



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí
County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE KERRY JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON MONDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2017.

MIONTUAIRSCÍ DE CHRUINIÚ CHOMHCHOISTE PÓILÍNEACHTA CHIARRAÍ A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRAÍ NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRÁ LÍ, DE LÚAIN AN 27 LA MÍ FEABHRA 2017.

PRESENT / I LÁTHAIR

Cllr. P. McCarthy

Cllr. B. Cronin

Cllr. P. Daly

Cllr. J. Moloney

Cllr. G. Spring

Cllr. D. Nolan

Cllr. S. Locke

Cllr. J. F. Flynn

Cllr. N. Kelleher

Cllr. M. Cahill

Cllr. J.J. Culloty

Senator Mark Daly

Cllr. J. Sheahan

Senator P. Coghlan

- **Mr. Charlie O'Sullivan, Director of Services, Operations Capital Infrastructure & Safety, Kerry County Council.**
- **Mr. J. Breen, Dir. of Sustainable Communities/Quality of Life, Kerry County Council**
- **Mr. B. Looney, JPC Administrator & Head of I.S, Kerry County Council.**
- **Chief Superintendent T. Myers, An Garda Síochána – Kerry Division**
- **Superintendent D. Keane – Listowel District**
- **Superintendent J. O'Connor – Tralee District**
- **Superintendent F. Murphy, Killarney District**
- **Inspector A. Sugrue, Traffic Corps**
- **Sgt. M. Fleming – Tralee Division Office**
- **Ms. C. O'Leary, Community Rep, Public Participation Network (PPN)**
- **Séan Roche, Community Rep, PPN**
- **Mr. D. Hennebry, Community Rep, Jigsaw Kerry/Young People**
- **Mr. M. Culloty, Community Rep, Killarney Chamber of Commerce/Business Community**
- **Mr. Bill Morrell, Community Rep, PPN**

APOLOGIES/ LEITHSCÉAL Ó

Cllr. M. Kennelly

Cllr. P. Connor Scarteen



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



The meeting commenced at 2.40 pm.

Cllr N. Kelleher commenced the meeting by thanking all in attendance to the annual and first public meeting of the Joint Policing committee. He introduced Chief Superintendent Tom Myers and welcomed him to Kerry on behalf of himself and all present offering assistance in any way. He welcomed the Garda Management Team and thanked them for their attendance which signifies the

1.) MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

On reply to a query from Cllr. P. Daly in relation to the minutes, Cllr. N. Kelleher confirmed that the comments made by Senator Coughlan concerned an internal current investigation, and were therefore ruled out of order in accordance with the terms of reference of the JPC and not minuted. The minutes of the November meeting will be amended accordingly.

On the proposal of Cllr J.F. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. J. Sheahan, the minutes of the meeting held on the 7th November 2016 were adopted.

2.) SOUTHERN REGIONAL DRUG & ALCOHOL TASK FORCE PRESENTATION

A comprehensive presentation was given by Kate Gibney with contributions from colleagues Gordon Kingsley and David Lane.

Ms. Gibney outlined that the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force covered Counties Cork and Kerry and was established under the National Drug Strategy to work with communities experiencing issues with drugs problems. She outlined their membership and services and referred mainly to the issues around funding, volunteers etc. She referred in particular to the upcoming Alcohol Bill and asked all present to support this Bill in its entirety.

Cllr. N. Kelleher thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation and invited comments from the floor.

Cllr. M. Cahill welcomed the presentation referring to the huge role it has to play especially in Secondary Schools as young people progress to work/college where they are more exposed to drugs/alcohol. He added that need more emphasis is needed on educating students on the risks and damaged that these substances cause and the value for money. He agreed that former addicts should be addressing these students and mentioned a recent Notice of Motion he had in relation to sexual assault/date rape drugs/alcohol affecting college students.

Cllr. P. McCarthy thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation stating that it was very interesting. He pointed out that alcohol was too affordable and widely available and these factors contributed to the problem.

Senator M. Daly thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation. He referred to the Alcohol Bill remarking that the political system will strive the carry it across the line. In relation to schools he remarked that a previous addict addressing students regarding hedgshops and drugs issues would be very effective adding that "prevention is better than cure".



