

County Laois Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of Meeting

Held on Monday, 20th June 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. Willie Aird, Cllr. James Kelly, Cllr. Noel Tuohy, Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley, Mr. Sean Fleming, T.D., Mr. Conor O'Leary, 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, Mr. Brian Stanley, T.D., Mr. Michael Cobbe. Ms. Antoinette Kinsella, Mr. Noel Dooley.

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

Confirmation of Minutes

Upon the proposal of Cllr. Paddy Bracken and seconded by Cllr. John King, the minutes of Meeting of Laois Joint Policing Committee held on 7th March 2016 were confirmed.

An Garda Síochána Report

Supt. Joe Prendergast presented a report on behalf of An Garda Síochána in respect of the period of the first Quarter of 2016. (*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.

The Members thanked the Superintendent for his report. Comments and discussion arose in relation to:

- Ways in which the community can support An Garda Síochána on the issue of drug related crime. Supt. Joe Prendergast commented that information from the community is key for evidence and investigation.
- Supports for young family members who may witness a violent incident.
- The issue of anti-social around the vicinity of the Courthouse in Portlaoise on court days. A number of members highlighted the importance of the visibility of Gardaí in this area during court times. Mr. John Mulholland advised for the members' information that he had written to the Assistant Secretary of the Courts about the possibility of a new location for the Courthouse and received a positive response in relation to arranging an early meeting to discuss its inclusion in a future programme. He also advised of his intention to meet with the Chief Superintendent with a view to examining issues of anti-social behaviour of this nature.
- In respect of An Garda Síochána Operation 'Nero', Supt. Joe Prendergast advised that arrests were made during this operation, with a number of offenders now serving sentences.

- When asked in relation to speed check van locations, the Superintendent advised that locations were prioritised by areas prone to road traffic accidents or locations where driver behaviour has been reported as dangerous.
- The issue of illegal temporary encampments was raised and it was noted that, as per the legislation, there is an onus on private owners to take the first step to protect their boundaries and if an encampment occurs, to report same to An Garda Síochána.
- The issue of horses roaming in housing estates was raised. Supt. Joe Prendergast advised that every equine must be chipped and registered with its owner's address and that An Garda Síochána liaise closely with the local authority in relation to having stray horses removed.

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. Comments made included:

- The effect of new litter legislation could add to the problem of illegal dumping in the county. The members requested that resources be examined with a view to putting them in place to manage this issue. Mr. Conor O'Leary suggested initiatives at local level with Community Alert Groups to encourage prevention/vigilance regarding illegal dumping, which might also encourage community pride locally.
- Supports for older people were discussed. Mr. Conor O'Leary encouraged the promotion of the Seniors Alert Scheme among groups locally and highlighted the 'Befriending Laois' scheme rolled out by Laois Partnership.
- The opening of the Youth Café in Rathdowney was welcomed. Cllr. John King thanked all those involved for their assistance in completing the project and advised that the committee was working with Youth Work Ireland in the roll out of programmes in the Café.
- Cllr. Caroline Stanley queried why the local authority no longer part funded inspections by the HSE of houses where residents deemed vulnerable and at risk of hoarding rubbish.

Consideration of the Draft JPC Work Plan 2016

The members were presented with the draft JPC Work Plan 2016 for their approval, and advised that such a plan, based on the actions in the JPC Strategic Plan 2016-2020, must be made and reported upon annually as per the JPC Guidelines. Upon the proposal of Cllr. Paddy Bracken and seconded by Cllr. John King, the 2016 JPC Work Plan was approved.

Any Other Business

Mr. Conor O'Leary thanked An Garda Síochána for convening the Community Alert Networking Group in Co. Laois, citing its uniqueness to Laois and stating that it has set a good precedent for other counties to take note of.

Ms. Georgina Ireland advised the members in relation to:

- Period of consultation for a new National Policing Authority Strategy and Code of Ethics for An Garda Síochána.

- Recent launch of the Laois Age Friendly County Strategy 2016 – 2021. Copies were circulated to members.

It was also agreed that the Annual Public of Laois County Joint Policing Committee would take place on Monday, 19th September 2016 at 3.30pm.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Padraig Fleming
Chairperson

Date: _____