

## Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
Council Chamber

### Members in Attendance:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Representing:</b>
Cllr. Fintan Brett (Chairperson)	Elected Member
Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy	Elected Member
Cllr. Tim Durkan	Elected Member
Cllr. Fiona McLoughlin-Healy	Elected Member
Cllr. Anne Connolly	Elected Member
Sonya Kavanagh	KCC
Marian Higgins	KCC
Supt. Oliver Henry	An Garda Síochána
Maura Littlewood	Comhairle na nÓg
Steven Joyce	SWRDATAF
Conor O'Leary	Muintir Na Tíre
Monica Cox	Kildare OPC
Michael Corcoran	PPN
<b>Apologies</b>	
Chief Supt. John Scanlan	An Garda Síochána
Cllr. Naoise Ó Cearúil	Elected Member
Dep. Seán Ó Fearghail	Oireachtas Member
Dep. Bernard Durkan	Oireachtas Member
Sen. Fiona O'Loughlin	Oireachtas Member

**An Garda Síochána:** Supt. Martin Walker, Supt. Georgina Gray, Ins. John Fitzgerald, Ins. Brian Cagney and Garda Helena Murphy.

**Kildare County Council - Dept. of Economic, Community & Cultural Development:** John Shannon, Administrative Officer and Ciara Gallagher, Clerical Officer.

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### 1. Minutes / Matters Arising:

The minutes of the quarterly meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 (with minor amendment agreed by the chair in advance) were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Padraig McEvoy seconded by Cllr. Tim Durkan.

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### **2. Chairperson's business:**

1. Cllr. Brett advised the meeting of the three-year Garda Youth Diversion Programme and the excellent work being done through it, led by Inspector Brian Cagney. The focus of the programme was to engage with youth at an early stage and to direct them towards practical courses such as learning to drive or beauty therapy etc. as an alternative to being placed on detention in Oberstown House. Costs of €50,000 were likely and the chair indicated he would speak to the various MD chairs as part of their LPT deliberations. The chair also noted that the community bus funded by Naas MD was proving to be of significant use to the Gardaí already.
2. A motion from full council had been received:
  - o That the council asks the County JPC Committee to consider the establishment of a cross-agency working group to co-ordinate a strategy and action plan that outlines the actions being taken or to be taken to improve the safety of our elderly community through direct actions, linking existing actions and awareness.

It was noted that the Kildare Age Friendly Strategy was due for renewal in 2022. It was agreed that the JPC would have significant input to the new strategy via the chairperson of the Older Person's Council and the actions proposed in the motion could be considered in that forum.



### **3. Correspondence:**

Cllr. Brett noted that correspondence had issued with responses to several questions raised at the annual public meeting in December. Cllr. McLoughlin Healy noted that none of her four specific questions had been answered and she requested that answers issue to her or at a minimum confirmation that her questions were sent to the commissioner's office.

### **4. Policing Report & Questions:**

Supt. Walker (in place of Chief Superintendent Scanlan) presented the policing report with relevant statistics comparing Q4 2021 with Q4 2020. 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. In general, there were increases in some categories matched by reductions in others and the superintendent felt that the overall situation was being managed.

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### 6. Community Text Alert Update:

Cllr. Brett informed the meeting that the challenge to the proposed tender award had been dealt with and it would be possible to move on to discussions with the successful tenderer. Currently, insurances were being requested and checked as required in the tender.

### 7. Presentation: Steven Joyce, Southwest regional Drugs & Alcohol Task Force

Steven gave a presentation on the role and activities of the SWRDATF. He emphasised that the task force took a health-led focus and viewed persons struggling with addiction as victims rather than potential criminals. He listed the various support services and centres available and explained the SAFER club's project. Steven reminded the committee that sometimes alcohol is not considered to be part of the wider substance-abuse problem but in fact it is the most toxic of commonly abused drugs.

There was an open discussion following Steven's presentation:

- Gardaí can issue a caution for certain drugs offenses rather than go to court
- Communities are often challenged with trying to deal with drug abuse
- The Portuguese model is being adopted for Ireland
- There is a need for many more residential places for addicts
- Families can be reluctant to get involved with Gardaí for several reasons
- The Garda focus is generally on suppliers rather than users
- There are proposals to introduce random drug-testing for Gardaí
- The health authorities need to properly fund services rather than seeking support from council funds
- The Purple Flag award is designed to target a range of night-time activities, not just alcohol-based events
- The SAFER clubs project could be progressed via Kildare Sports Partnership

**Next meeting:** Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 3.00 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Brett', is written over a horizontal line.

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

- The community bus had been an excellent initiative and allowed the Gardaí to undertake actions not previously possible e.g., evacuating a family at short notice in a domestic violence situation and bringing civilian witnesses to court in Dublin
- One community bus was sufficient for now and councillors might be minded to allocate LPT funding to other initiatives in 2022
- Have Gardaí liaised with Local Link to ensure no duplication of existing services?
- How were crimes such as online bullying and intimidation categorised in the statistics?
- 10 new probationer Gardaí had been allocated to Kildare division (eight to Kildare and one each to Naas and Leixlip)
- 800 Gardaí would be recruited in a new campaign and Kildare would be seeking its share of these Gardaí when available
- Three further probationers should be available soon (one for each district)
- Were the new Gardaí additional i.e., not simply replacing retirees or transfers?
- In line with the new policing model, a divisional drugs unit will be implemented
- What actions could Gardaí take to prevent fuel thefts, particularly in rural areas/farmyards?
- Could Gardaí assist community groups as far as possible as they restart after two years of inaction in many cases, particularly text alert groups?

Supt. Walker and Supt. Henry answered the questions raised.

### **5. CCTV update:**

Cllr. McEvoy advised the meeting that the planned design of a CCTV scheme for Clane Community Council had been costed at levels which would require EU procurement. The group was going to re-examine the proposal to ascertain if this could be reconfigured to allow a simple quotation process.

Superintendent Henry confirmed that a joint controller agreement was being put in place for the Athy community CCTV scheme which would enable Gardaí to access the footage as originally planned.

Other points were made in a brief discussion:

- The model being proposed is a sensible option
- Will the CCTV sub-committee be presented with the Clane template when finalised?
- Could the terms of reference of the CCTV sub-committee be circulated?
- Will traffic management cameras be available to Gardaí as before?