

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 23RD MARCH, 2015 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT

Councillors Galvin, Keary, Lynch, McMahon, O'Brien, Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Donoghue and Sheahan (K).

Niall Collins, T.D. and Patrick O'Donovan, T.D.

Chief Superintendent David Sheahan and Superintendent Smart.

Pat Dowling, Deputy Chief Executive, Eugene Griffin, Senior Executive Officer, Christy O'Connor, Senior Executive Officer, Dara McGuigan, Administrative Officer Mary Killeen Fitzgerald, Administrative Officer and Tom O'Callaghan, Administrative Officer.

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting has been received from Conn Murray, Chief Executive, Jan O'Sullivan, T.D., Councillors Eddie Ryan and Gerald Mitchell.

At the outset Councillor Lynch extended best wishes to Garda Brian Hanrahan who had been shot and injured while on holiday in New Orleans. He also extended best wishes to Detective Jim Browne who had just retired from the force and welcomed Superintendent Smart back to Limerick.

To mark his election as Chairperson of the Joint Policing Committee, Councillor Lynch made the following address:

"It is a great honour for me to be selected as the Chairperson of the Joint Policing Committee. As a former member of An Garda Síochána I am privileged and proud to take up this position and will lead this committee with passion and understanding. I will build relationships, be inclusive of all, and engage and actively listen to everyone.

I am extremely proud to have served 32 years with An Garda Síochána and I have to agree the phrase often used "once a guard, always a guard" may be true. It is hard to get the guard out of the system at times.

The whole landscape in An Garda Síochána has changed and continues to change, hopefully for the better, we must all continue to embrace change while never losing sight of the objectives.

I hope that this forum brings all the representatives and the various community groups together as "one", by consulting, discussing and making recommendations on matters affecting policing. It is imperative that we identify problems, and raise awareness, and try and find solutions to the many issues impacting or causing

concern for communities. I believe it is time, now, more than ever for the communities to work closely with An Garda Síochána.

Certainly, it is pleasing to hear of the recruitment process in full swing and also of the positive reform, especially putting in place a victim's support office in each division which helps in liaising with victims of crime. All these plans rolled out by the Commissioner recently are great in theory but without resources they are fruitless. My fear is that manpower may be taken from Districts to fill these new positions.

I must compliment An Garda Síochána in Limerick City and County for their continuous brave and honourable service they provide under the leadership of Chief Superintendent Dave Sheahan and now retired Detective Superintendent Jim Browne. In an era of economic, social and political adversity, they have suffered savage cutbacks, even though they are presently severely under resourced, the closures and downgrading of stations around the country and cutbacks significantly illustrate this, but they still give a great service.

However, it is important to note that the Gardai are the police service of the public. Gardai are themselves members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence. They serve and protect the citizens of this city and county.

The Joint Policing Committee will support policing in enhancing community safety, we will implement strategic plans focused on achieving co ordinated actions to prevent crime, especially serious crimes in our communities. It is important to point out that organised crime is a pestilence to communities, a continuous and prominent threat – dealing promptly with same is essential.

As Chairman of this Joint Policing Committee, I hope to advise, arrange and host public meetings throughout the local authority areas concerning matters affecting policing of that area. I look forward to inviting all age groups especially our youth / elderly who have many challenges, obstacles, on topics relevant to an area or to a particular group and offer workshops and presentations sourcing ideas on how best we, as a Joint Policing Committee, can conduct our business in a fair, equal manner going forward.

Nevertheless, our objective together is to ensure that the people of Limerick are secure and safe, while the dark shadows of crime are pursued and the law is enforced appropriately. I will advocate for continuous support and interventions to ensure that people are given the opportunity and responsibility to desist from their activities and play their part in their communities – to allow for decent hard working people to be secure and safe in their daily lives.

It is fundamental that the public acknowledge and participate in their community alert schemes and neighbourhood watch programmes and work in conjunction with An Garda Síochána to ensure communities are safe and sound.

It is vital I highlight the most common public misconception: which is that crime control and law enforcement are the predominate focus of the gardai. This is not the case. The Garda Síochána operates for the people and there are numerous programmes and schemes available such as community involvement and diversion

programmes and many more which are of great benefit.

I advocate for community policing as it is an essential model for building and maintaining a healthy working relationship with the communities. Community policing is a revolutionary style of policing that results in positive outcomes for the police and civilians. Moreover, community policing is a progressive style that consists of co operation with non state bodies and enables ordinary citizens to engage and interact with their police force.

This forum is about building confidence and trust by bringing communities together in a comfortable relaxed setting. Drink and drugs are a huge scourge in our society today, intoxicants can be a root cause of many issues which lead to crime and some mental health issues. This needs to be addressed in a constructive manner using role models.

Finally, I will lead and conduct these meetings in an efficient and effective manner with all your assistance and co operation, we will unite as a team and set out our goals and priorities.

I look forward to working with my fellow committee members and indeed with members of various community groups.

Any suggestions and proposals are welcomed.

Go raibh maith agaibh”

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee held on 27th February, 2015

Circulated, copy of minutes of Joint Policing Committee held on 27th February, 2015.

On the proposal of Councillor O’Dea, seconded by Councillor Keary, the minutes of the Joint Policing Committee held on 27th February, 2015 were confirmed.

Councillor Galvin apologised for being unable to attend the previous meeting of the Joint Policing Committee.

