

Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of Meeting

March 12th, 2021 (Held Online).

Present: Cllr. Al McDonnell, Cllr. Michael Kilcoyne, Cllr. Neil Cruise, Cllr Gerry Coyle; Cllr. Michael Loftus, Cllr. Michael Burke, Cllr Christy Hyland, Cllr Damien Ryan, Cllr. Mark Duffy, Cllr Sean Carey, Rose Conway Walsh TD, Alan Dillon TD, Dara Calleary TD, Senator Paddy Burke, Edith Geraghty MTSG, Mr Daniel Kabango PPN, Peter Duggan, Interim Chief Executive, Mayo County Council, Chief Superintendent Tony Healy, Superintendent Joe McKenna,

In attendance: Superintendent Joe Doherty, Superintendent Thomas Calvey, Superintendent Gabriel Moran, Inspector Senan Wall, Mary Gildea AP, Sgt Paul Maher, Sergeant Thomasina McHale, Deirdre Finnerty, Maura Murphy, Michael Galvin,

1. Welcome

Cllr. Al McDonnell opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present. He welcomed Deirdre Finnerty, the new SEO of Community and Integrated Development MCC, to her first JPC meeting and wanted to acknowledge the great news that Castlebar was going to receive €11 million under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.

He hoped this money would be put to good use in the restoration of the Imperial Hotel and that part of it would be dedicated to the historical importance of Michael Davitt. He said the application from Mayo County Council was top class and was instrumental in getting awarded these funds and he congratulated Anne Sweeney, Padraic Kelly, Declan Clark, and Iarla Moran on the very high standard of their application.

Cllr Michael Loftus Wanted everyone to remember the crew of the R116 tragedy as this was the 7th anniversary of the crash and he thanked everybody involved in it at that time and said the community spirit displayed in that time was truly excellent. Everyone present wished to be associated with these remarks.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and matters arising

Proposed: Cllr Damian Ryan **Seconded:** Cllr Michael Burke

There were no matters arising.

3. Annual Report 2020

The chair complemented Maura Murphy and her team for putting together such an excellent and concise annual report which highlighted all the good work carried out in 2020.

Rose Conway Walsh said it had been an extremely difficult year and sometimes the messaging was very unclear, and she wanted to compliment An Garda Síochána on the excellent work they have done during the pandemic under very difficult circumstances and she wanted to thank all the frontline Gardaí also.

Proposed: Cllr Michael Burke **Seconded:** Cllr Mark Duffy

4. Mayo JPC Workplan 2021

Cllr Michael Kilcoyne said that the work plan was excellent and concise and has included all the major items to be worked on in 2021.

Cllr Damien Ryan said a lot of work went into it and acknowledged the difficulties the pandemic had created and complimented An Garda Síochána for encouraging people to comply rather than enforcing the law.

Proposed Cllr Michael Kilcoyne **Seconded** Cllr Mark Duffy

5. Reports from An Garda Síochána

Chief Superintendent Tony Healy gave an update on some figures as follows -:

- 4231 patrols were carried out
- 1700 checkpoints carried out
- 1521 visits to public houses
- 654 visits to retail premises
- 1096 visits to the vulnerable and elderly

He said AGS has joined the Schengen Information System which is the most widely used and largest police information sharing system and gives them access to an International Data Base of information.

Superintendent Joe McKenna then gave an update on crime figures in the Mayo Division from the start of 2021 up to March 11th, 2021.

Superintendent Thomas Calvey gave an update on the road traffic figures and said detections were down 40% mainly due through to the reduced traffic flow caused by the Government's COVID-19 restrictions.

- 1812 speeding tickets have been issued
- 133 learner drivers have been prosecuted
- 148 drink drivers
- 21 drug drivers.

Their main priority now is lifesaving offences, these are speeding, drink driving and driving without a seat belt and there have been 300 detections in the last month.

