

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF THE LIMERICK JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE AND ONLINE ON 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2022 AT 10.00 A.M.**

<b>IN THE CHAIR :</b>	Councillor A. Teskey
<b>MEMBERS :</b>	Councillors B. Collins, T. Collopy, S. Hartigan, S. Keary, S. Kiely, M. Murphy, E. O'Brien, J. O'Donoghue, K. Sheahan, C. Sheehan, J. Sheahan and Mayor F. Foley
<b>OIREACHTAS MEMBERS</b>	M. Quinlivan, T.D., N. Collins, T.D., K. O'Donnell, T.D., and R. O'Donoghue, T.D.
<b>PPN SECTORAL NOMINEES :</b>	D. Dunne and Dr. B. Hayes
<b>GARDA NOMINATIONS :</b>	Superintendent (Ms. A. Magner), Superintendent (Mr. K. Ruane) Inspector (Ms. E. Kennedy), Senior Intelligence Analyst (Ms. L. Collins)
<b>OFFICIALS :</b>	Administrative Officer (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Staff Officer (Ms. A. Foley), Staff Officer (Ms. L. Creamer)
<b>APOLOGIES :</b>	Chief Superintendent (Mr. D. Smart), Chief Executive (Mr. P. Daly), Senior Executive Officer (Ms. L. Flannery), Mr. J. Slattery, North Star Family Support Project

**1. MINUTES**

Circulated, copy of Minutes of Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2022 :

Proposed by Councillor O'Donoghue (J)  
Seconded by Councillor Collins (B)

**2. UPDATE FROM CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT**

Superintendent Magner stated that she would give update after overview on Crime Statistics.

**3. OVERVIEW ON CRIME STATISTICS FROM SENIOR CRIME AND POLICING ANALYST**

Ms. L. Collins, Senior Crime and Policing Analyst gave a brief statistical overview of current crime statistics.

It was agreed that a copy of the presentation would be circulated to all Members after the meeting.

Superintendent Magner stated that domestic abuse cases had increased by 23%. This was a very worrying national trend with some cases having tragic results. There are 120 – 150 domestic abuse cases each day in this country and she added that the majority of murders in Ireland had an element of domestic abuse. In the last three years, the busiest period was between 25<sup>th</sup> December and 2<sup>nd</sup> January with the 1st January being the busiest day. She encouraged all victims to reach out for support and asked communities to look out for the most vulnerable in our society.

She stated that when Covid restrictions lifted, that there was a rise in the number of burglaries committed. However, there has been a downward trend in residential burglaries. There has been great success in addressing travelling burglars and added that it is worth noting that most burglaries occur between the hours of 5.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m.

The number of assaults have increased in all areas apart from the Bruff District. In some instances, the injured parties do not make a statement to the police. The biggest number of assaults are domestic assaults and Section 3 assaults are quite serious and dangerous and are mostly fueled by alcohol. She stated that the Gardaí have renewed emphasis on inspection of licensed premises.

The war on drugs continues. Many of the high-level targets are now before the courts; however, the onus on everyone is to be proactive in the use, sale and supply of drugs and to report any suspicious or observed dealings. There is a lot of education now on drugs and this will continue as it is proving to be very successful.

Superintendent Magner stated that there were thirteen deaths this year from fatal road collisions. Others were left with serious life altering injuries. She appealed to drivers to slow down, wear a seat belt, do not drink and drive and do not use a mobile phone while driving. Drink driving offences are up and drug-driving offences are down. Since 1<sup>st</sup> December, there is a new drugs swipe test, which replaces the more cumbersome process that was there to test for drug use. It is similar to the Covid test machine and is more effective and efficient. She said that a member from the Roads Policing Unit could come to the next meeting to update members and discuss road safety and the new drugs testing machine.

In reply to Councillor Keary, Superintendent Magner stated that minor assaults were included in the total number of assaults in the presentation, some of which are domestic assaults. However, the increase is due to the opening up of the nighttime economy. This is reflective of the country as a whole.

The Chairman proposed that the Committee write to the RAI, TII and Road Safety Authority regarding the N21 one and a half mile stretch of road where there has been eighteen fatalities. He would support traffic calming and more lighting and upgrading Rings Pike junction. He stated that he had asked TII to reduce speed limit at Coolmore Shop but to no avail.

Councillor Keary seconded the Chairman's proposal and said he would support any proposals or measures to make this location safe. He had also tried to engage with TII on several occasions. He asked if there was any engagement with the Gardaí in relation to this matter. The minimum speed limit here should be 60 KPH.

