

**DRAFT Minutes of Joint Policing Committee
held on the 16th October 2020 at 2 p.m. via Zoom**

In attendance via Zoom:- Chief Superintendent Derek Smart, Cllr Noel Coonan (Chairperson), Pat Slattery Director of Services, Deputy Martin Browne, Eddie Meegan (Secretary), Cliona Tobin, Cllr Marie Murphy, Cllr Annemarie Ryan, Cllr Pat English, Cllr Shane Lee, Cllr David Dunne, Cllr John Crosse, Cllr Fiona Bonfield, Cllr Richie Molloy, Imelda Walsh Chair IFA
Simon O'Duffy (media)

Apologies: Deputy Michael Lowry, Cllr Mark Fitzgerald, Cllr Tony Black, Margaret Sheehy, Deputy Mattie McGrath

Welcome

Cllr Noel Coonan (Chair) opened the meeting. He apologised for the September meeting being adjourned to today due to technical issues with zoom. He welcomed all present including Chief Superintendent Derek Smart, Pat Slattery Director of Services and all the members.

Confirmation of the Minutes of meeting held on Friday 3rd July, 2020

Verification of the minutes of the last meeting – Proposed by Deputy Martin Browne T.D. seconded by Cllr Tony Black.

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

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart gave a presentation (a copy of which was emailed with the Agenda) on the Tipperary Division Statistics up to 1st October, 2020, 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 1/10/2020 and is liable to change. Crime counting rules are applied, unless otherwise stated. Incident counts are based on date reported.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart demonstrated via map format the statistics for each of the Municipal Towns in the County, Nenagh, Thurles, Clonmel Tipperary and Cahir.

He highlighted the ongoing Community Engagement, Animal Cruelty and Anti Dog Theft Operations, Operation Tombola (seizing illegal fireworks) amongst other organised operations to combat crime.

He thanked Superintendent Dave Nolan who has transferred from Nenagh Municipal District for all the work he done whilst stationed in Nenagh.

Chairman Cllr Noel Coonan thanked on behalf of the members of the JPC Superintendent Smart and all the members of the gardaí for all their work helping those especially in rural areas during Covid 19 outbreak.

The following questions were posed to Superintendent Smart after the presentation:-

Cllr Noel Coonan aired his concerns for the Thurles and Roscrea areas regarding increase in burglaries.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart stated a lot of members that were deployed at the start Covid have returned to Templemore college to complete their training. Roscrea and Nenagh are up against all other areas in the County to get members. Any resources needed he will try and get them in place.

Deputy Martin Browne thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart for presentatoin and had a list of questions to which Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied:-

Q. Non Aggravated burglary up 14% in Thurles any reason?

A. Burglaries such as sheds which were classed as permanent structure where tools were taken were recorded as a dwelling. Stats were higher in January and February, during Covid this slowed down due to people being at home he's hopeful it will slow down more by Christmas.

Q. Crimes against persons up 15% any reason?

A. Assaults in Clonmel are down – Crimes against person such as threats – Superintendent Lee is proactive and files are being prepared for DPP. Crimes everywhere else are down and they aim to keep the figures down. When pubs reopen assaults may increase. Domestic abuse increase with victim being locked at home with offender.

Q. Possession of drugs for personal use increase

A. Section 3's have increased – gardaí have ceased a lot of tablets for personal use and other drugs such as cannabis, cocaine some heroin

Q. Possession of drugs for sale and supply any timescale brought to court?

A. Section 15 (sale or supply) have gone up as gardaí are being pro active where they can as they will charge and go through courts system. Repeat offenders have a different more serious charge Section 15 a

Q. Traffic

A. Gardaí now have the capacity to test at roadside for drugs.

Q. How many Community Guards have we as they make a huge difference in all areas – fireworks are crazy at the moment.

A. There are 3 sergeants and 9 gardaí involved in community policing working

closely with meals and wheels and other initiatives.

Q. Animal Cruelty – Is there any way gardaí can work with Traveller Horses Association who have over 200 members – there are only a small number abusing horses.

