

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST JOINT POLICING SUB COMMITTEE HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, AND ONLINE, ON WEDNESDAY, 30TH MARCH, 2022, AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor L. Galvin, Cathaoirleach.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Collins, Foley and Sheahan.

APOLOGIES:

Councillors Ruddle, Scanlan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Community Development Directorate (Mr. G. Daly), Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Mr. M. Curran), Senior Executive Engineer (Mr. J. Sheehan), Executive Engineer, Roads (Mr. P. Vallely), Clerical Officer, Newcastle West (Ms. A. Lenihan)

Superintendent A. Magner, Detective Sergeant M. Reidy, Sergeant N. Barry, Sergeant R. Fitzsimons, Y. O’Keeffe, District Clerk.

At the outset, Councillor Galvin welcomed the Superintendent and everyone in attendance to the March Meeting of the Newcastle West Joint Policing Sub Committee.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Online Meeting of the Joint Policing Sub Committee Meeting of the Municipal District of Newcastle West held on 20th October, 2021.

Proposed by: Councillor Foley
Seconded by: Councillor Galvin
And Resolved:

“That, the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read and adopted and signed”.

2. Policing Issues in the District

Superintendent Magner commenced by conveying her apologies for not being able to attend the Meeting in person and acknowledged the importance of the holding of the Joint Policing Committee Meetings in the District. She stated that Inspector A. Lacey had now left the District due to promotion and is a huge loss to the area. She also referred to the retirement of Garda R. O'Donoghue, Abbeyfeale Garda Station and wished him well on his retirement.

Superintendent Magner gave an update on policing issues within the District. She noted the cases, which the Gardaí have dealt with including burglaries, road traffic accidents, criminal damage, theft, public order offences, drink and drug offences. She stated that the incidents of theft has decreased since society has opened up following the lifting of Covid19 restrictions but stated there was a slight increase in theft from shop. She referred to the substantial decrease in trespass offences in the District. Superintendent Magner made reference to serious assaults causing harm and to public order offences in the District.

Superintendent Magner referred to the number of fatal Road Traffic Accidents which she stated have sadly occurred in the District and stated that two fatal Road Traffic Accidents had taken place to date this year. She made reference to the tragic and difficult scenes witnessed by the emergency services and implored all road users to slow down and not to use a mobile phone when driving. She stated that the Gardaí would continue to target speeding on our roads.

Following a query from the Members regarding the provision of a new Garda Station for Newcastle West, the Superintendent confirmed that the draft plans for the new Garda Station have been received and there have been some minor adjustments to the plans. She confirmed that these plans have now been shared with the relevant stakeholders and are to be returned to Headquarters shortly. She stated that the next step is to commence the planning process for the building of the new Garda Station. She also stated that the Garda Commissioner is fully supportive of the building of the new Garda Station for Newcastle West. At this point, Superintendent Magner left the Meeting due to a prior engagement.

Detective Sergeant Reidy referred to serious crime in the District and to organised crime gangs who travel the country to carry out burglaries and organised foreign groups who fly into the country and target a particular area. He noted the increase in burglaries of commercial premises by foreign criminal gangs who target specific stores. He also referred to Operation Thor which is designed to target organized crime gangs involved in burglaries and to the number of cases before the Courts.

He referred to the stealing of metal by criminals which has significantly reduced and where a criminal has been prosecuted and charged before the Courts. He also noted the substantial increase in fraud and economic crimes which he stated is likely to continue, the need to be cautious when disclosing bank details and to delete suspicious text messages. He stated that the Gardaí has identified persons and prosecutions are pending against this type of crime. He also

referred to the work which is ongoing with the banks at national level with a view to reducing this type of crime.

Detective Sergeant Reidy referred to the Drugs Unit in the District. He stated that there are two Members assigned to the Newcastle West District and two Members assigned to the Bruff District and it is expected that a Sergeant will be assigned to the Drugs Unit in due course. He referred to crime investigation and the excellent work which has been carried out in this area. He mentioned a number of significant arrests which had taken place in the District. He also noted a number of convictions secured for sale and supply of drugs and to drug seizures in the District. He referred to the schools programme and stressed the importance of the assistance of members of the public in the reporting of crime.

The Members referred to a number of matters including the availability of drugs within the District, anti-social behaviour, boarding up of derelict properties, use of Council's property marking machines, theft of metal and minor road traffic accidents on local roads. The number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's) issued in the District was raised. The Cathaoirleach referred to a query raised on the use of e-scooters on our streets. In replying, Sergeant Barry stated that discretion is used in this matter and that education in our schools is ongoing. He also stated that this matter is being looked at nationally and legislation is in the Dáil at present on the use of e-scooters for anyone over sixteen years of age.

The Members also referred to illegal dumping and asked if the Gardaí could liaise with the Council to alleviate the issue of illegal dumping. The placing of barriers at the entrances to forestry roads and CCTV cameras was also raised. A brief discussion followed on illegal dumping and following discussion Sergeant Barry stated that business cases could be submitted for CCTV in blackspot areas.

The Members made reference to the increased cost for fertiliser and to the theft of fertiliser within the farming community. In replying, Detective Sergeant Reidy stated that one report of theft of fertiliser has been reported so far in 2022. He stated this fertiliser has since been recovered and a successful conclusion has been reached. Detective Sergeant Reidy urged the farming community to be vigilant in the storing of fertiliser and to store fertiliser closer to the family home where it is secure.

The Members acknowledged the visible presence of the Gardaí on the streets which is of huge importance. It was also noted that Garda T. Cummane has now taken over the role of Community Alert in the District.

The Senior Executive Engineer referred to the recent opening on a permanent basis of the Mass Path, Newcastle West and to any potential issues of anti-social behaviour which may take place as a result. In replying, Sergeant Barry noted that no incidents of anti-social behaviour has been highlighted and there are no concerns to date with regard to this matter.

The Senior Executive Engineer referred to speeding on the Ardnacrohy Road, Newcastle West, which is a 80km/hr speed zone and in replying Sergeant Barry referred to the issue of safety and the securing of a safe location to carry out speed checks on this section of road.

The regular occurrence of damage to cars outside the Carnegie Library, Bishop Street, Newcastle West, was also raised.

The Cathaoirleach and Members complimented the Superintendent and the Gardaí on the overview of policing matters within the District.

The Cathaoirleach and Members wished to welcome Sergeant R. Fitzsimons to the Abbeyfeale Garda Station and also wished to convey best wishes to Detective M. Herlihy, Abbeyfeale Garda Station.

Best wishes was also conveyed by the Cathaoirleach and Members to Garda Roger O'Donoghue, Newcastle West Garda Station on his retirement. It was agreed that the Meetings Administrator would correspond with Detective M. Herlihy and Garda R. O'Donoghue on these matters.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Dated: _____