

## Joint Policing Committee

### Minutes of Meeting

Friday December 10th, 2021 at 11.00am (Online).

- Present:** Cllr. Al McDonnell, Cllr. Neil Cruise, Cllr. Michael Burke, Cllr. Damien Ryan, Cllr. Mark Duffy, Cllr. Tom Connolly, Cllr. Sean Carey, Cllr. John O 'Hora, Cllr. Ger Deere, Cllr. Gerry Coyle, Mr Kevin Kelly, Chief Executive, Mayo County Council, Ms. Edith Geraghty MTSG, Mr Micheal Larkin PPN, Mr Keelan Moran PPN, Chief Supt. Ray McMahan, Supt. Joe McKenna,
- In attendance:** Supt. Gabriel Moran, Supt. Paudie O'Shea, Garda Mary Gildea, Inspector Jerry McNally, Garda Shane O'Connor, Deirdre Finnerty MCC, Maura Murphy MCC, Michael Galvin MCC.
- Apologies** Cllr. Michael Loftus, Cllr Christy Hyland, Cllr. Michael Kilcoyne, Deputy Rose Conway Walsh

#### 1. Welcome

Cllr. Al McDonnell opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

#### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and matters arising

There were no matters arising.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Michael Burke

**Seconded:** Cllr. Gerry Coyle

#### 3. Reports from An Garda Siochana

Supt. Joe McKenna gave an update on crime figures in the Mayo Division. He reported that in order to get a true reflection of the trend's figures would have to be compared to 2019 figures as the pandemic has distorted the statistics. The reduction in crime rates in 2021 due to the pandemic are beginning to rise again now that the economy has almost fully reopened and commercial activity has continued to increase.

Supt. McKenna urged people to be cautious on a daily basis as there is a continuing increase of people being caught by fraudulent emails, texts and cold calls. He strongly advised people never to click on any links purporting to be from banks etc. "Money mules" are being sourced mainly via social media by trawling and accessing students. These messages were re-emphasised by Chief Supt. McMahan and Supt. O'Shea.

The value of drug seizures in Mayo to date amount to €812,754.88 with cash of €89,435.00 being seized.

Some figures provided by Supt, McKenna from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 were as follows:

<b>Crime</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Change</b>
Burglary	95	Up 12%
Serious Assault	56	Up 4%
Minor Assault	226	Up 16%
Theft	154	Down 6%
Theft from Shops	201	Up 3%
Theft from Person	4	Down 100%
Car theft	38	Down 15%
Public Order offences	240	Up 1%
Criminal Damage	279	Down 5%
Sexual crime- Rape	20	Up 54%
Sexual crime – Assault	33	Down 8%

### **Policing Reports**

Supt. Paudie O'Shea – Castlebar / Westport Area

Supt. Paudie O'Shea reported that there has been an increase in cases of fraud. He advised people to be alert and bring to the attention of the Gardai any scams that people become aware of. He explained that it is important to look at crime rates over a three-year period to get an accurate view of trends.

In Castlebar all areas of crime are down apart from domestic violence.

A number of males have been arrested as a result of an incident in Westport on the 27<sup>th</sup> November. AGS became aware of a violent disorder via social media. Also, following the public order disturbance in September, which was reported at previous JPC, six arrests have been made and a file has been sent to the DPP.

Westport town is busy, AGS are concentrating on providing more Gardaí presence on streets in the town as regards parties etc. The same will be carried out in Castlebar in particular around the Christmas season.

AGS have also made progress on Anti-Social Behaviour incidences. This is thanks to cooperation and collaboration of relevant agencies MCC was complimented for bringing an ASB case to court.

### **Supt. Gabriel Moran - Claremorris Area**

Supt. Moran also reported that there has been an increase in fraud particularly incidents with bank accounts which may result in account being frozen. Money laundering on accounts can have serious impacts. He informed members that and may even lead to conviction.

