

# County Laois Joint Policing Committee

## Minutes of Meeting

**Held on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise**

**Present:** Cllr. Pdraig Fleming (in the Chair),  
Mr. John Mulholland, Supt. Joe Prendergast, Sgt. Joe Culliton, Cllr. Paddy Bracken,  
Cllr. Seamus McDonald, Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald, Cllr. John  
Moran, Cllr. John King, Cllr. Tom Mulhall, Cllr. David Goodwin, Cllr. Willie Aird, Cllr.  
Noel Tuohy, Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr. Brian Stanley, T.D., Mr. Conor O'Leary,  
Ms. Antoinette Kinsella, Mr. Noel Dooley, Mr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Mr. Thomas Jones

**In Attendance:** Mr. Michael Rainey, A/Director of Services, Ms. Georgina Ireland, Administrative  
Officer, Ms. Jennifer Moore, Clerical Officer.

**Apologies:** Chief Supt. John Scanlan, Cllr. James Kelly, Mr. Sean Fleming, T.D., Mr. Charlie  
Flanagan, T.D., Mr. Michael Cobbe.

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

### ***Confirmation of Minutes***

Upon the proposal of Cllr. Tom Mulhall and seconded by Cllr. John King, the minutes of Annual Public Meeting of Laois Joint Policing Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015 were confirmed.

### ***JPC Approval of Community Based CCTV Schemes***

The members noted correspondence from Camross and Ratheniska Community Alert Groups, both seeking Joint Policing Committee approval of their proposed installation of Community based CCTV in their respective areas.

It was noted that the role of the Joint Policing Committee in the approval stages of the scheme is to examine the request and approve each scheme in principle, subject to An Garda Síochána approval and relevant Planning approvals being in place.

In each case, upon confirmation that these approvals were in place, the Members approved each Community CCTV Scheme as follows:

- Ratheniska Community CCTV Scheme was proposed by Cllr. Paschal McEvoy and seconded by Cllr. Noel Tuohy.
- Camross Community CCTV Scheme was proposed by Cllr. Seamus McDonald and seconded by Cllr. John King.

Cllr. John King requested clarification of the status of funding in respect of Community based CCTV and was informed that no such funding scheme was in place, but that once-off pilot funding had been awarded in Laois to Dunmore and Borris-in-Ossory Community Alert Groups by the Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government, however no notice was received of further funding being made available.

## **An Garda Síochána Report**

Supt. Joe Prendergast presented a report on behalf of An Garda Síochána in respect of the period Qtr 4 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 (*copy attached*). He particularly highlighted the issue of theft from vehicles and asked that the message be conveyed to the public in every way possible, not to leave property in their vehicles.

He also highlighted a Garda Operation entitled “Operation Nero”, a major drug operation during which undercover units worked throughout Laois, the result of which saw 15 offenders before the Courts. He raised “drink driving” as a particular issue for An Garda Síochána currently, again asking that the message be conveyed to all that it is not acceptable.

He advised the members in respect of a new Community Alert Working Group, comprising members of An Garda Síochána and representatives from the local authority and Community Alert Groups. The group was formed to share information and work together to address crime related issues in the county, and to ensure that Community Alert Groups are updated on a regular basis in this regard.

The Members thanked the Superintendent for his report. Cllr. Pdraig Fleming requested that cumulative figures in respect of 2014 and 2015 be presented at the next meeting, in order to show a statistical trend.

Other comments made in relation to:

- Community policing, particularly in Portlaoise. It was noted that community policing was high on the agenda for An Garda Síochána and to a large extent, every Garda has a role in this regard.
- Garda resources - it was noted that additional resources were being made available in Portlaoise to balance recent retirements. Garda presence at certain key locations was discussed, including Pairc an Phobail, Main Street and Lyster Square Portlaoise.
- The issues surrounding drug dealing in Laois. It was noted by the members that this is a priority for An Garda Síochána and in this regard “Operation Nero” was key to addressing the issue. It was agreed that this issue would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Community Alert Working Group with a view to a presentation being made on the subject at the Annual Meeting of all Community Alert Groups later in the year.
- The invaluable assistance provided in crime prevention and detection by Community Alert, Text Alert and Neighbourhood Watch Groups was discussed, especially in respect of bogus callers. It was noted that the Sergeant with responsibility for crime prevention presented and gave advice to 18 groups in the last quarter of 2015.
- Suggestion that a promotional message to discourage drink driving could be delivered by this Committee.
- Assisting victims of crime through the process of witness statements and court appearances. There were comments also made in relation to repeat offenders continually appearing before the Courts. It was noted that a dedicated Victim Support office was located in Portlaoise Garda Station.

## **Laois County Council Report**

Mr. Michael Rainey, A/Director of Services presented a report on behalf of the local authority (*copy attached*).

The Members thanked Mr. Rainey for the report.

**Adoption of the Joint Policing Committee Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020**

Mr. Michael Rainey, A/Director of Services presented the 5-year Strategic Plan to the members for adoption, prepared following extensive consultation with the JPC members and local and national agencies/organisations. He advised that an Annual Implementation Plan would be devised and an Annual Report presented to the Dept of Justice in respect of same.

Upon the proposal of Cllr. Willie Aird and seconded by Mr. John Mulholland, the JPC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was unanimously adopted by the members, subject to some agreed minor changes as suggested by Ms. Antoinette Kinsella, Midland Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force.

**Any Other Business**

It was agreed that letters extending the members’ good wishes would be forwarded to Garda Tony Ryan (Juvenile Liaison Officer) and Sgt. Donal O’Connor (Traffic Division), in recognition of their recent retirements.

It was also agreed that meeting dates for the remainder of the year would be set as follows and that members would be notified in writing of same:

20<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 11.30am

19<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 3.30pm (Annual Public Meeting)

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

**Cllr. Pdraig Fleming**  
**Chairperson**

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