**Minutes of Meeting of County Cavan Joint Policing Committee held on-line over Microsoft Teams, Cavan on 3rd September 2021 at 3pm.**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr Sarah O’ Reilly, Cllr John Paul Feeley, Cllr Paddy Mc Donald, Cllr Carmel Brady, Cllr Madeleine Argue, Cllr. Brendan Fay, Cllr. Trevor Smith, Cllr. Patricia Walsh, Cllr. T.P. O’Reilly, Cllr. Philip Brady, Cllr Craig Lovett

**Community Representatives:** Vanessa Clarke, John Magee, Stanley Nwaneri, Elizabeth Ormiston

**Executive**: Brendan Jennings (Director of Services, CCC)

**Garda Officers**: Superintendent Padraic Jones, Superintendent Gordon Englishby

**Oireachtas Members:** Deputy Pauline Tully, Deputy Joe O’Reilly, Diarmuid Wilson

**Apologies:** Chief Superintendent Glacken, Cllr Clifford Kelly, Cllr. Aiden Fitzpatrick

**In Attendance:** Inspector Nial Mc Kiernan (An Garda Síochána), Sgt Michael Kearney (An Garda Síochána), G. Boyle (CCC), Andy Ogle (NERDTF), Zoe Wells (CAMDAS), Shelia Enright (An Garda Síochána), Eddie Butler (Anglo Celt), Diarmuid Pepper (Northern Sound)

In the Chair and Vice Chair’s absence B. Jennings opened the meeting. He welcomed all in attendance.

**Minutes & Matters Arising**

The minutes were proposed by Cllr. Brady and seconded by Cllr. S. O. Reilly.

**Matters Arising**

Vanessa Clarke provided an update to confirm Community Engagement Day will take place on 13th October 2021. She is working on a promotional video to promote the Vulnerable People’s Register, she will forward onto members to support in its distribution once finalised.

Deputy P. Tully and Cllr B. Fay enquired if there has been any further update relating to the Community CCTV Scheme. Inspector N. Mc Kiernan replied that the applications are still on hold due to Data Protection Issues. A clarification is needed on the Ballyjamesduff application once this has been completed the other applications will be dealt with subsequently.

Chair Cllr. J P Feeley joined the meeting at this point and was congratulated by members on his recent marriage.

**Supports for Victims of Crime: Inspector Nial McKiernan and Garda Sheila Enright, Ballyconnell Garda Victim Service Office**

Garda S. Enright and one other staff member run the delivery of the Supports for Victims of Crime service for the Cavan and Monaghan Division. Her presentation covered the following areas:

* E.U. Victims Directive 2012/29/EU - Criminal Justice (Victim of Crime) Act 2017
* Establishment of Garda Victim Service Offices (GVSO)
* What is provided through the GVSO
* Crimes addressed through GVSO
* Who is a victim? Victims Charter
* Initial Engagement with Victims
* Contact in Person
* PULSE Letters – Investigation Updates
* Information Leaflets
* National & Local Victims Support Organisations & An Garda Síochána’s victim supports
* Operation Faoiseamh

Deputy J.O’ Reilly proposed the following questions:

* Do victims of Crime receive regular updates of the details on investigations into their cases?
* Is the service countywide?
* Is support provided to victims around post traumatic stress?

Inspector. N. Mc Kiernan replied that regular updates are provided to the victims of crime, the service is countywide. Victims are provided with information of services and organisations that support them with any post traumatic stress they may have. This is provided through a leaflet as well as recommendations and advice provided by the gardaí.

Deputy P. Tully asked if a perpetrator has served a custodial sentence and is due for release will the victim be informed. Superintendent. P. Jones replied that the prison service will let victims know however the victim must request this information in advance. It was agreed that this is something which should be promoted and made know to victims if they so wish to receive this information.

**Drugs & Alcohol Presentations:**

* **MQI CAMDAS (Cavan and Monaghan Drug and Alcohol Service):  Zoe Wells, Service Co-ordinator**
* **North East Regional Drugs Task Force (NERDTF): Andy Ogle, Regional Co-ordinator**

Cllr J P Feeley welcomed both Zoe Wells and Andy Ogle to the meeting.

Zoe Wells delivered information over the following areas as part of her presentation.

* History to the setting up of the MQI
* Overview of Services
* Services provided by Riverbank
* Services by County Provided
* Services over the COVID-19 Pandemic
* Cavan & Monaghan Drug & Alcohol Services
* Overview of services
* Referrals by month per county
* Source of referrals
* Primary Substances
* Gender & Age Profile of clients
* Primary substance by Age Group

They have seen an increase in the number of referrals from older adults during the COVID 19 period for alcohol abuse.

A launch of the service will take place by Frank Feighan, TD, The Minister for Public Health, Well Being and National Drugs Strategy onTuesday 21st September, 2021 at 10:00 am in the Cavan Crystal Hotel.

Cllr J.P. Feeley said it was interesting to hear alcohol is still the biggest substance abused and also enquired into her thoughts as to why the largest numbers of referrals were coming in for County Cavan over Monaghan. Zoe replied that that they need to advertise their services more extensively in County Monaghan, also they only deliver a part-time service in Monaghan so it may be down to a resource issue.

