



Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes
County Meath Joint Policing Committee

21st February 2022 at 2.30 p.m. - Online via Zoom in Navan

In Attendance:

Chairperson: Cllr Francis Deane

County Council Members: Maria Murphy, Aisling O'Neill, Noel French, Tom Behan, Paul McCabe, Trevor Golden, Alan Lawes

Oireachtas Members: Dep Darren O'Rourke, Dep Peadar Tóibín, Senator Sharon Keogan.

An Garda Síochána: Chief Superintendent Fergus Healy, Superintendent Dermot Drea

County Council Officials: Barry Lynch, Fiona Fallon

Community & Voluntary Sector: Bernard Kenny, Conor O'Leary, Ronnie Owens,

Coordinator: Angie Mitchell

Apologies: Min H McEntee, Min D English, Dep T Byrne, Dep J Guirke, Sen A Hoey, Sen Shane Cassels, Cllr D Gilroy, Cllr D Geraghty Smith, Cllr E Fennessy, Cllr G Toole, Cllr P Fitzsimons, Cllr Y Adenuga, Cllr A Tobin, B Comerford, J Maguire, Clarissa Byrne, Tinu Achioya (Culture)

Item	Discussion / Action
1.	Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 13th December, 2021 The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 th December 2021 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr Maria Murphy and seconded by Cllr Aisling O'Neill.
2.	Matters arising from minutes No matters arising



3. Correspondence
No correspondence

- 4. To receive details of the Meath Joint Policing Committee Annual Report 2021**
Fiona Fallon gave a verbal report on the annual report for 2021 which had been circulated to all JPC members prior to this meeting and noted that there was 1 item that hadn't been updated in the report and that was the Garda figures for 2021 and this was because the figures required validating by the Central Statistics Office and this was not completed by them in time for inclusion in the Annual Report for 2021. She briefly outlined the highlights of the report including the property marking machine training day in Summerhill in October and stated that training would continue to be rolled out in the use of the property marking machine for various groups and individuals in the county in 2022. She also stated that the annual report set out the actions carried out by the JPC subgroups for 2021 and she reminded the Committee that the JPC adopted its new strategic plan 2021-2025 at its December meeting and under this new strategy the subgroups will be reviewed and re-established in 2022.

The annual report was approved on the proposal of Cllr Tom Behan and seconded by Cllr Noel French.

- 5. To receive a brief presentation on the DRIVE (Drug Related Intimidation & Violence Engagement) project which was launched in November, 2021**

Andy Ogle from NERDATF gave a brief presentation on the DRIVE initiative that was launched in November, 2021. The DRIVE initiative sets out a number of key actions to support a comprehensive and evidence informed approach to respond effectively to drug-related intimidation and violence in communities. Membership of the DRIVE Oversight Committee who led on this initiative used an interagency approach and is comprised of representation from An Garda Síochána, Regional and Local Drug & Alcohol Task Forces, HSE Social Inclusion, Probation Service, Family support and the Community & the Voluntary Sector. The initiative details and describes the development of a model to respond to drug related intimidation and violence in our communities. It outlines guidance for local structures, data collection methods and the evidence base for different approaches. This will play a key role in guiding a pathway forward and highlight those areas which require attention. The success of DRIVE will depend on interagency collaboration. There is also a commitment to resource a National DRIVE Coordinator to support its ongoing development and implementation and to set up Local DRIVE committees for specific areas. The first annual good practice national conference will be held in Q4 of 2022.

Cathaoirleach thanked Andy for his presentation and then opened it to the floor for comments or queries on the content of the report.



A lengthy discussion ensued and members of the Committee who posed questions and raised concerns included Cllr Paul McCabe, Cllr Maria Murphy, Cllr Tom Behan, Cllr Alan Lawes, Cllr Aisling O'Neill, Ronnie Owens, Dep Peadar Toibin & Senator Sharon Keogan.

Their questions and concerns related to the following issues; the escalation of drug use in the County particularly in young people, the often lengthy response time from Gardai to reported issues of antisocial behavior, the concern that the use of drugs is becoming more socially acceptable, the question of whether a protocol could be put in place between the Local Authority Housing Department and the Gardai for the possible fast-tracking of a transfer of a LA Housing tenant due to drug related intimidation.

