

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**Minutes of the Galway County Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup>  
February 2022 via MS Teams**

**I LÁTHAIR:**

**Council Members:** Cllr. Jim Cuddy (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr. Mary Hoade  
Cllr. Michael Maher  
Cllr. Joe Byrne  
Cllr. Karey Farag McHugh  
Cllr. Andrew Reddington  
Cllr. Shelley Herterich-Quinn  
Cllr. Liam Carroll  
Cllr. Gerry King  
Cllr. Colm Keaveney  
An Comh. Dáithí Ó Cualáin  
An Comh. Pdraig Mac an Iomaire

**Deputies:** Deputy Catherine Connolly

**An Garda Síochána:** Chief Supt. Thomas Curley  
Insp. Brian Ryan  
Insp Georgina Lohan  
Sgt. Mick Walsh  
Sgt. Sinead Cunniffe

**Community Reps:** Mr. Aodán Mac Donncha  
Mr. Gerard Costello  
Mr. Gerry Larkin

**Oifigigh:** Ms. Valerie Loughnane, A/ Director of Service  
Ms. Ita Martyn, Meetings Administrator

**Other Officials:** Ms. Noreen Moughty, Corporate Services  
Ms. Ann Dolan, Environment Section

**Apologies:** Mr. Pat Flanagan  
Mr. Martin Ward

*Cllr. Hoade expressed a vote of sympathy to the family of the late Noel Treacy who gave 30yrs dedicated and committed service to the County and the Country.*

*Chief Superintendent Curley paid tribute to the late Noel Treacy.*

*Cllr. Cuddy wished to be associated with sympathies on behalf of the Members of the Joint Policing Committee.*

*Mr. Larkin wished to be associated with sympathies for the late Noel Treacy as he worked with him as chairman of the GAA County Board Committee from 2012 – 2016.*

*Cllr. Byrne wished to be associated with the votes of sympathy.*

*Cllr. Cuddy said it was a historic year for the Gardai as they celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of An Garda Síochána.*

**Item No. 1 – Minutes of the JPC Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021:**

On the proposal of An Comh. Ó Cualáin and seconded by Cllr. King, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be adopted.

**Update Sub Committees**

Cllr. Hoade gave an update from the Illegal Dumping/Litter Awareness Sub-Committee.

She advised of the priority areas for Galway County Council in the RMCEI Plan for 2022:

1. End of Life Vehicle reuse and recycling
2. Household and Commercial waste inspections
3. Multi-Agency approach in dealing with illegal dumping An Garda Síochána/Local Authorities and Stakeholders
4. Producer Responsibility Initiative - Producer's responsibility to dispose of the products they produce (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) WEEE Batteries, Packaging and End of Life Vehicles.

Cllr. Hoade raised the issue of illegal dumping on the N84 and recommended that the Gardaí and Galway County Council work together to deal with the problem.

Cllr. Carroll highlighted the issue of illegal dumping on the dual carriageway from the Galway Clinic to the Maldron Hotel.

Cllr. King gave an update from the Education and Awareness Sub-Committee.

He thanked Ms. Caulfield and Sergeant Browne for their contribution. He advised on the following:

1. **Online Bullying & Internet Safety** - Talks being rolled out in secondary schools by An Garda Síochána
2. **Ask Angela** - Person feeling unsafe/having issues in a public house/night club they can seek assistance from staff/security 'Ask Angela' and An Garda Síochána can be contacted.
3. **Internet Safety Day - 7/2/2022** An Garda Síochána holding a campaign to highlight Internet Safety and Ms. Caulfield promoting on Social Media.

#### **Awareness initiatives**

Personal Safety

Road Safety

Bullying

Illegal Substance Abuse

Underage Drinking

Cyber Fraud Crime

He highlighted initiatives that were carried out in 2021.

- An Garda Síochána's Park Smart, Shop Smart Secure Vehicle. – Not to leave items visible.
- Make Way Day - Keep Street clear
- Lock it or Loose it Lock your Bicycle securely
- Be Bright Be Seen - Reflective Clothing
- Bike Week 2021
- Driving Safely
- Cyber Fraud Crime

#### **Projects 2022**

- Roll out talks with Transition Year Students in Athenry College on Education and Awareness

Cllr. King told the meeting that the "Ask for Angela" campaign will be rolled out to venues in Galway and it will help people feel safe on a night out.

He advised that Gardai were visiting schools in Galway City to give talks about on-line bullying and this would be extended to County schools.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn said that education has a role to play to address the culture of behaviour and she had contacted the Principal of Clarin College, Athenry regarding an initiative to educate students about issues around respecting women.

She said that she had been contacted by concerned mothers whose daughters had made complaints in light of the Aisling Murphy murder case regarding unwanted behaviour from boys including being followed and cat-called. She advised that Sergeant Brown is heading a professional unit to assist victims and she stated that an initiative on Education and Awareness for Children needs to be rolled out.