A. Derek assured the meeting Gardaí have good relationships with County Councils personnel who they work closely with regarding this issue. Garda Mark Allen Cahir works with Horse Traveller Association.

Q. If level 5 Covid 19 restrictions come in to place is there enough gardaí to monitor travel outside 5 km

A. Derek said he is satisfied they will be able to do whatever is asked.

Noel hopes we won't get to Level 5.

Cllr Pat English thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart for presentation and congratulated the gardaí both indoor and outdoor for all the work they are doing. He commended the gardaí in the huge effort in catching the drug dealers in Clonmel, the figures are proving that the town will be a safer place to live in. He said it is great to see gardaí taking in mistreated horses and thanked everyone involved. He agreed the community guards are doing a lot of work. He asked if there was a reason for increase in crimes against person and assaults in Clonmel is it that it needs additional policing and is there a reason for the increase in drink driving.

Imelda Walsh (IFA) asked if there were many repeat offenders/crimes and had sympathy for the gardaí regarding same. The issue of Free Legal Aid for repeat offenders was raised with Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan. Regarding the increase in domestic abuse she said the fact alcohol is so readily available there are child protection issues and questioned if they are working with TUSLA. She thanked the Chairperson and Chief Superintendent Derek Smart.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied to Imelda's queries regarding repeat offenders stating the cases can be brought to the circuit court not district courts like other cases, they have to go to DPP if consistently offending- it is a stronger sentence. Regarding legal aid it is not within his remit to speak on this. Gardaí liaise with TUSLA and/or their counterparts regarding domestic abuse case. There is Divisional Protective Services Unit that conduct meetings and if there's a child at risk they will take child out of that area.

Cllr Marie Murphy thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart for the presentation and echoed her colleagues praise for the gardaí. She thanked Noel Glavin on behalf of the Senior Citizens in Clogheen for all his support and she said they are delighted to see guards been pro active through Covid. She said it was good to see technology catching people who have no tax, insurance and NCT. She expressed her disappointment to hear of domestic abuse incidents when victims are at home with no other outlet it will have knock on affect to children witnessing this abuse. She questioned the age demographic for speeding and hoped the property marking technology can be rolled out soon as signage should deter and reduce crime.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied regarding age, vehicle demographic for speed fines – details aren't to hand but can be available for next meeting. Property Marking Initiative is very good initiative for property ownership and if anyone wants to some property marked they can contact gardaí.

Cllr Shane Lee thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart and complimented gardaí especially in Roscrea. He expressed his sadness to see rescue of pets in Templemore. He raised concerns about the health and safety of members of the Force left manning the stations with their colleagues returning to Templemore and members retiring. He understands resources are stretched but station doors closed is concern for public. Drugs crime is up 40% in Roscrea area concerns around drug dealing taking place. Regarding dog theft he questioned if there was knowledge as to where these people are coming from. Regarding increase in speed detections he asked what the policy was regarding speed vans is it only in accident spots or why are they deployed to the locations they park. He thanked Superintendent David Nolan for all his work and welcomed Superintendent Eddie Golden.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied to Shane's comments regarding staffing issue in Roscrea by welcoming the appointment of 600 new members announced in the budget. Advertised through HRM Department for Civilian staff has commenced and he stated any time someone leaves a post they are replaced. Regarding the dog theft local knowledge has to be a factor and the road network is allowing transport of dogs. Inspector Mark Allen Roads Policing Inspector is responsible for identifying locations for speed vans normally where more serious collisions have taken place.

Community Engagement vehicles were available during Covid lockdown period with garda markings on them. Mobility phones were also provided for detection of car ownership, tax, insurance and NCT details are available instantly.

Noel thanked Inspector Ailish Myles for all her work in the area also.

Item 2 – Notice of Motion Number: 1897

- Make the community policing a permanent force in Tipperary

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart can't say that he'll be able to keep the numbers going forward. There were 5 units now they are split into 4. It is subject to negotiations outside of his control and stated it would be unfair to say. He suggested if members want to put forward a formal request to the Minister he would fully support it.

Chair Cllr Noel Coonan said he is lobbying for additional gardaí always.

