

**Minutes of Meeting of County Cavan Joint Policing Committee held on-line over Microsoft Teams, Cavan on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 3pm.**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr C. Brady, Cllr John Paul Feeley, Cllr Paddy Mc Donald, Cllr Madeleine Argue, Cllr. Trevor Smith, Cllr. Aiden Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Peter Mc Vitty, Cllr. T.P.O' Reilly, Cllr. Craig Lovett

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

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

**Garda Officers:** Chief Superintendent A. Mc Govern, Superintendent Padraic Jones, Superintendent Gordon Englishby

**Oireachtas Members:** Senator Diarmuid Wilson, Deputy Niamh Smyth, Deputy Pauline Tully, Senator Joe O'Reilly, Deputy Brendan Smith

**Apologies:** Tony Mc Govern, Cllr Clifford Kelly, Cllr Sarah O' Reilly, Cllr. Patricia Walsh

**In Attendance:** Inspector Nial Mc Kiernan (An Garda Síochána), G. Boyle (CCC), Thomas Lyons (Anglo Celt), Damian Mc Carthy (Northern Sound), Inspector Annmarie Ladinar (An Garda Síochána)

Chair Cllr. Feeley opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

He reminded members that it would not be possible to go 'in committee' due to the fact that the meeting is taking place on-line. No discussions of a personal nature were to take place.

## **Minutes & Matters Arising**

The minutes were proposed by Deputy J. O' Reilly and seconded by Cllr. P. Mc Donald.

## **Matters Arising**

Cllr B. Fay said that he had issued his apologies for the last meeting and requested the minutes be amended.

Chair Cllr Feeley wished Garda Padraig Scott a speedy recovery after the recent assault in Blacklion. An Garda Síochána is still carrying out their investigations in relation to this incident and urged members of the public to come forward with any information they may have in relation to the incident.

Chair Cllr Feeley also stated that access to resources and supports for rural Garda Stations needs to be looked at. There are unique policing requirements for the border areas, they need to be provided with greater consideration when resources are being allocated to them at the national level.

Deputy B. Smith concurred with this statement, adding that it is terrible to think that a garda carrying out his duties can be attacked in this manner. He believes there is not enough consideration given when resources are being considered at the national level. He has recently raised the issue with An Taoiseach.

Senator J. O' Reilly concurred also. Ireland is proud to hold the tradition of having an unarmed police force and he would not like to see this change. He endorsed the call for additional supports.

Cllr.P.MC Donald condemned what happened and asked if it's the policy of An Garda Síochána to send gardaí out on patrol in pairs.

Cllr. B. Fay and Cllr. C. Lovett wanted to be associated with the previous comments. Cllr. P. Mc Vitty also agreed with the comments and enquired when a sergeant will be appointed for the Ballyconnell District.

Deputy Niamh Smyth informed members that she has written to the Garda Commissioner D. Harris regarding this issue and requested additional resources for the Border, highlighting its unique needs on the island. The gardaí within the region are very vulnerable and in need of additional resources.

Chief Superintendent O'Reilly thanked everyone for their concern and messages for Garda Scott, they will be passed on to him. He thanked the media for their role also. The investigation is ongoing so he is unable to make any comments in relation to the incident. He said thankfully these incidents do tend to be rare. On occasions Gardaí do need to carry out solo patrols if, for example, they are going from one station to another. However Garda Scott was not responding to an incident at the time. In response to Cllr. Mc Vitty he said that a national recruitment process is underway and he expects a sergeant to be appointed to cover the Ballyconnell area before the next JPC meeting in June. Covid has affected training and slowed up the process. They have been trying to attract people from diverse backgrounds under the recruitment process.

John Magee supported the messages for Garda Scott. He commented that legislation needs to be ramped up to support not only gardaí but also those working in the security sector. He believes that taser guns should be allowed for use by Gardaí .

Deputy N. Smyth enquired into the status of Blacklion and Ballyconnell stations regarding building developments and recruitment. Superintendent Jones said that a full account of the progress regarding the Ballyconnell Station was provided at the previous JPC meeting. He expects a sergeant to be in place within the next 3 to 6 weeks. A cohort of gardaí have been assigned to the Blacklion Station, however it will not be manned on a 24 hour basis.

Chair Cllr. Feeley paid tributes to An Garda Síochána on the good services they are providing. He understands that there is no justification for a full-time station in Blacklion, however the gardaí there could always avail of whatever additional resources which could be made available.

## **Community Engagement Units within Cavan/Monaghan Division - Inspector Annmarie Lardner**

Chief Superintendent Mc Govern thanked members for their support for the Community Engagement Unit and their recent activities with vulnerable adults. He also thanked Age Friendly Ireland and Cavan County Council for their support for their LED Candle Light / Emergency Magnets campaign for the elderly.

Inspector Lardner thanked members for the opportunity to present on the newly established An Garda Síochána's Community Engagement Unit. Her presentation covered the following areas:

- Background information to the setting up of the Community Engagement Unit.
- Services provided by the Unit.
- Recent community engagement initiatives in December 2021, the main aims of the initiatives were as follows:
  - To provide reassurance to vulnerable members of the community.
  - To support people in hard to reach areas through engagement and high visibility.
  - To encourage young people from diverse backgrounds to interact with An Garda Síochána.
- Presentations to Primary and Secondary Schools.