Mr. Larkin said that the policy would have to be a co-ordinated approach and it should be rolled out for Sporting and Voluntary Organisations also. He said that the Irish Sports Council and the National Voluntary and Sporting Organisations would have to take the lead in the roll-out of the policy.

Cllr. King told the meeting that Ms Heverin of the PPN was currently working with Ms. Mullen a resource worker in the PPN in relation to a new Age Friendly Committee being set up in the County and a meeting had been held in October 2021.

Cllr. Carroll expressed his gratitude to Ms. Higgins and staff for the clean-up of the R446 Dual Carriageway. He appealed that litter be brought home and not discarded on the roadway and he said that 2 – 3 truckloads of litter was collected on the dual-carriageway. He expressed his concern regarding Road Safety for Cycling and he suggested that training should be rolled out to children on how to cycle safely. He said an initiative had been rolled out in Waterford County Council on safe-cycling and he would recommend that training on safe-cycling could take place in the Galway Airport site.

### **Garda update**

Chief Supt. Curley outlined the Garda Report for 2021 in comparison to 2020. He also gave a breakdown of figures in accordance with the different fraud types. He outlined that the figure for burglary was up 12% and he stated that there were a number of travelling criminal gangs visiting rural parts of the County. He advised that members of the public should take extra care in securing their property and to report any activity to An Garda Síochána and he said that Sergeant Walsh was working on it on a continual basis. He advised that drugs for sale and possession was down and cocaine was the largest drug that had been seized. He said that fatal accidents had increased and domestic violence incidents had increased by 41%. He stated that Fraud type crime was on the increase and substantial amounts of money had been defrauded by just clicking on a Link on a Website.

Cllr. Reddington thanked Supt. Curley for the presentation, and he expressed his concern with the increase in burglaries in the County. He said he had attended a seminar in Tuam before Covid hosted by Garda Mick Walsh Crime Prevention Officer, which gave practical advice to the public about how to safeguard against burglaries. He requested that similar seminars be rolled-out across the County.

Comh. Ó Cualáin welcomed the report and he expressed his concern in relation to the safety of elderly people and the local community in An Cheathrú Rua Area as the number of Gardaí in An Cheathrú Rua Garda Station had been reduced. He said that the situation in relation to drugs had gone out of control and he was concerned with the increase in road fatalities on country roads. He stated that there was an increase in the frequency of vehicles travelling on the wrong side of the road including the M6 Motorway and he questioned what efforts were being made to prevent this happening. He expressed his concern in relation to response times of Gardaí travelling from Salthill Garda Station to Conamara if the cycle lane goes ahead.

Cllr. Connolly thanked Supt Curley for the update and she questioned in relation to Irish speaking Officers and the increase in Domestic Incidents. She said that there was a huge increase in Domestic Violence and the numbers of Domestic incidents had not been disclosed.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn questioned in regard to Internet Safety and if it was possible for a member of a WhatsApp group to leave anonymously.

Cllr. Byrne welcomed the report and he highlighted his concern in regard to speeding on country roads and he recommended more of a vigilance by Gardai and the Traffic Corps in Towns and Villages. He said that in relation to call-out of emergency services to road accidents he recommended that the Fire Brigade should be the first point of call.

Cllr. Carroll thanked the Gardai for the update and he expressed his concern with the increase in burglaries and he highlighted the case of an elderly person in Sligo being attacked in his own home. He said that elderly people are isolated in their own homes and living in fear and a Garda presence in the locality would be reassuring for them.

Chief Supt. Curley in reply to Cllr Reddington advised that Sergeant Walsh holds regular meetings in the Community and he should contact him to arrange an event.

In reply to Comh. Ó Cualáin regarding the filling of posts in An Cheathrú Rua Garda Station he said he was actively trying to accommodate transfers of Gardaí to the Station and he would not send a Garda who was not proficient in Irish or did not have enough experience. He said that there were no Garda with sufficient Irish who had an interest in the post and he would not transfer a Garda unless they wished to be transferred to the Station. He advised that a service was being provided from Salthill Garda Station and no calls were left unattended.

In relation to the drugs issue he advised that additional Gardai were being assigned to the Drugs Unit when he receives 3 new Gardaí and 3 Probationers into the Division. He said there

is a huge increase in demands and it is not just an issue for An Garda Síochána, it includes education and treatment for drugs also.

He said regarding speeding in Towns and Villages he would instruct the Roads Policing Unit to pay closer attention to speeding through rural towns and villages.

In reply to Cllr. Connolly, he advised that regarding Domestic Incidents are thoroughly investigated. Call backs are performed as per policy in respect of all Domestic incidents reported. Increase in uptake of Safety/Protection/Barring Orders. He advised that extra resources have been made available in relation to incidents in Eyre Square.