There has been a significant increase in acts of domestic violence, however, a number of offenders are being brought to court for breaches of safety orders. It is thought this increase is as a result of tensions of being house bound throughout pandemic.

There had been a decrease in burglaries until recently, where a number of reported incidents occurred. It is thought these were linked to other countrywide cases. The reopening of the economy has led to an increase of public order incidences. Thefts from shops is slightly down and several detections have been made using the benefits of CCTV. Drunk driving is also on the increase.

Supt. Moran commended the work of the Divisional Drugs Unit on the detection of drugs in Claremorris yesterday.

### **Superintendent Joe Doherty – Ballina / Belmullet Area**

Supt. Doherty reported that there is evidence of a decrease in most crimes. AGS in Ballina have had good success in drugs detection and have brought a number of offenders to court. (Supt. Joe McKenna and his team were thanked for their assistance on these cases). Unfortunately drink driving has increased by 45% and he appealed to people to act responsibly over Christmas. AGS will be operating a no tolerance policy, particularly over the holiday season. In the Belmullet area burglaries are up, however, a number of arrests have been made in relation to these.

In community engagement AGS have 673 people registered on the Citizens Register. Those that are on this register will be visited by AGS during the month of December. Four people on this register are considered “high priority” and will be visited by AGS on a regular basis.

Supt. Doherty highlighted some 2021 community initiatives being successfully implemented, e.g. message in a bottle, Ballycroy “mug” with useful numbers, shamrock and chocolates to elderly people for St. Patrick’s Day, safety talks and road safety talks to National Schools.

Twenty Gardai in the area have now been trained as first responders by the Order of Malta.

He congratulated Nathan Gaughan who recently won a Garda National Youth Award.

There are 11 Missing Persons in the Ballina / Belmullet are, AGS are continuously working on locating these people as well as keeping in regular contact with families involved.

Supt. Doherty appealed to local media to be very careful when identifying housing estates when it comes to Public Order and or Anti-Social Behaviour.

### **Inspector Jerry McNally reported on behalf of Supt. Calvey – Road Safety**

Inspector McNally updated the group on initiatives AGS are focusing on, i.e. “Operation Surround” which works towards identifying area’s and suitable times for checkpoints in towns and “Operation Lifesaver” will concentrate on what are called

"lifesaver" offences, i.e. driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, non-seatbelt wearing and using a mobile phone while driving. These initiatives are necessary due to the increase in road traffic over Christmas periods. There has been a big increase in drink driving and drug driving during the pandemic; Insp. McNally appealed to people not to drive while under the influence to ensure a safe Christmas for all. He reported that there have been 3 fatalities on the roads this year, 22 serious road collisions, a decrease of 25% with speeding offences and an increase of 20% of those on mobile phones while driving.

Legislation, Part 12 of the Road Traffic and Roads Bill 2021 for e-scooters is currently going through the second stage in the Dáil. Powered personal transporters will have a maximum speed of 25KPH and a maximum power of 2KW.

At this point Chief Supt. McMahon also re-iterated the don't drink and drive message.

The following items were then raised:-

Keelan Moran agreed to have his advanced question taken at this point and included an additional question, i.e. if there was an awareness campaign in place for the problem of Money Mules and regarding reports of Domestic Abuse- where were the reports coming from?

Cllr. Michael Burke thanked AGS on the very positive reports and agreed bank fraud is a huge issue. He complimented AGS on the good progress that has been made on tackling drugs. He raised the issue of manpower in the Ballinrobe Garda station and asked for assurances that there would be someone in the office during the advertised opening hours.

In response Supt. Gabriel Moran apologised for the inconvenience to the member of the public who made the complaint. They will seek to open the station at the advertised times, and he will ensure that a notice with the contact details of the Claremorris station, which is open 24/7, is erected immediately. Alternatively, AGS will if necessary, arrange to meet people where appropriate.

