

**COMHAIRLE CHONTE NA GAILLIMHE**

**Minutes of the Galway County Joint Policing Committee Meeting held in Áras an Chontae,  
Prospect Hill, Galway on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 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. Shelley Herterich-Quinn  
Cllr. Liam Carroll  
Comh. Dáithí O Cualáin  
Cllr. Gerry King  
Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire  
Cllr. Peter Roche  
Cllr. Karey McHugh Farag

***Deputies:*** None

***An Garda Síochána:*** Chief Supt. Thomás Curley  
Insp. Georgina Lohan  
Insp. Declan Rocke  
Insp. Peter Conlon  
Sgt. Mick Walsh  
Sgt. Sinead Cunniffe

***Community Reps:*** Mr. Gerard Larkin  
Mr. Pat Flanagan  
Mr. Gerard Costello

***Oifigigh:*** Mr. Alan Farrell, A/Director of Service  
Ms. Marian Donohue, Meetings Administrator, Corporate Services.

**Other Officials:** Ms. Ita Martyn, Corporate Services.  
Mr. Emmett Major, West Regional Task Force.

***Apologies:*** Deputy Anne Rabbitte  
Deputy Noel Grealish  
Deputy Catherine Connolly  
Cllr. Colm Keaveney  
Cllr. PJ Murphy  
Mr. Aodán MacDonncha  
Mr. Martin Ward  
Mr. Thomas Madden  
Ms. Aileen Heverin.

Cllr. Cuddy welcomed all to the Meeting and referred to the pandemic COVID 19 which led to the cancellation of the April JPC Meeting. He acknowledged the exemplary role undertaken by An Garda Síochána throughout the Coronavirus crisis to protect lives. He expressed the appreciation of the Committee for the professional and sensitive manner they undertook their role in challenging times. He expressed condolences to all the families who were bereaved due to the pandemic - may their souls Rest in Peace.

Members of the Galway County JPC Committee concurred with the Cllr. Cuddy to express their thanks for the role An Garda Síochána played and was continuing to play during the COVID 19 pandemic.

**Item No. 1 – Minutes of the JPC Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Charity, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 be adopted.

*Matters arising from the Minutes:*

In reply to Comh. Ó'Cualain, Chief Supt. Curley explained that some interest had been expressed from Gardaí in other counties to transfer to positions at Leitir Mór and An Spidéal, where a high level of Irish was required, but a corresponding transfer by Gardaí from Galway to these counties would be required to facilitate these transfers.

With regard to the deployment of member of the Gardaí from the Salthill Station to An Spidéal, Chief Supt. Curley advised that members from An Cheathrú Rua station were assisting the Leitir Mór station. Inspector Conlon advised that a Sergeant had been temporarily redeployed from Salthill to An Spidéal.

In reply to Cllr. Carroll's query in relation to Community Liaison Gardaí, Chief Supt. Curley outlined that a job specification was awaited from the Garda Community Relations/Human Resource Management Sections and once received, the recruitment process could proceed for the Community Liaison Gardaí in the Galway Division which should be finalised by Q3 2020.

Chief Supt. Curley advised that a business case had been made for one additional Superintendent to be appointed and a Superintendent would be in place for Galway City (to include Millstreet, Salthill and Murrough HQ), Galway East (Tuam, Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Gort) and Galway West (Oranmore, Athenry, Loughgeorge, Monivea, Clifden District and Salthill District).

Cllr. Reddington welcomed the visible Garda presence in Headford during COVID 19 and said it was very positive for the area. Chief Supt. Curley advised the during the pandemic, the roster was reduced from 5 to 4 units which allowed for an additional 20% garda presence on the ground. He explained that the 5 Unit pilot roster had been in place since 2013 but this was currently being reviewed by the Asst. Commissioner, Barry O'Brien, and his recommendations were awaited.

In reply to Cllr. King's concerns regarding speeding on approaches to villages/towns, Chief Supt. Curley said An Garda Síochána would support any Council initiative to reduce speed in any area. Mr. Farrell said he would refer his concern to the Roads Department.

In reply to Cllr. Herterich Quinn, Mr. Farrell said no findings had been received from the Data Commissioner's audit of Galway County Council.

## **Item No. 2 – 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 to the meeting, the waste management and enforcement duties continued to be undertaken during the COVID 19 pandemic and outlined the following:

- *CCTV at Bring Banks* – Galway County Council have been advised by the Dept. that local authorities were not to use CCTV until further notice. Mr. Maher advised that the Councils Environment Section were still doing all they could to discourage illegal dumping through awareness campaigns and audio devices at bring banks.
- *Illegal Dumping Stats* – Identified a limited increase in Galway but nationally there had been a 20-25% increase in illegal dumping, which may be due to the increased numbers of people out in the countryside due to the pandemic and who were reporting when they observed illegal dumping.
- *Waste Presentation Byelaws* – As the implementation of these Byelaws involved house to house calls and interviews with the occupants, Galway County Council is not in a position to carry out this work until further notice due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Cllr. Maher said the provision of Recycling Centres in each Municipal District would assist in tackling illegal dumping.

