

Draft Minutes of the Joint Policing Committee Meeting held in the new Stable Building, Vandeleur Gardens, Kilrush on Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 10.30am.

In attendance:- Cllr. John Crowe, Chairperson
Cllrs. Michael Begley, Bill Chambers, Mary Howard, Gabriel Keating, Paul Murphy, Joe Killeen, Ian Lynch, Pat McMahon, Alan O'Callaghan, P.J. Ryan, Tony O'Brien

Gardaí:

Supt. John Ryan
Insp. Morgan O'Donoghue
Insp. Ronan McMahon

Officials:

Leonard Cleary, Director of Service,
Karen Fennessy, Administrative Officer

Brian McManus, Clare Youth Service
Patrick McMullen, Clare Youth Service

Apologies:

Cllr. Pat Burke
Cllr. Pat Daly
Cllr. Ann Norton
Deputy Cathal Crowe
Deputy Michael McNamara
Senator Róisín Garvey
Chief Supt. Colm O'Sullivan
Bill Slattery
Mary Mather Leahy, Clare Older People's Council
Madeline McAleer, Public Participation Network

Welcome:

The Chairperson Cllr. J. Crowe welcomed the members to the meeting. He commended the fantastic venue for the meeting.

1. Draft Minutes of JPC meeting held on 16th February 2023:-

Proposed by: Cllr. PJ Ryan
Seconded by: Cllr. A. O'Callaghan and agreed.

2. Matters arising from minutes:

Cllr. M. Begley requested a change to page 3; where it mentions Parteen, this should read Springfield, Clonlara. Karen agreed to amend the minutes.

3. Correspondence

Karen advised that she received an extensive list of questions from Cllr. I. Lynch which she brought to the attention of the Steering Group and a formal reply issued yesterday.

4. Presentation by Clare Youth Service on Youth Diversion Projects

Brian McManus and Patrick McMullen introduced themselves to the members and presented on Youth Diversion Projects.

Brian and Patrick invited questions from the members and they provided the following additional information:-

- Usually the person is referred to the programme by the Juvenile Liaison Officer. They can take children from 1st Year to Leaving Cert. They have to be suitable for the programme and it is all voluntary. They have to be involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. Some will need a lot of after care and they follow up with the person after six months. They also liaise with An Garda Síochána to see if there has been any further incidences. They have met young people who are now working and are doing apprenticeships.
- If there is crime being committed people need to report it and evidence is needed.
- Funding is received from the Department of Justice. Some aspects of the programme are relatively low cost but there are times that they could do with increased funding.
- All of the work carried out has a very targeted element to it. There are two new projects in East Clare.
- Drug projects need universal work. There is more universal youth work now available.
- The Kilrush Project is funded by Tusla. There are a lot of young people outside of the remit of these projects. There is no town youth worker and there is only 4 staff available.
- In Ennis there is a community training centre and there is an element of youth reach involvement in it. There is a need to target formal education services.
- In some instances peer pressure is an issue. They have worked with people in toxic relationships and if someone is genuinely looking to change their behaviour and fit into society they have to make those hard choices and isolate themselves from others.
- In relation to youth clubs, over 20 years ago they had youth justice projects to support youth clubs and youth support workers were available 5 days per week. Now they only have 5 support workers available 3 days per week. It is a difficult situation and they do not have the resources to support youth clubs. There is a need to put emphasis on government funding.
- There are projects in schools around the County and it is important to work closely with schools on completion projects. They have those connections in place as there is a Vice-Principal on the steering group. There are plenty of young people going through situations but are not involved in criminality. Early intervention is key. The connections that the previous generation had is gone

as people do not know their neighbours anymore so if youths step out of line it can be missed.

- In relation to the Kilrush Project restorative practices are introduced and youth-reach have really embraced it. Restorative practices work in both directions.
- There are 102 youth projects around the country and this expertise can be used.
- They have worked with 80 young people. Some were opportunistic offenders and some were serious.

The members thanked Brian and Patrick for the wonderful work that they are carrying out. They commended them on the programme and noted that further support and funding was essential. The members noted that intervention was the key as the youth are the future. Brian recommended that the members visit The Junction and the offices in Carmody Street.

Supt. John Ryan stated that he works closely with the Clare Youth Service and advised that securing funding is a struggle. There has been a growth in population in Sixmilebridge, Shannon and Newmarket-on-Fergus and 5 youth workers is not enough. The population has also grown in Lisdoonvarna.

