



**Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes**  
**County Meath Joint Policing Committee**

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 – 2.30 pm in the Ardboyne Hotel, Navan**

**In Attendance:**

**Presiding:** Cllr Francis Deane

**County Council Members:** Cllr Maria Murphy, Cllr Noel French, Cllr Alan Lawes, Cllr Yemi Adenuga, Cllr Gillian Toole, Cllr David Gilroy, Cllr Alan Tobin

**Oireachtas Members:** Deputy Peadar Toibin, Deputy Johnny Guirke, Deputy Darren O'Rourke

**An Garda Síochána:** Chief Superintendent John Dollard, Superintendent Martina Noonan, Detective Inspector Inspector Peter Gilsenan, Inspector Brian Dunne, Inspector Mick O'Keeffe, Inspector Alan Roughneen

**County Council Officials:** Fiona Fallon

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

**Co-Ordinator:** Angie Mitchell

**Apologies:** Minister Helen McEntee, Jackie Maguire, Barry Lynch, Superintendent Dermot Drea, Minister Damien English, Deputy Thomas Byrne, Senator Annie Hoey, Senator Regina Doherty, Senator Sharon Keogan, Senator Shane Cassells, Cllr Deirdre Geraghty Smith, Cllr Pdraig Fitzsimons, Cllr Paul McCabe, Cllr Trevor Golden, Cllr Aisling O'Neill, Cllr Tom Behan, Cllr Edward Fennessy, Tinu Achioya

Item	Discussion / Action
1.	<p><b>Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022</b></p> <p>Cllr Francis Deane welcomed everyone to this meeting and noted his absence at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September which was chaired by Cllr Maria Murphy.</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were confirmed on the proposal of <b>Cllr French</b> and seconded by <b>Deputy Toibin</b>.</p>



## 2. Matters arising from minutes

No matters arising.

## 3. Correspondence

F Fallon noted that all items of correspondence had been circulated to the Committee in advance on this meeting and there were no items for discussion today.

## 4. To receive an update on the 3 JPC Sub Committees

A Mitchell gave an update on the 3 JPC Subcommittees

1. The Road Safety & Improved Driver Behaviour Committee met on 6<sup>th</sup> December
2. The Community Safety & Crime Prevention Committee met on 8<sup>th</sup> December
3. The Antisocial Behaviour and Public Order Committee organised a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November as requested at the JPC meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022. This meeting was organised to discuss the ongoing issue of antisocial behaviour on the NX Bus Service, the Navan Town Bus Service and at the Abbey Road Bus stop in Navan. Following this meeting, it was agreed to issue letter to the National Transport Authority from Meath JPC, seeking their engagement and financial support to put in place a facility for Bus Eireann passengers on public transport to report incidents of antisocial behaviour and to support the NRB in calling for the implementation of assault screens on all Bus Eireann service vehicles in the Navan Area. A draft letter to the NTA was presented to the Committee for approval. Cllr Maria Murphy suggested changing the wording of the draft letter as presented. It was agreed by all present to proceed with the issuing of this letter with minor amendments as per Cllr Murphy's recommendation.

Cathaoirleach thanked A Mitchell for the update and opened to the floor for any questions or comments.

Queries, concerns and questions were raised and discussed by **Cllr Lawes, Cllr French, Deputy Toibin, Cllr Toole, Cllr Gilroy & Deputy O'Rourke** in relation to - *antisocial behaviour in Navan Town, the problem of speeding in towns and villages across Meath including Summerhill Village, the suggestion of using permanent speed cameras to combat speeding, Road safety concerns on R147 and R155, the sale of alcohol to underage teenagers, recent scams in Dunshaughlin & Ratoath villages, the importance of good communication between An Garda Siochana and Meath County Council Transportation Staff in relation to information on where speeding is taking place on secondary roads, Garda resources in relation to the traffic corps, public safety on public transport and the possibility of having a dedicated transport unit within An Garda Siochana, concern over the slow implementation of traffic calming and safety measures such as at Oberstown Cross.*

Cllr Tobin joined the meeting at 15.03 p.m.

Responses to queries and concerns raised were responded to by Chief Superintendent Dollard and Inspector Peter Gilsean who noted all comments and concerns.

Chief Superintendent Dollard stated the importance of highlighting the dangers of speeding. He confirmed that there were 3 less fatalities in Meath in 2022 compared to 2021. He advised that the merger of the Meath/Westmeath Garda Divisions will take place in 2023, however he confirmed that he is in the process of setting up a third road policing unit in Delvin prior to the merger. This new policing



unit will cover Dunshaughlin/Moate and Devlin Areas. He confirmed that he is also in the process of launching a competition to enhance the Garda numbers for this new division and each of the 3 road policing units will have an even size number of Gardai assigned to those units.