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



Cllr. J.J. Culloty thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation stating that the alcohol culture in this country is unacceptable and education is vital to address this. He pointed out that it is a national and local problem and a huge cost to A&E, An Garda Síochána etc and not recognised how it affects society and young people. He stated that he would be support of changes in legislation and stressed that public's attitude to alcohol has to change and Government has to take it more seriously in order to bring this issue under control. He noted alcohol abuse was not just a "young person's" problem but spreads throughout families and can lead to criminal activity etc.

Cllr. S. Locke thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation referring to the 2 recent suicides in Cork schools. He stated that this issue needs to be part of the curriculum in schools so that our youth can see what the abuse of alcohol and drugs can lead to. He referred to the homeless problem and to the fact that alcohol and drug use is a major factor causing huge problems for the Housing Department and Homeless unit in Kerry County Council. He pointed out that the price of alcohol in off licences is very low and makes it too available and added his support to the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force and to the new legislation.

B. Morrell remarked that if the legislation prevents someone drinking harmfully it will be excellent. He pointed out that if the price of alcohol increases this will put increased financial pressure on families as person with alcohol problem will continue to drink.

C. O'Leary referred to the Strengthening Family Programme which the FRC has delivered in her own community and stressed the proven benefits of that programme. She added that sexual health education was included in the programme. The JPC sub-committee on Community Cohesion had commended the programme at its recent meeting.

Cllr. J. Sheahan thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation. He agreed that the purchase of alcohol was too accessible for youths at off licences and its been consumed by youths at home before they go out on the town. He supported the price increase of alcohol in off licences.

D. Hennebry thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation and referred to international research in Iceland which showed that percentage of 15- and 16-year-olds who had been drunk in the previous month plummeted from 42 per cent in 1998 to 5 per cent in 2016. He explained that it was a preventative model where teens were given alternative activities to do and it worked and the issues need to be addressed here.

In reply to previous speakers K. Gibney informed the meeting that the SRDTF are in the process of funding a pilot programme at primary level as an early intervention tool to identify kids with behavioural issues so they can be addressed and not labelled as problem kids and to keep them in the education system. In reference to former addicts addressing youths she stated that this doesn't always work as issues at home may need to be identified first as well as looking at attitudes to alcohol in the home and where problems began. She urged all present to lobby the Bill in every forum. In reply to the Icelandic research she stated that it needs to be mimicked here and pointed out that substance abuse was not just confined to youths. She stressed that a Community focus was necessary to combat substance abuse and this will have a knock on effect on the HSE,



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



Gardaí etc. She concluded by emphasising the need to get the Bill passed.

D. Lane pointed out that despite the economic collapse that services have grown in Cork and Kerry and that significant investment from the HSE has enabled this. He referred to the huge problem with illegal drug use, synthetic drug use, over the counter medication use and hedgshop drugs stating that the attitude to drugs in this country was very bad. He agreed that the availability of alcohol needs to be addressed. He pointed out that its not just a schools problem and that the solution doesn't just lie in targeting them as international research has shown that once off talks and scare tactics don't work and wont necessarily stop people getting involved in drugs. He stressed the need for effective intervention such as the Strengthening Families Programme as it works and referred to a pilot programme in North Kerry schools in conjunction with the Department of Education to tackle drugs issues. He commended the results in Iceland and hoped that it could be reciprocated in Ireland in the future. He urged all present to support the enactment of the Bill in full.

Senator P. Coghlan also voiced his support of the Bill. Senator Daly added that if the Bill is passed it would have a long term effect and he would support it but he stated that lobbying was very strong against it.

Cllr. N. Kelleher thanked the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force for their presentation.

3.) ANNUAL REVIEW OF CRIME IN KERRY 2016

Cllr. N. Kelleher welcomed Chief Superintendent Myers and all his team.

Chief Superintendent Myers stated that he was delighted to be in Kerry and had previously worked as Superintendent in Anglesea Street and Mayfield in Cork in the drugs division and was very impressed with the progress of the drugs crime team in Kerry. He referred to his involvement with the JPC in Cork commending its success and stressed the importance of its role. He praised the work to date of the Kerry JPC stating that the relationship between the Gardaí and the community is excellent working together so that Kerry is safe for all. He encouraged support from the public.