Councillor O'Donoghue stated that TII removed signs coming into Croom and Rathkeale, which has resulted in accidents occurring there. He stressed the importance of TII and the Council listening to Councillors from the area who have local knowledge and information.

The Chairman asked the Oireachtas Members present at the meeting to bring the matter of some Government State Agencies refusing to attend local authority meetings and listening to local councilors, to the attention of Government.

More Gardaí need to be recruited. Everything should be done to make An Garda Síochána more attractive as a career and encourage more to join the force. He proposed that the Committee write to the Garda Commissioner asking for a better work life balance for Members of An Garda Síochána in an effort to encourage more people to join the Gardaí.

The Chairman seconded Councillor O'Donoghue's proposal. He stated that the Minister should meet with Limerick JPC and Gardaí to listen to what the Gardaí have to deal with on the ground. He referred specifically to the events that occurred in Newcastlewest on Halloween Night where Members of the force put their lives at risk.

Deputy O'Donoghue suggested that retired Gardaí should be encouraged to come back two or three days a week, as they would have invaluable experience to pass on to new recruits.

Superintendent Magner stated that she would liaise with Pdraig Sutton in the Road Safety Authority to arrange a meeting between Limerick JPC and TII.

She stated that recruitment of Gardaí is an ongoing battle with Garda shortages throughout the country. Rostering of Gardaí is a matter for the Garda Commissioner. The opinions of Garda management and Unions have also been given in relation to work life balance for the Gardaí.

Superintendent Ruane stated that delays occurred throughout the country with court cases, however, there were no delays in Limerick. There are courts in Limerick city, Kilmallock and Newcastle West and there may be an additional one in 2023. Gardaí are constantly engaged by the Court services.

Deputy Quinlivan stated that some sexual abuse cases were taken to Dublin courts when they could have been held in Limerick so going forward asked that, where possible, that all local cases be dealt with by the Limerick courts.

Ms. D. Dunne commended Superintendent Magner for her extended update on crime statistics. She pointed out that domestic violence increased during Covid and is showing a steady increase over the last number of years. Gardaí are doing great work in identifying high-risk cases and added that ADAPT is open 24 / 7 over the Christmas period and appealed to anyone experiencing domestic violence to reach out and seek help. This should be relayed out to local communities along with the telephone number for the 24/7 helpline.

In reply to Councilor K. Sheahan, Superintendent Magner stated that there is a Roads Policing Unit based in Newcastle West and said she would take Councillor Sheahan's comments in relation to dangerous underage driving in rural areas back to the Unit to follow up on.

In reply to Councillor Collopy, Superintendent Magner stated that there are very streamlined procedures for CCTV in place and the use of it in criminal prosecutions. There is work being done in Limerick to ensure that all is kept to legislative requirements adding that CCTV is vitally important in dealing with criminal investigations and prosecutions.

In reply to Councillor K. Sheahan, Superintendent Magner stated that there has been no change to the opening times of Askeaton Garda Station. It is open for one hour each day and the opening hours are up on the door of the station. She indicated the number of callers to the Garda Station did not warrant a permanent presence in the office for more than one hour each day and there was a mobile phone number that members of the public can ring if they want to speak to a member of an Garda Síochána. She stated that it was more beneficial to have the Gardaí out in the community instead of being confined to the office.

#### **4. PRESENTATION ON THE POLICING PLAN 2023 BY SUPERINTENDENT KIERAN RUANE**

Superintendent Ruane gave presentation on The Policing Plan 2023. He outlined how the Policing Plan was based on the following five pillars and he proceeded to give an overview of the actions relating to each pillar:

- Community;
- Tackling Crime and Preventative Policing;
- Victims and the vulnerable;
- Protecting the security of the Irish State;
- Sustainable Change and Innovation.

The Members of the JPC thanked Supt Ruane for his presentation to the JPC Meeting.

The Chairman stated that there was a better presence of Gardaí in the community fifteen years ago than there is now. True engagement at community level is needed to address the many criminal issues especially in relation to drugs.

Members stated that drugs and intimidation is becoming more prevalent in society. Law-abiding citizens see criminals with a large number of convictions avoiding prison and citizens are losing confidence in the judicial system. People who have never worked are driving expensive cars and lead lifestyles outside their means, which is very frustrating to the ordinary members of the public.

