

**DRAFT Minutes of Tipperary Joint Policing Committee
held on the 14th May, 2021 at 2.00 p.m. via Zoom**

In Attendance Via Zoom:-

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart, Cllr Noel Coonan (Chairperson), Eddie Meegan (Secretary), Pat Slattery Director of Services, Deputy Martin Browne, Deputy Mattie McGrath, Cllr Annemarie Ryan, Cllr Ger Darcy, Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr Marie Murphy, Cllr Richie Molloy, Cllr Hughie McGrath, Cllr Fiona Bonfield, Imelda Walsh Chair (IFA), Michelle Aylward (Tipperary Chamber), Pat Carroll (IFA), Cliona Tobin (TCC)

Also in Attendance Via Zoom:-

Eoin Kelleher (Media), Simon O'Duffy (Media), Darren Keegan (Media), Aileen Haahesy (Media), Anne Bradshaw (HSE)

Apologies:

Cllr Mark Fitzgerald, Deputy Michael Lowry, Deputy Alan Kelly, Anne Williamson (PPN)

Welcome

Cllr Noel Coonan (Chair) opened the meeting, welcomed all present and noted apologies received.

Vote of Sympathy

A vote of sympathy was passed on behalf of the members on the passing of Tom Ambrose R.I.P. father of our colleague Cllr Siobhan Ambrose.

Confirmation of the Minutes of previous meeting

Verification of the minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 12th February, 2021 were approved on the proposal of Deputy Martin Browne seconded by Imelda Walsh.

Item 1 – To Review levels and patterns of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in the County

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart gave a presentation on the Tipperary Division Statistics up to 1st May, 2021, in respect of:-

1. Domestic Abuse Incidents
2. Property Crime at a Divisional Level (broken down by District)
 - Additional attention afforded to Burglary
3. Crime Against the Person at a Divisional Level (broken down by District)
 - Additional attention afforded to Assault
4. Proactive Policing Measure
 - Includes Possession of Drugs, Sale of Drugs, Firearms and Offensive Weapons
5. Traffic
 - Fatalities/Serious injuries figures YTD
 - Drink Driving and Drug Offences
 - Life Saver Offences

All information is based upon operational data from the PULSE System as was available on the 1/5/2021, unless otherwise stated, and is liable to change. Crime counting rules are applied, unless otherwise stated. Incident counts are based on date reported.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart gave a presentation on the statistics for each of the Municipal Towns in the County - Nenagh, Thurles, Clonmel, Tipperary and Cahir.

The statistics for the overall Tipperary Division indicated:-

- An increase in Domestic Abuse Incidents which include Domestic Violence, Breach of Barring Order, Breach of Protection Order, Breach of Safety Order, Domestic Dispute, Domestic Dispute – No Offence Disclosed and any incident with Domestic M.O. (modus operandi) up 7% YTD
Breaches of Interim Barring, Barring, Protection & Safety Orders is down 27.8% YTD
 - Compulsory on line training taking place under Operation Faoiseamh
 - Newly appointed Detective Sergeant and Gardaí assigned to Divisional Protective Services Unit in addition to new clerical support staff
 - Purple Clothes Dye campaign taking place in pharmacies in conjunction with Cuan Saor to support victims of Domestic AbuseChief Superintendent Derek Smart took the opportunity to thank Cuan Saor and the pharmacies that took on the initiative.
- A reduction in Property Crime which includes robbery, burglary and various theft offences - down 27%
- A reduction in Non-Aggravated Burglary which includes residential and non-residential – down 33%
- An increase in Crimes Against the Person which includes murder, murder threat, all assaults, harassment, child abandonment and neglect or abuse – up 15%
- An increase in Assaults which include assaults causing harm and minor assaults – up 21%
- An increase in Proactive Policing measures - overall searches up 52% within the division
- A reduction of Possession of Offensive Weapons – down 4%
- A reduction of Possession of Firearms – down 50%
- An increase of Possession of Drugs for sale/supply – up 30%
- An increase in Possession of Drugs for personal use – up 30%
- A reduction in Serious Injury Road Collisions – down 27%
- An increase in Fatal Collisions – up 300%
- 170 MIT Checkpoints conducted YTD – down 80% which resulted in 88 driving while intoxicated offences (this figure includes 30 drug driving offences) – down 15% from last year.
- A reduction in phone usage whilst driving – down 7%
- A reduction in non-wearing of seat belt – down 30%
- An increase in driving over the speed limit – up 71%

The above information is based upon operational data from the PULSE System as was available on 4/5/21 and is liable to change. Incident counts are based on date reported.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart also updated the Committee on the following Pro Active Policing Measures:-

