**Minutes of Meeting of Co. Cavan Joint Policing Committee held in the Council Chamber, Cavan on 24th Nov 2017 at 3pm.**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** ChairpersonCllr. J. P. Feeley, Cllr. C. Kelly, Cllr. P. Mc Vitty, Cllr. P. Smith, , Cllr. N. Connell, , Cllr. C. Brady, Cllr D. Brady. Cllr. F. Curtin, Cllr. S. O’Reilly, Cllr S.P. O’Reilly,

**Community Representatives:** Vanessa Clarke, Brian Mc Dermott,

Bob Gilbert, Noeleen Brady.

**Executive**: Tommy Ryan (Chief Executive), Eoin Doyle, (Director of Services), Emer Coveney (Community & Enterprise) and Sinéad Tormey (Community & Enterprise)

**Garda Officers**: Chief Superintendent Colette Quinn, Superintendent James Coen.

**Oireachtas Members:** Deputy Brendan Smith

**Apologies:** Senator J. O’ Reilly Deputy Niamh Smyth Cllr. M. Argue Cllr. P. Mc Donald, Cllr W. Bennett, Cllr Carmel Brady, Aisling Tobin

**In Attendance:** Thomas Lyons (Anglo Celt), Inspector Nial McKiernan

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Cllr John Paul Feeley, chairperson, opened the meeting by conveying his condolences to Cllr Damien Brady on the recent death of his brother. The Chair also relayed the news that the death had occurred of Brendan Reilly, CEO of Breffni Integrated that morning. The committee observed a moment’s silence as a mark of respect for both bereavements.

The Chair then welcomed the new Chief Superintendent Colette Quinn to the meeting and wished her well in her new role. He acknowledged the great work and cooperation that the group had with the previous Chief Superintendent Christopher Mangan and said he looked forward to ongoing co-operation with the Gardaí.

Each of the Councillors conveyed their sympathy to Cllr Damien Brady and to the family of Brendan Reilly. They each in turn also welcomed the new Chief Superintendent Colette Quinn.

A discussion took place regarding the loss of Brendan Reilly. He will be sadly missed not only by his family, friends and colleagues but by the wider community and county as a whole. He carried out tremendous work in the county and was always willing to help in any way he could.

**Previous Minutes**

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Bob Gilbert and seconded by Cllr. Sarah O’Reilly.

**Matters Arising**

The Chair acknowledged all of the work done by emergency services and in particular the Gardai during the recent storm Ophelia.

**Community CCTV Funding Scheme**

Emer Coveney updated the committee on the subgroup meeting which was held on the 11th September. Cavan County Council will act as the Data Controller for the scheme. Lynda McGavigan from the Corporate Affairs department is developing a Data Protection Policy for Community CCTV Schemes. Applicant community groups will need to sign up to the local authority policy.

In some cases data control can be delegated to the Gardai. All those with responsibility regarding the data will have to be Garda vetted.

A question arose at the subgroup in relation to the option of using moveable cameras. The Department of Justice had not come across this enquiry before but were not sure if this was workable.

Emer Coveney distributed a shortened guide of the steps to be followed when applying for this funding to the committee members. She commented that the subgroup only need to meet and will be more functional when applications start to come in.

Inspector Nial McKiernan told the group that the Ballyjamesduff consultation has taken place.

Cllr S. P. O’Reilly enquired as to how the scheme will work regarding the housing of the equipment. He suggested that the Gardai should be responsible for monitoring the data and that it is a burden on community groups to take responsibility for the equipment.

Cllr Paddy McDonald mentioned that there were cameras put up in Ballyjamesduff by the locals and they were not welcomed as people felt their privacy was being invaded.

Superintendent James Coen explained that there will be no on-going monitoring of the data. It is only when an incident occurs that needs to be investigated when the data will be viewed. The Chief Superintendant has to approve the data download in order for it to be used for public viewing as evidence.

Eoin Doyle said that the burden will lie with the community groups for the housing and maintenance of the equipment. He said under data protection that there was a new national protocol and we need to see how this can be transferred to the community.

Deputy Brendan Smith commented on how difficult it is for community to access this funding. So far five applications had been received by the Department and they were all returned as they were incomplete.

Cllr Sarah O’Reilly commented on the large amount of detail on the forms and that it is a burden on volunteers. She felt the synopsis document produced by Cavan County Council was useful.

