

County Laois Joint Policing Committee Public Meeting
Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 13th March 2023 at 3.30 pm in County
Hall



Present: Cllr Aisling Moran, Chairperson
Cllr Padraig Fleming; Laois County Council
Cllr Paddy Bracken, Laois County Council
Cllr Seamus McDonald, Laois County Council
Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald, Laois County Council
Cllr James Kelly, Laois County Council
Cllr PJ Kelly, Laois County Council
Cllr John King, Laois County Council
Cllr Ben Brennan, Laois County Council
Cllr Conor Bergin, Laois County Council
Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, Laois County Council
Mr John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Laois County Council
Chief Superintendent John Scanlon, An Garda Síochána (AGS)
Superintendent Eamon Curley, AGS
Inspector Joe Culliton, AGS
Sgt Graham Kavanagh, AGS
Sgt Jason Hughes, AGS
Sgt Anita Scully, AGS
Sgt Rowan Casey, AGS
Deputy Brian Stanley, T.D.
Mr Bobby Delaney, PPN Representative
Mr Thomas Jones, PPN Representative
Mr Conor O'Leary, Muintir na Tire
Mr Brendan Birney, IFA
Ms Antoinette Kinsella, Midlands Drug & Alcohol Taskforce

Apologies: Deputy Sean Fleming TD
Deputy Charles Flanagan TC
Cllr Thomasina Connell, Laois County Council
Cllr Paschal McEvoy, Laois County Council
Ms. Sara Rasool, PPN Representative

In attendance: Mr Donal Brennan Director of Service, Laois County Council
Ms Pamela Tynan, A/Senior Executive Officer, Laois County Council
Ms. Anne Marie Kirrane, A/Administrative Officer, Laois County Council
Ms Rose Doolin, Assistant Staff Officer, Laois County Council

Cllr Aisling Moran welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Adoption of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr Paddy Bracken and seconded by Cllr. John King the Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st November 2022 were adopted.

Matters Arising

Cllr Paddy Bracken raised the matter of masking of cameras for Mountmellick Community CCTV Scheme. Chief Superintendent John Scanlon stated that Data Control is a matter for the Data Protection Commissioner but that some issues may be clarified in the new Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Bill 2022. Deputy Brian Stanley TD requested that the JPC write to Minister Eamon Ryan requesting that the CCTV Illegal Dumping Statutory Instrument be enacted so that CCTV can be placed in areas where illegal dumping is occurring. This was seconded by Cllr Aisling Moran.

Mr Donal Brennan DOS stated that CCTV can only record in public places and must not impinge on private property. Superintendent Eamon Curley stated that while there are some restrictions with masking, the cameras in Mountmellick are useful.

Mr Tom Jones stated that illegal parking is still occurring in Portarlinton. Inspector Joe Culliton advised that this situation is being monitored and being dealt with as it arises.

Report from An Garda Síochána

Chief Superintendent John Scanlon gave an update on Crime and Traffic Statistics:

- Property Crime has risen slightly with respect to theft from shops. This is not exclusively due to inflation where food is taken, as alcohol and high value items are also being taken. It was noted that organised criminal groups are targeting rural shops and taking high value items with a commercial value.
- Crimes against the person is on the increase again, due in particular to the night-time economy over the Christmas period.
- Criminal Damage and Public Order offences figures have improved compared to the same period in 2019.
- Drugs and Weapons offences. There is a serious issue with drugs which are on the increase.
- Traffic offences have risen slightly in the last quarter in particular traffic collisions causing material damage only.
- Domestic - sometimes gardaí are called to an incident but offences are not recorded. .

Chief Superintendent John Scanlon advised that the contract for works on the Portlaoise Garda Station has commenced.

Matters that were raised at the meeting:

- Deer's crossing at the N77 near Abbeyleix, Ballacolla and in Ballybrittas. An Garda Síochána are aware of the specific issue on the N77 and are working with landowners on culling.

- Rally driving in the Slieve Blooms - Superintendent Eamon Curley advised that the Gardaí are aware of the issue and people are being given a fair warning that An Garda Síochána will be patrolling the area.
- Scams against the elderly and vulnerable people by individuals pretending to be members of An Garda Síochána in Laois - AGS reiterated that members of the public should not invite unknown persons into their house and report any suspicious activity.

Chief Superintendent John Scanlon advised that this JPC will be his last JPC meeting after 11 years as he is retiring from An Garda Síochána. He said policing has changed a lot over that period for the better. He stated that Laois is a very good place to live with law abiding decent people. He thanked the members of the JPC. He thanked the Chief Executive John Mulholland, Mr Donal Brennan, Director of Services and all the staff that work to ensure the smooth running of the JPC meetings. Members of the JPC thanked the Chief Superintendent for all his work and assistance throughout the years. He and his family were wished the very best in his retirement. A presentation was made to Superintendent John Scanlon on behalf of the members on his retirement.

Annual Report 2022

Ms Pamela Tynan advised members that the JPC Annual Report for 2022 was circulated in advance of the meeting for their attention. The matter was noted, and no issues were raised on foot of same.

JPC Strategy Implementation Plan – Update on Actions

Ms Pamela Tynan advised members that the JPC Strategy Implementation Plan was circulated to members in advance of the meeting for their attention. The update was noted.

AOB

Mr Bobby Delaney raised the issue of slow moving vehicles on the N80 between Portlaoise and Mountmellick. He advised that slow moving vehicles are unable to pull in on this section of road to allow traffic to pass. Mr. Delaney was advised that the matter would be investigated.

Mr Tom Jones stated that hedges and fences are being damaged near the Rock of Dunamais as a result of people hunting for rabbits with lurchers. An Garda Síochána are aware of this issue.

Time and Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 12 June 2023 at 3.30 pm.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Chair of the Joint Policing Committee

Dated: _____