- Roads Policing –
 - Responded to complaints by local residents of speeding through Marlfield village on 11th May – as a result a garda checkpoint detected 2 drivers in excess of the speed limit and were issued with FCPN's one was arrested for dangerous driving and charged to appear before Clonmel District Court.
 - Arrested a disqualified driver in Cashel and vehicle was seized on 3rd March. Driver was subsequently charged and received a 9 months custodial sentence on 25th March and a further 6 year disqualification.
- Environmental Issues & Joint Investigations –
 - Joint investigation with Tipperary County Council following a report of rubbish and clothing dumped in the Cahir area on 1st March 2021 – identification of perpetrator found on item of clothing.
 - Arrest made following surveillance operation for disposal of Human Waste on R639.
- Neighbourhood Watch & Community Alert –
 - A large attendance to 5 virtual District Neighbourhood Watch & Community Alert meetings with opportunity for questions and answers at end of meeting - details of all local liaison gardaí were provided to ensure local garda are invited to attend local AGM
 - Information packs were provided on phishing, internet security & home security
 - Crime prevention advice offered by Sergeant O'Dwyer
- Animal Welfare –
 - On 28th February Clonmel gardaí intercepted a sulky race in progress and FCPN's issued for Covid-19 breaches and unlicensed and unchipped pony was seized
 - On 17th March Thurles gardaí rescued a malnourished injured pony in Two Mile Borris and on the same day a number of Covid-19 fines issued in Cahir area in relation to movement of persons allegedly involved in sulky racing
- Community Engagement –
 - Clonmel Community gardaí took part in virtual 5k walk, run or cycle in support of Clonmel Community Pride.
 - Templemore gardaí safely located 2 persons lost near 'The Devil's Bit' late evening of 2nd April
- Drugs –
 - Arrest of two males on 7th May after search warrant was executed at an address in Clonmel - drugs to the value of €2,700 along with cash, mobile phones and digital scales.
 - Arrest of two males on 9th April after search warrant was executed at an address in Borrisokane - cannabis herb to the value of €2,800 was located and 2 follow up searches in Portroe located suspected Cannabis Herb to the value of €12,00 and €2,040 subject to analysis
- Drugs & Crime –
 - Four arrests were made on 29th April in Clonmel with assistance from Defence Forces following the seizure of suspected drugs to value of €19,400 and a number of weapons
 - Two Males arrested in a Newport on 7th May following a report of a disturbance between 5-6 individuals in a housing estate. Garda John

Collins was commended for his bravery as he held the parties at bay until assistance arrived.

➤ Crime –

- Two arrests following a number of serious incidents in Roscrea on 6th May – altercation took place between a number of youths – one party left the scene at speed and fled the scene when intercepted at a garda checkpoint eventually arrested for endangerment. Two charged one was refused bail conditions and further arrests anticipated.

Noel thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart for a comprehensive report and added that the purple dye campaign is very important and to get it out there and make it known. He also said the training was welcomed and briefing the committee on the campaign itself. He acknowledged the work of gardaí at community level and would like to pass on the gratitude to Chief Superintendent Derek Smart and his members. He opened the floor for questions or comments.

The following questions were asked by members:-

Q. Imelda Walsh IFA concurred with comments from the Chair in relation to domestic violence purple dye campaign and added that it is a fantastic initiative and advocated the advertising of this campaign out on social media. She added that the huge social media campaign helped locate the stolen cattle in Cloughjordan. Also if working from home may have contributed to the reason for reduction in crime.

Q. Deputy Martin Browne welcomed the compulsory domestic violence training for gardaí. He added it's great to see property crime coming down. He questioned if issue of catalytic convertors can be resolved through scrap dealers being held responsible for selling on the precious metal. He asked if reduction in non-aggravated burglaries or drop in crime is due to more patrols. He asked if the increase in crime against persons is due to drinking or drug use. Regarding the proactive policing measures and bringing people to court for sale and supply of drugs how long could you expect before cases brought to court. Can we get list of names of local gardaí.

Q. Deputy Mattie McGrath thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart and his colleagues in the Clonmel and local district for all the work on the drug scene. He welcomed the purple dye initiative on reporting domestic abuse. He expressed his delight to hear the current garda roster is going to remain and he is delighted to hear there is extra cars available to Clonmel and Carrick gardaí. He said he raised the issue of catalytic convertors in the Dail and suggested the need for PPS no.'s or VAT numbers of people bringing them in to scrap yards.