Cllr. Maher thanked Ann Dolan, facilitator of the Sub Committee (Galway County Council), and the Director, Ms. Eileen Ruane, and staff of the Environment Section for their role in tackling illegal dumping. He advised that the statistics in relation to illegal dumping in County Galway for 2019 and 2020 had been circulated to each Member of the County Galway Joint Policing Committee.

The Chair thanked the Committee for the informative update.

Cllr. Roche welcomed the recent funding allocated to Galway County Councils Environment Section as only limited Councils were successful but said the problem of illegal dumping had

deteriorated during the Covid-19 pandemic. He sought clarification on how the figure of 1221 complaints registered on the Environmental Complaints Database was determined, if the statistics were based on those filed by the Community Wardens or members of the public.

Cllr. Roche said that additional resources were necessary for the Environment Section to meaningfully tackle illegal dumping. Mr. Farrell advised the meeting that the sum of €128k had been secured by Galway County Council for anti-litter campaigns with a number of projects currently in progress.

Cllr. Charity expressed concern with the Department's recommendation to cease the use of CCTV footage, as the presence of CCTV as a detection and deterrent tool was vital to stop this type of activity. Cllr. Herterich Quinn said CCTV was a necessary tool for the detection and deterrent of illegal dumping. Pat Flanagan concurred and said that the Data Protection Office needed to issue further guidance on the use of CCTV footage. Mr. Farrell concurred that CCTV was an important tool and the Council would work with An Garda Síochána but explained that the Council was awaiting a report from the Data Protection Commissioners office on the implications for GDPR on the use of CCTV footage.

Mr. Larkin concurred with Cllr. Maher regarding the provision of Recycling Centres in Municipal Districts. He proposed, in the interim, that each Municipal District provide skips at specific designated locations where one could drop off waste. He referred to a similar initiative undertaken by the IFA with regard to silage wrap. He expressed concern at a recent newspaper article where it was outlined that of 32 apartments in Gort, only 5 had bins and said this was unacceptable. Mr. Farrell advised he would raise these suggestions with the respective Director of Service Environment and suggested that these matters should be raised and considered further at the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC and at JPC Sub Committee level.

Cllr. Byrne concurred and said the DOS Environment had confirmed a plan was to be initiated where households must confirm how they comply with the Byelaws and this was welcomed. He expressed concern regarding an unauthorised dump on the outskirts of Gort (entrance to the Punchbowl estate) which must be dealt with. Comh. Mac an Iomaire said it was not acceptable that persons travel to Connemara to dump their rubbish in the bogs in Connemara.

Cllr. Hoade asked if skips could be provided to communities to undertake clean ups that they were unable to do in Spring due to COVID 19. She welcomed any initiative where households were asked to show proof of how they dispose of their household waste. Mr. Farrell said that the Spring Clean Ups had been suspended due to Covid-19 but would be soon resumed.

In reply to Cllr. McHugh Farag, Chief Supt. Curley advised that dashcam footage would not stand up in a court of law and would have to be backed up by a statement.

## **Education & Awareness Sub Committee**

Deputising for Deputy Anne Rabbitte, Chair of the Education & Awareness Sub Committee, Cllr. Shelley Herterich-Quinn outlined to the meeting, the Sub Education and Awareness initiatives held to date in 2020, which included:

- 31/01/2020 – An Garda Síochána’s National ‘Community Engagement Day’ - Keeping People Safe;
- 02/02-08/02/2020 – Promotion of Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture Opening Ceremonies;
- 11/02/2020 – Promotion of ‘Safer Internet Day 2020’ – initiative of the European Commission ‘Together for a Better Internet’. Sgt. P. Ryan dedicated the weekly Garda Radio Slot on ‘Galway Talks’, Galway Bay FM, to this topic and gave advice on Phishing and Invoice Fraud;
- 12/02/2020 – Tweet on free High Visibility Material available from the Council Offices, courtesy of the Road Safety Authority – ‘Be Seen, Be Safe’ Initiative;
- 27/02/2020 – ‘Personal Safety & Home Security’ – members of An Garda Síochána’s Community Policing Unit and AIB Bank, Tuam Road, Galway, held an Information Briefing at Cregg Community Centre, Corrandulla, which advised older persons on the topics of personal safety and home security;
- 06/04/2020 – ‘Community Response Forum’ – Promotion of Galway Co. Council’s COVID-19 Community Response Forum detailing contact information;
- 05/05/2020 – Road safety awareness message for Cyclists – appeal to motorists to reduce their speeds and to share the roads with these vulnerable road users;
- 18/05/2020 – Promotion of ‘Stay Safe-Stay Strong-Stay Separate’ – COVID-19;
- 12/06/2020 - Road safety awareness message – appeal to motorists ‘Don’t Drink and Drive’;

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. 3 – Report from An Garda Síochána:**

Chief Supt. Thomás Curley outlined the Garda Report for the period 1st January 2019 to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020, in comparison to the 2019 year.