Cllr Pat English agreed with Chief Superintendent Derek Smart to write to the Minister to push for more members.

Imelda added we are facing into a difficult winter with isolation in rural areas and a stronger garda presence is needed as there is a fear factor.

Cllr Pat English proposed a notice of motion to the Minister Cllr Noel Coonan seconded.

Item 3 – Standing Orders JPC Membership

Eddie Meegan stated the addition of members is up to the Steering Group. The County Council nominate the Council Members and the PPN nominate 5 Community Members, the IFA nominate one member and Chambers Ireland nominate one member and it is proposed that the PPN would nominate a migrant member in the future.

Eddie Meegan will note this in the Standing Orders - Section 3 page 3 of the Standing Orders.

He stated the Community section is working on the Migrant Integration Plan. Difficult to engage with Communities during Covid.

Pat Slattery will contact PPN to try to increase the numbers.

Item 4 -Text Alert System – Sub Group

Eddie Meegan has no update.

He will liaise with Cllr Mark Fitzgerald, Chair of Sub Group.

Item 5 – Property Marking

Eddie Meegan wrote to members to seek nominations for Property Marking training

There were 7 responses. He will arrange a date for training in due course. Due to Covid restrictions it is not safe to have training at present.

Pat suggested training or briefing via zoom with information on how it works or how it's managed.

Item 6 – CCTV

Chair Cllr Noel Coonan stated there were a number of issues. CCTVs in Littleton, Borrisokane and Roscrea had recorders placed in Garda Stations – subsequently not suitable for under Data Protection Regulations. Consultants were appointed to look at alternative location for CCTV.

Littleton – solved

Borrisokane – Cllr Ger Darcy is active in community group and they had ambitions to have suitable CCTV in the town. The N52 is busy thoroughfare and ASB is increasing lately. A sponsor has come on board to support town. Approval from JPC is needed before it goes to Commissioners office. He thanked Pat Slattery and Eddie Meegan and all the staff for all the work they have done so far. He stressed we need to strike while the 'iron is hot'. Possible sights are the Library or Fire Station for storing of equipment.

Imelda Walsh agreed. With a rural garda presence CCTV is extra set of eyes.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart said he is 100% in support of Borrisokane

CCTV. He fully supports community based CCTV. Applications do have to go to Commissioners office.

Clonmel Extension request – Sgt Tom Dwyer has issue with specifications.

Pat Slattery has spoken with Sgt Dwyer and District Administrator Rosemary Joyce is fully supportive of it. It's not a simple process there are a lot of steps involved from preparing the application then it goes to Superintendent, then the commissioner, detail design, Department of Justice for funding – contractors have to be appointed – installation – it is a long road.

Regarding CCTV in Littleton, Fethard, Burgess, Birdhill they're still not over the line – the process is long.

He stated the County Council is happy to be Data Controllers.

The groups have to be strong, robust and have entity

He strongly supports Ger Darcy's regarding the Borrisokane CCTV Proposal

Cllr Ger Darcy Proposed

Cllr Noel Coonan Seconded.

Ger said he can assure they have a robust community and he looks forward to taking it to the next stage.

Item 7 – AOB

Cllr Pat English informed the meeting the plans for the planning application for new Garda Station in Clonmel at Kickham Barracks are on public display and he hoped the sooner it is up and running the better.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart informed the meeting the plans are available for viewing at the FÁS office in Clonmel. Sergeant Margaret Reilly is in charge of this and he would encourage people to see the plans as they look good.

Cllr Marie Murphy raised the issue of the noise from 'boy racers' at the Vee. There needs to be cooperation across all the districts, Cappoquin, Lismore, Clonmel, Cahir and Mitchelstown as we need to deter these activities.

At Powers the Pot there could be 70/80 cars and Marie asked if there could be an operation to stop it.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart spoke with Denis Whelan in Cahir Gardaí but they have to be caught in the act. He will talk to Chief Superintendent Myers in North Cork to ensure it is looked at again.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting was set for 11th of December at 2.00 p.m. via zoom.