

County Kildare Joint Policing Committee – Public Meeting

Draft Minutes of County Kildare Public Joint Policing Committee Meeting

The Glenroyal Hotel – Maynooth
Monday 5th December 2016

Members Present:

Cllr. Martin Miley Jnr.	Chairperson
Cllr. Aoife Breslin	Vice Chairperson
Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin	An Garda Síochána
Peter Carey	Chief Executive, KCC
Peter Minnock	Director of Services
Cllr. Pdraig McEvoy	
Cllr. Fintan Brett	
Cllr. Carmel Kelly	
Cllr. Michael Coleman	
Cllr. Tim Durkan	
Cllr. Anne Breen	
Cllr. Íde Cussen	
Cllr. Anthony Larkin	
Dep. Catherine Murphy	
Dep. Bernard Durkan	
Dep. James Lawless	
Dep. Fiona O'Loughlin	
Dep. Frank O'Rourke	
Steven Joyce	SW Regional Drugs Task Force
Sean D'Arcy	Celbridge Community Council
Emma Berney	Children & Young People's Services Committee

In attendance:

Josephine Feehily	Chairperson, The Policing Authority
Superintendent Martin Walker	An Garda Síochána
Superintendent Gerard Wall	An Garda Síochána
Detective Inspector Paul Dolan	An Garda Síochána
Inspector John Costello	An Garda Síochána
Inspector Oliver Henry	An Garda Síochána
Sergeant George Doherty	An Garda Síochána
Sergeant Eoin Phibbs	An Garda Síochána
Sergeant John Flaherty	An Garda Síochána
Sergeant Paul Mayock	An Garda Síochána
Garda Jane Ryan	An Garda Síochána
Cllr. Brendan Weld	
Cllr. Daragh Fitzpatrick	
Cllr. Reáda Cronnin	
JP Holligan	Community Section
Eileen Doyle	Community Section
Syl Merrins	Kildare Sports Partnership
Bernard Higgins	Community Section
Pauric Buggy	Community Section

Ciara Gallagher

Community Section

Members of the public were invited to this JPC meeting. Those attending numbered up to 50, subsequently these members of the public participated in the workshop sessions.

Apologies:

Superintendent Declan McCarthy

An Garda Síochána

Councillor Mark Stafford

Deputy Martin Heydon

Item 1 – Welcome and Format/Overview of the Evening

The Chairperson, Councillor Martin Miley Jnr. welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the format of the meeting and gave an overview of the evenings speakers. Cllr. Miley acknowledged the tragic incident involving Ms. Kym Owens and expressed his and the committees sympathies to Ms. Owens, her family and the communities of Castleblayney and Maynooth.

Item 2 – Minutes of the JPC meeting dated 24th October 2016.

The minutes from the last JPC Meeting held on the 24th October 2016 were formally adopted as proposed by Councillor Fintan Brett and seconded by Councillor Anne Breen.

Item 3 - Policing Report

Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin presented the Policing Report, (report attached). Chief Superintendent McPolin updated the members on the crime figures for the year to date. He informed the meeting that the 6 Year Strategy was adopted in July and detailed its objectives and the priorities which provide a planning framework for working together with communities and extensive interaction with agencies such as Kildare County Council. Chief Superintendent McPolin also spoke about Garda resources noting the new staff recruited and future recruitment planned for 2017.

The Chairperson thanked Chief Superintendent McPolin for the presentation.

Item 4 – Update from Municipal Districts

Naas MD – Councillor Fintan Brett

Cllr. Brett informed the meeting that anti-social behaviour and illegal encampments are two areas of difficulty in the Naas Municipal District. . Cllr. Brett thanked Superintendent McCarthy and Sergeant Goode for their work in the area and noted the success of the JPC. Cllr. Brett extended the good wishes of the district to Chief Superintendent McPolin in his transfer.

Kildare/Newbridge MD – Councillor Suzanne Doyle

Cllr. Doyle stated that the issues affecting this district were mainly public order offences, drugs and anti-social behaviour. Cllr. Doyle commended the JPC and its engagement at local level. Cllr. Doyle thanked Sergeant Flaherty and Chief Superintendent McPolin and made a plea to Josephine Feehily for more Garda resources.

Celbridge/Leixlip MD – Councillor Michael Coleman

Cllr. Coleman highlighted the population of Celbridge and Leixlip as being similar to that of a metropolitan area with Ardclough being the only rural area in the district. Cllr. Coleman detailed the most challenging problems in the district to be anti-social behaviour, public property damage, damage to the playground in Celbridge, damage to cars and litter. Cllr. Coleman asked how as a community can we help or what can be done, would CCTV be helpful and if local businesses should be required to take more responsibilities in helping with some of the above issues. Cllr. Coleman also mentioned the positive community events that had taken place in 2016 such as the festivals in June in both Celbridge and Leixlip and the Christmas lights. Cllr. Coleman thanked the Gardaí of the district, Superintendent Wall and his staff for their help and co-operation.

Athy MD – Councillor Aoife Breslin

Cllr. Breslin began by thanking Superintendent Walker and Sergeant Bergin for all their work in the district. Cllr. Breslin detailed the positive work by Gardaí in the district which is mostly rural with pockets of urban areas, this work included resolving issues of anti-social behaviour, problem solving in some housing estates and identifying and dealing with incidents of poaching. Cllr. Breslin noted that they understand that resources are tight but help is always offered, she also posed the idea of Community Policing as back up to the local Gardaí.