Q. Cllr Ger Darcy welcomed Chief Superintendent Derek Smart and congratulated him on the comprehensive report and complimented him on bringing down the crime figures. He supports and welcomes the initiative on domestic abuse. Regarding stolen livestock he complimented the media facebook campaign on located the animals.

Q. Cllr Marie Murphy thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart saying it is good to see work around domestic abuse and the incidents are down almost 28% for safety orders. Regarding theft of catalytic convertors - an incident was caught on camera in Clogheen which only took minutes – car was old but invaluable to the owner. Marie added palladium from the catalytic convertors is more valuable than gold and the value has soared over past few years.

Q. Cllr David Dunne noticed an increase in anti-social behaviour since lockdown and asked for opinion on CCTV recording of these crimes to be brought to prosecution – CCTV needs to be 'done up' at Kickham Street as increase in anti-social behaviour and a lot of drugs in one particular area. He asked if money seized for drug dealing can be used for drug rehabilitation programmes or to help break the debt cycle and if the JPC can do any more for this problem.

Q. Cllr Siobhan Ambrose thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart and Clonmel district for recent drugs haul. Covid-19 has given heavier focus on community gardaí and she asked for specific names for community gardaí for own area.

Regarding domestic violence initiative there no mention of male domestic abuse and we need to be cognisant of that. She requested update of Clonmel staffing numbers and asked where we are at with new garda station and update on CCTV for Clonmel.

Cllr Fiona Bonfield echoed sentiments of Garda John Collins for counteracting what could have been worse situation during the incident in Newport. She asked if more foot patrols could take place in towns as teenagers are loitering. She also echoed Cllr Dunnes sentiments regarding drugs – drug use in secondary schools are a big issue and can something be done through JPC. She asked about CCTV in Newport.

Q. Cllr Richie Molloy concurred with what is being said and added its great the percentages are well up on drug searches and fines – there is a very large drug presence around even in early afternoon in town centre. He asked for motion at Council meeting previously for monies found in drug searches be diverted back to community projects.

Q. Cllr Shane Lee thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart and across the board what's happening on the ground. He commended sergeant Mark Kelly and all the staff in Roscrea garda station for trojan work. He asked where we are at regarding CCTV – is it down to resources or policy.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied to the questions as follows:-

Regarding stolen animals – there is a market in it and thieves have developed a way to remove tags from cattle – need for tighter regulation on how animals are moved - unregulated abattoirs are a national problem – gardaí are keeping an eye out for trailers, trucks and vans moving livestock and if you suspect any illegal activity to contact the garda confidential line which is printed on every patrol car. Support from IFA or any other group for initiative would be welcomed.

Removal of catalytic convertors from cars are a huge issue and there is a market for it – they are worth over €300 - 18 convertors reported stolen in the past week – thieves can remove convertors in seconds with cutting equipment and tools which are melted down swiftly and sold on – 3 catalytic convertors were matched with the car owners in Thurles which was a breakthrough as it is difficult to match convertors with cars as there is no serial number on them. 2 people were charged and were before the courts in Clonmel thanks to the hard work and dedication of garda members.

Property crime has fallen due to initiatives in place to deal with that in circuit court.

Section 3 misuse of drugs – people looking for product more at weekends which is driving market for criminals – detection rates going up – resources are dedicated to areas where the product is being provided.

The law has changed recently where a caution is given – it is not a criminal offence for first time detection to try and prevent getting caught up in sale and supply – sale and supply policy – reduction in wait time for drugs to be forensically examined in Dublin from 12 months to 6/7 months in district court.

A list of liaison guards will be made available through Eddie Meegan.

Regarding the work roster, this is an IR issue but is being discussed between Senior Garda Management and the Associations.

Training has slowed down a small bit but on the job training continued until the college was back up last month – he will make case through Commissioner.

Staffing is the same in Clonmel. A Sergeant from Clonmel is starting in the Divisional Protective Services Unit this week. Competition for Garda Sergeant will be advertised in the next few months. It is hoped this will provide extra support to Superintendent Leahy to areas that need to be prioritised.

The plans for the new garda station in Clonmel were on display for public viewing it is now gone to government for approval and to be signed off on. He added it will be good to get the 'boots on the ground' although it will probably take 2 to 3 years.

Siobhans comment regarding advertising the purple dye initiative being directed at female victims in campaign was spot on however majority of victims are female but it is aimed at both men and women. Gardaí are also working with Mens Sheds regarding same. Domestic Abuse is a big issue and any support or advertisement of purple dye campaign would be welcomed.

Regarding anti-social behaviour – parental controls play a huge part as there is no other outlet for children until peer led activities resume.