Cllr Gerry Coyle complimented AGS for all the very good initiatives they have been engaged with in the Ballycroy/Bangor Erris area and thanked them for contacting people affected by crime as it has a very negative effect on people's confidence.

Cllr. Damian Ryan welcomed the positive AGS reports particularly in respect of the success relating to detection of drugs and prosecution in relation to same. He acknowledged in particular the great work in relation to drugs in the South Mayo area.

Chief Supt. Ray McMahon thanked Cllr. Coyle for his kind words and said that putting the victim front and center of all our dealings is the main aim of AGS. At this point he also addressed the Advance Questions.

Regarding the Ballinrobe manpower situation, a process has started where non-sworn members can be brought in to man the counters to free up Gardai for other duties. The majority of calls received on Domestic Violence come from within the household and relatives calling on behalf of victims. Domestic Violence reports can be taken from anybody and all reports will be investigated.

On new recruits he said the allocation is the Commissioner's remit and he has no indication yet if Mayo will be allocated extra Gardaí.

The role of AGS in Drug Crime is to detect offences and what happens in the Courts is totally separate, he cannot comment on matters that are in the role of the judiciary.

Under the "Stop and Search" policy Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act, members of AGS must have *reasonable cause* to stop and search an individual and it is not a requirement for AGS to tell the person who has been stopped why they were chosen.

A fraud awareness campaign has been looked into and we will hopefully be getting into the schools in the near future to start the campaign.

#### **4. Establishing of Sub-Committees**

The establishment of sub-committees was discussed, and it was agreed to go ahead with the appointment of the following sub-committees -:

- Community Engagement
- Traffic and Road Safety
- Crime and Drugs
- Public Order and Anti-Social Behaviour

Any member who wants to join a sub-committee needs to email Maura Murphy. Membership will be chosen on a first come first served basis with eight members on each sub-committee.

**Proposed** Cllr Tom Connolly

**Seconded** Cllr Gerry Coyle.

#### **5. Public Meeting**

The public meeting will have to be deferred to another time as it is not currently possible to hold a physical meeting and the public meetings cannot be held online.

#### **6. Presentation - "Connect for Life".**

This item was deferred and will be on Agenda of next meeting.

#### **7. JPC Strategic Work Plan**

The Strategic Work Plan is now due for renewal so Maura Murphy asked members to e-mail her any actions they feel need to be included and she will begin the process of preparing a draft plan.

#### **8. Policing Plan 2022**

Inspector Jerry McNally updated group on the Policing Plan which is developed annually on what AGS plan to deliver to Communities. The draft process has begun, and he invited members of the JPC to make submissions.

The four areas of the plan are – Community, Tackling Crime, Victims and the Vulnerable and Sustainable Change and Innovation.  
It will be a public facing document and all submissions will be considered. They must be achievable and quantifiable.

Submissions must be made by January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**9. Advance Questions**

A. Q's were dealt with under item 3 of Agenda.

**10. Proposed dates for JPC meetings for 2022 are -:**

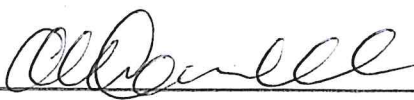
11 a.m. 11<sup>th</sup> March  
11 a.m. 10<sup>th</sup> June  
11 a.m. 9<sup>th</sup> September  
11 a.m. 9<sup>th</sup> December.

Chief Supt. Ray McMahon thanked the members of the JPC for their help and co-operation in 2021 and wished everybody a safe and happy Christmas on behalf of all the members of AGS.

Edith Geraghty expressed thanks to all the members of AGS for their excellent work in community policing and for their outstanding response to Covid-19 and said we appreciate all the work they do to help us live our lives well and wished everybody a Happy Christmas.

Cllr Al McDonnell closed the meeting by wishing everybody a safe and Happy Christmas and a safe and peaceful New Year.

The meeting concluded.

Signed:   
11/3/22