

Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 14th September 2020
Aras Chill Dara, Naas

Members in Attendance:

Name:	Representing:
Cllr. Fintan Brett (Chair)	Elected Member
Cllr. Aoife Breslin (Vice Chair)	Elected Member
Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy	Elected Member
Cllr. Ciara Galvin	Elected Member
Cllr. Chris Pender	Elected Member
Cllr. Fiona McLoughlin-Healy	Elected Member
Cllr. Anne Connolly	Elected Member
Cllr. Bernard Caldwell	Elected Member
Dep. Patricia Ryan	Oireachtas Member
Dep. Réada Cronin	Oireachtas Member
Dep. Martin Heydon	Oireachtas Member
Sen. Fiona O'Loughlin	Oireachtas Member
Peter Carey	Kildare County Council
Sonya Kavanagh	Kildare County Council
Chief. Supt. John Scanlan	An Garda Síochána
Supt. Oliver Henry	An Garda Síochána
Conor O'Leary	Muintir na Tíre
Steven Joyce	SWRDATAF
Monica Cox	Kildare Older Persons Council
Michael Corcoran	Public Participation Network
Apologies:	Elected Member
Cllr. Tim Durkan	Elected Member
Cllr. Brian Dooley	Elected Member
Cllr. Nuala Killeen	Elected Member
Cllr. Bill Clear	Elected Member
Cllr. Naoise Ó'Cearúil	Elected Member
Emma Berney	CYPSC
Dep. Catherine Murphy	Oireachtas Member
John Daly	PPN

Also in attendance: Supt. Martin Walker, Supt. Eamon Curley, Ins. Paul Reilly, Sgt. John Dunne, Helena Murphy (all An Garda Síochána), Cllr. Noel Connolly (attending as member of the public), Liam Dunne, John Shannon, Denis McDermott, Ann Dooley, Ciara Gallagher (all Dept. of Economic, Community & Cultural Development, KCC)

1. Minutes / Matters Arising:

The minutes of the quarterly meeting held on Monday 2nd March 2020 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy, seconded by Monica Cox.

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2. Chairperson's business:

Nominations to CCTV sub-committee:

- Cllr. Brett advised the meeting that Michael Corcoran and Monica Cox had expressed interest in joining the sub-committee. Cllr. McLoughlin Healy had indicated her interest at the March meeting. It was agreed that all three would serve on the CCTV sub-committee going forward.
- Supt. Henry gave a brief update on proposals to launch a pilot CCTV scheme in Clane. Issues around procurement, planning, technical specifications and data sharing remained to be resolved. It was likely that external expertise would be required to finalise the project. Cllr. Brett indicated that the councillors would likely make LPT funding available to assist groups with set-up costs once the picture is clearer.

(Dep. Martin Heydon later confirmed that draft amending legislation to allow data sharing would be published by the end of September).

- The chairman noted that the proposal to invitation to Judge Desmond Zaidan to attend a JPC meeting had not been replied to, to date.

3. Correspondence:

The committee noted the letter from Chief Superintendent Scanlan re Garda resources and the online survey and public consultation regarding the Criminal Justice Strategy (previously circulated).

4. Motion from full council:

Sonya Kavanagh indicated that this had been referred to the Planning Strategic Policy Committee. Cllr. McEvoy confirmed that it had been discussed at the recent SPC meeting.

5. Policing Report & 7. Questions:

Chief Supt. Scanlan presented the policing report with relevant statistics comparing Q1 & 2 2020 with Q1 & 2 2019. Statistical details were given in relation to property crime, crime against the person, criminal damage / public order offenses, drugs / weapons offences and road traffic incidents. The chief superintendent referred to the overall reduction in criminal activity which is linked to the Covid-19 restrictions on the community generally. He also noted the significant levels of cooperation the Gardaí have been receiving from across all sectors on an ongoing basis.