2. To receive Presentation on Garda Age Friendly Policy

The Chief Superintendent outlined details of the Limerick Garda Strategy for Older People that included the following :

- The strategy was based on the actions outlined in the National Garda Strategy for Older People developed in 2010 and the response to issues raised by older people in Limerick through the Age Friendly consultation process.
- The actions that would be carried out under the following four key strategic elements of the strategy:
 1. Develop and maintain effective communication links between the Gardai and older people.

2. Deliver a timely and effective proactive response by the Garda Síochána for older people.
 3. Increase trust and confidence by lessening the fear of crime amongst older people.
 4. Determine and respond to the needs and expectations of older people on an ongoing basis.
- Details of how the strategy would be implemented.

The Joint Policing Committee thanked the Chief Superintendent for his presentation and the following points were made by Joint Policing Committee members on foot of same:

- Consideration should be given to rolling out the strategy to second level schools and community associations through the Council's Administrative area as it was a positive initiative that would help to reassure communities.
- The use of social media and text alerts to communicate with older people was a positive initiative.
- Many applications for the Garda Reserves had not yet been processed by the Public Appointments Commission and it was proposed by Deputy Collins and seconded by Councillor O'Dea that the Minister for Justice should be written to in this regard.
- An area along the centre of the county was up to 25 minutes from the nearest manned Garda Station and consideration should be given to having a fully manned station in this area. The use of monitored CCTV would also assist in this regard.

In response to queries raised by members of the Joint Policing Committee, the Chief Superintendent clarified the following :

- It would be unusual for two patrol cars to be sent to the same incident and there would be merit in the members of the Joint Policing Committee visiting the Garda Control Centre in Henry Street which deals centrally with calls, dispatch and CCTV monitoring.
- Allocation of Garda staffing resources was based on a national model with the perception that Limerick was oversubscribed in this regard. Five new recruits were to commence in Henry Street in April 2015, a new Sergeant was awaited in Askeaton and the return of Superintendent Tom O'Connor had made a significant impact.
- There was a slight decrease in general crime levels in 2014 compared to 2013. Henry Street and Bruff recorded a small increase in burglaries with the theft of diesel from cars a challenge in Limerick. Incidents of assaults and threats had decreased in the current year.
- The importance of crime prevention needed to be emphasised continuously and home and business owners should take reasonable measures to protect their

property.

- There would be benefit in the installation of CCTV at locations in the county but there was a considerable lead in time associated with same. A visit to the control centre would highlight the challenges in this regard.

3. To discuss proposed Joint Policing Committee District Sub Committee Structure

The Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services gave a powerpoint presentation outlining details of a proposed Joint Policing Committee Sub Structure at District level that included the composition of the sub committees, timing of meetings, strategic themes and linkages between the Joint Policing Committee and sub committees.

The Joint Policing Committee members indicated general agreement with the proposed structure and the following issues were discussed in relation to same:

- That the local Superintendent should be given at least 7 days notice of issues to be raised at sub committee level.
- That clarity be provided as to whether notices of motion agreed at sub committee level should be acted on directly or approved by the Joint Policing Committee.
- A view was expressed that all the elected members of the Metropolitan District should not sit on that District's sub committee as the sub committee would be too large. It was agreed that the structure of the Metropolitan District sub committee should be agreed by that District.
- It was agreed that the PPN would be requested to provide representatives on the Joint Policing Committee and its sub committees in accordance with geographic and sectoral requirements, as agreed.

The Chair of the Joint Policing Committee stressed the need to maximise public participation at Joint Policing Committee meetings and proposed that the next meeting be held in East Limerick. The proposal was seconded by Councillor O'Donoghue. A contrary view was expressed and the Deputy Chief Executive noted that the Joint Policing Committee guidelines covered the holding of public meetings and stressed the importance of retaining the status of the Joint Policing Committee and protecting the integrity of the guidelines.

The Chief Superintendent noted the importance of the Joint Policing Committee working at a strategic level in developing a six year plan and also annual work plans.

4. Anti Social Behaviour

Garryowen

It was noted that residents of Reidy Court had engaged with the Community Gardai in relation to anti social behaviour at Garryowen and that residents were recommending that the Reidy Court entrances be blocked or CCTV be provided. It

was also suggested that Garda resources be targeted in this area. The Chief Superintendent noted that Garda patrols were being placed in this area and indicated that crime prevention through environmental design would be the most effective option and suggested that the entrances in question be closed.

Hyde Road Shops

The Chief Superintendent pointed out that there was a constant Garda presence on the Hyde Road and stressed the need for the community to come on board to address issues at this location.

Wandering Horses

The Chief Superintendent noted that more horses had been seized in 2014 than the previous year and that identifying the owners of these horses proved an ongoing issue that hindered the taking of prosecutions in many cases. He stressed that the horse project was a matter for the Council but noted that horse owners would have to come on board for same to succeed. It was noted that the Council now covers the full cost of seizing horses.

5. Date of Next Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Cmhrl. Ó Ceallaigh that future meetings be held in Dooradoyle on Mondays at 10.00 a.m. to accommodate Dáil Deputies but it was also noted that this time might not suit many community representatives. It was agreed that the next meeting be held on a date to be decided by the steering group.

6. Any Other Business

No items were raised under this heading.

Signed: _____
CHAIRPERSON

Date: _____