

County Kildare Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of County Kildare Joint Policing Committee Annual General Meeting “Safer Communities” Monday 7 December 2015 Solus Bhríde, Tully Road, Kildare

Present:

Cllr. Martin Miley, Chairperson
Cllr. Aoife Breslin, Vice Chairperson
Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin, An Garda Síochána
Peter Carey, Chief Executive, KCC
Peter Minnock, Director of Services
Cllr. Fintan Brett
Cllr. Ivan Keatley
Cllr. Tim Durkan
Cllr. Anne Breen
Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy
Cllr. Ide Cussen
Cllr. Anthony Larkin
Cllr. Suzanne Doyle
Deputy Martin Heydon
Conor O’Leary Muintir na Tíre
Monica Byrne Kildare Older Persons Council
Steven Joyce SW Regional Drugs Task Force

Apologies:

Superintendent Declan McCarthy
Deputy Catherine Muphy
Deputy Jack Wall
Deputy Anthony Lawlor
Deputy Bernard Durkan
Deputy Emmet Stagg
Deputy Sean O’ Feaghail
Cllr Willie Crowley
Cllr. James Lawless
Cllr. Paul Ward
Cllr. Frank O’ Rourke
Cllr. Mark Lynch
Cllr Anthony Larkin
Mike Farrell, Comhairle na nOg
Emma Berney Kildare Children & Young People’s Services Committee
Sean Darcy Celbridge Community Council

In attendance:

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| Superintendent Martin Walker | An Garda Síochána |
| Sergeant Garry Madden | An Garda Síochána |
| Sergeant George Doherty, | An Garda Síochána |
| Garda Finian Dempsey, | An Garda Síochána |
| Garda John Flaherty, | An Garda Síochána |
| Cllr. Teresa Murray | Kildare County Council |
| Alice Corbett | Community Section |
| Bernard Higgins | Community Section |
| Linda O' Keeffe | Community Section |
| JP Holligan | Community Section |
| Eileen Doyle | Community Section |

Members of the public were invited to the JPC meeting. Those attending up to 30, subsequently participated in the three workshop sessions.

Item 1 – Minutes of the JPC meeting dated 5th October 2015

The Chairperson Councillor Martin Miley welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes were formally adopted as proposed by Councillor Anne Breen and seconded by Councillor Ide Cussen.

Item 2 – Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Item 3 – Policing Report

Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin presented a report on crime figures in Kildare (see report attached). Crime levels in County Kildare have remained largely static and are down in some instances. Chief Superintendent McPolin reported on the number of sexual offences, minor assaults, and assaults causing harm, thefts from the person, thefts of other types and burglaries. The figures so far in 2015 were comparable to the figures from 2014. Chief Superintendent McPolin noted that there had been a spike in the number of burglaries a number of weeks ago, with five burglaries alone in the week prior to the AGM. However he added that this issue is being tackled through armed and unarmed patrols as part of operation Thor.

Chief Superintendent McPolin also noted that County Kildare had received fifteen new Gardáí over the summer and that more were on the way now that the force was recruiting again.

The Chairperson thanked Chief Superintendent McPolin for these reports.

Item 3 – Date of next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 7th March 2016 in Aras Chill Dara, Naas.

Item 4 – Presentation from the Crime Prevention Officer, An Garda Siochána

The Crime Prevention Officer for County Kildare, Sergeant George Doherty, gave a presentation on crime prevention (see report attached). His main messages to people were to illuminate to eliminate burglaries,” to lock up and light up” when going out and to farmers and others he advised that they use the recently launched “Theft Stop Initiative” to safeguard their farm equipment. He also advised against having high hedges in front of family homes as these hedges or high walls may give privacy but they also give privacy for burglaries and he advised that the front of houses should be seen by anyone looking in. Sergeant Doherty also advised the meeting about the work of the Garda Victim Support Office.

The Chairperson thanked Sergeant Doherty for his presentation.