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There were several questions and points raised in relation to the report:-

- Has there been a recorded increase in domestic violence cases?
- Have there been recorded incidents of dog/pet thefts as reported in media?
- What resources are available in the Kildare division and how are these allocated across the districts?
- Reference was made to lower Garda numbers in certain towns and non-availability of a Garda vehicle in one station.
- How are Gardaí handling the reported increase in suicides?
- Has there been an increase in bicycle thefts at Sallins railway station?
- Has there been a rise in cybercrime as reported?
- When will Garda be able to recommence community meetings?
- Are community police officers dedicated to the new roles or are they temporary assignments?
- The increasing population of the county must feed into the allocation of Garda resources nationally.
- The Garda handling of an illegal encampment on the Curragh was acknowledged.
- How are Gardaí dealing with reports of drug debt-based violence?
- The work of Sgt. Gavin Dunphy in assisting the community response forum was noted.

CS Scanlan (with Supt. Walker and Supt. Henry) answered the queries raised:

- Kildare Garda numbers have increased by over 100 since 2015 and are allocated equally across all three districts having regard to demand generally. He noted that Naas has higher numbers as it is a divisional headquarters and the additional Gardaí based there work across all districts.
- CS Scanlan reiterated that he is constantly looking for additional resources and noted that Templemore training college is at maximum capacity currently.
- There is a dedicated drugs unit in the Kildare district serving Newbridge and other areas in the Kildare district.
- A new divisional domestic violence unit starts up on 21st September. Currently, a 98% call back rate to such reports has been recorded.
- Details of all community Gardaí were given. CS Scanlan emphasised that all Gardaí are community Gardaí first and foremost but that these positions would be developed and supported further.
- No specific dog thefts were recorded but CS Scanlan indicated that local Gardaí had assisted in the interception of dogs being transported illegally.
- The CS cautioned about the prevalence of rogue traders calling to vulnerable persons.
- Community meetings are not possible during current restrictions, but local representatives and local MD meeting can be used for raising community policing issues as normal.
- Gardaí operations regarding loose dogs in Athy are ongoing.

JK Brub.
17/12/2020.

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- Individuals or families dealing with drug debt are encouraged to contact their local Gardaí for non-judgemental confidential assistance.
- Details of bicycle thefts in the Naas district were outlined and Gardaí are working with Irish Rail and retail parks to help reduce the number of thefts.
- The Chief Superintendent indicated he is available to take calls directly from JPC members if necessary.

6. Draft Drug Litter Clean-Up Protocol:

Steven Joyce presented the draft protocol which was prepared by the drug litter sub-group of the SWRDATAF. The protocol was adopted unanimously.

8. Items for discussion with Commissioner Drew Harris:

It was agreed that members could submit questions/topics either via local MD meetings with An Garda Síochána or directly to the JPC administration team via jpc@kildarecoco.ie.

9. JPC Guidelines review:

Cllr. Brett advised the meeting that the JPC steering committee was examining the guidelines to identify areas where the committee might need to improve performance and the results would be notified to the members.

10. Update on Text Alert Scheme:

Cllr. Brett indicated that the working group had received the tender documents used by Monaghan County Council and were hoping to adapt them for use by Kildare County Council.

It was noted that due to the significantly higher spend envisaged, KCC would have to go tender nationally via etenders and could not simply seek quotations as Monaghan had done. It was hoped the document could be finalised and advertised in advance of the next meeting; members would be advised of the latest position then.

11. Any other business:

- Cllr. McLoughlin Healy asked about the reasons for issuing an invitation to Judge Zaidan to attend a JPC meeting. Cllr. Brett confirmed that it had been agreed at the March meeting.
- Michael Corcoran indicated that he was a member of a sub-committee on the text alert system and he was not being kept informed of progress. Cllr. Brett confirmed there was no formal sub-committee set up for this purpose but there was an informal working group.

Next meeting: Annual Public Meeting Monday 7th December 2020 7.00 p.m. (venue TBC).