

COMHAIRLE CHONTE NA GAILLIMHE

**Minutes of the Galway County Joint Policing Committee Meeting held in Áras an Chontae,
Prospect Hill, Galway on Monday, 3rd February 2020**

I LATHAIR:

Council Members: Cllr. Jim Cuddy (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. Mary Hoade
Cllr. Michael Maher
Cllr. James Charity
Cllr. Joe Byrne
Cllr. Andrew Reddington
Cllr. PJ Murphy
Cllr. Shelley Herterich-Quinn
Cllr. Liam Carroll
Comh. Dáithí O Cualáin
Cllr. Gerry King
Cllr. Colm Keaveney

Deputies: None

An Garda Síochána: Supt. Damien Ó'Flannacháin (deputising for Chief Supt. Thomás Curley)
Insp. Declan Rocke
Insp. Peter Conlon
Insp. John Dunne
Sgt. Mick Walsh
Sgt. Sinead Cunniffe

Community Reps: Mr. Gerard Larkin
Mr. Aodán MacDonncha
Mr. Gerard Costello

Oifigigh: Mr. Kieran Coyne, A/Senior Executive Officer (for A. Farrell, A/Director of Service)
Ms. Marian Donohue, Meetings Administrator, Corporate Services.

Other Officials: Ms. Anna Kyne, Corporate Services (Minute Taker)
Ms. Ann Dolan, Executive Scientist, Environment Section.

Apologies: Comh. Pdraig Mac an Iomaire
Mr. Pat Flanagan
Mr. Martin Ward (not allowed to attend under PPN rules as he is a
General Election candidate)

Condolences:

Cllr. Michael Maher extended his condolences on behalf of the County Galway Joint Policing Committee to Chief Supt. Tomás Curley and his family, on the passing of his mother, Mrs. Teresa (Tess) Curley.

Item No. 1 – Minutes of the JPC Meeting held on 30th September 2019:

On the proposal of Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Hoade, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 30th September 2019 be adopted.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

In reply to Cllr. King, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin explained that Gardaí with a level 4 requirement in Irish would be required to fill these positions and any positions at Leitir Mór and An Spidéal.

In reply to Comh D. Cualáin, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin said he would report back on whether a member of the Garda from the Salthill Station could be deployed to An Spidéal in the interim.

Item No. 2 – Minutes of the JPC Meeting held on 4th November 2019 (public meeting):

On the proposal of Cllr. Carroll, seconded by Cllr. Keaveney, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 4th November 2019 be adopted.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

In reply to Cllr. Carroll, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin explained that the recruitment process had commenced for the filling of nine Community Liaison Gardaí in the Galway Division which should be finalised by mid-2020.

Cllr. Keaveney expressed concern for the vulnerable senior citizens of the area, many who live in isolation and were fearful of crime and welcomed the introduction of Community Liaison Gardaí. He explained there were repeated burglary targets in Tuam town due to its proximity to the motorway and people were concerned about Garda response times attending properties where burglaries had occurred. He explained that Garda checkpoints/road blocks were essential to protect communities and condemned the practice where people used social media platforms to advise of these Garda checkpoint locations as said criminals would avoid these and use alternative routes.

In reply, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin said the concerns were noted and said while he was aware of the fear among the public, the figures for 2019 showed a decrease in burglaries in the Galway Garda District. He reported that highly mobile gangs were often involved in the burglaries and explained that local, regional and national Garda units were monitoring the gangs involved in this crime with several covert operations undertaken in recent weeks to try to disrupt their activities.

Supt. Ó'Flannacháin said while social media could be misused at times, the Gardaí rely on the public to report crimes and any unusual activity.

Item No. 3 – Update from the Galway County Council Sub Committees

Illegal Dumping & Litter Awareness and Crime Prevention & Personal Safety Sub Committee

The Chair of the Illegal Dumping & Litter Awareness and Crime Prevention & Personal Safety Sub Committee, Cllr. Michael Maher, outlined the areas considered at their Sub Committee's meeting held on 24th January 2020, which included:

- Illegal dumping and the requirement for additional resources to tackle same;
- Waste Collection – Householders to provide evidence of their waste collection provider;
- Social Media Illegal Dumping campaign – Large fines payable by illegal dumpers;
- Personal Safety and cyclists – Promotion of the usage of hi-vis, helmets and lights;
- Re-invigoration of Community Alert Schemes within villages/towns;
- GDPR & CCTV – Examination of the findings from the Data Commissioners Audit Report when received;
- Bottlebanks – Headford;
- Heavy Bulky Goods Disposal at Municipal District yards – Consideration to provide facilities at Council MD yards, from time to time, where householders could bring bulky goods for disposal for a minimum charge;
- County wide one-day Clean Up – Suggestion for groups to hold a 'Clean-Up' event on Good Friday;
- Drugs –Boards of Management of Schools to consider the introduction of drug testing within the school setting as a deterrent for young people.