Andy Ogle responded by stating that alcohol is still the main problem in society and with the easy accessibility of cocaine nowadays, both when mixed together are causing serious issues and an increasing number of people are presenting seeking help. Under the DRIVE initiative they are hoping to roll out evening courses to help those people with their issues and he stated that sometimes substance abuse is caused by an underlying issue so by providing good links with mental health services this may help certain people. He also noted the emerging trend in people presenting to front line services due to alcohol and crack cocaine abuse and the increase in violent and chaotic scenes both in society and in our A & E Departments.

He further stated that incidents of drug related intimidation are usually dealt with on a case by case basis. Certain families have been moved to temporary accommodation in the past such as B&Bs to avoid danger. He also stated that this is not just an issue for people housed by social housing bodies but that such incidents are happening everywhere. Other deterrents for households could include the installation of CCTV or if issues are ongoing in certain areas that perhaps a stronger Garda presence could be made in that particular area. He acknowledged the lack of housing stock in general to facilitate transfers of families affected by drug related intimidation.

Bernard Kenny from Core Ireland advised how Core could help individuals, care providers and professionals whos mental health is impacted from the use of drugs and alcohol and by drug intimidation by offering various courses and workshops and stressed the importance of getting the word out and letting people know that help is available.



Ronnie Owens voiced his concerns on the increased number of people being dragged into and engaging in illicit activities against their will over drug debt.

Andy Ogle acknowledged the trauma that drug related intimidation is causing not just for families of those directly involved but also for their neighbours and young children who are witnessing these incidents in their localities especially in the Drogheda area and stated that agencies need to work together to try and figure out how we can help them.

Cllr Aisling O'Neill asked if the DRIVE initiative will be linked to schools.

Andy Ogle responded to Cllr O'Neill by stating that the DRIVE initiative will be linked to schools and that there has been a revamp of the curriculum to include two new programmes of focus 1) To inform young people of the consequences of Driving under the influence and 2) To inform young people of the effects of drink and drugs on mental health.

Dep Peadar Toibin joined the meeting at 3.15 and raised the issue of supply and demand and stated that if one drug dealer is caught then another dealer simply replaces them. He also stated that people in all levels of society take drugs and suggested that if their driving licences were to be taken off them, perhaps this would deter them. He also queried residential drug rehab in the county and stated that there are inadequate services for those under the age of 18. He also voiced concerns over the possible legalization of drugs and questioned whether more access might mean more harm.

Andy Ogle agreed that there are scant resources in Meath for drug and alcohol rehab and for the increasing amount of people in need of treatment. He suggested that day programmes may work for users and their families but for those who don't have any support, then a residential home treatment centre may be their only option but in Meath Tabor House is the only treatment centre for men and stated that currently there is no treatment centre for women in Meath. He also stated that Ballyraggot in County Kilkenny is the only treatment centre for those under the age of 18 who need rehab. On the question relating to driving licences, this would need to be responded to by the Gardai.

Senator Sharon Keogan joined the meeting after 3.20 and raised a major concern which is the age of the kids who are being targeted and used by criminals and criminal gangs as runners and sometime dealers and who are sometimes as young as 12 or 13 years of age.

Andy Ogle referred to the evidence that has emerged from Iceland showing how they have overcome this issue of drug taking by young people by ensuring that their youth engage in sporting activities, that engagement is made with their families, that good communication is



kept with their friends, by ensuring that parents are aware of where their kids are, that they make sure their kids are safe, and by asking all the community to keep an eye on the kids in their communities in general. He stated that the problem usually lies within a small minority in a community and we need to focus on this minority.

Chief Superintendent Fergus Healy agreed that there is an increasing issue with young people offending. He stated that criminals are opportunists, they make money where they can and they take advantage of young people. It is a different process to bring young people to justice and unfortunately in many cases, it is a struggle to get to them before the dealers get to them. He stated that we need to try and work together to get to them before the dealers do and advised that there is a Youth Diversion Scheme in every Garda division and a Junior Liaison Officer assigned to each division who works with kids in schools and also with kids who have dropped out of school. He stated that every child has a right to be considered for the youth diversion scheme and it is in huge demand across the county at present.

Cathaoirleach thanked Andy Ogle and Chief Superintendent Fergus Healy for their input.

