

Meath County Joint Policing Committee
Minutes of Meeting

Venue: Council Chamber
Date: 6th June 2012
Time 11.00am

In Attendance:

Chairperson: Cllr. Gerry O'Connor.

County Council Members: Cllrs. J Reilly, Killian, Dillinon, Murphy, Mc Gowan, Holloway, McIlhenny

Oireachtas Members:

An Garda Síochána: Martin Smethers, Inspector

County Council Officials: Ger Murphy, A/Senior Executive Officer.

Community & Voluntary Sector: Charlie Traynor.

1. Adoption of Minutes of the meeting of 19th September 2011:

Minutes of the meeting of **20th April 2012** were adopted on the proposal of **Cllr. Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor McIlhenney**.

2. Correspondence:

It was noted that there was correspondence from:

- Senator Thomas Byrne requesting an emergency meeting of the committee in relation to the amalgamation of the Laytown and Ashbourne Garda Stations;
Cllr. O'Connor outlined that he responded outlining that the matter would be raised at the June meeting. He outlined that the Gardaí
- The DoECLG in relation to the review of the operation of JPCs.
 - Cllr. O'Connor outlined that he welcomed the review
 - Cllr. J. Reilly outlined that the JPC members should be consulted
 - GM to circulate copy of response to review letter to the members.
 - Cllr. Holloway outlined that the committee may go the way of area management etc.
 - Cllr. O'Connor outlined that the County JPC requires a resource
 - Cllr. Killian – obviously needs to be a review – County level is a costly activity – newsletter would also be expensive. Should Navan, Trim and Kells JPCs feed into the County JPC?
 - Cllr. Murphy – we can seek a budget next year
 - Cllr. J. Reilly – JPC needs to create an image for itself. Chair could attend that other JPCs. Initiative to the Community & Enterprise groups to create awareness of the committee. 3 or 4 initiatives over the next few months in conjunction with Gardaí and Community Sector would assist.
 - Cllr. Killian outlined that we're restricted in what we can and can not do and the things that we can comment on.
 - Cllr. McGowan – disagree that a budget is not the answer considering based on the size of the county and allocating projects might be difficult. Council funding might be the way forward.

- Cllr. O'Connor – need the money for communications/newsletter.
- Cllr. Killian – active citizen involvement – must encourage people to become involved in the process.
- Cllr. Holloway – Council could not function properly without the area committees. Review of Local Government could affect the issue.
- Cllr. J. Reilly – it is all about providing a better policing service for the county. Communicate through the website may help.

3. Reports from the working sub-groups:

4. Reports:

(a) An Garda Síochána:

Inspector Martin Smethers (Chief Superintendent Michael Devine could not attend due to another urgent meeting) advised the meeting in relation to policing in the county as follows:

- Targeting travelling criminals along roadways – special sitting of the criminal court
- Public order offences are down – 1 arrest on Navan and Ashbourne
- Adult caution scenario in effect – for persons not before the courts before – appear within a week in a Garda Station. Police certificates of character are being important
- 7 fatal accidents in the division – 2 at the weekend
- Serious crime is down – 1 armed robbery
- New roster on its 7th week at this point. From a practical policing perspective – more staff out than ever before. Doubling of units at the weekend. A lot more cover up to the early hours of the morning. There is a review of the roster system after 8 weeks. It's working to the advantage of the general public. Loss of Superintendent at Laytown? All other staff are still in place. Gained an Inspector in Ashbourne. Doubling of cover from a policing.
 - Cllr. Killian – 1 car to cover the whole of Ashbourne. Claimed that Gardaí are a re-active force in Dunshaughlin Area. Community Guard leaving and being transferred to Naas. Now 1 Community Guard for Ratoath. Paid tribute to Colm Curtain (Community Guard). Noted that it's a resource issue.
 - Cllr. O'Connor outlined that Superintendent Devine covered the issue at the last meeting and went into detail on the matter.
 - Inspector Smethers noted the issue of 1 Gardaí car and stated that he would look into same. He also outlined that the new roster brought in a 'district' responsibility rather than a 'sub-district' responsibility. They then have the use of the district resources.
 - Cllr. Killian – BMX park in Ratoath (credit to Regina Doherty TD). Downside is that the bikes are being ridden on the roads and children are not wearing helmets. Causing problems for businesses. Issue in estates also. It will be a problem during the summertime period. It is a community problem probably rather than a Garda problem. Ask that the Gardaí keep an eye on the matter.

