was left with a feeling that the tour group was fragmenting ...[he] seems extremely tired and I think he does not cope well with the way that groups like ours like to do things. Despite our best efforts he will not let go of the reins."

Although Saving Iceland declined to be interviewed it disputes the level of Kennedy's involvement.

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