**Minutes of Meeting of County Cavan Joint Policing Committee held in the Council Chamber, Cavan on 9th Feb 2018 at 3pm.**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr Sarah Reilly, Cllr Shane P O’Reilly, Cllr Clifford Kelly, Cllr Winston Bennett, Cllr John Paul Feeley, Cllr Carmel Brady, Cllr Paddy Smith, Cllr Peter McVitty, Cllr Madeleine Argue, Cllr Noel O’Connell, Cllr Paddy McDonald, Cllr Damien Brady.

**Community Representatives:** Vanessa Clarke, Brian Mc Dermott, Bob Gilbert.

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

**Garda Officers**: Chief Superintendent John O’Reilly, Superintendent James Coen, Superintendent Leo McGinn, Inspector Nial McKiernan, Sgt Mick Kearney (Garda Drugs Unit).

**Oireachtas Members:** Deputy Brendan Smith, Senator Joe O’Reilly, Senator Diarmuid Wilson.

**Apologies:** Deputy Niamh Smyth Cllr, Aisling Tobin, Cllr Fergal Curtin, Noleen Brady

**In Attendance:** Eddie Butler (Northern Sound), Thomas Lyons (The Anglo Celt), Gladys Brady (Student), Karla Clarke (Student) Siobhán Gargan (Student).

The chair John Paul Feeley welcomed the new Chief Superintendent John O’Reilly to the meeting. Several other JPC members also welcomed him to his new role. John O’Reilly noted his appreciation of their comments and said he was fortunate to have a good team.

The chair welcomed students Karla Clarke and Siobhán Gargan who were attending with Cllr Sarah Reilly to observe the meeting and also Gladys Brady who was on work experience with the local authority.

The chair congratulated Bob Gilbert on winning the All Ireland Community & Council Awards in the category of Volunteer of the Year. Bob Gilbert thanked everyone for their good wishes.

**Minutes from meeting 24th November 2017**

Previous minutes were proposed by Cllr Peter McVitty and seconded by Cllr Carmel Brady.

Emer Coveney noted that Noeleen Brady had made an amendment to the wording of the minutes in relation to her point about Maghera text alert.

**Presentation by Garda Divisional Drug Unit**

Sgt Mick Kearney gave an overview of drug use patterns in Cavan and crime trends. He has been in charge of the Drug Unit since it was established in 2017. There had been no drugs unit in Cavan Monaghan for a five year period.

Half of illegal drugs coming into Cavan are bought across the internet. The ‘dark net’ has sites for the purchase of drugs, hit men and prostitution. New drug users are tech-savvy. He outlined the range of new synthetically manufactured drugs. The Gardai have found crack cocaine pipes in Cavan. This is cocaine that is heated to a very high temperature and is extremely addictive. There is evidence of grow houses in Cavan. There is also misuse of prescription drugs.

He said there is large scale drug use in every town in Cavan and Monaghan. Cannabis is the most common drug used. There are no major drug lords but there are a lot of small dealers. The economic boom is back and this has resulted in a resurgence in cocaine use. Hash is chemically enhanced to make it more mind-altering and addictive. Depression among young people who use drugs is a major problem.

Sgt Mick Kearney’s contact details are: 086 828 1846 and email michael.j.kearney@garda.ie

The chair commended the work of the Gardai in tackling the drug problem.

Senator Joe O’Reilly congratulated the police on their work and asked what advice the Gardai have to encourage people to disclose information about drug use in the community. He referred to the Alcohol Bill going through the Dail at the moment and said that as a society we have too tolerant a position on alcohol.

Cllr Sarah O’Reilly asked if the Gardai go into schools to provide this information.

Inspector Nial McKiernan said it is part of the plan for the JPC to research more effective ways of providing drug education through the schools. Through the Cavan Drug and Alcohol Forum there is a plan to deliver training to teachers so awareness can be rolled out through the SPHE programme.

Cllr Paddy McDonald commented that a five person drugs unit was a small team to cover two counties. Gardai should be going around night clubs to deter drug use.

Deputy Brendan Smith in complementing Sgt Kearney on his presentation asked if it could be given to the wider community perhaps through a JPC Public Meeting. He said he participates with the Gardai in seminars on road safety and perhaps something could be done on the same basis in relation to drug issues.

Cllr Shane P O’Reilly suggested working with the Vintners’ Federation. As a board member of the Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board, he was sure that the ETB would support any proposal coming before them in relation to drugs education. As chair of the Cavan Drug and Alcohol Forum, he would be interested in a publicity campaign using the Council page in the Anglo Celt over a number of weeks. The Gardai also have radio airtime to promote drug awareness.

Cllr Clifford Kelly suggested approaching Development Associations or Chamber of Commerce to organise community meetings where parents could be invited to hear a presentation on drug use.

Cllr Noel Connell referred to mandatory sentencing for drug offences in excess of a certain value.

Cllr Peter McVitty asked if roadside checks for drug use are happening and if anything could be introduced to curtail ordering online.

Cllr Carmel Brady referred to the effectiveness of a Birmingham initiative that features imagery displayed in toilet blocks of the damage caused by drug use.

Chief Superintendent John O’Reilly said there are Criminal Asset Bureau asset profilers in this region. Deputy Chief Superintendent Pat Clavin is giving a presentation to the Monaghan JPC on this issue. They forward information to CAB who then investigate the individual in question and have the power to seize monetary and physical assets.