In relation to the significant increase in Breaches of Barring Orders and Safety Orders he advised that Sergeant Donoghue would be transferred from Oranmore to the Garda Headquarters in Murrough and her role would be dedicated to domestic violence incidents and liaising with Gardai in dealing with the problem. He said it was very rare for a Garda Division to dedicate a Sergeant solely to domestic violence and the transfer was an indication of how seriously he views the problem.

In reply to Deputy Connolly TD regarding follow-up on incidents where no offence was disclosed and liaised with other organisations who deal with Domestic Violence he advised that Gardai follow-up with visits to the victim and the injured party may make statements and he confirmed that Gardai liaise with voluntary groups who deal with Domestic Violence. He said in relation to the full statistics on the number of domestic violence offences he would have more detail for the next meeting.

Chief Supt. Curley in response to Comh. Ó Cualáin regarding the number of fatal and serious road traffic accidents caused by people driving along the wrong side of the motorway he said that Gardai had contacted the Local Authorities, National Roads Authority and National Transport Authority and he reassured the JPC Committee that it was high on the agenda.

Regarding the cycle-way in Salthill he confirmed that Gardaí had forwarded submissions on the cycle-lane on the basis of concerns about delayed response times in emergencies due to the proposed one-way system.

Chief Supt. Curley in response to Cllr. Herterich Quinn regarding Internet Safety he advised that it was a matter for the Service Providers Policy.

In response to Cllr. Byrne regarding speeding in rural towns and villages he advised that he would instruct the Roads Policing Unit to pay closer attention to speeding through rural towns and villages.

Chief Supt. Curley in response to Cllr. Carroll regarding his concern for the elderly he confirmed that he will ensure there is a Garda presence and high visibility will be provided in rural areas.

Deputy Connolly welcomed the Sergeant to the role in relation to Domestic Violence and she requested clarification in relation to the number of domestic assaults. She questioned when An Cheathrú Rua Station would receive the compliment of staff with fluency in Irish.

Chief Supt. Curley replied that it was difficult to confirm when the positions would be filled but every effort was being made to fill the positions.

Cllr. Farag-McHugh expressed her concerns regarding on-line fraud.

Chief Supt. Curley replied that the onus is on the providers who allow crimes to excel. He stated that the Gardai are notified when the fraud has taken place. He agreed that more needs to be done and he recommended having a continuous message advising not to Click the Link.

Cllr. Hoade thanked Supt Curley for the report and she expressed her concern in relation to the increase in burglaries in broad daylight and the increase in drugs in rural communities. She said members of the public had a part to play as did community alert groups and she urged the public to contact Gardai to report any suspicious activity.

She said that the schools should partner with the HSE and the Gardai in relation to the issues around drugs.

Cllr. Hoade expressed her concern in relation to the wearing of high-vis Vests when walking or cycling.

Supt. Curley replied that burglaries have increased with the opening back up of the economy. He said that an analysis of burglary statistics showed that the most vulnerable time in County Galway is between midday and 7pm on Thursdays. He said that travelling gangs had targeted rural areas of East Galway and Tuam in recent weeks and are sizing up where there are no alarms and breaking in. He advised that homeowners take precautions and community alerts and neighbourhood watch organizations are aware of the new threat of burglaries

Cllr. King questioned regarding the filling of the post in the Garda Station in Sraith Salach.

He stated the importance of high visibility walking/cycling and he recommended putting high visibility stripes on schoolbags.

Comh. Ó Cualáin expressed his disappointment regarding the filling of posts in An Cheathrú Rua Garda Station and he said that the numbers were reduced by 50%.

Supt. Curley responded that the Gardaí are not available and he would advertise an Expression of Interest for Irish speaking Gardaí.

In response to Cllr. King he stated that Sraith Salach is covered by Clifden Garda Station.

Comh. Ó Cualáin replied that it was important to have Gardaí in the Community and he expressed his concern regarding the cycle-lane in Salthill and access to Connemara.

### **Annual Report 2021**

On the proposal of Comh. Ó Cualáin and Seconded by Cllr. Hoade the Annual Report for 2021 was adopted.

### **The agreed dates for the JPC Meetings 2022**

**3<sup>rd</sup> February**

**9<sup>th</sup> May**

**5<sup>th</sup> September**

**Public Meeting November (not decided)**

### **A.O.B.**

Cllr. Farag-Mchugh expressed her concern regarding anti-social behaviour in the Palace Grounds Park in Tuam. She said that a picnic bench had been burned and destroyed and a lot of money had been spent on the grounds.

Chief Supt. Curley replied that he would contact Sergeant Dunne in relation to policing of the Park.

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