

Kildare Joint Policing Committee Minutes of Meeting

3.00 p.m. Monday 6th March 2023
Council Chamber

Members in Attendance:

Name:	Representing:
Cllr. Aoife Breslin (Chair)	Elected Member
Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy	Elected Member
Cllr. Bernard Caldwell	Elected Member
Cllr. Anne Connolly	Elected Member
Cllr. Colm Kenny	Elected Member
Cllr. Ciara Galvin	Elected Member
Cllr. Chris Pender	Elected Member
Cllr. Fiona McLoughlin Healy	Elected Member
Sonya Kavanagh	KCC
Marian Higgins	KCC
Supt. Oliver Henry	An Garda Síochána
Chief Supt. John Scanlan	An Garda Síochána
Dep. James Lawless	Oireachtas Member
Dep. Martin Heydon	Oireachtas Member
Michael Corcoran	PPN
Conor O'Leary	Muintir Na Tíre
Steven Joyce	SWRDATE

Apologies	
Cllr. Fintan Brett (Chairperson)	Elected Member
Dep. Patricia Ryan	Oireachtas Member
Sen. Vincent Martin	Oireachtas Member
Emma Berney	CYPSC

An Garda Síochána: Supt. Paul Burke, Ins. Tony Connaughton, Insp. Ronan McDonald.

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

JL Brett
12/6/2023

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NOTE: *In the absence of Cllr. Brett, Cllr. Aoife Breslin chaired the meeting.
Cllr. Breslin commenced proceedings by wishing a speedy recovery to Cllr. Brett on behalf of all JPC committee members.*

1. Minutes / Matters Arising:

The minutes of the quarterly meeting held on Monday 5th September 2022 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Pdraig McEvoy, seconded by Dep. Bernard Durkan (no amendments). (The format of recent policing reports to municipal districts was raised by several members at this point. The reports contained simple percentage changes for incidents categories rather than actual figures and a return to the previous format was requested).

2. Chairperson's business/correspondence:

Cllr. Breslin reminded the members of two recent emails sent out by the JPC administrator. One concerned the provisions of the Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Bill and the other included a soft copy of the revised 2022 JPC guidelines. Cllr. Breslin advised that hard copies of the guidelines were available as required.

3. Policing Report:

Chief Superintendent Scanlan presented the policing report with relevant statistics comparing Q4 2022 with Q4 2021. 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 presenting his report, the chief noted that in general incidents had increased across most categories but were not yet at pre-Covid levels. He advised that two specialist drugs units would be set up for north and south Kildare in the next few weeks, with Kildare being very vulnerable due to its proximity to Dublin. In relation to the domestic violence figures, the chief urged persons in difficult situations to apply to the courts for any appropriate order they could in order to protect themselves as far as possible.

Cllr. Breslin opened the discussion to the floor and several questions were asked in relation to the contents of the report and policing matters generally:

- The number of public order offences seemed to have increased significantly.
- After the CSO has produced its small area statistics from Census 2022, it might be useful to re-examine allocation of resources.
- It is important to ensure that non-nationals were not being specifically associated with burglaries to the exclusion of other persons or groups.
- Were there specific figures for hate crimes?

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- How are thefts of modern scooters and similar vehicles being categorised as they are not pedal cycles?
- Is there a breakdown of drug-driving as opposed to drink-driving offences?
- Failure to report hate crimes could be linked to a mistrust of Gardaí based on previous experiences
- Are there statistics specifically for purchasing drugs or drug paraphernalia, perhaps using the internet?
- The chief superintendent was thanked for his support of Muintir na Tíre and the text alert service generally
- Is there a timeline for the community engagement areas to be rolled out in Kildare?
- Are calls for assistance to local Garda stations being routed to Waterford?
- Experienced staff transferring out of the division should ideally be replaced by other experienced staff rather than by new recruits only.
- The waiting times on court days can impede persons wishing to apply for protective orders.
- Anti-refugee protestors are not from local communities and have not been welcomed by them
- The Gardaí actions at recent protests were appreciated.
- What would be the impact of the new drugs units on local resources?

Chief Supt. Scanlan answered the questions raised and some of the points made were as follows:

- Garda numbers had improved in the county, but resources are always an issue due to an increasing population and Kildare's location.
- The community engagement units would be set up shortly but the planned changes to structures will require additional senior officers and business cases are being made to Garda HQ in this regard.
- The control room in Waterford is best placed to see what units are available at any given time and will react accordingly.
- Emergencies should always be notified via the 999 service.
- The new drugs units would be filled by appointment of local personnel in the first instance and expressions of interest are being sought.
- Drug purchases are being intercepted and Gardaí have made arrests at delivery addresses

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4. Overview of the Sale of Alcohol Bill 2022

Dep. James Lawless, who is the chair, gave a background to the workings of the Dáil's justice committee and outlined its preparation of the draft bill. The deputy noted that current legislation in this area was complex, antiquated, inconsistent and increasingly out of step with modern life. It is hoped the bill will lead to the creation of a single piece of legislation to regulate the sale of alcohol. The committee has invited all relevant parties to contribute to the debate and further submissions will be welcome before the draft legislation is finally published.

Some of the main provisions are:

- Standard opening hours of 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 a.m. seven days per week
- Annual permits to replace applications for specific exemptions.
- Protections for staff working in the night-time economy
- Practice of extinguishment of licences to be abandoned.
- New cultural/amenity licences for events in non-traditional locations

A number of members commented on the presentation and concerns around transport, Garda resourcing, drink-driving and effects on local communities were discussed.

5. CCTV update:

Supt. Henry updated the meeting on the status of the Clane Community Council CCTV project. He advised that the consultant had commenced work in Clane, and a preliminary report was imminent. It was agreed that a meeting of the CCTV sub-committee should be called in the near future to discuss the Clane report as it would provide a model for other groups to follow. Cllr. McEvoy confirmed that the Clane CCTV project will be compliant with all data protection requirements. Sonya Kavanagh gave a brief explanation of the background to a fine issued to KCC by the data protection commissioner recently and confirmed the issues that arose would not impact the community CCTV scheme.

6. Community Text Alert Update:

Cllr. McEvoy (for Cllr. Brett) informed the meeting that a number of public meetings had been held to publicise the new system and that community Gardaí are continuing to link in with groups as required. Michael Corcoran confirmed that Inspector Gavin Dunphy was very active in this area and the service and the Cairde app has been operating for a number of weeks.

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7. A.O.B.

At the close of the meeting, Councillor Breslin presented a small gift to Chief Superintendent Scanlan to mark his final JPC meeting in Kildare. The Chief Superintendent's 41 years of service were noted and the members thanked him for his dedication to the public over his long career.

Next meeting: Monday 12th June 2022 at 3.00 p.m.