In relation to sentencing, John O’Reilly said that under Section 15A, there is mandatory sentencing when the value of drugs is €13,000, but it is not always being applied.

In relation to the comment on increasing the capacity of the drugs unit, there is a District Crime and Drugs Unit in Cavan and Monaghan which works well with the Divisional Drugs Unit.

Responding to Deputy O’Reilly’s point about fear of disclosure, John O’Reilly said there is a facility for people to engage with the Gardai without giving their identity. The Garda confidential (**Crimestoppers) number is** [1800 666 111](tel:1800%20666111)

The facility for checkpoints for drug use is up and running.

To have an impact on the online drugs market, the Chief Superintendent said we have to start in the home with parents taking responsibility for their own children. Customs officers regularly identify suspicious packages and sometimes they also do controlled deliveries.

Senator Diarmuid Wilson asked if there were statistics on the percentage of drugs coming in through Northern Ireland and whether there was co-operation with the police in Northern Ireland. John O’Reilly affirmed there were a number of joint operations with the PSNI and good contacts.

**Community CCTV scheme**

The chair asked JPC members to endorse a letter of support for the Ballyjamesduff CCTV application to the Dept of Justice. This was proposed by Deputy Brendan Smith and seconded by Cllr Shane P O’Reilly.

Emer Coveney explained that a JPC subgroup had been set up to support communities with CCTV applications. There had been a number of internal meetings in the County Council and meetings with the Gardai about CCTV.

Community groups that have received grants for CCTV or which are in the process of applying for grants are being invited to a meeting 22nd Feb at 8pm in the Council Chamber. This will be an opportunity for the local authority to explain data protection issues to community groups. Cavan County Council is in the process of developing its policy on community CCTV.

Director of Service Eoin Doyle advised that while we are supportive of CCTV as a measure to counteract crime, there are resource implications for local authorities. There will be changes to data protection legislation in May this year. The local authority system is coming to terms with what this will mean and will need to review applications for CCTV on a case by case basis.

Inspector Nial McKiernan said that the Gardai will provide assistance where they can. There is a CCTV Advisory Committee in Garda headquarters.

Cllr Paddy Smith called for the CCTV command posts to be situated in local Garda stations where at all possible. This point was supported by Cllr Winston Bennett.

Inspector Nial McKiernan said that while previous schemes were in the Garda station, going forward the preferred option of the CCTV Advisory Committee is that the equipment is housed in local authority buildings.

Cllr John Paul Feeley said that the local authority does not have property in most towns. He welcomed the idea of CCTV but said we need to look at the expectations placed on voluntary organisations. There is a heavy responsibility on communities to both raise funds and manage data protection. The Blacklion community looked at this scheme but were reluctant to apply because of the obligation to maintain the equipment and data protection responsibilities.

Deputy Brendan Smith enquired who the main contact person is for CCTV. He was referred to the information leaflet produced by the JPC which lists contact details for all the relevant personnel.

Director of Service said that there is a growing awareness of how onerous the scheme is. There are three options for locating the equipment: 1) Garda Station, 2) community centre or 3) local authority property. However a lot of property is not suitable from either a practical or legal point of view.

Senator Joe O’Reilly welcomed the funding and said the existence of cameras would be a good deterrent. Logic would suggest that the control centre should be in the Garda Station.

Vanessa Clarke said that a number of areas have gone to the Department of Justice for clarification. She suggested that an MOU be devised to address legal queries.

Cllr John Paul Feeley said the scheme needs to be tweaked at national level and complemented Inspector Nial McKiernan and Emer Coveney for their work locally on the initiative.

**Property Marking Machine**

Cavan County Council has ordered a Property Marking Machine which will be available for use by the community. Cllr Peter McVitty and Cllr Val Smith made this request at the December Council meeting.

Cllr Peter McVitty thanked Tommy Ryan for agreeing to purchase it and thanked Inspector Nial McKiernan for his support.

Sgt Ken Coughlan had given a property marking demonstration at a previous JPC meeting.

Cllr Carmel Brady complemented the initiative and said it would be a great deterrent locally.

Bob Gilbert said there was responsibility on the community to organise property marking days in local venues.

Cllr Paddy Smith complemented the purchase of the machine but said that it would take a while to cover all 25,000 households in the county. He suggested training a number of people to use the machine.

There is a national charity promoting this approach called Community Protect. James O’Neill can be invited to the next JPC meeting to present information on this group.

**Review of JPC actions delivered in 2017**

A draft summary newsletter on JPC related activity in 2017 was distributed to the meeting. This was proposed by Cllr Clifford Kelly and seconded by Cllr Madeleine Argue.

**Implementation plan for 2018**

The chair asked members to consider the main areas of JPC activity to include in the 2018 work plan.

* Public meetings to be held in each Municipal District area
* Property marking scheme
* Drugs education
* Garda open days

**AOB**

Chief Superintendent John O’Reilly acknowledged the contribution to policing made by Superintendent Leo McGinn throughout his 40 year career and wished him well in his retirement. The chair Cllr John Paul Feeley joined in these sentiments on behalf of the JPC.

**Next meeting**

The next Cavan JPC meeting will be held on Friday 4th May at 3pm.