

Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 4th September 2023
Boardroom/Microsoft Teams

Members in Attendance:

Name:	Representing:
Cllr. Fintan Brett (Chairperson)	Elected Member
Cllr. Aoife Breslin	Elected Member
Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy	Elected Member
Cllr. Tim Durkin	Elected Member
Cllr. Brian Dooley	Elected Member
Cllr. Bernard Caldwell	Elected Member
Cllr. Anne Connolly	Elected Member
Cllr. Bob Quinn	Elected Member
Cllr. Ciara Galvin	Elected Member
Cllr. Nuala Killeen	Elected Member
Cllr. Naoise Ó'Cearúil	Elected Member
Cllr. Bill Clear	Elected Member
Cllr. Chris Pender	Elected Member
Dep. Reada Cronin	Oireachtas Member
Dep. Bernard Durkin	Oireachtas Member
Dep. Cathal Berry	Oireachtas Member
Dep. Martin Heydon	Oireachtas Member
Sen. Fiona O'Loughlin	Oireachtas Member
Sen. Vincent Martin	Oireachtas Member
Sonya Kavanagh	KCC
Paula O'Brien	KCC
Chief Supt. Anthony Lonergan	An Garda Síochána
Michael Corcoran	PPN
John Daly	PPN
Conor O'Leary	Muintir Na Tíre
Maura Littlewood	Comhairle na nÓg
Steven Joyce	SWRDATAF

Apologies	
Supt. Oliver Henry	An Garda Síochána
Maura Littlewood	Comhairle na nÓg

An Garda Síochána: Paul O'Reilly

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

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1. Minutes / Matters Arising:

The minutes of the quarterly meeting held on Monday 12th June 2023 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Nuala Killeen, seconded by Cllr. Bernard Caldwell (no amendments).

2. Chairperson's business/correspondence:

- Cllr. Brett welcomed Chief Superintendent Anthony Lonergan to his first County Kildare JPC meeting and wished him every success in his new role.
- CS Lonergan confirmed that Det. Insp. Brian Cagney would be remaining as the Garda liaison on the Drug Related Intimidation Reporting Programme.
- Cllr. Brett noted the appointment of Cllr. Bob Quinn to the vacancy on the JPC.

3. Operating model & new Kildare-Carlow Garda Division

The Chief Superintendent thanked the chair for his opening remarks and stated he was looking forward to working with the JPC on the challenges ahead. He confirmed that following a review of the original operating model introduced in 2018, it had been decided to remove Kildare from the previous three-county arrangement and create a new division with Carlow. He considered this a more effective arrangement and believed it would help foster closer links with the communities in the division.

4. Policing Report:

Chief Superintendent Lonergan presented the policing report with relevant statistics comparing Q2 2022 with Q2 2023. Statistical details were given in relation to property crime; crime against the person; criminal damage and public order offenses; drugs and weapons offences; road traffic incidents and domestic violence data.

In his opening remarks, Chief Supt. Lonergan advised that arrangements are being put in place to target crime hotspots, based on the statistics being recorded; community policing teams are visiting schools to address younger persons on the importance of appropriate behaviours around social media; multi-agency approaches are needed to deal with pervasive drugs abuse issues; a suite of supports is available to assist persons in domestic violence situations; the format of the policing reports remains under review but it is hoped to include community engagement statistics in future reports.

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Cllr. Brett then opened the discussion to the floor. Questions were asked as follows in relation to the contents of the report and policing matters generally:

- Is there a breakdown of the drugs possession figures to indicate personal use as opposed to those supplying drugs?
- Has the number of Gardaí attached to roads policing units increased?
- How will the proposed new Garda rosters impact on community policing roles?
- It was noted that this was the first time that crime statistics were reduced in several categories.
- It was noted that breach of safety orders had increased.
- A youth football tournament in Leixlip was a huge success and could be repeated elsewhere.
- How many hours do the Go Safe detection vans operate in Kildare?
- Community Gardaí using bicycles are very visible and encourage cycling and can be seen as a climate action initiative.
- Further information on bail applications will be requested directly as part of a research project covering this area.
- Recidivism is very common with persons on bail.
- The availability of drugs is widespread and must be curtailed.
- Can Gardaí alert persons where a partner has previous domestic violence convictions?
- Is there a Garda vehicle based in Rathangan?
- Kildare is a large county with lots of challenges and resources must reflect this.
- Is it possible to get year-end unsolved crime figures?
- Harassment remains a serious issue and anti-social behaviour is not acceptable.
- What are the criteria for joining Kildare and Carlow to make a division containing 310,000 people?

