

County Laois Joint Policing Committee
Minutes of Annual Public Meeting
Held on Monday, 19th November 2018 at Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise

Present: Cllr. Pádraig Fleming (in the Chair), Chief Supt. John Scanlon, Supt. Anthony Pettit, Cllr. Paddy Bracken, Cllr. Seamus McDonald, Cllr. John King, Cllr. Tom Mulhall, Cllr. Noel Tuohy, Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr. Sean Fleming, T.D., Mr. Brian Stanley, T.D., Mr. Conor O'Leary, Mr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Mr. Thomas Jones, Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive

In Attendance: Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Ms. Georgina Ireland, A/Senior Executive Officer, Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/Administrative Officer

Members of the Public/Press in attendance: Laois Today, Laois Nationalist, Leinster Express, Ms. Sheelagh Coyle, Helen Sherman

Apologies: Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald, Cllr. John Moran, Cllr. William Aird, Cllr. James Kelly, Ms. Antionette Kinsella, HSE, Mr. Noel Dooley, Mr. Thomas Timmons

Cllr. Pádraig Fleming welcomed all members and members of the press and public also.

Confirmation of Minutes

Upon the proposal of Cllr Paddy Bracken and seconded by Cllr Tom Mulhall, the minutes of the Laois County Joint Policing Committee held on 10th September, 2018 were confirmed.

Matters Arising

The matter of Data Controller in relation to Community CCTV was raised. The Chief Executive advised that there are a number of issues to be considered if the Local Authority was to assume the role of Data Controller. Data protection, safety and security issues would also have to be resolved.

Report from An Garda Síochána

Chief Supt John Scanlon presented a report on behalf of An Garda Síochána. The following matters were noted:

- There has been a decrease in the number of burglaries in the third quarter.
- Drugs offences have increased in particular Possession of Drugs for sale or supply. Much of this can be attributed to the Electric Picnic.
- Property crime figures have decreased and this was welcomed.
- An Garda Síochána were complimented for their work tackling issues on the Mountmellick Road. Chief Supt. Scanlon advised the committee that an additional eight Gardai will be coming to Laois. He acknowledged contributions made at the recent successful Community Alert Meeting.

Laois County Council Report

This report was circulated and was taken as read.

Questions submitted by members of the public

The following questions were submitted by Helen Sherman, Donaghmore Community Alert Group (in attendance):

"The Committee are very concerned about many of their members who are living alone and feel very isolated and vulnerable as the long nights are in again and with the close proximity to the two motorways M7 & M8 allowing for several quick getaways for criminals."

The following questions are being raised?

1. *What progress has been made on the issue of Data Controller for Community CCTV Schemes?*
2. *If this issue is not likely to be resolved any time soon what should the Community Alert Committee do with the funds collected with CCTV Cameras as the reason?*
3. *What would the result be if we went ahead and erected cameras without waiting for the approval?*
4. *How would Gardai make use of the data collected on these cameras?*

5. *What effect would this action have on our current insurance situation in the event that a claim was made against us (the committee) under Data Protection?*
6. *What action can a committee such as ours take to protect ourselves against such claims?*

Chief Supt. John Scanlon replied as follows:

- The matter of Data Controller by Chief Executive John Mulholland.
- The Community should be ready to go if/when the Data Controller issue is resolved.
- Gardai cannot use data on CCTV cameras as it is not legally obtained.
- Gardai cannot use data on the Community CCTV cameras as it would not be data that is legally obtained.
- The matter should be discussed with the community group's insurance company and advise obtained in this regard.

The second question raised was by Ms. Sheelagh Coyle (in attendance):

"The vice president of the IFA, Richard Kennedy, recently claimed that Gardai from more than 20km away are being tasked with investigating rural crime, even though the nearest Garda station is much closer.

Complexities over Garda divisional boundaries mean that the nearest officers are not always dispatched, Mr. Kennedy claimed.

Is this happening in Laois? I am a member of the IFA living in rural North Laois."

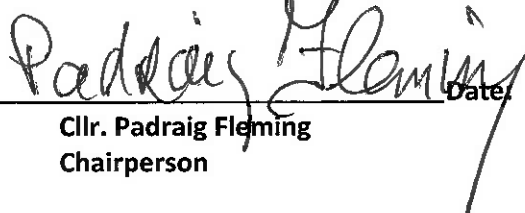
Chief Supt. John Scanlon replied that in an emergency a call goes directly out on a system, the nearest Garda responds to the emergency call. Any administration response must be done by Gardaí in that administrative areas. Ms. Coyle thanked Chief Supt. John Scanlon for his response and suggested that a Crime Task Force for small rural communities be considered.

Any Other Business

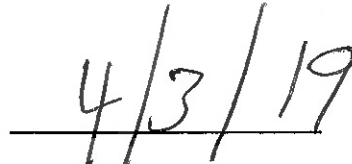
None.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:


Cllr. Padraig Fleming
Chairperson

Date:


4/3/19