Vanessa Clarke advised that it is vital to hold consultations with community groups and also to link in with Community Development Associations so that groups are clear of exactly how the scheme works and when and how the data is used.

Cllr. Fergal Curtin questioned if the grant aid was 60% or did it vary. He felt this was not enough especially with ongoing cost element. Emer Coveney responded that the maximum grant is 60%. Eoin Doyle said that the Municipal District discretionary grants could be used towards funding the scheme.

**Location of Speed Vans**

Cllr Paddy McDonald stated there should be more check points on the roads he also asked how the locations for speed vans are decided upon.

Superintendent Coen explained that locations are decided upon due to statistics of traffic collisions, serious injury accidents and fatal accidents over the years in association with the Garda Traffic Bureau. The ‘Go Safe’ speed vans are set at designated locations. Garda speed vans are in place where there is a community concern regarding safety, eg schools, sporting grounds, traffic congestion.

Cllr Shane P. O’Reilly said that there was a major issue regarding fixed penalty notices and people not receiving them. He suggested they be sent out by registered post to combat the situation.

Cllr Paddy McDonald questioned the location of the speed vans outside Ballyjamesduff on the Virginia Road. He suggested that the money spent on these vans could be better spent on Garda resources.

Cllr Noel O’Connell asked if there will ever be a provision for fixed cameras to be located in villages and between towns as this has in the past made drivers slow down.

Superintendent Coen explained that the Go Safe contract is for mobile cameras through the National Traffic Bureau. He said that through the proper channels he can bring the issue to the Bureau either in writing or through the Committee.

**Council motion to propose a CCTV grant for agricultural community and rural dwellers[[1]](#footnote-2)**

Cllr Shane P. O’Reilly referred to statistics regarding tool, machinery and livestock theft. He said that many crimes are unreported as communities or individuals feel that nothing is done about them. His proposal is for a grant for rural dwellers to help combat the epidemic of burglaries and thefts. He mentioned that older people have got the panic buttons and sensor lighting but said there is much fear among rural dwellers. He suggested a vat rebate facility or some sort of grant to help the vulnerable in our society to feel safe and secure in their own homes.

Deputy Brendan Smith complimented Cllr O’Reilly on his initiative and said it commands our support. The additional policing demands posed by being in a border region were emphasised. Deputy Brendan Smith said it would be useful if there was grant aid that acts as a leverage for small households and farmers to protect their own property.

Vanessa Clarke concurred with Deputy Brendan Smith in welcoming an approach to increasing awareness. She said communities have a role to play in crime prevention. Property marking initiatives have been successful, for example, in County Monaghan. She suggested that machines be made available in this area and perhaps tracking devices installed. She commented if the feedback and incidents were not being report for statistics then it will result in stations closing and a decrease in services in that area.

Chief Superintendent Collette Quinn explained that under-reporting would be a disadvantage from the point of view of funding and resources as most of these initiatives are decided based on evidence. She said it is vital to have engagement with the marts, farmers, and rural businesses.

Superintendent Coen spoke about a report of suspicious activity which led to the recovery of a stolen vehicle and tools. He said all calls are monitored and closed off. He informed the group that rural areas are targeted, especially unlocked sheds, usually between 2am and 7am.

The Chair questioned how calls were monitored. Superintendent Coen replied that they were all monitored though the Regional Control Centre.

Cllr Fergal Curtin complimented Cllr. O’Reilly for putting this on the agenda. He mentioned that he himself and several neighbours were victims of this kind of crime. He questioned if the reporting of crimes leads to convictions. He also questioned where the equipment which is stolen ends up as it does not seem to be sold in local markets and are they exported out of the country.

Chief Superintendent Collette Quinn replied that the stolen goods are bought by criminal gangs and locally. She said statistics show what type of goods are taken and what is recovered.

For joint operations to recover property, more and more resources are needed and all reported incidents help to recover the goods and to address the problem.

The motion was seconded by Cllr Fergal Curtin and will be referred to the Minister for Justice.

**Text Alert**

Maghera Community Alert is not receiving the Garda texts.

Inspector Nial McKiernan explained that the IT system for text alert was down from early May to end of September. He said that he personally sent messages when required. He said that the Cavan group held a stakeholders meeting on 6th November and they will meet again in January.

He said that dissemination in Cavan has been remedied and that this will be rolled out to the Bailieborough district. The guidelines state that only a Sergeant can send a text alert message but they are piloting an idea that would allow the alert to be sent by a number of Gardai.