Chief Supt Curley advised the meeting that the Galway Division would be enhanced with a new Garda Dog Support Unit to be in place by year end, as two dogs had been secured for the county and city.

Cllr. Charity welcomed the arrival of the Dog Unit to Galway as he hoped it would assist in the curbing of drug use within Galway. In concurrence with Cllr. Charity, Chief Supt. Curley said that courts had been very accommodating to Gardaí during the Covid-19 pandemic and the service provided was top-class.

In reply to Cllr. McHugh-Farag, Chief Supt. Curley advised the meeting that while Covid-19 may have been a factor for the decline in drug possession figures, he said the issue was still rife in every town and village in the county.

Cllr. Hoade referred to the 79 cases of fraud reported and cautioned people to be aware when undertaking online shopping and to only buy from reputable sites. She expressed her thanks and paid tribute to Supt. Marie Skehill who recently retired and wished her and her family the very best.

With regard to the increase in domestic violence incidents, Chief Supt. Curley said the Division had a 95% rate of call backs to each domestic violence report within 7 days. Cllr. Hoade welcomed the call back rate and encouraged people to come forward and report domestic violence as people needed reassurance to know that support was available. Cllr. Herterich-Quinn welcomed any support that could be made available to victims/witnesses of domestic violence.

In reply to Cllr. King, Chief Supt. Curley said a business case had been made for additional Garda cars as high Garda visibility does deter speeding.

In reply to Comh. Ó'Cualáin, Chief Supt. Curley advised that five people were charged under emergency Garda powers for failing to comply with public health guidelines during the lockdown, with a further 40-50 files being prepared for the DPP arising out of possible breaches of the Government lockdown rules. He explained that members of An Garda Síochána used the four E's policing Covid-19: Engage, Educate, Encourage and lastly, Enforce.

#### **Item No. 4 – Any Other Business - Correspondence**

Ms. Donohue advised the meeting that outlined the correspondence received which included:

- Correspondence relating to an Online Public Consultation Strategy being launched by the Department of Justice and Equality to inform the development of the first ever Strategy for the Criminal Justice System. The Strategy aims to further embed a culture of collaborative working amongst the agencies that make up the Irish criminal justice system with an essential part of this consultation process is obtaining the views of members of the public. This online consultation process offers the public and other

interested parties, the chance to have their say on the proposed direction of this Strategy.

Ms. Donohue outlined the three dates for the interactive online consultation events to the meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 15<sup>th</sup> July.

- Reply from the Chief Officer, Community Healthcare West, Merlin Park, Galway dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 which outlined that there were no plans to reopen the Addiction Treatment Centre at Merlin and the development of a network of community-based addiction services would be considered a higher priority.

Cllr. Carroll expressed his disappointment with the response from Community Healthcare West. He said it was his understanding that €470,000 had been allocated by the Government last year to rebuild the Centre. The Chair, Cllr. Cuddy, and Comh. Ó' Cualáin concurred and said clarity should be sought.

On the proposal of Cllr. Cuddy, seconded by Cllr. Carroll, it was agreed that a letter issue to the HSE requesting clarity on how it proposed to spend the funding allocation of €470,000.

**Presentation by Mr. Emmet Major, Regional Drugs Task Force, Galway, on the project – Planet YOUTH:**

Mr. Emmet Major advised the meeting that the Planet YOUTH project was a public health project that used an approach called primary prevention, with the aim is to improve the health and happiness of young people in our communities and assist them in achieving their potential. He explained that Planet Youth started in Iceland 20 years ago with the aim of reducing high levels of drug and alcohol use by young people.

He referred to a survey completed in October 2018 with 4,480 15/16-year-olds in all schools in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. The survey had 79 detailed questions with the local risk and protective factors identified using this Planet Youth questionnaire. He said the first Irish results were published in May 2019 with a lot of positives which included: Time with parents, Relationships at home, Community safety, School experience, with some things that need attention: Sleep, Screen time, Mental health and Alcohol. He said a further study would be undertaken in October 2020.

He referenced the Strategy & Implementation Framework which provides a clear vision and strategy for the Planet Youth programme with the aim to support stakeholders in adhering to the Planet Youth model and become part of embracing a prevention approach to young people's alcohol and drug use.

The Chair, Cllr. Jim Cuddy thanked Mr. Emmet Major for his informed and illustrative presentation and said it was important to support Programmes that could assist in educating people around the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Cllr. Maher and Cllr. Reddington

welcomed the project and looked forward to the results following the October 2020 survey and they appealed to all Schools to embrace the survey.

**Next Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – Venue to be determined.**

The Chair, Cllr. Cuddy informed that meeting that a formal invitation had be extended to the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, to address a future County JPC meeting and it was expected that he would attend the next JPC Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**CRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIÚ ANSIN.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Cathaoirleach County Galway Joint Policing Committee***

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_