**County Laois Joint Policing Committee**

**Minutes of Annual Public Meeting**

**Held on Monday, 19th September 2016 at Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise**

**Present:** Cllr. Padraig Fleming (in the Chair), Mr. John Mulholland, Supt. Joe Prendergast, Sgt. Joe Culliton, Cllr. Paddy Bracken, Cllr. Seamus McDonald, Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Cllr. John King, Cllr William Aird, Cllr. James Kelly, Cllr. Noel Tuohy, Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr. Brian Stanley, T.D., Mr. Conor O’Leary, Mr. Noel Dooley, Mr. Michael Cobbe, Mr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Mr. Thomas Jones,

**In Attendance:** Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Mr. Michael Rainey, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. Georgina Ireland, Administrative Officer, Ms. Theresa Bergin, Clerical Officer.

**Members of the Public/Press in attendance:** Mr. Matthew Kennelly, Downtown Portlaoise, Mr. Joe Barrett, Laois Nationalist.

**Apologies:** Chief Supt. John Scanlan, Mr. Sean Fleming, T.D., Cllr. John Moran, Cllr. Tom Mulhall, Cllr. David Goodwin.

Cllr. Padraig Fleming welcomed all members and members of the press and public also.

***Confirmation of Minutes***

Upon the proposal of Cllr. Paddy Bracken and seconded by Cllr. John King, the minutes of the Laois County Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on June 2016 were confirmed.

***An Garda Síochána Report***

Supt. Joe Prendergast presented a report on behalf of An Garda Síochána in respect of the period April – June 2016 (Copy attached). He remarked that the statistical trend was positive and advised in relation to a number of recent successful Garda operations.

Supt. Prendergast also highlighted the issue of people leaving property in their vehicles and asked how this committee could assist in successfully conveying this message to the public. He advised that a new Divisional Drug Unit would be established in the coming months.

On the subject of driving offences, the Superintendent noted with disappointment that the number of people still driving under the influence of intoxicants is quite high and asked that the road safety message be conveyed again to the public. He referred also to a number of road traffic operations ongoing.

Members noted that a number of new Gardaí would be recruited to the District in the coming months, and that despite retirements and transfers, Garda numbers in the District have increased.

The Members thanked the Superintendent for his report and congratulated An Garda Síochána on their work to date.

Other comments made in relation to:

* Appearance of new designer drugs and the consequences of same.
* The assistance of Community CCTV in detecting crime and whether it is useful for road traffic offences. The quality of imaging on Community CCTV systems was also discussed. It was noted that all CCTV and Text Alert systems will help to increase vigilance.
* Rural crime - crimes being committed on the pretext of night hunting.
* Garda powers in relation to illegal encampments.
* Texting whilst driving. The Superintendent agreed to bring to the next meeting a breakdown of offences of this type.
* Members discussed road safety issues including cycling and cycle lanes, particularly in rural areas.
* An Garda Síochána were thanked by members for their ongoing presence in Pairc an Phobail Portlaoise, which helped to curtail anti-social behaviour in the area.
* The positive influence on crime through the relationship between An Garda Síochána and the Irish Farmers’ Association was praised by members.
* Mr. Conor O’Leary introduced the concept of property marking and listing and advised that further information would be made available by Muintir na Tire at the National Ploughing Championships later that month.
* The issue of the location of the Courthouse currently on Main Street Portlaoise and related anti-social behaviour was raised by members. Mr. Donal Brennan advised the meeting in relation to the Courthouse issue, that the Chief Executive had some positive engagement with the Courts Service on this matter and a location is currently being sought for its relocation. There was some discussion on this matter, during which some members expressed their concern that this matter be addressed urgently. Mr. Brian Stanley agreed to seek a meeting on the matter with the Office of Public Works.

***Laois County Council Report***

Mr. Michael Rainey, Senior Executive Officer presented a report on behalf of the local authority *(copy attached)*.

The Members thanked Mr. Rainey for the report. Members welcomed the concept of Age Friendly parking and also congratulated the local authority on its work regarding stray horses.