CCTV is successful but it does move the crime/problem to other areas which are not covered by the system.

Regarding foot patrols in Newport – plans to look at peddle cycle policing to get around gowns and villages.

Regarding resources for Roscrea – once resources become available they will go to where needed.

Monies from drug seizures goes back to national exchequer/coffers– there are talks to change legislation. €1.5 million ceased in Tipperary in the last year. Covid-19 has allowed gardaí focus on how to combat drugs.

Item 2 – Property Marking

Eddie Meegan updated the Committee as follows:-

There is a budget for training however face to face training can't take place yet– he is looking for nominations from community groups to host training when it is safe to do so hopefully in the Autumn.

Item 3 – CCTV

Pat Slattery gave an update saying he is working with Chief Superintendent Derek Smart on this – tied up in national debate about the housing of recording and monitoring equipment and joint data controllers. They are looking at putting CCTV equipment into Littleton garda station and gardaí being joint data controller with the county council. For access to Community CCTV you have to contact Council for permission. Pat hopes to meeting with Kieran Fagan Acting Principal GDPR and Michael Armstrong in the next few weeks regarding same.

In relation to Roscrea Pat said Margo Hayes met with a working group and contacted Jacinta Ryan OPW and M Carey Planning Officer.

Derek Russell will follow up with Church of Ireland regarding licencing issue there may be an issue if it is a protective structure. Margo continuing follow up in Roscrea and Eddie with Borrisokane.

Derek added that hopefully after Pat has the meeting we can get over the line.

Ger Darcy expressed sense of frustration in Borrisokane as they prepared all they can do – he hopes the meeting Pat has success in near future.

Siobhan asked if there was any update in relation to status for CCTV for Clonmel as this is going on a long time and local guards fully support this.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied by saying he was in Clonmel Wednesday and an engineer was with him as there was an issue that had arisen There is a garda system and a county council system to be joined together to get issue resolved and it is hoped it progresses and he can answer in the next few weeks.

Noel hopes Oireachtas members can push it on and respond to frustration of community in Tipperary.

Fiona expressed her frustration at CCTV issue as well as loops and holes are crazy.

David added the County Council has access and cameras are outdated and he asked who is responsible for up keep – is it within Councils remit or gardaí.

Pat replied that it was a good question – the Scheme under Carrick RAPID Programme 20% is the Council – Municipal District would maintain the scheme He got a quotation to update - the network recorder would need to be updated also quotation was for over €200,000. Some CCTV is covered under urban renewal RRDF – he will submit query to see if funding will cover same.

Mark Fitzgerald submitted a query looking for update on Fethard Scheme – Pat will email Mark once resolved nationally.

Item 4 – Presentation

Anne Bradshaw HSE gave a presentation on the recently launched 'Inside Out' booklet. The aim of the booklet is to make society a safer place for all.

Inside Out came about as a result of increasing concern amongst people with disabilities and older people in the community who have been victims of crimes or are fearful of becoming crime victims in their local community. The aim was to create a project that would highlight the issues but also provide a solution or project that would bring about a change in society. Long term impact of crime on people with disabilities and older people is sometimes underestimated.

The booklet was compiled with the support of Transition Year Students in Tipperary Town, gardaí including Inspector Des Bell and Chief Superintendent Derek Smart , Tipperary County Council, HSE and participants from Limerick Prison. All the women in prison that worked on this project had children/grandchildren themselves and they wanted to steer them away from crime and ending up in prison.

The Handbook is due to be published in the coming days and will be of interest to those working with young people in schools or youth groups and to the broader community in general to raise awareness of crimes. It will be used in Irish Prison Education settings, TY classes in schools (peer mentoring programme), Libraries, Youth and community groups and Broader community in general.

Anne thanked in particular Fiona Crotty, Tipperary County Council Age Friendly Co-ordinator for her input she wouldn't have been able to do it all without her assistance. She also thanked Kate Fleming and Derek Donlon Photographer, local artists for illustrations and all who volunteered to take part in this project.

Noel thanked Anne for fantastic initiative and stated that people still suffer after crime is long over and offered full support on behalf of every member of the committee.

Fiona Bonfield congratulated Anne on this initiative and commented that it was lovely to see Transition Year Students and youth involved and if she can offer support in her own area regarding this project she will do so.

Martin also congratulated Anne on the great initiative and for brining all sectors of crime together to help combat families of repeat offenders coming through system.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart also congratulated Anne on driving this initiative.

Item 5 – AOB

None.

Item 6 – Date of next meeting

The next meeting is set for 10th September, 2021 at 10.00 a.m.