

Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 3rd March 2020
Aras Chill Dara, Naas

Members in Attendance:

Name:	Representing:
Cllr. Fintan Brett (Chair)	Elected Member
Cllr. Aoife Breslin (Vice Chair)	Elected Member
Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy	Elected Member
Cllr. Chris Pender	Elected Member
Cllr. Fiona McLoughlin-Healy	Elected Member
Cllr. Anne Connolly	Elected Member
Cllr. Bernard Caldwell	Elected Member
Cllr. Brian Dooley	Elected Member
Cllr. Vincent P Martin	Elected Member
Dep. Réada Cronin	Oireachtas Member
Peter Carey	Kildare County Council
Sonya Kavanagh	Kildare County Council
Supt. Oliver Henry	An Garda Síochána
Monica Cox	Kildare Older Persons Council
Michael Corcoran	Public Participation Network
Apologies:	
Chief Supt. John Scanlan	An Garda Síochána
Cllr. Ciara Galvin	Elected Member
Dep. Martin Heydon	Oireachtas Member
Emma Berney	CYPSC

Also in attendance: Supt. Gerard Wall, Sgt. Gavin Dunphy, Sgt. Paul Reilly and Ins. John Fitzgerald.

Meeting Coordinator: John Shannon / Meeting Administrator: Ciara Gallagher

Minutes / Matters Arising:

The minutes of the Annual Public Meeting held on Monday 2nd December 2019 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy, seconded by Cllr. Aoife Breslin.

Cllr. Brett confirmed that going forward all reports, when received, will be circulated to all committee members.

Cllr. McLoughlin Healy asked that a review of this JPC's proceedings be carried out to confirm if it is operating in accordance with the JPC Guidelines as published. Cllr. Brett suggested that a clarification document could be issued to the members. Cllr. Brett also directed the members to kildarejointpolicing.ie advising them that all policing reports, minutes, events and other useful information is available on this platform.

Chairperson's business:

Nominations to CCTV sub-committee:

Cllr. Brett advised that four members of the committee were no longer in a position to continue and the JPC could replace them if that was considered necessary. On her own proposal, seconded by Cllr. Pender, Cllr. Healy McLoughlin was nominated to the CCTV sub-committee.

Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 3rd March 2020

Aras Chill Dara, Naas

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to circulate an invitation for nominations by e-mail to all JPC members.

Proposal to invite Judge Desmond Zaidan to a JPC meeting:

Cllr. Brett indicated that he thought it would be useful to invite a member of the judiciary to a JPC meeting to get their views on areas of policing issues and law and order generally. Proposed by Cllr. Brett and seconded by Cllr. McLoughlin Healy, it was agreed to write to the judge and invite him to attend.

Correspondence:

The committee noted the letter from Commissioner Drew Harris confirming he would attend the December meeting. The committee agreed to identify areas for discussion at its September meeting.

Policing Report:

Supt. Wall presented the policing report with relevant statistics comparing Q4 2019 with Q4 2018. Statistical details were given in relation to property crime, crime against the person, criminal damage / public order offences, drugs / weapons offences and road traffic incidents.

There were several questions and points raised in relation to this report:-

- The statistics do not include sexual crimes or cyber-bullying which is a significant offence amongst younger people which needs to be captured
- The overall numbers seemed to be improving which could be related to better Garda resources in the division
- The statistics need to better reflect crime trends rather than a simple comparison year-on-year
- There are no local policing fora in Co. Kildare to allow local issues to be raised
- Crime numbers appeared to be significantly higher in the Kildare district
- The JPC should be agreeing specific actions based on the agenda items as per the guidelines

Supt. Henry and Supt. Wall (and other Garda personnel) and Cllr. Brett answered the queries raised:

- JPC members can contact Gardaí directly at any time with issues of concern
- The quarterly in-camera MD meetings are extremely useful for discussing local issues not appropriate to a public JPC meeting as specific localities could be identified
- General issues raised at MD meetings can be listed for JPC meetings if requested
- The local MD meetings effectively act as local policing fora
- There is a dedicated burglary unit based in Kildare
- An improved economy has led to an increase in some offence categories
- Clarification on submitting items will be issued to members

Questions and motions:

The two motions related to Garda resources in Newbridge and Athy respectively. Several points were made by members:-

Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 3rd March 2020

Aras Chill Dara, Naas

- Newbridge does not have a dedicated drugs unit and it does not have a full-time community police officer and is significantly under-resourced compared to Naas
- There is ongoing anti-social behaviour and related issues in specific parts of Newbridge which is causing significant concern locally and has been the subject of several meetings
- A successful operation in Kilkenny using all available Garda personnel should be repeated in Athy
- Additional Garda numbers allocated have been reduced by transfers out of the area
- Could new Gardaí be dedicated to Newbridge to bring up numbers?
- Are there CAB officers working in any area of Kildare or are they just based in Dublin?

In response, Supt. Henty and Supt. Wall (and other Garda personnel) made the following points:-

- Resources are secured on a divisional basis in the first instance and are assigned by senior Garda management as required
- Core policing functions must always be covered
- There is an ongoing request for additional resources for the division
- There are burglary units in Kildare, Athy and Newbridge
- There is a drugs unit for the district
- New Gardaí are being assigned from each batch of recruits to Co. Kildare
- Multi-agency operations do take place in Co. Kildare
- There are asset profilers in the division who can report to CAB

Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed to write to Commissioner Drew Harris regarding the lower Garda numbers in Co. Kildare generally.

Update on Text Alert Scheme:

Sgt. Gavin Dunphy advised that several options are being considered by an ad-hoc committee for a new text alert scheme to replace the current system. He advised the indicative costs based on a model rolled out in Co. Monaghan which assumes the KCC could provide appropriate IT and administrative support. Sonya Kavanagh requested that community staff be kept informed of developments as the capacity to manage a new system would have to be assessed.

Community CCTV:

Sgt. Paul Reilly confirmed that several groups were significantly advanced with planning and might be able to submit applications soon if the current issues around data protection, technical specifications and links to Garda stations could be clarified.

Sonya Kavanagh confirmed that funding from the Dept. of Justice and Equality for the scheme would continue in 2020.

Cllr. McEvoy requested that the CCTV sub-committee meet as soon as possible to assess the current situation in the county.

Michael Corcoran expressed concerns about the conditions being placed on the community groups who wish to implement this scheme, particularly the 5-year cost of maintaining CCTV and insurance costs.

Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 3rd March 2020
Aras Chill Dara, Naas

AOB:

- Cllr. Brett noted that Supt. Gerry Wall was due to retire soon, and this would be his last JPC meeting. Several committee members and the Chief Executive spoke to wish him a long and happy retirement.
- It was confirmed that apologies had been received from Chief Superintendent Scanlan who could not attend.

Next meeting: Monday 8th June 2020 – 3.00 p.m. – Áras Chill Dara.

JL Brett
14/9/2020.