***JPC Strategic Plan 2016 -2020 – Update on Implementation Plan 2016***

The Members noted an actions’ update circulated in respect of the JPC 2016 Implementation Plan.

Mr. Conor O’Leary sought a gathering of Community Alert Groups before the end of 2016 and was advised that this would be taking place in November 2016, date to be confirmed. Members also noted the convening by An Garda Síochána of a Community Alert Working Group upon which Muintir na Tire and Laois County Council are also represented.

***Questions submitted by members of the public***

One question was submitted by Mr. Matthew Kennelly, Chairperson, Downtown Portlaoise:

*“I am writing on behalf of the traders association, Downtown Portlaoise, and would like to first compliment the Gardaí on their response times to thefts and other crimes in the area, however with our growing population will we be seeing any increased numbers on the beat on Main Street and surrounding areas? Are there any plans in relation to rostering for this?”*

Supt. Joe Prendergast responded to the question, thanking Downtown Portlaoise for their positive comments. He advised that it is a high priority of An Garda Síochána to get as many personnel as possible on the beat. He also expressed his hope that another five Gardaí would be recruited to the District by the end of 2016 which would be of great assistance.

The members thanked Mr. Kennelly and the members of the Downtown Portlaoise group for their interest and their submission.

***Any Other Business***

None.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed: Date:**

 **Cllr. Padraig Fleming**

 **Chairperson**

**County Laois Joint Policing Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Held on Monday, 13th February 2017 at Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise**

**Present:** Cllr. Padraig Fleming (in the Chair), Mr. Donal Brennan, Supt. Joe Prendergast, Sgt. Joe Culliton, Sgt. Michael Tarpey, Cllr. Paddy Bracken, Cllr. Seamus McDonald, Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald, Cllr. John Moran, Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Cllr. John King, Cllr. Tom Mulhall, Cllr. David Goodwin, Cllr. William Aird, Cllr. James Kelly, , Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr. Sean Fleming, T.D., Mr. Brian Stanley, T.D., Mr. Conor O’Leary, Mr. Noel Dooley, Mr. Thomas Jones.

**In Attendance:** Mr. Michael Rainey, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. Georgina Ireland, Administrative Officer.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Noel Tuohy, Chief Supt. John Scanlan, Ms. Antoinette Kinsella, Mr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Mr. John Mulholland.

Cllr. Padraig Fleming welcomed all members and members of the press also.

***Confirmation of Minutes***

Upon the proposal of Cllr. John King and seconded by Cllr. Seamus McDonald, the minutes of the Laois County Joint Policing Committee Annual Public Meeting held on 19th September 2016 were confirmed.

***Matters Arising***

None.

***An Garda Síochána Report***

Supt. Joe Prendergast presented a report on behalf of An Garda Síochána in respect of the final quarter of 2016. *(Copy attached)* He particularly highlighted the following:

* In relation to theft from shops, the particular importance of availability and quality of CCTV to aid An Garda Siochana with detection and prosecution. Also the importance of businesses making prompt reports of such crime.
* Statistics show that people are still taking chances in relation to drinking and driving despite the large number of checkpoints held in 2016. Supt. Prendergast asked that a press release be issued from this Committee to highlight this issue and ask people not to drink and drive.

He also asked that this committee consider some publicity in relation to the use of mobile phones while driving in the hope that both messages may help to reduce the amount of road traffic accidents in Laois.

The Members thanked the Superintendent for his report and congratulated An Garda Síochána on their work to date.

Other comments made in relation to:

* Recent seizures of drugs and related arrests made in the drugs scene in Laois. Supt. Prendergast also advised that a Divisional Drugs Unit was in its final stages of establishment.
* Possibility of CCTV on motorway slip roads. The assistance of Community CCTV in detecting crime was praised, with five operational schemes noted in the Co. Laois. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Minister for Justice and Equality enquiring in this regard.
* The question of victim compensation following damage or theft was raised. Mr. Brian Stanley, T.D., requested that this committee write to the Minister for Justice requesting that a scheme be establishment for restoration for victims of crime.
* Recruitment of new Gardaí and the importance of visibility of Gardaí on the beat as a deterrent was discussed.
* The question of drones and their legality in relation to rights to privacy was raised. It was noted that drones are relatively new in this country and the Irish Aviation Authority has recently issued regulations in relation to their operation. Supt. Prendergast stated that he would encourage the reporting of drone activity if members of the public are aware of same.
* It was noted that there was no new information in relation to the proposed relocation of the Courthouse in Portlaoise. It was agreed that a report on this issue would be brought to the next meeting.
* There was a discussion in relation to the control of dogs and the financial loss to farmers in respect of damage to farm animals. It was agreed that a public message should issue from this committee in relation to the control of dogs around farmland.
* It was acknowledged that the vacant position of Crime Prevention Officer for the Laois/Offaly Division would be advertised shortly.
* The issue of Garda cover in areas bordering with other Garda Divisions was raised. Supt. Prendergast stated that the Chief Superintendent would brief the next JPC meeting in relation to cooperation arrangements in respect of the areas bordering Carlow.

***Laois County Council Report***

Mr. Michael Rainey, Senior Executive Officer presented a report on behalf of the local authority *(copy attached)*.

The Members thanked Mr. Rainey for the report. Comments were made in relation to:

* Issues around illegal dumping. Mr. Michael Rainey advised that several measures are being taken to tackle the issue, including a public awareness campaign, Litter Warden activities, mobile CCTV, joint action with Coillte and monitoring of identified hotspots.

It was suggested by members that other stakeholders are asked to become involved in the promotion of this issue, e.g., IFA.

* It was requested that a report be brought to the next meeting in relation to the positive effect of youth educational programmes on the rate of fire services call outs in the county.

***JPC Annual Report 2016***

Mr. Michael Rainey outlined the content of the previously circulated Annual Report in respect of the JPC 2016 Implementation Plan as part of the 5-year JPC Strategy in accordance with the JPC Guidelines. He advised that upon approval by the JPC, the report would be forwarded to the Dept. Of Justice. Upon the proposal of Cllr. John King and seconded by Mr. Sean Fleming, T.D., the JPC Annual Report 2016 was approved.

He also circulated the proposed JPC 2017 Implementation Plan, which progresses ongoing actions and commences new actions in 2017. Upon the proposal of Cllr. Tom Mulhall and seconded by Cllr. Paddy Bracken, the 2017 JPC Implementation Plan was adopted.

***Any Other Business***

The members noted the recent retirement of Garda Gerry Dillon, and acknowledged his ongoing commitment to the community in Portlaoise, particularly in relation to preparations for any town events including the St. Patrick’s Day Parade, in which Gerry Dillon has been very involved. They wished him well in his future endeavours.

The members unanimously congratulated Supt. Joe Prendergast upon the announcement that he would retire in March 2017 and wished him well, thanking him for his work and commitment to the Portlaoise District and to the JPC over the past 3 years.

Supt. Joe Prendergast thanked the members in turn for their good wishes.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed: Date:**

 **Cllr. Padraig Fleming**

 **Chairperson**

**County Laois Joint Policing Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Held on Monday 18th September 2017 at Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise**

**Present**: Cllr Patrick Fleming (Chair), Chief Supt. John Scanlan, Inspector Ollie Baker, Supt Anthony Pettit, Cllr Paddy Bracken, Cllr Paschal McEvoy, Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald, Cllr John King, Cllr Tom Mulhall, Cllr William Aird, Cllr James Kelly, Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr Brian Stanley TD, Mr Conor O’Leary, Mr Noel Dooley, Mr Pat Fitzpatrick, Mr Thomas Jones, Ms Antoinette Kinsella HSE

**In attendance**: Mr John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Mr Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Mr Michael Rainey, Senior Executive Officer, Ms Georgina Ireland, Administrative Officer, Ms Claire Buckley, A/Senior Staff Officer, Ms Evelyn Brownrigg, Administrative Officer.

**Apologies**: Cllr John Moran, Cllr David Goodwin, Cllr Noel Tuohy, Mr Sean Fleming TD,

Cllr Padraig Fleming welcomed all members and members of the press.

