

**County Laois Joint Policing Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 10.00am in County Hall**

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- Present:**
- Cllr James Kelly, Laois County Council
  - Cllr Paddy Bracken, Laois County Council
  - Cllr Seamus McDonald, Laois County Council
  - Cllr Ben Brennan, Laois County Council
  - Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald, Laois County Council
  - Cllr PJ Kelly, Laois County Council
  - Mr John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Laois County Council
  - Mr Donal Brennan Director of Service, Laois County Council
  - Chief Superintendent John Scanlon, An Garda Síochána (AGS)
  - Superintendent John Lawless, AGS
  - Inspector Joe Culliton, AGS
  - Sergeant Graham Kavanagh, Crime Prevention Officer, AGS
  - Mr Conor O'Leary, Muintir na Tire
  - Mr Bobby Delaney, PPN Representative
  - Mr Thomas Jones, PPN Representative
  - Mr Brendan Birney, IFA
- On-Line:**
- Deputy Brian Stanley TD
  - Cathaoirleach Cllr Thomasina Connell, Laois County Council
  - Cllr John King, Laois County Council
  - Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, Laois County Council
  - Cllr Conor Bergin, Laois County Council
  - Ms Antoinette Kinsella, Co-Ordinator Midlands Drug and Alcohol Taskforce
- Apologies:**
- Deputy Sean Fleming TD
  - Deputy Charles Flanagan TD
  - Cllr Aisling Moran, Chairperson
  - Cllr Padraig Fleming (Vice Chairperson), Laois County Council
  - Cllr Paschal McEvoy, Laois County Council
  - Ms Sara Rasool, PPN Representative
- In attendance:**
- Ms Pamela Tynan, A/Senior Executive Officer, Laois County Council
  - Ms. Anne Marie Kirrane, A/Administrative Officer, Laois County Council
  - Ms Suzanne O'Connor, A/Senior Staff Officer, Laois County Council

With the apologies of the Chair and Vice Chair conveyed, Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/SEO referenced the Standing Orders pertaining to the JPC advising members that in the absence of both the Chair/Vice Chair that “the Chairperson of the committee shall be a member of the local authority concerned, nominated to membership of the committee as a member of the local authority”. As a result, it was unanimously agreed by the members present that Cllr. James Kelly would chair the meeting.

Cllr. James Kelly opened the meeting welcoming all members present, both in person and on-line.

### **Adoption of Minutes**

On the proposal of Cllr Ben Brennan and seconded by Cllr. John King the minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 were adopted.

### **Matters Arising**

None.

### **Correspondence**

All correspondence circulated in advance of the meeting were taken as read, with no comments forthcoming.

### **Report from An Garda Síochána**

Chief Superintendent John Scanlon directed members to the on-screen presentation guiding them through various AGS statistics. Chief Superintendent Scanlon noted that incidents of property crime have increased significantly from 166 in Q2 2021 to 340 in Q2 2022, in particular theft from shops (up from 38 in Q2 2021 to 157 in Q2 2022). Increases are attributed the re-opening of society after COVID-19.

In addition to the report, Chief Superintendent Scanlon noted:

- Progress is being made in Portlaoise Garda Station with works also due to commence in Stradbally, Abbeyleix and Borris-in-Ossory. Works will commence in Durrow, Portarlinton and Mountmellick in 2023. Currently two extra Gardai are using office space in Borris-in-Ossory. Branch offices in Mountrath, Abbeyleix, Durrow and Clonaslee are being used for administration purposes by civilian staff.
- It has been agreed after interaction with Carlow Gardai, that they will undertake initial contact for incidents on the boundary line ,with Laois gardai to take over any wider investigations. A further meeting with Carlow Gardai is scheduled to take place.
- Electric Picnic went well, being the largest music event in the country at present. One serious assault was recorded in addition to a number of drug offences and traffic difficulties. It was noted that in excess of 20,000 persons arrived on site on Thursday prior to the event. Planning for 2023 event is already underway, with attendance to remain unchanged for 2023.
- The National Ploughing Championships is the next big event on the calendar, being the biggest Agricultural show in Europe, having a very positive impact on the local economy. Chief Superintendent Scanlon commended the local communities of Stradbally and Ratheniska for their tolerance of such events and thanked the local GAA clubs for assisting with parking.

Chief Superintendent Scanlon requested that going forward, all questions be submitted to An Garda Síochána in advance of meetings, so that more accurate answers and information can be conveyed at meetings. This proposal was welcomed by members.

The members thanked Chief Superintendent Scanlon for his report, with members noting the success of Electric Picnic 2022 and complimenting members of An Garda Síochána on work undertaken during the event. Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald also complimented Martley's Buses on the very successful shuttle service offered to concert goers, which eased local traffic significantly. Members proceeded to pose the additional comments/questions to AGS:

- Clarification was sought on National Ploughing traffic plan for the Mountmellick area with AGS noting that all ploughing traffic will be directed via the Bay Road.
- New Sergeant is to commence in Rathdowney on 20<sup>th</sup> September.
- Drug driving now exceeds drink driving.
- There are over 100 text alert groups in Laois with a review currently being undertaken. It is hoped that the government may assist groups and assist with associated costs.
- Laois/Offaly Community Policing framework will bring about dynamic changes to get people out and engaged in their communities.

#### **Consideration of Draft JPC Strategic Plan**

Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/SEO presented the draft JPC Strategic Plan 2022-2027 to members for consideration, noting that the plan was prepared following consultation with JPC members and local/national agencies and organisations. Laois Draft Joint Policing Strategy 2022 - 2027 was considered by members of the Laois Joint Policing Committee at a meeting on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 and Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2022. The Draft Strategy was placed on public consultation. Details in relation to the public consultation process were published in the Leinster Express dated 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2022, on Laois County Council's website, on LCC social media channels, and on Laois County Council's consultation website <https://consult.laois.ie/>. The public consultation process invited views and comments from interested parties up to and including Tuesday 5th July, 2022. There were no comments, views or submissions received from any interest party by the deadline date.

Ms. Tynan advised that an Annual Implementation Plan will now be devised, and an Annual Report presented to the Dept of Justice in respect of same.

Cllr. James Kelly welcomed the Draft Strategic Plan and called on members present to ratify same; it being proposed by Cllr. Paddy Bracken and seconded by Cathlaoireach Cllr. Thomasina Connell.

#### **Any Other Business**

Mr. Pamela Tynan, A/SEO updated members on the CCTV scheme, advising the Mountmellick CCTV is live with any issues being dealt with, as they arise. Woodenbridge CCTV is progressing with a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA) being prepared. It is hoped to progress Donaghmore in the coming weeks.

Mr. Bobby Delaney, Laois PPN expressed concerns re low hanging branches on the Mountmellick Road and asked whose responsibility was it to maintain same. Mr. Donal Brennan, DOS advised that

the responsibility falls to the landowner but concerns can be expressed to the local area office, who in turn can issue notice to said landowner.

**Date & Time of next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on **21<sup>st</sup> November in the Council Chamber at 3.30pm**. This will be the annual public meeting of the JPC.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Joint Policing Committee

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_