Cllr. Ian Lynch recommended that this goes before the full Council and to write to the Minister for funding to increase the level of service. Cllr. J. Crowe supported this and the members agreed.

Cllr. J. Crowe thanked Brian and Patrick for their fantastic presentation and offered the support of himself and his colleagues.

5. Update by An Garda Síochána

Supt. John Ryan provided the latest statistics to the JPC comparing figures from January to April 2022 to January to April 2023. He also provided a snapshot of Community Engagement Initiatives.

Cllr. John Crowe thanked Supt. Ryan for his presentation and invited comments from the members.

6. Questions from JPC Members

Comment from Cllr. Tony O'Brien:-

Cllr. O'Brien referred to the emergency contact card which was the brain child of Inspector Michaela Moloney. She put together a list of emergency numbers, particularly for older and isolated people i.e. numbers for the Gardaí, emergency services etc. The cards were printed in the Council and distributed countywide. There have been 1300 distributed to date and there are 1,000 more on order. It was a hugely successful and proactive venture. He stated that Clarecare and the Clare Age Friendly programme were very much involved. The feedback from the older community is that they have found it hugely beneficial. He thanked everyone for their engagement.

Cllr. O'Brien referred to the roll out of the new jurisdictions and stated that Killaloe is in a very vulnerable position. He invited Supt. Ryan to attend the next Municipal District meeting in Scariff.

Question from Cllr. Mary Howard:-

Cllr. Howard referred to the "Go Purple" day and the Clare Local Area Network who advocates for women dealing with domestic violence. She stated that they kept it all going during Covid. She referred to the new set up of the hubs e.g. in Kilrush. Following the retirement of Supt. John Galvin and the fact that there is no Chief Superintendent for Co. Clare she enquired what impact did that have over the last 12 months. Cllr. Howard enquired if there is a plan to improve resources and what is the minimum standard resources required to police West Clare. She also enquired if there will be a knock on effect especially during the Summer months when the population increases.

Supt. John Ryan stated that there is an issue with Garda Recruitment at the moment due to a cultural shift. The Gardaí is no longer a job for life and younger adults are keen to travel and see the world. They are actively seeking Guards to come to Clare however there are no spare resources coming out of Templemore at the moment. He stated that the force can focus on community engagement in the Clare Division and the Crime Superintendent will focus on criminality. He referred to Eoin Daly and Deirdre Scanlon who are doing phenomenal work but when they move on they will need to be replaced. There is a huge difficulty when they are hit by travelling criminals. The early intervention with text alerts is critical.

Question from Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan:-

Cllr. O'Callaghan referred to burglaries in East Clare and he advised that a text message came out very quickly making people aware. He commended the Gardai for the increase in drug detection but advised that there is a huge problem with supply. He enquired what is driving the demand. Demand from all ages is a huge problem for everyone and it drives up criminality.

Cllr. O'Callaghan referred to the property marking system and emphasised the importance of the service especially for farmers who have very expensive machinery.

Supt. John Ryan stated that in relation to crime their aim is to support each other and they work with the Detective Inspectors stationed where the crime is taking place. He stressed the importance of early intervention, communities being alert, early text messages going out and alarms being set if people are out for the day. He stressed the importance of the property marking scheme. The IFA ran a property marking event at the mart last year with little buy in. He stated that 300/400 items were marked at the Willie Clancy Festival last year. He advised that farm machinery is very expensive and recommended tracking devices which immobilises it. It is costly to put in alarms but it is worth investing in. There is a free app in which items can be photographed along with their serial numbers. There are simple things that the public can do to be more proactive.

Supt. Ryan stated that drug demand is the problem. There is a need to educate young people in relation to the long term effects of drug taking. He stated that they have to start looking at it in more depth and look at the education side of it.

Cllr. O'Callaghan referred to works being carried out at Quin Garda Station and enquired if An Garda Síochána are involved in this. Supt. Ryan advised that boundary wall works are taking place and he does not envisage that it will be a Garda Station but would not be sure at this stage.

Question from Cllr. Ian Lynch:-

Karen read out questions submitted by Cllr. Lynch and stated that a reply had been received from An Garda Síochána. Cllr. Lynch referred to domestic violence cases and stated that intervention was working as the cases were high during Covid.