In reply, Superintendent Magner stated that unfortunately, drugs in communities is an ongoing problem. Society has changed a lot over the years and the problem has to be dealt with now. A multi-agency approach is required to address the drugs issue and added that there was a multi-agency event taking place during the week in Limerick in an effort to address the problem. Community and voluntary groups do wonderful work in the community. She said the Gardaí will continue to work hard but times have changed and policing has to change also and adapt. In addition, the level of work has changed significantly. She confirmed that all calls to An Garda Síochána are logged throughout the division. She added that significant supports are put into the Rathkeale area at a particular time of year to mitigate issues and stated that no other town in Ireland gets the same resources.

The Chairman stated that phone calls went unanswered in Newcastle West and Rathkeale Garda Stations last week and the public are not satisfied with the service. He stated that there is a problem in the district with underage drivers and with children as young as 6/7 years stopping traffic in Rathkeale town.

R. O'Donoghue, T.D., pointed out that there is a problem with dogs killing sheep on farms and this needs to be addressed urgently. He said that it needs to be relayed to the public that they have to ring 999 and not individual Garda Stations if they wish to report anything.

Superintendent Magner stated that a new system is being piloted in Limerick, which will be rolled out nationally in due course. Members of the public will ring 999 and all calls will be logged, tracked and prioritized. Problems with the new system need to be ironed out before rolling out to the rest of the country. It is hoped to roll it out in the first quarter of 2023.

In reply to Councillor Collopy, it was confirmed that Alan Dooley, Head of Information Systems would be invited to the next meeting to give an update on CCTV.

## **5. BRIEF OVERVIEW ON OPERATION CROI BY SUPERINTENDENT AILEEN MAGNER**

Superintendent Magner gave a brief overview on Operation Croí.

She stated that this operation targets begging, theft, scooter use and anti-social behaviour in the city. 420 cases were dealt with over an eleven-week period. She stated that they work very closely with other state agencies in addressing these crimes. There are a lot of addiction and mental health issues amongst offenders and the Gardaí engage with the relevant services to help the individuals concerned.

## **6. BRIEF OVERVIEW ON OPERATION ROTHAR BY SUPERINTENDENT AILEEN MAGNER**

Superintendent Magner gave a brief overview on Operation Rothar.

She stated that this was a targeted approach in dealing with the theft of bicycles. She stated that over fifty bicycles were stolen around University of Limerick between September and November this year. The operation concentrated in the UL area and concluded on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2022. It was a very successful operation and those responsible were identified and have since been taken to court. Since 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 only four bikes have been stolen.

In reply to Councillor C. Sheehan, Superintendent Magner stated that she would get the figures for the number of bikes returned to owners and let Councillor Sheehan know. She added that property marking is invaluable and people should invest in an expensive bike lock for their bikes. It was important to get the message across to members of the public of the importance of property marking and good bike locks for bicycles.

She informed Councillor Collopy that scooters are now classed as mechanically propelled vehicles and the Department of Transport will be issuing legislation shortly in relation to same.

## **7. TO APPROVE DATES FOR 2023 MEETINGS**

It was proposed by Councillor Keary, seconded by Councillor C. Sheehan and unanimously agreed to approve the following dates for 2023 Meetings:

10.00 a.m., Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2023

10.00 a.m., Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2023

10.00 a.m., Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2023

10.00 a.m., Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2023

The Chairman proposed that former Chief Superintendent, Gerard Roche, be written to expressing the Committee's congratulations and best wishes for every success in his new post as Chief Superintendent in Galway and to thank him for all his efforts and hard work while in Limerick and for his contribution to the Limerick Joint Policing Committee. This was unanimously agreed.

The Chairman stated that he had to leave the meeting due to another commitment and took the opportunity to wish everybody a happy Christmas.

The Chairman then left the Meeting and Councillor S. Keary took the Chair.

Councillor Keary proposed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the family of the late Private Seán Rooney, RIP, on the tragic and untimely death of their son while on a UN peacekeeping mission in the Lebanon.

He also proposed that best wishes for a speedy recovery be extended to Trooper Shane Kearney who was injured while on a UN peacekeeping mission in the Lebanon and to offer him the Committee's condolences on the death of his colleague, Private Seán Rooney, RIP.

## **8. CORRESPONDENCE**

Submitted letter of reply from the Minister for Justice in relation to the Committee's correspondence regarding the Local Community Safety Partnership model. Noted.