Cllr. Maher thanked Ann Dolan, facilitator of the Sub Committee (Galway County Council), and the members of the Sub Committee for their participation and assistance to achieve the Committee's goals.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their informative update.

Mr. Larkin concurred with Cllr. Maher and said that the provision of skips in designated areas would be a great idea and hoped this initiative would be pursued further by the Sub Committee. Cllr. Keaveney said more discussion would be required regarding this proposal as the Tuam Council Office depot was limited to the items it can receive.

In relation to drug testing, Mr. Larkin said the Sub Committees suggestion should be explored further to perhaps include sporting organisations. Cllr. Charity questioned the proposal to introduce random drug testing in Schools, as considered it would be unconstitutional.

In relation to illegal dumping, Cllr. Charity requested a report be obtained from Galway County Council's Environment Section on the: Number of reports of Illegal Dumping; the Number of Detections made; Number of Prosecutions and Outcomes, for consideration at a future JPC meeting. He said illegal dumping should be penalised as it would provide a deterrent to illegal dumpers. Cllr. Carroll said there was a personal civic responsibility on each person to deter and not engage in illegal littering.

Education & Awareness Sub Committee

Deputising for Deputy Anne Rabbitte, Chair of the Education & Awareness Sub Committee, Cllr. Shelley Herterich-Quinn outlined the areas considered at their Sub Committee's meeting held on 24th January 2020.

She outlined the initiatives which were considered at that meeting:

- Personal Safety - Promotion of An Garda Síochána's 'National Community Engagement Day' on 31-01-2020;
- Highlighting / Promoting to the public of 'Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture' Opening Ceremonies, which was to take place from 02-02-2020 to 08-02-2020;
- Cyber Fraud Crime - Creating awareness and promoting 'Safer Internet Day' on 11-02-2020.

She said that other proposed initiatives/projects by the Sub Committee for 2020 would include:

- Linking in with the Western Region Drugs & Alcohol Task Force,
- Project with youth clubs/ sports clubs,
- Project with older persons,
- Project with farmers,
- Project with schools.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn thanked Deirdre Caulfield, facilitator of the Sub Committee (Galway County Council), and the members of the Sub Committee for their participation and assistance to achieve the Sub Committee's goals.

Item No. 4 – Report from An Garda Síochána:

Supt. Damien Ó'Flannacháin (deputising for Chief Supt. Thomás Curley) outlined the Garda Report for the period 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019, in comparison to the 2018 year.

Cllr. Byrne voiced his concern regarding speeding on approaches to villages/towns. He referenced Kinvara and Ballindereen and said traffic calming /flashing lights should be installed on the approach to densely populated areas. In reply, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin said there was a speed limit of 50km on approaches to most towns and villages but advised these areas of concern could be further examined. The Chair, Cllr. Cuddy, referred to the recent review of speed limits undertaken by Galway County Council which were being ignored by road-users and said speed vans were required on these roads.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn advised the meeting that a new task force on crime prevention was being established in Athenry together with several new Neighbourhood Watch groups to try to combat the crime in the area. She expressed serious concern at the ongoing depletion of local Gardaí in rural areas and explained that while Athenry's population had increased, the Garda presence had considerably reduced. She said the introduction of community policing, through the new Garda Divisional model, was vital but was not yet evident in rural areas. In reply, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin advised that the rollout of the new divisional policing model was ongoing but said it was expected that the new model would improve services to the public and provide a greater presence of Gardaí on the ground rather than them undertaking administration roles. He explained that some legislative changes would be required for some tasks. Supt. Ó'Flannacháin commended the Community Alert Schemes and repeated it was extremely helpful that people reported any unusual activity in their areas immediately to the Gardaí.

Cllr. Charity asked that areas where Garda Stations had been closed be considered for community policing personnel. In response, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin explained that every Garda was a community guard and advised that Chief Supt. Curley was continuously making a business case for additional resources to oversee the 46 Garda Stations across the City and County.

In response to Cllr. Herterich-Quinn's concern regarding anti-social behavior at Athenry train station, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin said this would be examined.

In reply to Cllr. Reddington's request for a Garda presence in Headford, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin advised that while resources were constantly under review, the request to re-examine Headford Garda Station's opening hours would be considered.

In reply to Cllr. Herterich-Quinn, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin explained the District Drugs Unit delivers Drugs Education Programmes to Secondary Schools but advised it was also necessary that parents/guardians provided drugs awareness/education to their children. He highlighted the general public's inaccurate perception that cocaine was not a harmful drug.