Maynooth MD – Councillor Tim Durkan

Cllr. Durkan represented the district of Maynooth he commended Superintendent Wall on how he handled the recent tragic attack in the area. Cllr. Durkan expressed the importance of the 'in committee' nature of the JPC/MD meetings for the exchange of vital information for the safety of the community. Cllr. Durkan thanked the Gardaí for being proactive against crime.

The Chairperson thanked all the district representatives for their updates and emphasised the common theme of sharing information is a great example of communities working together.

Item 5 – Guest Speaker – Josephine Feehily, the Policing Authority

Ms. Josephine Feehily, Chairperson of the Policing Authority presented an overview of the work of the Policing Authority (presentation attached).and informed the meeting that the role of the Policing Authority is to “oversee the performance of An Garda Síochana in relation to policing services, to promote public awareness of policing matters and to promote and support the continuous improvements in policing in Ireland.

Ms. Feehily outlined the functions and detailed their Policing Priorities for 2017 to be: confronting crime, community policing and public safety, roads policing and organisational development and capacity improvement. The report detailed the Policing Authority’s vision, mission, values and work which is in progress currently such as developing a Code of Ethics for Gardaí and developing a framework to enable the assessment of policing performance/work in progress. Ms. Feehily spoke of The Policing Authorities function in relation to JPCs these included issuing guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of JPCs, convening meetings of JPC chairs, co-ordinating/facilitating the performance of their functions and receiving annual reports from JPCs no later than three months after the end of each year. Ms. Feehily commended County Kildare JPC for its dynamic work and complimented the 6 Year Strategy Plan. Ms. Feehily wished Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin all the best of luck with his return to Cork and thanked him for a safe and well policed Kildare.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Feehily for her presentation.

Item 6– Worksop – “What are your priorities for creating a safer community”

The meeting convened into a “Round Table Format” where all attendees discussed the following items:

- 1. What are the top three things you would like the Joint Policing Committee to address in 2017?**

The following issues were an example of the topics discussed:

- The issue of Garda resources was prevalent from all attendees with much discussion from all tables on this matter calling for more resources.
- Designated opening times for Garda Stations in North Kildare as members voiced their anger at the fact that when they go to Garda stations during opening hours they can often be closed as Gardaí are out dealing with incidents on the ground.
- There was a call for the re-instatement of Community Gardaí who are viewed as a valuable asset to the community.
- Increased numbers of Garda patrols in Maynooth and co-operation with Maynooth University with regard to anti-social behaviour from students.

- The need for representation from Maynooth Community Council on the JPC.
 - A greater emphasis on the issue of street begging.
 - There was a call for the upgrade of the radio room in Kildare
2. **Have you any questions you would like to ask the Chairperson of the Policing Authority?**

The following issues were an example of the topics discussed:

- How to get civilianisation of Garda administration duties.
- How appropriate is it for a community group to ask The Policing Authority about station opening times, community policing resourcing and activities. Need a two hour ring fenced period during the day in some stations.
- How can the Policing Authority help Kildare to obtain to increase Garda resources as Kildare has the lowest in the country.
- What difference do you envisage at the end of 2017 or changes you have implemented
- To contribute to public confidence in reporting to An Garda Síochána, that the data reported to the Policing Authority reflect the quantity of calls submitted to An Garda Síochána not just those that produce a pulse number.

Item 7 – Feedback Session

1.

Chief Superintendent McPolin informed the meeting that Kildare have received 35 probational Gardaí since the moratorium on recruitment ended last year and he added that the pressure from local representatives and from the Community Policing in North Kildare Action Group is working to secure more resources.

Superintendent Gerry Wall gave his commitment at the meeting that two hours a week would be given to part time Garda Stations (that are not open 24 hours), such as Celbridge, Kilcock and Maynooth in order to deal with public enquires at designated opening times. This news was greatly appreciated by all attendees of the meeting.

Chief Superintendent McPolin stated that three Community Gardaí would soon be delivered to the county with one going to Leixlip and the intention of a second being appointed in Maynooth. He informed the meeting that there is a competition presently underway for the selection of a sergeant and three Gardaí to set up a community policing unit in Kildare Garda Division and it is expected to be up and running in early 2017.

Chief Superintendent McPolin stated that another area where improvements are to be made is the upgrade of the radio room in the Kildare Division which will be modernised over the next year. All calls have to be recorded manually at the moment and that the system will soon be

turning electronic and that would mean that all calls and incidents recorded will be then given a pulse I.D. number.

2.

Ms Feehily responded to the questions posed to her and explained the priority areas for 2017. She explained that the matter of civilisation of administration duties is a matter for the Garda Commissioner but that the suggestion of using retired members of the force to work in this area is a lot more complex. She welcomed the news of upgrade of the radio system in the Kildare District which she stated, would contribute to more accurate recording of data. Ms Feehily again reiterated that the community engagement and confidence contribute to the mission of the Authority “to drive excellent policing through valued and effective oversight and governance.

Item 8 - Meeting Schedule for 2017

The Meeting Schedule for the JPC for 2017 is as follows; 6th March, 12th June, 4th September and 4th December 2017.

The Chairperson, Councillor Martin Miley Jnr. thanked everyone for their participation and engagement in the evening noting that co-operation with public representatives and the community is vital in order to better our communities. Councillor Miley again thanked Josephine Feehily for attending and speaking at the meeting. Councillor Miley also thanked Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin for his work in Kildare and wished him all the best of luck and every success in his move to Cork.

The meeting concluded.