## **9. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SEAN HARTIGAN**

***"I will ask at the next Meeting, under what circumstances is garda vetting required for membership of local community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations?"***

### **RESPONSE:**

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 is an act to make provision for the protection of children and vulnerable persons. If someone is doing relevant work/activities with an organisation or group which has contact with children or vulnerable persons, they can apply for Garda vetting through the relevant organisation, but it has to be relevant work and they must have vetting

prior to commencing work. An Garda Síochána provide the vetting service, we do not comment on suitability of members. Membership of organisations or groups is not a vetting/AGS function, as membership/hiring is up to the group or organisation itself as part of their HR function.

#### **10. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SEAN HARTIGAN**

***“I will ask at the next meeting how many fines for illegal parking were issued by the Gardaí in the Limerick Metropolitan area from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to the present date including fines issued in Milford Grange, Oaklawns, College Court and Elm Park”***

#### **RESPONSE :**

Unfortunately, that KPI PULSE search for Fixed Charge Notices is not optimised for searching specific locations for offences and is prioritised towards Districts where the offence occurred. We can quantify the types of parking offences in both LCN and LCS CEFA's which would effectively be the Limerick metropolitan area for 2022 YTD, with fines handed out by Roads Policing Unit and all other units.

2022 Parking FCN Total 2728 issued in combined area of Henry Street and Roxboro Road.

While structured Garda parking enforcement is utilised for major events, match fixtures or concerts, parking is always challenging to police particularly in residential areas. Enforcement in residential areas typically stems from reports from the public and with just under 4,000kms of roads in County Limerick of all categories from motorways to local rural roads, the Roads Policing unit is a Divisional resource, which is deployed accordingly. With 13 lives lost on Limerick's roads this year so far, RPU is heavily involved on pillar lifesaver enforcement over the Christmas period. Parking offences are being dealt as they arise but RPU can only provide a snap shot level of enforcement.

There has been an increase with the installation of double yellow lines in residential areas of Limerick City, these road markings are a relatively cost-effective measure for improving road safety and for informing and guiding drivers. In areas where these road markings are not effective, it could be considered that Limerick City and County Council to monitor parking in the areas by enforcement with traffic wardens whilst on their daily patrols. Should road marking be ineffective, physical parking barriers could offer long-term solutions.

Members stated that this is a huge issue throughout the city and there should be increased emphasis on enforcement by the Council and the Gardaí. They asked that the budget be looked at next year for the provision of additional traffic wardens.

#### **11. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MAURICE QUINLIVAN, T.D. :**

***“I will ask at the next meeting for an update regarding what actions are being taken to address the misuse of scrambler motorbikes in Limerick, especially in the City Centre, urban estates and public green areas across both Limerick City and County”.***

#### **RESPONSE:**

##### **Positive Scrambler Garda Actions**

Limerick Gardaí have received a number of complaints in respect of the misuse of scrambler We can appreciate that is behaviour while not only illegal (Insurance etc.) is particularly intimidating (wearing balaclavas) and frustrating for commuters, residents and visitors to the city.

The prosecutions for such offences rely solely on interceptions while driving.

The interception of offenders is difficult given the dangers of a pursuit to the individuals involved (no helmets etc.) in heavy traffic. In terms of finding a solution to this problem, Gardaí have engaged with communities in the city and led out educational work. Members of the public or local representatives are encouraged to report incidents of this nature to the relevant Community Engagement Functional Area.

#### 2022 RSA Leading Lights in Road Safety Awards Winner Education Primary – Moyross Youth Academy, Limerick

The project aimed to raise awareness of the dangers and risks associated with the misuse of scrambler bikes and quads in urban areas. During Covid-19, the area had seen an increase in this activity with very limited opportunities to address the issue with the then ongoing restrictions. The idea of a road safety awareness documentary scrambler edition evolved from group discussions with interested parties including Limerick City and County Council, An Garda Síochána, National Ambulance Service, TÚS and others.

The project in May 2021 involved the launch of a road safety campaign in the community with the staging of a road crash involving a scrambler and a car, along with the emergency response. This event was witnessed by 6th class students from Corpus Christi School. It was followed by a discussion on road safety between the students, Advanced Paramedic Keith Mullane, and Sergeant Tony Miniter from Limerick Roads Policing Unit. This was then followed by a launch of the new documentary on the issue, which was shown locally and is available on Facebook, titled 'Keeping It On Track' developed with input from An Garda Síochána.