- Cllr. O'Connor outlined that the reality is that public sector have lost significant amounts of experience and resources recently. We must support the Gardaí as a JPC. Total confidence on the Gardaí to manage their resources. Need to go through the local people and feed the issues upwards.
- Cllr. J. Reilly – worked with schools etc. Organised with Meath Sports Partnership. Role of the Garda Reserve – numbers in it, are the Gardaí recruiting to it. If possible could the JPC promote the active Garda Reserve membership? Cllr. O'Connor – could the committee have the number of Garda Reserve? Nationally advertised. Names held and training ongoing in Templemore at the moment. No local quota. Inspector Smethers outlined that it works very well. Cllr. J. Reilly outlined that the promotion of this could be work for the County JPC.

(b) Meath County Council:

Ger Murphy, A/Senior Executive Officer advised of anti-social behaviour affecting the Council's housing stock as follows:

Housing Investigations	September to December 2011 (4 months)	January to March 2012 (3 months)	April to May 2012 (2 months)
Number of Complaints investigated	11	17	11
Ongoing cases April 2012			(6)
New complaints			5
Number of Verbal Warnings issued	4	5	2
Number of Written Warning issued	1	2	1
Number of Abandonment Notices issued	1	0	0

It was outlined that these figures indicate a decrease in activity from the figures outlined at the previous meeting of the Committee.

- Cllr. McGowan raised the query of ASB in non-Council related properties.
- Cllr. Killian suggested that this is where the Community Garda can become involved.
- Cllr. J. Reilly – ASB affects the community. ASB hot-spots are an issue and no matter what is put in place the offenders will find a way around the issue. Set-up a mediation unit for the process of negotiation between offenders and victims. Set-up a small unit with membership from the Gardaí, Council, JPC, mediator etc. Put some sort of pilot scheme in place? Cllr. O'Connor – utilise a Town Forum for this?
- Cllr. Murphy – Always be weary that there is generally two sides to the story. If the matter is significant enough it will be referred to the Gardaí

- Cllr. O'Connor – Community Garda does a terrific job in Dunshaughlin
- Inspector Smethers: Community Policing is vitally important – they have the local 'on the ground' information. It works very well in most areas. Great local knowledge and can solve significant amounts of problems – mainly community problems as opposed to crime.
- Cllr. O'Connor – particular age group that there is a difficulty do to resources and something to do.
- Cllr. McIlhinney – seeking to get the Library moving in Ballivor – fence needed to curb ASB at an alleyway – litter problem and cans etc. Gardaí in agreement that a fence is required. County Librarian has advised that the matter has gone to tender – not moving quick enough. Looking for the support of the Committee. Committee write to the Council to move process. GM to discuss with Ciaran Mangan as to where the process is at.
- Cllr. Killian – attacks on persons – any difficulties on this in Co. Meath rural areas? Inspector Smethers outlined that there is advice going out there all the time from the Community Garda – he will forward to the Chairman of the committee. Thankfully no issues in Co. Meath.
- Cllr. J. Reilly – Council C&E Department database of community groups could be utilised to disseminate information. Inspector Smethers – definitely utilised in Navan at least.
- Cllr. Dillion-Gallagher – community alert system – very aware of elderly people in various areas – great for older people as they feel included in the community – provides comfort etc. Inspector Smethers – very active in the sub-divisions in rural areas in particular.

5. Any Other Business:

- Cllr. Killian – is there an indication that speeds are reducing? Inspector Smethers – yes.

6. Next Meeting Date:

Next Meeting: 19th September 2012

Public Meeting: Slane Area (Duleek Civic Offices) - date to

List of non-attendees to Cllr. O'Connor

This concluded the business of the meeting.