

County Laois Joint Policing Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Held on Monday 18th November, 2019 at Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise

Present: Cllr Tom Mulhall (Chair), Mr John Mulholland Chief Executive, Supt Anthony Pettit, Cllr Paddy Bracken, Cllr Seamus McDonald, Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald, Cllr Aidan Mullins, Cllr Conor Bergin, Cllr Thomasina Connell, Cllr Aisling Moran, Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr Sean Fleming TD, Mr Brian Stanley TD, Mr Bobby Delaney, Mr Thomas Jones, Mr Conor O'Leary, Ms Sara Geraldine Rasool

In attendance: Mr Donal Brennan Director of Service, Ms Carmel McNicholl, Senior Executive Officer, Ms Pamela Tynan A/Administrative Officer, Ms Rose Doolin, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms Elaine Moore, Senior Staff Officer

Apologies: Chief Supt John Scanlon, Cllr Padraig Fleming, Cllr Paschal McEvoy, Cllr John King, Cllr Ben Brennan, Ms Antoinette Kinsella

Cllr Tom Mulhall (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings

Upon the proposal of Cllr Seamus McDonald and seconded by Cllr Aidan Mullins the minutes of the meeting of 14th October 2019 were confirmed and signed. Cllr Aidan Mullins referenced the inclusion of Portarlinton, together with Mountmellick and Clonaslee, in the discussion at the previous meeting, with the Chief Superintendent, on additional AGS staff resources.

Matters Arising

Mr Bobby Delaney enquired if there was any update from the Minister on the extension of the funding scheme for Community CCTV. Cllr Conor Bergin advised, not as yet, but he would seek clarification.

Report from An Garda Síochana

Supt Anthony Pettit gave an update with statistics for the 12 month period from last year. He stated that while Aggravated Burglary was up, Property Crime over the period was down by 20%. In respect of Crimes against the Person there is a reduction overall. However, Murder, Threats to Kill or Cause serious harm was up to 36 cases. He clarified that of these 12 related to the prison. Criminal Damage and Public Order is up. Drunkenness Offences and Public Order Offences are up but this is in fact a positive as it means Gardaí on the ground are doing their job. This statistic must also be combined with the overall reduction in assaults. Simple Possession for drugs are up by 15%. More members of the public are being apprehended with drugs for own use. Intoxicated Driving of a vehicle under the influence of alcohol and drugs is up by 19%. Overall the number of people killed on the roads in Laois is 4 and it is hoped that this number will not increase by the end of the year. He stated that while the statistics may be up, this is in fact a positive and the number of people getting caught is due to the increased numbers of Gardaí on the ground.

The members thanked Supt Pettit and sought clarification and further detail on the following:

- a) Could the Gardaí provide further details for the amount of offences in which drugs are a factor?
- b) Crimes against older people eg bogus calls and callers
- c) The number of driving offences with fixed charges that are being struck out in court and who is responsible for making sure licences are endorsed?
- d) The sale and supply of drugs in Kilminchy has increased. Extra patrols were requested in the Kilminchy area and this is also a problem in other areas. How is the exclusion of individuals from areas being addressed?
- e) Illegal money lenders and where the law stands in relation to this?
- f) Threats to kill and the treatment of such matters in the Court?
- g) Incidents of Domestic Violence?
- h) Update on the new Headquarters in Portlaoise and staff requirements?

Supt Anthony Pettit clarified and provided further detail on each of the issues raised.

He also advised that it is proposed to add additional cameras to the Garda CCTV system in 2020, following an upgrade to same in 2019, and that this will include the Mountmellick Road.

Laois County Council Report

The contents of the report were noted as read.

The members complimented the Environment Section of the great work done in respect of the couch and mattress Amnesty in August 2019.

The question of CCTV cameras was raised and in particular the regulations which state that groups can only store data for 28 days. Also the question of cameras which can recognise number plates and Supt Anthony Pettit advised on the use of AMVR and non AMVR cameras. This issue is being discussed nationally.

The matter of brown bins was also raised particularly the fact that not all households have a brown bin, that this needs to be addressed and also the collection rotas. The issue of dog fouling in Mountmellick was also raised.

Questions submitted by members of the public

The following question was submitted by Coolbanagher, Killimy & Emo Area Residents:

It concerns speeding issues on R419 in Coolbanagher, Killimy and Emo residents feel there is a need for a Go Safe van or regular presence of the Road Policing Authority to enforce the speed limit. Traffic has a straight run downhill from Coolbanagher Church which adds to the speed problem making access for residents from L7150 very dangerous.

The Garda Response was as follows:

- Supt Anthony Pettit addressed this matter at the meeting.
- On foot of this Communities concern regarding speed non compliance issues on R419 in Coolbanagher, Killimy and Emo, AGS locally will notify the National Roads Policing Bureau requesting they engage with Go-Safe to consider the R419 as a location for speed monitoring.
- C/Supt will direct Local Traffic unit to conduct routine speeding monitoring in the highlighted area.

Supt Anthony Pettit also updated the members that he had received confirmation that this road has been included in the zoning and that the Go-Safe vans will be assigned in the next roll out of the service which should be in the New Year.

Any other Business

Conor O'Leary stated that the Carbon Monoxide Alarms scheme is still open to groups. Also the Annual Text Alert Rebate Grant is now available for groups. Forms are available from Muintir na Tire.

Cllr Tom Mulhall stated that John Mulholland and himself attended a meeting in Dublin which was attended by the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris. The Commissioner will attend any JPC meetings to which he is invited. On the proposal of Deputy Sean Fleming and seconded by Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, it was agreed that Commissioner Harris would be invited to attend a meeting of the Laois Joint Policing Committee in the new year.

The matter of members of the public cycling across zebra crossings was raised, and the public safety issue arising.

Date for next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 16th March 2020.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: 
Chairperson

Dated: _____