Chief Superintendent Myers commenced his report comparing 2015 and 2016 figures year to date by stating that overall Crimes Against the Person was down 3% from 587 to 570 incidents, Property Crime had decreased by 30% from 1,564 to 1,101, Drugs & Offensive Weapons crime had increased by 11% from 462 to 515 and Criminal Damage & Public Order had decreased by 13% in the period from 1,717.



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



Property Crime

Burglary

He outlined that Aggravated burglary had increased by 25% in the period adding that this crime was particularly horrific and very distressing for families. In relation to non aggravated burglary he welcomed the significant decrease in this crime and commended Operation THOR. He pointed out the first few months of 2017 had seen a rise in burglaries and confirmed that these were linked to travelling criminal gangs.

Theft of Vehicle/Theft from Vehicle

Chief Superintendent Myers pointed out that crime statistics were very encouraging as theft of vehicles was down by 19% from 47 to 38 with theft from vehicle decreasing by 28% from 143 to 103 in the same period.

Thefts

Theft from Shop/Theft of other property

In relation to thefts from shops he confirmed that these figures had fallen by 12% from 518 to 454 and theft of other property which referred to mobile phones etc had decreased by 29% which was very encouraging.

Crimes Against the Person

Murder & Murder Threats

Chief Superintendent Myers outlined that murder statistics had remained unchanged at 1 as had murder threats at 8.

Assaults Causing Harm/Minor Assault

He pointed out that assaults causing harm had decreased by 15% from 123 to 104 whereas minor assaults had risen by 6% from 302 to 321.

Criminal Damage & Public Order

Chief Superintendent Myers commented that all areas of crime here had decreased, in relation to arson crime he remarked that these figures had fallen by 30% from 20 to 14, criminal damage from 390 to 320 a drop of 18%, public Order offences decreased from 898 to 766, down 15%, and drunkenness offences had also fallen by 7% from 609 to 565.

Drugs & Offensive Weapons

Drugs

He stated that the possession of drugs for sale or supply was up by 4% from 74 to 77 while possession of drugs for personal use had increased from 300 to 354 an increase of 18%. He commended the very active drug squad in Kerry and attributed the rise in possession of drugs for personal use to drugs being more freely available as well as increased Garda detections.

Possession of offensive weapon

He confirmed that this statistic had dropped by 2% from 41 to 40.



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



Traffic

Traffic Collisions

Chief Superintendent Myers confirmed that fatal traffic collisions were still high at 7 though it had fallen by 1 since 2015, a 13% decrease. In relation to serious injury collisions he stated that these figures had risen from 16 to 24 a 50% increase.

Intoxicated while driving

He noted that statistics were still high for these crimes, in relation to driving under the influence of drugs had reduced by 18% from 11 to 9 and driving under the influence of drink had decreased by 9% from 301 to 273. He pointed out that it was troubling despite numerous media campaigns that these statistics were still high and confirmed that figures for driving under the influence of drink had increased so far in 2017. He stated that it is a major priority for An Garda Síochána and that checkpoints would increase and therefore detections sending message to the public that in Kerry you will get caught if driving under the influence and this message will help prevent crime. He stressed that persons should not get into vehicles with drivers under the influence. He referred to the recent article in the paper regarding breath tests stating that he is looking into this.

Drink Driving Gender breakdown by Age for 2016 YTD

Chief Superintendent Myers in outlining the gender breakdown by age stated that the offenders are predominantly male and in the 21-30 age group. He stressed that people need to recognise the penalties for these offences and how they can affect work and life. He remarked that the busiest times for detections for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs in Kerry is Sunday between midnight and 4am followed by Saturday between midnight and 4am, accounting for 50% of all detections.

Cllr. N. Kelleher thanked the Chief Superintendent Myers for his report and invited comments from the floor.

Cllr. S. Locke welcomed Chief Superintendent Myers to Kerry and wished him every success stating his support. He remarked on the recent drug seizure and stated his disappointment that drink driving figures were still high adding that the mindset was worrying despite the penalties and this needs to be publicised in the media. He added that An Garda Síochána are doing a great job with limited resources and alleviated criminality in the County.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty welcomed Chief Superintendent Myers and pointed out that minor assaults were very high and alcohol aids this. In remarked that the reduction in drug possessions was significant and was down to increased Garda checkpoints and detections and this was welcomed. In reference to burglaries he stressed the importance of the text alert scheme and encouraged more schemes. He queried as to why there isn't more investigations and convictions against offenders involving Revenue & CAB?