Inspector Nial McKiernan said he would discuss any queries regarding the Text Alert after the meeting.

**Ballyconnell Garda Station – changing of opening hours**

The Chair said that he attended the open and very constructive meeting organised by Superintendent Coen in Ballyconnel regarding the changing of opening hours in the station.

Superintendent Coen told the group that he met with councillors as well as members of the JPC prior to the public meeting. It was arranged with the locals to discuss the rationale for reduced opening hours for the station. He said that they have to make the maximum use of resources. He explained that there is an increased Garda presence out of hours at night time in mobile units and that there is always one unit and where possible two units in West Cavan. He said the station has seen reduced opening hours but that the 24hr police presence is there.

Deputy Brendan Smith said it was a very beneficial meeting especially to see how they use their resources. He said it highlighted a clear message that additional personnel are needed in West Cavan. He said the communities support the work of the Gardaí and would request additional resources.

Cllr Damien Brady welcomed news of additional resources. He said there are people living in fear and understand that resources are a big issue but that the pressure needs to be kept on.

He shared with the group that a new group of undesirables from a criminal gang in Dublin has moved into the estate and families are moving out because of them.

Cllr Mc Vitty stressed that it is imperative to get the message across to people that the Gardaí are on the ground in West Cavan. The fact that there is no Gardaí in the station is a worry to people. He welcomed the decision to reopen the Bawnboy Station.

Superintendent Coen said he engages with communities and that locals need to be able to identify with a local Garda. Visibility of Gardai is important.

Chief Superintendent Quinn said that they are putting a mobile phone in patrol cars. It is crucial to have an operational presence and to be able to respond.

**Update on actions in the JPC Plan**

There were no updates since the last meeting that were not already covered on the agenda.

**Annual Meeting for Community Alert Groups**

Muintir na Tire is holding their annual meeting for Community Alert groups on Wednesday 6th December in the Kilmore Hotel. This will coincide with two sessions being delivered by Pobal in relation to the Seniors Alert scheme. The Muintir na Tire session will run from 12.30 to 2.30pm. Topics will cover CCTV and text alert.

**Date of next Meeting**

The next JPC meeting will take place on Friday 9th February 2017.

**AOB**

A meeting will be held in Bailieborough on Monday 4th December at 7.30pm in relation to the Community CCTV scheme. The chair noted that this meeting is party political and that the JPC could not be used as a Forum to discuss party political issues. Eoin Doyle said that we needed clarification if the meeting is being organised by the community.

Cllr Reilly referred to text alert again. People in Bailieborough have not received any text alert message in 18 months. Inspector McKiernan said that the problems with text alert have been countrywirde. Monaghan is currently researching a remedy using the local authority text alert system.

The chair said that we needed to organise public engagement meetings and that we could look at organising one in each division in the new year.

It was commented on that the Open Day in Cavan Garda station was well attended and well organised. The chair complemented all those involved. Cllr S. P O’Reilly asked if this event would happen again. Superindendent Coen said it would be useful to hold it every two years.

Cllr S. O’Reilly said that the Bailieborough station is grossly under-resourced and the area is being affected by crime. She would like to see an increase in controls in that area.

Cllr D. Brady asked what could be done to encourage people walking on the roadside to wear high-vis jackets. Eoin Doyle said that 400 high vis vest has been distributed at Taste of Cavan. Vanessa Clarke said that any group can go online and order high-vis vests from the Road Safety Authority. The RSA also makes Road Safety Officers available to support community groups.

Brian McDermott asked about images posted on Facebook of farmers with firearms. Superintendent Coen said he had not noticed an increase in firearms licences. He also asked to have a discussion about the Garda Drugs Unit.

It was proposed that the Garda Drugs Unit would make a presentation to the next JPC meeting.

Cllr S. O’Reilly asked for an update on the Bailieborough Garda Station. Chief superintendent said there was no update on the building but it is in progression.

The Chief Superindendent said they would be interested in recruiting more Garda Reserve and that a training programme was available.

1. Excerpt from Council meeting October 2017

8.   Cavan County Council supports a request to Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment, Denis Naughton, T.D., and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed, T.D. to engage in meaningful dialogue for the creation of a CCTV and security systems grant for members of the agricultural community and rural dwellers due to the increasing frequency of burglaries and thefts in the North Eastern Region.

      The members also asked that the television programme Crime Call be televised all year round. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)