Item 5 – Round Table Discussion – “Safer Communities”

As part of the preparatory work, for the 6 Year Joint Policing Strategy “ Safer Communities in County Kildare”, there followed a workshop/discussion format where all those present, public, Gardai, local representatives and officials participated with an exchange of views across the three main headings;

1. What can Public Bodies do – e.g. Local Authority, Health Service Executive, Schools, Education Training Board, and Courts Service etc.?
2. What can the Community itself do?
3. What can the Garda Authorities do?

What can Public Bodies do – e.g. Local Authority, Health Service Executive, Schools, Education Training Board, and Courts Service etc.?

- More could be done to encourage people to live in the centre of towns. i.e repopulation of town centres as some particularly Naas tended to have no residential passive surveillance on the main streets.
- Improved public lighting which improves visibility.
- A role for the JPC in deciding whether licensed premises have their licences renewed or not.
- The Council Planning Department to give more consideration to building community spirit – proper planning for housing authorities to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- An increased role for the Education and Training Board in dealing with anti-social behaviour by education in social studies/interaction to be

taught in class. Programmes organised by KWETB around civic responsibility – home, relationships, befriending.

- Design of school programmes in order that there is greater awareness of the dangers of drugs/alcohol at an earlier stage.
- Installation of CCTV Cameras in towns and/or CCTV in communities - strategic communities for crime or litter prevention.
- LCDC – body on the ground, Local Area Networks.
- Alcohol Bye-Laws should be properly enforced.
- Call for improved communications between public agencies.
- HSE – that local clinics be set up for elderly people to check out their health issues rather than them going to A&E and waiting for hours on a trolley.
- Gardáí to be provided with duplicate keys to local parks where anti-social behaviour may be taking place.
- Provision of Youth and Community Facilities e.g. Boxing Club in Kildare Town.

What can the Community itself do?

- Increased parental responsibility – defending bad behaviour, would ETB have the resources for parenting classes.
- The appointment of crime prevention ambassadors – community volunteers are trained up and vetted to engage with rurally isolated people and elderly living in town – this scheme was piloted in Cavan/Monaghan.
- The Mens Shed organisations being encouraged to get involved in the Care and Repair Projects
- Establishment of a Circle of Friends to encourage people to get to know their neighbours – Rebuilding neighbourhoods.
- Look at volunteerism in communities, cater for the marginalised.
- More widespread use of text alert systems – Better ownership of the text alert system - more meetings of the groups for feedback and discussion.
- Formation of a partnership with the Tenancy Board regarding criminal elements renting properties in rural areas, progress is slow and most things fall in favour of the tenant - no consequences for anti-social behaviour in rental properties. – Legislation gap here.
- Linking of Groups – there are numerous groups with the same aim – Kildare Older Persons Council is one example of a group that has connections to all service providers.
- Crime prevention through environmental design for community safety/security.
- Residents Associations to register with PPN to liaise and inform.
- Get communities involved i.e. childreninvolved in local community improvement projects.

What can the Garda Authorities do?

- More Garda Resources for Kildare – the number of Gardáí need to increase significantly.
- More garda presence on the street. - visual deterrent – being on the street or in cars – Reserves should be used for “beat” duty
- Use of CCTV monitored by Gardai.
- Greater interaction of Gardáí in Local Youth Groups/ Mens Sheds groups/Community Groups
- Particular focus on false car licence plates – identification should be required when ordering new licence plates.
- Community Policing – need to get more Gardai out from behind desk – why do Gardai have to fill out so many forms, passports etc. - no Community Police – Kildare and particularly rural Kildare left totally vulnerable against organised crime.
- More engagement with text alert scheme – feedback from text alert schemes -
- Better promotion of the Crimestoppers Freephone number.
- Garda focus on early on local criminal offenders, there is research available to prove that this approach is best.

Mr Minnock thanked everyone for their attendance and active participation in the meeting and stated that the topics raised tonight would feed into and form part of the **County Kildare 6 Year Joint Policing Strategy**.

The meeting concluded.