**Confirmation of Minutes**

Upon the proposal of Cllr John King and seconded by Cllr Seamus McDonald, the minutes of the Laois County Joint Policing Committee held on 15th May 2017 were confirmed.

**Presentation by Midland Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force**

Antoinette Kinsella gave an overview of the work of the Midland Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force. Ms. Kinsella also gave a report on the National Drugs & Alcohol Strategy Plan and introduced Extern MYDAS Project which is a community based service for under 18’s and their families from the Midland Counties of Longford, Westmeath, Offaly & Laois. The service provides prevention, treatment and support to under 18’s who are experiencing difficulties in relation to their drug and/or alcohol use themselves or are affected by drug and /or alcohol misuse within their families. Merchant’s Quay Ireland has also been awarded the contract to provide a Community based Drug & Alcohol treatment support service for the Midlands. This is funded by HSE CADS & the Midland Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force (MRDATF) and it will complement and enhance existing statutory , community & voluntary services currently operating in the region and provide appropriate interventions to over 18’s and their families in line with best international research and standards. It was stated that there is a nurse practitioner available in Carlow who will also be working in Laois. Extern is currently in Portlaoise, Mountmellick, Stradbally, Abbeyleix. There are currently 129 individuals in Laois accessing services. They propose to hold a roadshow in the near future in Laois.

The Members thanked Ms Kinsella HSE, the representatives from Merchants Quay Ireland for their report and a number of general questions followed.

**An Garda Síochána Report**

Chief Supt. John Scanlan together with Inspector Baker presented a report on behalf of An Garda Síochána in respect of the respect of the second quarter of 2017 (copy attached). He particularly highlighted the following:

* Burglary has reduced by 17%
* Assaults has risen by 32%
* Criminal Damage is down by 20%, however, fire damage is up.
* Drugs and weapons are up by 90%
* Drink Driving is also up.
* Drugs Unit had a number of undercover officers purchase drugs from drug dealers - caught approximately 40 dealers in County Laois
* There is a significant drug problem in Laois

Chief Supt. John Scanlan informed the meeting of the arrival of 15 new Gardaí from November 2017. He stated that the new Gardaí will need experience in the larger towns first before they go out to the smaller urban areas. In addition, Garda stations in Mountrath, Mountmellick and Rathdowney are in the process of being renovated. The position of Community Liaison Officer has been advertised and will be filled soon.

The Members thanked the Superintendent for his report and welcomed the news in respect of the new Gardaí and raised the following:

* Thanked Gardaí for dealing with a problem on the road between Glendine to Kinnitty.
* The number of serious assaults in Portlaoise at present particularly among men.
* Can Garda phone number be included on signs for CCTV rather than a person’s private number and the information then be passed to the relevant person by the Gardaí (Gardaí to check and revert to the Committee
* Can Speed Detection vans be placed on certain regional roads
* Thanked Gardaí for their work at the Electric Picnic

**Laois County Council Report**

This report was taken as read by the members of the JPC.

Cllr Mulhall welcomed the upgrade of the Bring Banks, especially in Stradbally.

**Approval of Community CCTV Schemes**

Letters were received from Mountrath Community Alert and Donaghmore Community Alert seeking approval by the Joint Policing Committee in respect of installation of CCTV in their areas. Mountrath Community Alert was proposed by Cllr James Kelly and seconded by Cllr Paddy Bracken. Donaghmore Community Alert was proposed by Cllr John King and seconded by Deputy Brian Stanley. Mr Conor O’Leary stated that there is one million euro available each year for 3 years and that most areas in Laois should be able to get funding. He also stated that has been a change with Data Control Policy in Counties Kildare and Tipperary.

**JPC Strategy Implementation Plan 2017 – Update on actions**

The updates were circulated to the members present.

**Any Other Business**

Cllr John King proposed that landlords should be requested to have their tenants Garda vetted, this was seconded by Cllr. Tom Mulhall.