Chair Cllr. Feeley congratulated everyone involved in the work of the CEU.

Senator J.O' Reilly also congratulated everyone, he said how great it is to see how visible the CEU is within the county. Traditionally Gardaí have always had great personal relations with the local communities and it is excellent to see this happening again through the work of the CEU. He believes that patrolling would also help enhance this further and asked if there are any plans to increase the levels of this.

Vanessa Clarke is delighted to be working with the CEU on reactivating Community Alert groups. A networking event for Community Alert Groups will take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> March in the Kilmore Hotel. She encouraged members to attend and let people about it. She concurred with Senator J. O' Reilly comments in relation to the importance of Gardaí Patrols to build up relations with the local community.

Deputy B. Smith endorsed previous comments made in relation to the CEU. He expressed his gratitude in particular to Gardaí Cathal Buggy and Seamus Herron as well as all those involved in the activities of the CEU. It is very important for those vulnerable members of the community to know that the Gardaí are accessible and available.

Deputy N. Smyth also expressed her gratitude and appreciation for the work being undertaken by the CEU in Bailieborough and the engagement with local schools in particular. There are huge issues around mental health and suicide and a collective approach is needed to address these issues. She is delighted to hear about the re-launch of the Community Alert Groups, she wished everyone success with this and will be in attendance herself at the networking event.

Chief Superintendent Mc Govern expressed his gratitude to Inspector Ladinar. Inspector Mc Kiernan, Superintendent Jones and Superintendent Englishby on driving these community initiatives, adding they have all been very well received amongst the community. In relation to Inspector Ladinar's presentation he commented that a lot of the activity referred to took place over the pandemic and they hope to build on this in the future.

Superintendent Englishby thanked Deputy Smyth's for her comments in relation to the CEU's activities in Bailieborough, he said they are very committed and have dedicated Gardaí to engage with vulnerable members of the community.

## **The LA16 – Collision Reporting and Evaluation Procedure. Director of Service, Brendan Jennings, Cavan County Council**

Brendan Jennings reported that the LA16 Statistics unfortunately will need to be updated following a fatality which took place the previous week. He referred to the importance for the need for road safety and said everyone has an obligation on the road. The current statistics are 2 fatalities in 2020 and 5 in 2021. He said the work with the municipal district engineers and the Gardaí is completed on these fatalities and these are fully up to date.

### **Crime Figures for County Cavan – Q. 4 2020 vs Q.4 2021**

Chief Superintendent Mc Govern went through the updated Crime Statistics for Q. 4 2022 versus Q4. 2021. There has been a sharp increase in public order offences (61.3%) which reflects the opening up of society post COVID. Burglaries are up by 62%, and the Gardaí will increase it's crime prevention awareness campaign to tackle this. There was a significant statistical reduction in drug possession for sale or supply. Sexual offences increased more than threefold from 4 in Q4. 2020 to 13 in Q4. in 2021. He said that the divisional protective services unit, lead by Inspector Mc Kiernan is doing great work in encouraging people to come forward to make reports. Drink driving detections has increased but drug driving cases reduced. There was a small increase in the number of weapons possession charges, from 6 to 7, however Chief Superintendent Mc Govern noted that this is significant as as we have one of the highest detection rates compared to the regional average across North Western region.

Chief Superintendent Mc Govern commended colleagues and in particular Superintendent Englishby, in the recent sentencing of three people in their role in an attempted ATM theft in Virginia. The operation put an end to an organised crime gang causing devastation in rural communities on both sides of the border. It was affecting ordinary citizens and the business community through the structural damage that this type of activity causes. He also thanked members of the public for their patience during the operation as it led

to road closures. He warned that criminals who engage in this type of activity need to think about the devastation they bring to their whole community and to their own families when they are caught. He thanked the investigation team for their professionalism and diligence and acknowledged the support of regional and national units.

Chair Cllr. Feeley endorsed the comments made in relation to the recent convictions. He said it is always great when matters are brought up here after they have been dealt with in the courts. The impact this activity has had on every business because of the insurance loading as a result of the destruction that the gang were causing was immense. Many businesses do not want to have ATM machines as a result and hopefully confidence can now be rebuilt.

## **AOB**

Cllr B. Fay asked if there were any updates in relation to the Community CCTV Scheme.

Deputy N. Smyth replied that she has been in recent communication with the Minister over this and was informed that the issue regarding the data controller is still an area of concern and is holding up progression, however she has been assured that they are working to come up with a solution.

Inspector Mc Kiernan said that the Ballyjamesduff Community CCTV Scheme's application is at assessment stage and he is hopeful this will be approved soon to commence and the remaining three applications will follow. The Department of Justice funding has been extended into 2022. Chair Cllr. Feeley said that the scheme has been extremely frustrating. Expecting communities to provide the infrastructure is unacceptable as this should be under the remit on An Garda Síochána.

Deputy Smyth enquired if there was a date set for when the Bailieborough Garda Station to be ready by.

Superintendent Englishby replied that it was an 18 month project however realistically the timeframe is looking like 22 to 24 months.

An Garda Síochána's National Community Day will take place on the 27<sup>th</sup> April.

**Next Meeting**

3<sup>rd</sup> June at 3pm. This will take place in the Council Chamber.