R Owens joined the meeting at 15.10 p.m.

In response to a question from Cllr Tobin at the September JPC meeting, Inspector Gilsean advised that there are 19 Garda members currently assigned to Roads Policing in Meath. He noted the increase in interceptions at MIT checkpoints since 2019. He confirmed that Summerhill and Dangan schools are included in the roads policing schedule for Meath.

Deputy O'Rourke left the meeting at 15.13 p.m.

Inspector Gilsean discussed the new mobility devices that each of the roads policing Gardai are now using. This device is similar to a mobile phone. It contains an application that is connected to the PULSE system and displays real time data immediately. Gardai can now instantly scan number plates, scan driving licences, and receive the results of searches immediately on the roadside as opposed to ringing a garda station to obtain these results and noted that this is a huge benefit to Gardai. Inspector Gilsean also stated the importance of Meath County Council Transportation Section working in conjunction with An Garda Síochána following the speed surveys and noted the success of the work carried out at Bohermeen school by Meath County Council and An Garda Síochána to combat speeding.

Deputy Toibin queried if Gardai could give their permission for the placement of permanent speed cameras. He raised concerns about Garda numbers and the low numbers of new recruits. He questioned if the Meath Joint Policing Committee could make a formal request to meet with the Minister for Justice or a Regional Commissioner to discuss the lack of Garda resources in County Meath.

Inspector Gilsean referred to the permanent speed cameras that were placed at Liscarton, Navan in the past which were vandalised after placement. He stated that the Road Safety Officer may consider the placement of permanent speed cameras in areas patrolled by CCTV so as to deter criminal damage.

D Gilroy & P Toibin left the meeting at 3.30 p.m.

Further questions were received from Cllr Murphy, Cllr Lawes and Deputy Guirke in relation to the conditions under which speed vans can operate, policing numbers in Navan on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, the lack of garda resources in Meath and the possibility of the placement of a Garda Station in Johnstown Navan. These questions were responded to by Chief Superintendent Dollard.

C O'Leary queried today's agenda and noted the volume of questions to Gardai following item 3 on the agenda. He suggested that for future meeting, the Garda presentation could be placed as item 3 on the agenda where members can then pose their questions to Garda following the presentation of the crime statistics rather than before the statistics are presented by Gardai.

His comments were noted by the Chairperson.

Cllr Tobin raised concerns in relation to drug dealing in Ashbourne, violence to women and attacks on teenagers in Ashbourne and appealed for Gardai to help in these matters, however he stated that the main issue is the lack of Garda responses due to lack of Garda personnel.

Chief Superintendent Dollard acknowledged that there is a lack of Garda resources in County Meath due to demographic changes and large population increases. He stated that new recruits will be coming to



County Meath in Mid 2023 and he would be placing these new recruits into the trainee Garda stations of Laytown, Navan and Ashbourne and he will ensure that they receive mentoring. He is looking into the possibility of creating another Community Garda hub in Ashbourne, similar to that in Duleek and will confirm this when the new recruits emerge in Mid 2023. He asked JPC members to be patient as he continues to lobby for new Garda personnel and he is confident that he will receive more personnel. He noted Deputy Toibin's concerns about the retention issues within An Garda Síochána. He confirmed that he has now made Laytown Garda Station a 24 hour station and advised that he is working in conjunction with the Chief Superintendent in Drogheda in relation to reviewing policing boundaries in the hope that certain areas of Drogheda, Co Meath can be policed by Drogheda Garda Station and discussions are continuing to take place in this regard. He further advised that Gardai have modified their responses to domestic violence and stated that all reports are followed up with a call back to the victim to advise them of the supports available. In relation to migrants, he stated that there is an Ethnic Liaison Officer appointed. There are also specialists appointed to deal with domestic and sexual violence both of which are led by a Detective Inspector.

Cllr Adenuga raised concerns about Garda retention issues and asked if there is anything the Community can do to help the Gardai.

Chief Superintendent Dollard stressed the importance of members of the public continuing to liaise with Community Gardai and continuing to report any issues of crime in the community to Gardai.

#### 5. To receive an update on the new Joint Policing Committee Guidelines

F Fallon gave an update on the new JPC guidelines that were published by the Policing Authority and circulated to the JPC's in November 2022. The main points to note from the new guidelines are as follows:

- They replace the 2014 guidelines
- They set out the role and functions of the JPC which haven't changed
- They encourage the JPC to work with other structures such as the LCDC, local drugs taskforces and other structures working to combat criminality and antisocial behaviour
- They recommend that each JPC create a communications strategy which Meath JPC created in 2021
- They set out that the term of office of Chairperson shall be not less than 2 years with a maximum of 5 years
- Members of the JPC must be appointed by resolution of the local authority
- Members of the JPC are not entitled to appoint substitutes to attend and participate as members with the exception of the Officials and An Garda Síochána.
- Each JPC must prepare and submit an annual report to the local authority no later than 3 months after the end of each year, a copy of which must be submitted to the Policing Authority, Minister for Justice, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Garda Commissioner

Cathaoirleach thanked F Fallon for the update and opened to the floor for questions:

Cllr French questioned if a TD can be replaced at a JPC meeting.