Chief Superintendent Lonergan responded to the questions raised and the following were his main points:

- There have been significant drugs seizures in Kildare and enforcement will be a priority.
- Garda numbers in roads policing units are stable.
- Community policing is very important, and rosters will reflect this.
- Further checks will have to be made to establish speed detection van deployments.
- A new policing report format is being tested and verified.
- An Garda Síochána is only one part of the fight against drugs.
- The chief superintendent's office will welcome any observation on bail laws.
- The two-county model is expected to deliver better outcomes, but additional resources are always welcome and will continue to be requested.

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- Unsolved crime figures could not be released unless there were clear benefits to so doing.

5. Questions/Motions:

a. *That a subcommittee be established to look to next year's round of funding under the Community Safety Innovation Fund - **Steven Joyce***
Following a brief introduction by Steven it was agreed that Cllr. Brett, Cllr. McEvoy, Cllr. Pender and Steven Joyce would form a subcommittee to prepare for the 2024 round of funding. (Note: Cllr. Killeen offered her assistance after the meeting as she did not manage to volunteer in time before the next agenda item was called).

b. *To request a report on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence – **Réada Cronin TD***
Deputy Cronin thanked the Gardaí for the domestic violence data in the policing report and went on to say that she agreed with other speakers regarding the serious issue of harassment needing further attention.

c. *How are the Gardaí collaborating with other relevant agencies, such as social services or mental health organisations, to address underlying causes of crime and support vulnerable populations?*

Cllr. Chris Pender

Inspector Dunphy advised that An Garda Síochána enjoy a very good working relationship with the various agencies working with vulnerable persons and in crime prevention. There is a vulnerable persons register and there is an upcoming meeting with the relevant agencies to look at policy and procedures generally.

d. *Can the Gardaí provide an update on the implementation and impact of any crime prevention programs or initiatives that have been launched in recent years? - **Cllr. Chris Pender***

Sergeant Jim Kelly gave an extensive report on recent crime prevention initiatives. These include Age Friendly talks as part of the wider winter safety campaign; school talks; train and other public transport patrols; a Garda property app; property marking machine days and ongoing social media campaigns.

e. *Can the Gardaí provide an overview of their approach to handling protests or demonstrations and ensuring the right to peaceful assembly while maintaining public safety? - **Cllr. Chris Pender***

Inspector Anthony Connaughton gave an overview of policing methods used in different situations. The primary focus is on engagement with the organisers in advance of any planned demonstration, with proportionate enforcement responses in dynamic situations and/or unexpected protests where they arise.

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f. *To discuss police numbers in Kildare – Cllr. Fintan Brett*

Cllr. Brett stated he was happy that this item had been covered generally by CS Lonergan's earlier comments and no further discussion was required.

g. *To explore the possibility of an Integrated Crime and Substance Prevention Program which will work with all JPC stakeholders as well as introducing an academic research element (with Maynooth University).*

Steven Joyce

Steven explained the background to this motion and emphasised the need to develop evidence-based actions to address wider societal drug and alcohol abuse issues rather than simply focussing on individuals. It was agreed that Steven would prepare a short briefing document outlining his specific proposals for the next meeting.

6. CCTV update:

Inspector Gavin Dunphy confirmed that the Clane CCTV project has been through a third and final design draft and the next phase would be to seek LPT funding to move towards implementation of the scheme. Additionally, work would commence on identifying the next candidate town for CCTV using the template developed for Clane as guidance.

7. Message Alert Update:

Inspector Gavin Dunphy gave the committee a brief resumé of the most recent report received from BeAlert/Muintir na Tíre on the new service. While overall take-up remained low compared to the previous text-only service, Inspector Dunphy stated he was happy with overall progress to date and thanked BeAlert for their ongoing assistance.

Some points were made as follows in the discussion:

- The SMS aspect of the service was still being used much more than the app and this was expected due to the make-up of the user base. However, the ongoing costs of this would lead to the SMS service being discontinued eventually.
- Some of the messages posted by An Garda Síochána were of a national and/or generic variety and were not the type of locally focussed messages expected by service users.
- Other media are sometimes more suitable for certain Garda messages.
- There is an SOP for the system in An Garda Síochána, but this is not for public use.
- Community Gardaí remain available to meet with any group that wishes to sign up for the service or has any queries if already signed up.
- Cllr. Brett undertook to organise a meeting of the working group as soon as possible to address some of the issues highlighted.

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The meeting concluded.

Next meeting: Monday 4th December 2023 at 7.00 p.m. (Annual Public Meeting)



6/12/2023