6. To receive a report on fatal accidents in County Meath for Q1 of 2022 in line with Circular RW 18 of 2020 LA16 Collision Reporting and Evaluation Procedure

Chief Superintendent Fergus Healy gave a verbal report on the incidents of fatalities as follows and stated that 2021 was a bleak year for road fatalities with 14 deaths. There has been a steady increase in intoxicated incidents where persons have been caught driving under the influence.

Dep Peader Toibín asked if there any figures on drink driving prosecutions or prosecutions on speeding.

Chief Superintendent Healy advised that those figures were not to hand today but were available and suggested that a parliamentary question might be the best option to request those figures.

1 fatality in Slane
1 fatality in Donore



7. To receive a presentation from An Garda Síochána on Crime Statistics for Co Meath to 23rd January 2022

Chief Superintendent Healy gave a presentation on the crime statistics for Meath to 23rd January, 2022:

Meath Division Crime Statistics

Crime category	Incidents 2022 YTD	%change YTD	Diff	No of detections 2022 YTD	% change detection rate YTD
Property crime	113	+24%		13	-13%
Burglary (non aggravated)	36	+64%		2	+100%
Theft from Vehicles	17	+89%		2	--
Theft of Vehicles	6	-50%		1	0%
Theft from Shop	29	-6%		5	-55%
Theft of Other Property	17	+42%		1	--
Crimes against the person	28	+65%		8	-33%
Drugs (sale & supply)	3	-50%		5	-17%
Drugs (possession)	13	-43%		15	+36%

Meath Roads Policing

Category	2021 YTD	2022 YTD	Change	% Change
Fatalities	0	2	+2	--
Fatal Collisions	0	2	0	0%
Serious injury collisions	3	2	-1	-33%
Minor injury Collisions	7	19	12	+171%
Driving while Intoxicated incidents	20	28	+8	+40%
MIT Checkpoints	63	115	+52	+82.5%
Vehicles Seized	74	45	-29	-39%



Community Engagement

- **Community Engagement since onset of Pandemic - focus on assisting vulnerable and isolated members of community.**
- **Assisting with deliveries of medication, supplies etc. to those needing assistance**
- **Attendance at Community Events during year, via remote Platforms such as Zoom, Teleconference and Social Media forums.**
- **Text Alert system in operation.**
- **Garda Youth Awards Scheme – held on 13th October, 2021, Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim, Co Meath.**
- **Other normal Community Engagement activities e.g. meetings/school visits – adversely impacted during Covid-19 pandemic.**
- **Divisional Facebook page (Meath Crime Prevention) – 42,000 followers**
- **Divisional Instagram Account being piloted – Pilot ongoing**
- **Weekly Garda Crime Desk on LMFm Radio reaching circa 35,000 local persons.**

Resources – Meath Division

- 328 Sworn Garda Members (All Ranks)
- 121 Ashbourne District
- 104 Navan District
- 46 Kells District
- 57 Trim District
- 20 Roads Policing Unit
- 15 Reserve Members
- 44 Garda Staff
- 16 Garda Stations

Cathaoirleach thanked Chief Superintendent Healy for his presentation and opened it up to the floor.

Members who made contributions were: Cllr Aisling O'Neill, Dep Peadar Tobin, Cllr Tom Behan,

Cllr Paul McCabe on subjects such as new garda recruits, crime figures in Ashbourne, Garda numbers in Meath per capita, garda accommodation in Johnstown and Ratoath, speed vans in North Meath, theft of phone cable in North Meath. CS Healy responded to all queries raised to the satisfaction of the Members.



8. AOB and next Meeting Date 23rd May, 2022

- A special note of thanks was extended by Cllrs Noel French, Cllr Paul McCabe, Conor O'Leary & Cathaoirleach Francis Deane on behalf of the JPC Committee to Garda Dean Kearns who had recently retired for his exemplary work throughout the whole county of Meath including the setting up of the Meath Crime prevention page on Facebook and various other scheme which have been of huge benefit to the communities of Meath.
- Barry Lynch also thanked retired Garda Dean Kearns for his great work in the county of Meath on behalf of the Executive of Meath County Council, the JPC Committee and also the Age Friendly Alliance.
- Cllr Noel French reminded the Committee that the year 2022 marked the centenary of the formation of An Garda Síochána (originally called the Civic Guard).

Cathaoirleach thanked all for their attendance at the meeting and confirmed that that next JPC Meeting will be held on 23rd May, 2022.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach Francis Deane

Date:

23/5/2022