He referred to a number of property thefts and that there is a lot of concern among farmers in relation to changes in the force. He stated that some people do not realise that the Chief Superintendent is not being replaced. He suggested writing to the Commissioner stating that the area is too vast and that people are not happy. He commended the property marking system. He enquired if there will be adequate resources in the Summer months. He commended An Garda Síochána and the Council on the great work being carried out in relation to anti-social behaviour. He enquired about CCTV and requested that Leonard follow up on this in the Kilrush area. He stated that CCTV is critical and understands the issues around GDPR. He stated that he raised concerns at the full Council meeting in relation to speed limit bye laws and advised that it is up to the Council to set them with guidance from An Garda Síochána.

A discussion took place on CCTV. Leonard stated that guidance is awaited from the LGMA as they previously had concern around GDPR and sought clarification. The LGMA have confirmed that the Council can act as a joint data controller with An Garda Síochána. The Council are currently conducting a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to install cameras in Cloughleigh as a pilot scheme. The Council will be asking the Elected Members for support around budget time. This will require staff resources, financial resources, An Garda Síochána resources and capital investment.

Insp. Morgan O'Donoghue stated that he has done a lot of work in this area and in putting together a DPIA which includes how data will be controlled. It is proposed that a pilot be carried out in Cloughleigh but it requires a lot of resources and investment. It also requires special consultants. He stated that An Garda Síochána and Clare County Council have been working closely on it and would like to expand it further. In relation to temporary cameras they will have to change the procedures around the DPIA. He stated that certain data has to be controlled, even for temporary cameras. Cllr. M. Begley stated that Limerick were fined €100,000.

Insp. O'Donoghue stated that there are two types of CCTV schemes; Gardaí and Community. Commissioner's authorisation is needed to own and operate any CCTV scheme. If cameras are being installed over waste disposal bins in public areas then

a DPIA is required as they are impacting on the general public and in breach of GDPR regulations, without the Commissioner's authority. He stated that the DPIA is not finalised. He stated that one was recently completed in Ennis covering 20 cameras and it took three months to complete. It was an 80 page document and an outside agency had to be enlisted. If a court case comes up then this document needs to be produced. This is the level that GDPR is at. He stated that personal rights of the individual supersedes any good will rights of the Council and An Garda Síochána. GDPR has to be taken into consideration. He stated that Limerick was fined €200,000 in relation to a GDPR breach and they got 30 days to remedy it and every day after the fine increases. Care has to be taken before putting these schemes together. It takes a body of work and is very expensive.

Cllr. O'Callaghan enquired if dash cams can be used. Inspector O'Donoghue advised that they can be used in private vehicles.

Cllr. I. Lynch enquired about fly tipping. Leonard stated that funding was received from the Government a number of years ago that can be spent on this.

Question from Cllr. J. Killeen:-

Cllr. Killeen expressed concern about the fish kill on the Inagh River and advised that a huge amount of work was carried out in that area. He stated that it may be of relevance to the Environment Section rather than An Garda Síochána.

Supt. John Ryan stated that it was a matter for the Inland Fisheries. Leonard advised that the Environment Section are working with Inland Fisheries on this and he understands that the Inland Fisheries are investigating the incident.

Question from Cllr. J. Crowe:-

Cllr. J. Crowe referred to problems with anti-social behaviour in Shannon & Sixmilebridge and stated that older people are being targeted. He enquired if anything can be done to try and control the situation.

Supt. John Ryan stated that the situation in Shannon had been on National media the new Garda Operational Model has been agreed by Government and is more embedded in than it was 12 months ago. There is a Superintendent now located in the greater areas being supported by Inspectors.

Question from Cllr. P. McMahon:-

Cllr. McMahon referred to the sale of drugs and particular drugs that are available in the US and drugs that give relief to pain.

Supt. John Ryan referred to controlled drugs in the US but the drugs that have no controls can be detrimental. The law in Ireland is that all drugs are illegal.


Question from Cllr. P.J. Ryan:-

Cllr. Ryan enquired about the situation in Sixmilebridge. Supt. Ryan advised that Inspector Paul Slattery is doing a lot of work on this and they are hoping to see some progress on it shortly.

9. Any other business:

Cllr. Joe Killeen passed on his condolences to the family of Sean Keane from the Chieftans in Ballynacally.

With no other business Cllr. Crowe drew the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for attending.


Chairperson: Cllr. John Crowe

12th September 2023