

County Laois Joint Policing Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Held on Monday 13 June 2022 at 2.30 pm in County Hall



- Present:** Cllr Aisling Moran, Chairperson
Chief Superintendent John Scanlon, An Garda Síochána
Mr Donal Brennan Director of Service, Laois County Council
Deputy Brian Stanley TD, Chair Public Accounts Committee
Cllr John King, Laois County Council
Cllr Padraig Fleming (Vice Chairperson), 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 Ben Brennan, Laois County Council
Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, Laois County Council
Cllr PJ Kelly, Laois County Council
Mr Bobby Delaney, PPN Representative
Mr Brendan Birney, IFA
Mr Thomas Jones, PPN Representative
Cllr Paschal McEvoy, Laois County Council
Cllr Conor Bergin, Laois County Council
Deputy Sean Fleming TD, Minister of State Department of Finance
- On-Line:** Cllr Thomasina Connell, Laois County Council
Ms Antoinette Kinsella, Co-Ordinator Midlands Drug and Alcohol Taskforce
- Apologies:** Mr Conor O'Leary, Muintir na Tire
Deputy Charles Flanagan TD
Ms Sara Rasool, PPN Representative
Mr John Mulholland, CE, Laois County Council
Superintendent John Lawless, AGS
Sergeant Graham Kavanagh, Crime Prevention Officer, AGS
- In attendance:** Inspector Joe Culliton, AGS
Ms Carmel McNicholl, Senior Executive Officer, Laois County Council,
Ms Suzanne O'Connor, A/Senior Staff Officer, Laois County Council,
Ms Rose Doolin, Assistant Staff Officer Laois County Council,

Cllr Aisling Moran, Chairperson welcomed members to the meeting.

Adoption of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr John King and seconded by Deputy Brian Stanley the minutes of the 14th March 2022 were adopted.

Matters Arising

None.

Report from An Garda Síochána

Chief Superintendent John Scanlon informed the meeting that there are 7 Gardaí and 6 Sergeants in Laois. The Sergeants have been deployed to Mountrath, Rathowney, Abbeyleix and Portarlinton. He also notified members of the promotion of a number of Inspectors. There are now 10 Inspectors in Laois/Offaly with more anticipated. Chief Superintendent Scanlon also informed the meeting that a start has been made on Enabling Works in the Garda Station which has now gone out for tender, and that Mountmellick CCTV is now operational.

During the course of an on-screen presentation the following points of interest were noted:

- Property Crime - has increased as people are now returning to their workplace on a full time basis with houses being left unoccupied for long periods. There has been a large increase in theft from shops, mostly involving alcohol.
- Crimes against the Person – down overall while minor assaults have increased. This is as a result of the economy returning to normal after Covid.
- Criminal Damage and Public Order – this has increased, in particular Drunken Disorder Offences and Public Order Offences, again a post covid factor. It should be noted that the current figures are similar to 2019.
- Drugs & Weapons Offences - no cultivation or manufacture of drugs detected. While the statistics for possession of drugs for sale and supply are down this does not reflect the true quantity of drugs seized, with large amounts seized from significant dealers.
- Traffic – Driving while intoxicated has increased as well as traffic collisions causing material damage. There is also a disturbing trend of people driving while intoxicated with drugs.
- Domestic – While the law does not recognise domestic abuse as a specific offence this is covered by assaults, Breach of Orders, Public Order Offences. This matter is being taken very seriously by An Garda Síochána. After each call out to a domestic dispute a follow up call is being made to ensure that there are no vulnerabilities and that people can talk freely without being influenced by another person. AGS has sophisticated risk assessment tools and call back procedures in place.

The members thanked Chief Superintendent Scanlon for his report. The additional staff being deployed to Laois and increased garda visibility was welcomed with a request also for more Gardaí foot patrols, and that notice be put up with respect to opening times of each garda station.

- Sean Fleming TD welcomed the new major development of the Divisional AGS HQ in Portlaoise, advising members that the Government have agreed to cover 70% of increased construction materials costs as a result of increased inflationary pressures.

- The issue of boy racers in Rathdowney was raised and this will be investigated.
- Cllr Conor Bergin expressed condolences to the family of Garda Adrian Kelly and stated that he would be sadly missed by the community he served. Cllr. Bergin also noted the success of the recent Gardai Community Engagement days at which the Crime Prevention Officer, Graham Kavanagh was very visible
- Mr Bobby Delaney thanked Sergeant Michael O'Connell and his staff for all the great work they have done and continue to do in Mountmellick.
- Cllr. James Kelly welcomed the retrofit of Mountrath Garda Station and referenced the increase of crime and the use of drones in said crimes. Chief Super John Scanlon responded that there is no evidence of drone usage in Laois burglaries.
- The issue of Carlow Gardaí attending incidents in the Killeshin/Crettyard area of Laois was raised. The Chief Superintendent stated that he has spoken with the Chief Superintendent in Carlow on this issue and he will liaise with Cllr. Ben Brennan directly.
- Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley noted the increase of drug use in particular cocaine and its availability. Chief Super Scanlon acknowledged that this was an increasing problem.
- Cllr. Aisling Moran advised members of people being unable to get a driving test within a reasonable time frame in Laois. She proposed that a letter issue to the Minister for Transport seeking clarification on this matter, and this was seconded by Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley.

Draft JPC Strategic Plan

It was noted that this plan had been circulated to the members, and remained open for submissions from the public until 5th July 2022.

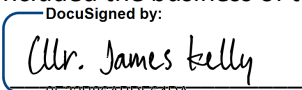
Correspondence

Correspondence had been circulated and taken as read.

Date & Time of next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 12th September 2022 at 10 am in the Council Chamber.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: 
A/Chair of Joint Policing Committee

Dated: 13 September 2022 | 12:16:08 BST