Crime	2021	2020	Change
Burglary	17	17	-
Minor Assault	42	56	Down 25%
Theft	30	58	Down 48%
Theft from Shops	32	42	Down 26%
Theft from Cars	10	20	Down 50%
Criminal Damage	67	60	Up 11%
Drugs for sale or supply	28	16	Up 75%
Fatal Road Collisions	5	3	Up 166%
Serious Road Collisions	21	38	Down 55%
Sexual crime- Rape	1	2	Down 50%
Sexual crime – Assault	5	11	Down 54%

Policing Reports

Superintendent Joe Doherty said that figures for the Ballina area have been very positive with burglaries and property crime both down 60% and detections against Drugs Crime up over 400% - extra Gardaí in the Belmullet, area are being trained in this area. The Costal Watch App has been working very well and they are also working on “a message in a bottle” initiative for the most vulnerable and elderly in society in conjunction with the Lions Club and have made over 320 visits to date. They have also delivered the Mayo County Council and Mayo Sports Partnership leaflets in the area. He also thanked the dog warden from Mayo County Council in the help in the fight against sheep attacks. He also thanked everybody involved in the ongoing missing persons search.

Superintendent Gabriel Moran reported that the figures in the Claremorris area have been very positive with the reduction across the board in crime in all areas. The Swinford local Policing Forum was now set up; he thanked Maura Murphy for her help in establishing group and he thanked all the Councillors involved for their input. They are working on CCTV, and the possibility of a Family Resource Centre for the area. They are also involved in the community response and vulnerable and elderly visits in the area.

Inspector Senan Wall reported on the Castlebar/Westport area as Superintendent O’Shea was unavailable due to the ongoing investigation into a fatal hit and run incident. They are currently working on the community engagement plan and working with Muintir na Tire to update the community alerts list. They are also working on “a message in a bottle” initiative in the Castlebar and Westport areas. They are working with local Councillors in the fight against Anti-Social Behaviour and have met with several residence associations the past six weeks and have increased their patrols in these housing estates.

Mary Gildea, Assistant Principal Officer, gave an update on the staffing strength in the division which currently stands at 363 members plus 14 probationers. Ten of these probationers will be returning to college shortly. The Sergeant vacancy in Foxford is expected to be filled within the next few weeks. The DPSU is currently fully staffed as is the Drugs Task Force Unit and more resource are being sought for the division. She welcomed Inspector Senan Wall who recently transferred to Castlebar from Galway.

The Chair thanked AGS for their excellent reports and congratulated them on their successes and the following queries and issues were raised:

Senator Paddy Burke:

What areas of the County were most prominent in drug use and was there drug testing in the workforce?

Cllr Damian Ryan: (agreed to have his advanced question taken at this point)

In acknowledging the recent success of An Garda Síochána in the increased detection of drugs in the County, are there any plans to establish a base in South Mayo with primary responsibility for reducing the scourge of drugs in that region with the possibility of a cross border initiative with our counterpart in Galway”?

Deputy Rose Conway Walsh:

Acknowledged that drugs are a major issue in County Mayo and asked what the figures would be like when the pandemic is over.

What the optimum resource level is to tackle drugs crime?

Would An Garda Síochána support the establishment of a family Resource Centre in the Erris region?

Are there any figures available on women failing the fitness test for the Gardaí?

Cllr Mark Duffy:

Commented that the figures in the Ballina area were very good and it was great to see the proactive work paying off and reiterated his support for the Gardaí and complimented them on their work with the vulnerable and elderly in the community.

Cllr Neil Cruise:

The policing forum in Swinford was working very well and the work on anti-social behaviour and CCTV was very important to the area. He said the case for a Family Resource Centre in the area was very strong as it was in the Erris region also.

Cllr Gerry Coyle:

Referred to young newly qualified drivers being fined for not being accompanied by a qualified driver particularly during COVID-19 restrictions. He suggested learning to drive should be part of the curriculum in all secondary schools and they should get extra points in their Leaving Cert if they passed the road safety programme.