In reply to Cllrs. Charity and Murphy, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin said the value of the seizure of heroin was thankfully low in comparison to other drugs. He explained that while it was difficult to qualify this figure, he outlined the Gardaí work in co-operation with the HSE who have undertaken a lot of work around heroin and provide many supports in this area.

In reply to Cllr. Herterich-Quinn, Supt. Ó'Flannacháin said the provision of the Garda Dog Unit for the Galway Division was ongoing.

Item No. 5 – 2019 Annual Report of the Galway County JPC

Ms. Donohue presented the Galway County JPC Annual Report 2019 to the Committee.

She said the report was produced to reflect on the commitment and participation of the JPC Committee members and to summarise the actions undertaken and progress achieved by the Committee in 2019.

Ms. Donohue thanked An Garda Síochána for their very valued contributions and to each member of the JPC for their continuing support in fulfilling the role and purpose of the JPC and to Galway County Council for the administration of the Committee and to Ms. Deirdre Caulfield, Ms. Ann Dolan and Mr. Evan Kilroy for the facilitation of the sub committees of the JPC.

On the proposal of Cllr. Keaveney, seconded by Cllr. Reddington, it was agreed that the Annual Report of the Galway County JPC 2019 be considered for adoption at the February plenary County Council meeting.

Item No. 6 – Adoption of the Galway County JPC Annual Work Plan for 2020

Ms. Donohue presented the Draft Galway County JPC Annual Plan 2020 to the Committee.

She said the Annual Work Plan 2020 was produced to set out objectives for the Sub Committees to consider during 2020.

She explained it was an overall framework for the Sub Committees and the JPC Committee to highlight and reflect on the motions and issues which arise at the JPC Meetings and the approach to be taken to assist the addressing of these issues. She said that this Annual Work Plan was an ongoing working plan and the Sub Committees could still feed into this Plan to add additional actions.

On the proposal of Cllr. Herterich-Quinn, seconded by Cllr. Maher, the draft Galway County JPC Annual Work Plan for 2020 was agreed.

Item No. 7 – Schedule of dates for 2020 JPC Meetings

Ms. Donohue outlined provisional dates for future 2020 JPC Meetings to be held at 10am in County Hall, Galway County Council as follows:

- Monday, 20th April 2020
- Monday 15th June 2020
- Monday 14th September 2020

It was agreed that the Public Meeting of the JPC would take place on Monday 2nd November 2020 at 7pm with the venue to be determined in the Oranmore/Athenry area.

The Meetings Administrator to circulate these dates to the Committee.

Item No. 8 – Any Other Business

On the proposal of Cllr. Hoade, seconded by Cllr. Maher, it was agreed that a formal invitation be extended to the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, to address a future County JPC meeting at a date suitable to him.

Ms. Donohue advised that it is hoped to have Mr. Emmet Major, Regional Drugs Task Force, Galway, to speak to the Committee on their recent project – Planet YOUTH, at a future JPC meeting.

Presentation by Mr. Joe Treacy, Clinical Specialist in Addiction, HSE Mental Health, Galway:

The Chair, Cllr. Jim Cuddy, welcomed Mr. Joe Treacy, Clinical Specialist in Addiction, HSE Mental Health Galway. He said that his presentation may assist the Sub Committees, especially the Education & Awareness Sub Committees, in their work programmes for 2020 to see how the Sub Committee could assist in educating people around the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

Mr. Joe Treacy, provided an awareness talk on the current emerging trends and the addiction services available within Galway. He said he had worked in addiction services in Ireland, UK, and Australia for nearly 30 years.

The presentation by Mr. Treacy highlighted that the use of cocaine throughout Galway County and City was at epidemic levels with samples revealing a purity of 94%.

Mr. Treacy said engagement was vital from a health perspective or a generation would be lost. He said the proliferation and availability of drugs was never as easy.

In reply to questions raised, Mr. Treacy said the traction was minimal from drugs education programmes rolled out in Schools and said a residential treatment Centre was desperately

needed for Galway. He said that there had been no public addiction treatment service in Galway since a former facility at Merlin Park Hospital was burned down in 2012 and the effects were seriously being felt. He said it was hoped a new service would open in June, as €470,000 had been allocated for the project.

The Chair thanked Mr. Treacy on his very informed and illustrative presentation.

On the proposal of Cllr. Cuddy, seconded by Cllr. Charity, it was agreed that a letter issue to the HSE requesting that the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre in Galway City be re-opened as a matter of urgency.

CRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIÚ ANSIN.

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach County Galway Joint Policing Committee

Date: _____