Cllr Padraig Fleming wished Georgina Ireland well in her new position. She has being attending Joint Policing Committee Meetings for the last 9½ years. He also welcomed Evelyn Brownrigg to her new role and looked forward to seeing her at the next Joint Policing Committee meeting.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Cllr Padraig Fleming

 Chairperson

**County Laois Joint Policing Committee**

**Minutes of Annual Public Meeting**

**Held on Monday, 13th November 2017 at Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise**

**Present:** Cllr. Padraig Fleming (in the Chair), Chief Supt. John Scanlan, Supt. Anthony Pettit, Sgt. Graham Kavanagh Crime Prevention Officer, Cllr. Paddy Bracken, Cllr. Seamus McDonald, Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald, Cllr. John Moran, Cllr. John King, Cllr. Tom Mulhall, Cllr William Aird, Cllr. James Kelly, Cllr. Noel Tuohy, Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr. Sean Fleming, T.D., Mr. Brian Stanley, T.D., Mr. Conor O’Leary, Mr. Noel Dooley, Mr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Mr. Thomas Jones, Mr. Thomas Timmons

**In Attendance:** Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Mr. Michael Rainey, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. Evelyn Brownrigg, Administrative Officer, Ms. Rose Doolin, Assistant Staff Officer.

**Members of the Public/Press in attendance:** Mr. Steven Miller, Laois Today, Mr. Anton Pytlan, DIT, Ms. Carmel Hayes, Laois Nationalist, Ryan Dunne, Leinster Express

**Apologies:** Ms Antionette Kinsella, HSE

Cllr. Padraig Fleming welcomed all members and members of the press and public also.

***Confirmation of Minutes***

Upon the proposal of Cllr James Kelly and seconded by Cllr John King, the minutes of the Laois County Joint Policing Committee held on 18th September, 2017 were confirmed.

***Matters Arising***

The matter of the opening hours of Mountmellick Garda Station was raised. Chief Supt. John Scanlon stated that the Garda Station in Mountmellick is open Monday to Friday and that the Victim Support Unit is housed in Mountmellick.

***Report from An Garda Síochána***

There has been a rise in the number of burglaries in the third quarter. This is an increase in the same period last year. Gardaí also encountered armed criminals and shots were fired. A number of arrests have been.

Crimes against the person have also increased in particular assault causing harm. Harassment and Menacing Phone Calls is stable. However, assaults overall are up in the third quarter.

Drugs and weapon offences have increased in particular Possession of Drugs for sale or supply. A lot of this can be attributed to the Electric Picnic.

There has been a rise in the number of Road Traffic Collisions with the majority being material damage only.

A number of questions were raised in relation in relation to people with serious criminal intent and it was noted that a great Garda present has been seen over the past few weeks. Also the number of burglaries in rural areas as well as town areas.

***Laois County Council Report***

This report was circulated and was taken as read.

***Questions submitted by members of the public***

One question was submitted by Noreen Doherty (not in attendance):

*Gangs of Youths hanging about estates is becoming quite a problem with violence towards residents who approach them to address damage to property.*

*Are there are procedures in place where if this is a continuing problem that there are steps in place in which there is a final solution to the problem.*

* *Teens are dispersed and told not hang out in gangs*
* *When Teens come back (if) the Gardaí take on the authority to find out where they live*
* *Parents are notified of this*
* *Warnings put in place to forewarn the parent of the teen involved in the gangs*
* *All are responsible if they are still hanging about in the estates*
* *Court Proceedings to follow if not listening in the form of a fine / voluntary community service.*

*One such idea I have is the teens are encouraged to not to hang in gangs, a curfew in place or they can be notified of any clubs open that will keep them off the street like no name club, red cross are at present looking for first aid volunteers, training in use of defibrillators, tidy towns, work experience or Foroige Club is now open on a Fridays perhaps get a community bus to transport them or indeed set up a fund through the government to encourage good behaviour through reward like trip to cinema etc.*

Chief Supt. John Scanlon that a lot of the issues raised were not within their remit but that he would make contact with Ms Doherty in relation to her concerns.

***Any Other Business***

None.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed: Date:**

 **Cllr. Padraig Fleming**

 **Chairperson**