Cllr Michael Burke:

Noted that the CCTV in Ballinrobe area was a great contribution to reducing crime in the area but there was very little funding available and said that CCTV should be an item on every JPC agenda.

Cllr Michael Kilcoyne:

Reported to the meeting that anti-social behavior in the estates around Mayo is a serious problem and asked if there was a procedure in place when the Gardaí were looking for information from Mayo County Council and suggested a liaison should be put in place to help try to stop the problem early when it occurs.

Cllr Christy Hyland:

Expressed concern on the high use of cocaine use in Mayo. He asked how many of AGS members been reduced by in Westport area?

When would the Westport Garda station renovations be finished.

Cllr Sean Carey:

Fully supports establishing a family Resource Centre in the Erris region and thanked the Mayo County Council dog wardens for their work and protecting sheep.

Cllr Michael Loftus:

How many Gardaí were due to retire and said he thought CCTV is good but having more Gardaí on the streets is much better.

He also asked if a local JPC could be set up in Ballina?

Daniel Kabango:

Suggested that regarding drugs crime that it would be very effective if the dangers of drug use were presented to second level students to educate them to the pitfalls surrounding drug use and that visits to schools should be considered once the pandemic is over.

Chief Superintendent Tony Healy replied:

Drugs issue was like any other business as it is based on supply and demand.

All Gardaí county wide are working in the fight against drugs and they also work closely with their colleagues in Longford, Roscommon and Sligo. He said new members get three months training on drug crime detection.

He supports the establishment of Family Resource Centres as they would be a great addition. He said regarding unaccompanied drivers' legislation is clear and also stated that anybody who was convicted of drug crimes can be disqualified from driving. Westport Garda station will be completed as soon as possible once level 5 restrictions are removed. He had no statistics available to him on women members of AGS failing the fitness test.

6. Topic for Public Meeting

The Following were put forward as possible items as topics for a public meeting:

1. Domestic violence
2. Community engagement
3. Drugs Crime
4. CCTV
5. Anti-social behavior

Cllr Michael Kilcoyne proposed to wait for the restrictions to be lifted before we decide on a date for a public meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Christy Hyland.

7. Presentation of the Search and Rescue app.

Sgt Paul Maher gave a presentation of the Search and Rescue app and the Mobility app to the meeting.

The chair then thanked him for his excellent presentation and said it was great to see the effect these apps have for all the communities in County Mayo.

8. Establishing of Community Sub-Committee's in Municipal Districts

Chief Supt. Tony Healy reported on intention to establish sub-committee's in Municipal Districts to address the following:

- Crime, Drugs and Public Order
- Community Engagement
- Road Safety / Traffic

To discuss with Mayo County Council and will update at next JPC.

9. Advanced questions:

This item was taken as part of item number 5.

10. Housing report- Anti-social Behaviour

Peter Duggan, Interim Chief Executive, Mayo County Council, outlined the figures on antisocial behavior covering the period of the last two years.

There were 35 cases of ASB in that period and 24 were resolved through interaction and the remaining cases are being monitored on an ongoing basis. The County Council follows its own policy in dealing with complaints and a limited number of them where in receipt of housing supports.

11. Agree dates of JPC meetings for 2021

The following dates were agreed for the remaining meetings of 2021 -:

25th of June 2021
24th of September 2021
10th of December 2021

12. AOB

Cllr Michael Kilcoyne said we should look into the setting up of other Police Fora's and to see how best they are going to work.

Proposed Cllr Michael Kilcoyne **Seconded** Cllr Mark Duffy

Cllr Michael Loftus said the CCTV system in Ballina should be upgraded as there will be a potential visit from the President of America, Joe Biden in the coming years.

Cllr Mark Duffy said he would like to compliment Peter Duggan on his excellent leadership and guidance as interim Chief Executive over the past 10 months as this is his last JPC meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting and the Chair thanked everybody for their participation.

Signed: _____


Cllr. Al McDonell
Chair of JPC

Date: _____

12/3/2021