In response F Fallon confirmed that a TD can send a replacement to the meeting but the replacement cannot participate or vote.



CLlr Toole suggested the creation of a Community Safety Partnership in Meath.

In response F Fallon stated that there are currently 3 pilot Community Safety Partnerships in place in Ireland and once these pilots have been completed, a decision will then be made on a possible rollout of CSP's nationally.

**6. To receive report on fatal accidents in Co. Meath for Q4 of 2022 in line with Circular RW 18 of 2020 LA16 Collision Reporting and Evaluation Procedure**

Inspector Gilsean gave a verbal report on the incidents of fatalities and stated that there have been 8 fatalities to date in 2022.

**Meath Roads Policing**

Category	2021 YTD	2022 YTD	Change	% Change
<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-20%</b>
<b>Fatal Collisions</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-20%</b>
<b>Serious injury collisions</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>+5%</b>
<b>Non-serious injury Collisions</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>+37</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Driving while Intoxicated incidents</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>MIT Checkpoints</b>	<b>1102</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>+66</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Vehicles Seized</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>-144</b>	<b>-21.72%</b>

Inspector Gilsean also responded to a question from Cllr Murphy from the September meeting regarding pre & post covid detection rates for alcohol and drugs and confirmed that alcohol rates are down 14% post covid and drug detections have increased substantially. He confirmed that there have been drug detections since early December 2022 due to the new drug testing device, which gives rapid results and tests more variants of drugs.

Cathaoirleach thanked Inspection Gilsean for his report.

**7. To receive a presentation from An Garda Síochána on Crime Statistics for County Meath to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Chief Superintendent John Dollard gave a verbal presentation on the crime statistics for Meath to date as follows:



### Meath Division Crime Statistics

Crime category	Incidents 2022 YTD	% change YTD	No of detections 2022 YTD	% change detection rate YTD
Property crime	2144	+44%	425	-15%
Burglary (non-aggravated)	379	+41%	30	+0%
Theft from Vehicles	265	+18%	25	-26%
Theft of Vehicles	121	+36%	20	+33%
Theft from Shop	734	+42%	266	-21%
Theft of Other Property	440	+63%	52	-24%
Crimes against the person	579	+14%	173	-17%
Drugs (sale & supply)	68	-33%	49	-54%
Drugs (possession)	267	-27%	248	-30%

### Resources – Meath Division

- 331 Sworn Garda Members (All Ranks)
- 124 Ashbourne District
- 108 Navan District
- 42 Kells District
- 57 Trim District
- 19 Roads Policing Unit
- 15 Reserve Members
- 53 Garda Staff
- 16 Garda Stations

Cathaoirleach thanked Superintendent Noonan for her presentation.

Bill Commerford, Cllr Tobin & Deputy Guirke left the meeting at 16.12 p.m.

C O’Leary raised concerns on behalf of the leaders of the Community Alert Groups regarding aggravated burglaries (statistics not provided) and particularly the impact of the change to the new Garda districts of Meath/Westmeath in 2023.

In response Chief Superintendent Dollard assured him that there will not no change in the number of Gardai on the ground under the new model. There will be 1 Superintendent for Community Engagement for North Meath and 1 Superintendent for Community Engagement in South Meath who will deal solely with Community Engagement. CO’L suggested consultation with the text alert leaders and the Superintendants to figure out what will work in each area. Chief Supt Dollard welcomed this.

Cllrs Murphy & Toole raised the issue of the escalating use of nitrous oxide with teenagers and asked if something can be done to identify the wholesalers and alert them to this issue.

In response Chief Superintendent Dollard confirmed that the use of Nitrous oxide does not fall under the Misuse of drugs act and consequently An Garda Síochána are powerless to act.



Cllr Toole advised the Committee that she will bring this issue to the attention of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and the Regional Health forum.

On the suggestion of Cllr Maria Murphy, the JPC passed a vote of sympathy to all those who have lost family members in road accidents.

C O'Leary left the meeting at 16.20 p.m.

**8. Any other business and confirm meeting dates for 2023**

F Fallon informed the Committee of the proposed meetings dates for 2023 and all members were in agreement with these dates.

**Cathaoirleach complimented the Chief Superintendent and his team for their attendance at the recent JPC meetings and thanked all the Committee members for their presence at this meeting.**

**The meeting concluded at 16.23 p.m.**

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

**Cathaoirleach Francis Deane**

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023