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



Senator P. Coghlan welcomed Chief Superintendent Myers and the decrease in statistics generally adding that any level of crime is acceptable. He asked three questions: as to where are crime gangs coming from perpetrating the burglaries, is manpower an issue in combating drug crime, and how over the limit are drunk drivers and are the local factors i.e. is it marginal exceedance in rural areas with people having two/three pints ?

Cllr. J.F. Flynn stated that areas where burglaries took place are areas where Garda stations are closed down and the Gardaí need to patrol these areas to show a presence in the communities. He commented that the text alert schemes had increased massively due to increase in burglaries. He referred to the upcoming Rally of the Lakes commending the Gardaí on the success of last year's event and adding that a facility was still needed for rally drivers.

Senator M. Daly thanked Chief Superintendent Myers for his presentation and queried the breakdown of minor assaults that have alcohol involved. He also queried the age bracket of those charged with drug possession.

Cllr. M. Cahill pointed out that Text Alert scheme was very successful in Glenbeigh/Glencar area and the community is alert and feel secure. In relation to recent burglaries he referred to the need for CCTV cameras in strategic locations which would help reduce this crime and investment is needed for these.

Cllr. N. Kelleher referred to the importance of vehicle registration recognition.

Cllr. G. Spring welcomed Chief Superintendent Myers to Kerry and commended his commitment to working with communities and stakeholders. He queried the breakdown by age bracket for drink drivers and the trends for drug offences and pointed out that previous convictions can affect recruitment potential and people need to be mindful of this.

Cllr. B. Cronin welcomed Chief Superintendent Myers stating his full support of him and his team. He stressed the importance of the text alert scheme and complimented Superintendent F. Murphy on work well done and his interaction with communities in the Killarney area. He queried if there are enough resources to combat crime in the County?

Cllr. N. Kelleher also queried about resources stressing the importance of a dedicated Community Policing Unit being in Killarney and Tralee.

Chief Superintendent Myers thanked Cllr. S. Locke for his comments. In reply to Cllr. J.J. Culloty's comment regarding assaults he confirmed that the vast majority are alcohol related.

He agreed that the Text Alert scheme is vital as it reassures the communities and works very well as can be seen in case of crime in Waterville recently. He complimented Superintendent F. Murphy on a job well done in Killarney. In relation to Revenue and CAB he stated that there were a number of operations ongoing to combat drugs crime using these agencies. In reply to comments from Senator Coghlan he stated that An Garda Síochána are receiving good information from the public regarding drug offences and he commended the help from the public. Inspector A. Sugrue referred to the over the limit



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



queries from Senator Coghlan stating that readings were very high generally, high being > 66 with >80 being extremely high. He reiterated that message not to drink and drive. He confirmed that the Garda plan for the Rally of the Lakes was the same as last year due to its success. He confirmed that he will have a breakdown of minor assaults caused by alcohol and a breakdown of drug statistics for the next meeting. In relation to comments from Cllr. M. Cahill regarding CCTV he expressed his surprise that there weren't more CCTV cameras in certain areas and the value of AMPR cameras. He confirmed that to Cllr. G. Spring that the burglaries were being carried out by prolific offenders and not be travelling gangs and he will bring a more detailed breakdown for drink drivers. In reply to query from Cllr. B. Cronin he stated that there were enough resources in Kerry and he would manage them. He commented on Cllr. N. Kelleher's remarks on resources stating that he was a fan of Community Policing and it was hoped to establish Community Policing in Tralee and Killarney. In reply to remarks from Cllr. J.F. Flynn regarding his Notice of Motion regarding free legal aid he stated that it shouldn't be given to offenders over certain level of offences and stressed the need to discourage criminality.

Cllr. N. Kelleher thanked Chief Superintendent Myers for his presentation stating that it was great to have good handle on crime in Kerry. He added that the JPC has confidence in system and he welcomed the Text Alert drive stating that B. Looney was progressing this with An Garda Síochána to grow the Text Alert system.