Cllr. C. Brady informed members that she is a member of the NERDTF Board and commented on the tremendous work they carry out. The HSE are reluctant to attend their meetings and asked if the Oireachtas members could follow up on this to put some pressure on them, Cllr. J.P. Feeley also added that those in attendance who are also members of the HSE Forum should also raise this issue there.

Deputy J.O’ Reilly agreed with the Chair’s observations around alcohol abuse, it remains a consistent problem. He enquired how well the service was funded, by whom and do they find that they are able to meet the demand for their services. He also stated that it is of vital importance that they promote the service as much as possible. Z. Wells replied that they are funded through the NERDTF and HSE. They have waiting lists for their services, particularly for counselling. They are working to progress the service further and be able to respond to the demand for their services.

Andy Ogle provided a presentation on the NERDTF, covering the following areas:

* National Drug Strategy – mid term review & local priorities
* Funded services / joint initiatives
* Drug related intimidation
* Resources & supports

Cllr. S. O’Reilly thanked Andy Ogle for the presentation. She commented that there is a massive shortage in funding available for services tackling this issue. There is a very complex network of services involved and more support is needed. She referred to the Family Addiction Support Network (FASN) and the fantastic work they are doing on the ground but are facing imminent closure due to lack of financial support. She stated the HSE and the government need to step up on this. Drugs & Alcohol is a growing problem and more resources are needed, early intervention is especially important as it leads to better outcomes in the long-run. A. Ogle agreed with Cllr S. O’ Reilly’s comments relating to the FASN, they are meeting with the HSE shortly to address this and are also seeking further funding opportunities. It is currently not a sustainable situation and they reply heavily on volunteers.

Deputy P. Tully thanked both presenters for the information provided and wanted to commend them on the services which they deliver to a very high standard. She wanted to enquire what the current situation was around treating people for mental health issues if they have an existing addiction issue also, in the past this couldn’t be done. A. Ogle agreed that the HSE deal with addiction separately from mental health, but there are investigations underway to see how both could be treated together as they will often naturally overlap. The HSE have a national Dual Diagnosis Group looking into this and he is hopeful there will be some clarity available around this soon. Services need to be much more people centred and a quick response is needed in a crisis situation.

Cllr. J P Feeley thanked both Zoe Wells and Andy Ogle for their presentations and members for their contributions.

He referred to the questions which had been submitted by members prior to the meeting as requested by Chief Superintendent Glacken and invited members to propose their questions directly.

Deputy P. Tully asked when a new sergeant will be appointed to the Ballyconnell area. Superintendent P. Jones informed her that a promotional competition was held recently and a panel has been formed from which appointments will be made. He expected by Q4 ’21 or Q1’22 a new sergeant will be appointed. A sergeant from another area is covering the area for the time being on a part-time basis until the appointment is made.

Cllr. S O’Reilly made the following enquiries in relation to the Cavan & Monaghan Drugs Unit:

* How many gardaí are appointed to it?
* Are positions currently filled?
* Will an Inspector with specific responsibility for the implementation of the Drugs Intimidation Programme be appointed? If so, will this be a full-time role and will it be an additional garda recruit or taken from existing personal.
* Is the Unit fully equipped and fully resourced to carry out their duties effectively?
* Sniffer dogs are essential in helping to tackle this issue, do the Unit have one?

She complemented the Gardaí on the recent drugs seizure in Bailieborough.

Superintendent P. Jones replied that the number of personal assigned to the Drugs Unit do fluctuate from time to time, however it is not just the Unit who is expected to tackle this issue, all sections and units work collaboratively to tackle the issue. He provided figures relating to drugs, ‘Possession of Drugs’ is up slightly from this time last year (48 to 52) however ‘Sale or Possession’ has reduced. He expects when the economy opens up it will begin to rise again. In relation to Drug Intimidation, he would encourage the person or public to come forward to make reports, people do not just need to go to the Gardaí, there are other methods of reporting also. They do not have a sniffer dog at present for the Unit. Plans are in place to have Garda Dog Unit for Cavan and Monaghan however this was put on hold over the pandemic. The dogs are already trained so he expects this will be up and running very soon. In the meantime they can have access to a sniffer dog when needed through the National Dog Unit.

Cllr S O’Reilly commented that the Gardaí’s unmarked cars are not very discreet and so therefore are not operating very effectively. She asked if there is a way this could be improved. Superintendent P. Jones informed her that the cars are swapped every now and again, but it is difficult to do this frequently.

E. Ormiston wanted to highlight the importance of dog owners keeping their dogs under control as she is hearing reports of some serious damage to livestock and there are fears it will only increase with people returning to work.

Cllr P Mc Donald enquired how the newly established Garda Community Policing Unit is progressing. Superintendent P. Jones replied that feedback in relation to the Unit has been very positive. They have been very active with young people in particular, Gardaí from the Unit have visited all the local schools.

Superintendent G Englishby said that the Community Policing Unit has also been active in supporting older and vulnerable members of the public. They will once again re-engage with the schools upon their return from the summer break. He also commented that he expects to see a dedicated Dog Unit for the County in the near future. He also reassured members that a new sergeant will be appointed for the Ballyconnell area within the near future.

Cllr. C. Brady said that she has been hearing great reports in relation to the Community Policing Unit, there has been great engagement and involvement with the Gardaí helping out at local events.

**Next Meeting**

3rd December at 3pm. The meeting will take place in the Council Chamber if the pandemic restrictions at the time allow for this.