#### New Legislation

While scramblers are MPV's and under the Road Traffic Act for offences, it is challenging to deal with scramblers when they are in private property. The Road Traffic and Roads Bill 2021 is currently before the Dáil, in it there are new powers of seizure for Gardaí where a vehicle has been, or is being, driven or used (or is likely to be driven or used) in any place in which it is, or is likely to be, dangerous to any persons present (including the driver or user) or persons who might reasonably be expected to be present may seize the vehicle.

It will also allow a member of the Garda Síochána, for the purposes of exercising a power under the Act to enter without warrant (if need be by use of reasonable force) any place including the curtilage of a dwelling but not the dwelling to demand names and address and to seize the vehicle (scrambler).

#### Operation Meirle and Operation Croi

"Operation Meirle" and "Operation Croi" have been established to target anti-social behaviour in the city centre area of Limerick City, which includes the targeting of persons engaging in the illegal use and driving of scrambler motorbikes. Further to this, the Roads Policing and Community Policing Units through patrolling and engagement in communities are targeting young person's engaging in this behaviour.

On the educational and community engagement front, Gardaí are involved in a number of initiatives, which highlight the offences committed, and the dangers of illegal scrambler use to young people in our communities. This includes the Garda Schools Programme and initiatives in Garda Youth Division Projects.

One of these initiatives relates to a Motocross Club, which was established and is currently running in conjunction with the Garda Youth Diversion Project at the Moyross Youth Academy. Further to this, a specific "Project Off Road" initiative has been run in conjunction with the Garda/HSE Life Saver Project and the Garda Youth Diversion Project, which resulted in an award this week at the R.S.A. Leading Lights

Awards in Dublin. This initiative was targeted at Primary School children who were present during a recreation of a serious road traffic collision involving a scrambler and a car.

The purpose of these educational initiatives are to engage with young persons and their families in the community to ensure that both the young person understands and abides by road traffic legislation; and also more importantly to ensure their safety and that of the communities they reside in.

## **12. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MAURICE QUINLIVAN, T.D.**

***“I will ask at the next meeting for an update on the establishment of the proposed multi agency mental health de-escalation unit, outlining what training has commenced and when the proposed unit is due to be operational”.***

### **RESPONSE:**

Superintendent Andrew Lacey is the joint implementation team leader for The CAST (Community Access Support Teams) pilot in Limerick for AGS. He is unable to be present today because of a milestone meeting in respect of the project taking place within the partner agencies. The joint steering group (AGS & HSE) are seeking sign off today (Friday) for the Project Initiation Document, which defines the project scope, management, and overall success criteria for the project. Following this meeting, it is hoped all the identified posts will be advertised and implementation work will commence between An Garda Síochána Limerick Division and the HSE mid-west. Training will be a pivotal driver at the outside of the pilot with 20-25% of the Limerick Garda Division to undergo international standard training in the area of crisis intervention and mental health first aid.

The purpose of the project is to create a specialist uniform unit who will work conjointly with health professionals to provide a rapid and integrated 24/7 response to persons with mental health issues.

This is a recommendation of the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (Commission on the Future of Policing 2018). This recommendation is overseen by the Department of the Taoiseach and reports periodically to the IGPR (Implementation Group on Policing Reform).

The commencement date of training and the subsequent pilot is dependent on the recruitment and appointment for the key posts. Significant research and collaboration has taken place with other jurisdictions and academic partners over the last three years. While the process is time consuming the joint steering group are committed to designing and implementing the based model for Limerick that will be independently evaluated fully over the pilot before moving to wider implementation in Ireland.

In January 2023 the steering group will be delivering briefings and engaging with agencies and stakeholders relevant to the project. If the Chair is amenable to same, a presentation can be given to the JPC at the next meeting where a Q&A will follow. It is hoped that agreed realistic timelines for implementation would be available at that juncture.

The pilot has received media coverage in recent weeks following the publication of a research report which formed part of a Policing Authority Meeting with the Garda Commissioner in November.

<https://www.policingauthority.ie/en/news/policing-authority-publishes-report-on-roundtable-symposium-on-co-response-models-to-crisis-mental-health-events>

## **13. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SEAN HARTIGAN**



***“I will move at the next meeting that statistics on fines issued for illegal parking are reported on at all meetings of the Joint Policing Committee”.***

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Sean Hartigan, seconded by Councillor Sarah Kiely and unanimously agreed.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor S. Keary thanked members for their engagement and help throughout the year and wished everybody a happy and peaceful Christmas.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor Adam Teskey, Chairman

Date : \_\_\_\_\_