4.) CONSIDERATION OF MEMBERS QUESTIONS & PUBLIC QUESTIONS

B. Looney stated that item had been advertised on the Council's website and in the local press but no public questions were received.

Several Councillors gave apologies that had to leave the JPC meeting early to attend another meeting (Kerry ETB).

5.) PURPLE FLAG PRESENTATION

Michael Culloty outlined the success of the Killarney Purple Flag stating the early evening/nighttime appeal (5pm to 5am) of an era especially town centres. He confirmed that at present there were 14 accredited in Ireland and they focused welcoming, clean and safe place to visit. He added that the areas must have a broad appeal and can't be centred on the pub scene, have safe walkways, be child friendly, well lit, pedestrian zones, accessible taxi ranks, easy movement of traffic, adequate car parking etc. He explained that the process commenced with Cllr. John O'Donoghue when it was brought to Killarney Town Council in 2013 and the stakeholders included representatives from Accommodation providers, Business community, Vintners Association, Kerry County Council, An Garda Síochána, KDYS and other youth groups. He added that key to the success of the Killarney experience was the co-operation from the bouncers on the doors at night. He explained that an overnight assessment was carried out to highlight issues that needed to be addressed ie. dustbins, lighting, cleanliness etc and then this forwarded to the application process where inspectors visited the town and highlighted weaknesses in the area to be addressed for the next year. He concluded by saying that it improved the Town Centre immensely.



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



Cllr. N. Kelleher thanked M. Culloty for his presentation and invited comments from the floor.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty thanked M. Culloty for his presentation stating that it was no easy task considering changeover in Council operations during that time. He pointed out that Killarney is the Gold standard and it's a win-win situation for a town as its better to live and work in such an area. He referred to the benefits that such an accreditation brings to a town and the benefits are ongoing and commended all stakeholders coming together for the common goal and he was proud of Killarney.

Cllr. B. Cronin congratulated the Purple Flag on its success and concurred with Cllr. J.J. Culloty's sentiments. He stated that the standards couldn't have been met without the commitment and involvement of all major players and Killarney was the gold standard for nighttime economy. He commended the process as there were simple solutions to significant problems like lighting wherein the issue was highlighted, managed and rectified quickly. He added that the Purple Flag was huge from a tourism perspective especially to sell an area abroad.

B. Morrell thanked M. Culloty for his excellent presentation and commented that it was a pity that more Councillors from other Kerry towns weren't present to take the key messages back to their towns.

C. O'Leary suggested inviting representatives from local communities on the committees to which M. Culloty replied that all sectors of the community could be on committee, it is an inclusive committee and for all to contribute and enjoy a safer town. He stated that the buy in from Local Authorities and the town as a whole was vital to its success.

Cllr. N. Kelleher pointed out that there was an obvious commitment to the Purple Flag in Killarney and he commended its success. He stressed the importance of all stakeholders working together towards one focus. In relation to lighting issues he urged all to report missing lights by using the 4 digit number and report it to Kerry County Council and Councillors.

6.) CONSIDERATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT & PROGRESS ON THE 2016 ACTION PLAN

On the proposal of Cllr B. Cronin, seconded by Cllr. J.J. Culloty, the Annual Report was adopted.

7.) CONSIDERATION OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES FOR 2017

B. Looney confirmed that the committees would continue as structured for 2017. He outlined the continuing items for the JPC for 2017 and invited other items for discussion to be forwarded:

- Community CCTV
- Policing Fora
- Establish local MD level briefings
- Develop Communications Strategy



Comhchoiste Póilíneachta - Contae Chiarraí County Kerry - Joint Policing Committee



- Develop JPC website / local crime maps
- Road Safety
- Litter

Cllr. N. Kelleher thanked Chief Superintendent Myers and his team for the opportunity to discuss local issues at MD area meetings.

8.) CONFIRMATION OF DATES FOR NEXT SUB COMMITTEE AND JPC MEETINGS

It was agreed that the:

- JPC sub committees would be held in May with the 11/12th May as initial preferred dates (to be confirmed later)
- JPC would be held on Friday May 26th in Listowel

9.) A.O.B.

Cllr. N. Kelleher thanked Chief Superintendent Myers and his team for their attendance and all present.

There was no other business and the meeting concluded at 16.30p.m.