

COMHAIRLE CHONTE NA GAILLIMHE

**Minutes of the Galway County Joint Policing Committee Meeting held in Áras an Chontae,
Prospect Hill, Galway on Monday, 15th October 2018**

I LATHAIR:

Council Members: Cllr. Peter Roche (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. Joe Byrne
Cllr. Mary Hoade
Cllr. Michael Maher
Comh. Seosamh O’Cualain
Cllr. Noel Thomas
Cllr. Frank Kearney
Cllr. Michael Connolly
Cllr. Tom Healy
Cllr. Eileen Mannion

Deputies: Deputy Anne Rabbitte

An Garda Síochána: Chief Supt. Thomás Curley
Supt. Seán Glynn
Supt. Damien Ó’Flannacháin
Sgt. Peter Conlon
Sgt. Mick Walsh, Crime Prevention Officer.

Community Reps: Mr. Gerard Larkin
Mr. Pat Flanagan
Mr. Aodán MacDonncha
Mr. Gerard Costello

Oifigigh: Ms. Marian Donohue, Meetings Administrator, Corporate Services.

Apologies: Deputy Noel Grealish
Deputy Catherine Connolly
Cllr. Aidan Donohue
Cllr. Malachy Noone
Cllr. Shaun Cunniffe
Cllr. Donagh Killilea
Cllr. James Charity
Mr. Tom Madden
Ms. Cathy Ni Ghoill

Introduction by the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Peter Roche

Cllr. Peter Roche, Cathaoirleach of the JPC, opened the meeting and welcomed the members from An Garda Síochána, Oireachtas members, Galway County Council Elected Members, Galway County Council officials, community representative and the members of the press who inform the public of the meetings business, and acknowledged the apologies received.

The Cathaoirleach of the JPC, Cllr. Roche, extended his condolences to Cllr. Aidan Donohue and the Donohue family on the untimely and sudden passing of his brother Michael and proposed that a Minutes Silence be observed as a mark of respect for the deceased.

A Minutes Silence was then observed.

Welcome by the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Peter Roche

Cllr. Roche, Cathaoirleach of the JPC, welcomed Mr. Gerard Larkin, Secretary of Abbey Muintir na Tire, a new JPC Community/Voluntary Member to the County Galway JPC Committee. Cllr. Roche said that Mr. Larkin had a long association with the community/voluntary sector in his roles on various committees and was aware of the challenges facing communities and the importance of local communities working together for the good of their local area.

Mr. Gerard Larkin said he was pleased to represent the Community/Voluntary Sector on the County Galway JPC Committee. He referred to his long connection in the community /voluntary sector through his involvement in his local community and clubs such as: Secretary of Abbey Muintir na Tire and Trustee of his local Abbey Community Centre, the County's current Central Council delegate to Cumann Luthchleas Gael in Croke Park and current Chairman of Kenny Park GAA grounds in Athenry, and he looked forward to working with the JPC into the future.

Cllr. Roche, Cathaoirleach, welcomed Mr. Pat Flanagan former Garda Sergeant and Crime Prevention Officer, back to the JPC Committee as a representative of the Community/Voluntary sector. Cllr. Roche said that Mr. Flanagan gave sterling service to the community in his role as Crime Prevention Officer over the years and the Committee were pleased that Mr. Flanagan agreed to remain on the JPC Committee.

Appointments of new members to Sub Committees

M. Donohue addressed the meeting and outlined the current vacancies on the Sub Committees. She welcomed the recently voluntary/community members and proposed the following Sub Committee appointments of new /recently appointed community /voluntary members which was agreed by the members and the Committee:

1. Mr. Gerard Larkin – To be appointed to the Education & Awareness Sub Committee
2. Mr. Gerard Costello – To be appointed to the Illegal Dumping & Litter Awareness Sub Committee
3. Mr. Pat Flanagan – As agreed at the July JPC Meeting, Mr. Flanagan to be appointed to the Crime Prevention/Personal Safety Sub Committee

Ms. Donohue advised that the Sub Committees normally meet the week prior to main County JPC Meeting to discuss the work plans and actions of the Sub Committee for each period.

Regarding the vacant Oireachtas position on the Crime Prevention/Personal Safety Sub Committee, Ms. Donohue advised that she would consult with Deputy Catherine Connolly to ascertain if she would be willing to sit on this Committee.

Item No. 1 – Minutes of the JPC Meeting held on 9th July 2018:

On the proposal of Cllr. Hoade, seconded by Cllr. Maher, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th July 2018 be adopted.

Item No. 2 – Reports from Sub Committees:

Illegal Dumping & Litter Awareness Sub Committee

The Chair of the Illegal Dumping & Litter Awareness Sub Committee, Cllr. Michael Maher, Chair outlined the topics considered and progressed at the Sub Committee's meeting held on 8th October 2018.

1. **Illegal Dumping:** Cllr. Maher said that he was pleased to report that the JPC, the local authority and An Garda Síochána's message that illegal dumping would not be tolerated was now evident in the number of cases being brought to court for illegal dumping.
2. **Clean Ups & CCTV:** Cllr. Maher said that the grant funding of €82,000 received by Galway County Council was used to undertake clean ups in the high-risk areas, identified by the Sub Committee, and CCTV cameras had been installed to deter further illegal dumping.

Cllr. Maher advised that the Environment Enforcement Team have initiated the installation of boxes containing CCTV cameras with additional empty decoy boxes on poles in isolated areas to combat illegal dumping.

3. Fast food waste: Cllr. Maher said an aim of the Committee at the start of the year was to advance the communication with Fast Food outlets to reduce wrapping on fast food. He said the Committee had met and worked with Mr. Pat McDonagh, Supermacs, and commended Supermacs on their *Glan agus Glas* (Clean and Green) initiative. Cllr. Maher said that the initiative saw the creation of Green Teams in each outlet who work to reduce littering outside Supermacs outlets. He outlined that other changes as part of the initial phase of its *Glan agus Glas* (Clean and Green) initiative were the use of 100% recyclable cups; paper straws to replace plastic straws; biodegradable burger wrapping and the introduction of dispensers for sachets and napkins.

Cllr. Maher said to build on this initiative the Committee plan to work, for a trial period, with businesses in Loughrea town who sell tea/coffee to reduce the cost of a take-way tea/coffee by 50 cents if the customer brings their own cup.

Cllr. Maher praised the work of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Team who work tirelessly to combat illegal waste activities within the county but said additional resources was needed within this section in Galway County Council to ensure these initiatives were maintained and enhanced to make Galway a cleaner county for all.

Cllr. Roche complimented the ongoing work by the Environmental Enforcement team and said that there was a noticeable difference in areas where clean ups were undertaken with many of these routes being now used by persons for leisurely walks. He said one should not get complacent and we need to constantly progress. He said it was vitally important the Council was provided with the appropriate resources, financial and human, so as the advancements and progression made by the Sub Committee was not lost.

Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Sub Committee

The Chair of the Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Sub Committee, Cllr. Mary Hoade, advised the Meeting that due to unforeseen circumstances, the Committee was unable to hold a meeting prior to the full JPC Meeting, but the Committee continued to work on its aims in Crime Prevention/Personal Safety.

Cllr. Hoade welcomed Sgt. Mick Walsh to the County JPC committee and the Crime Prevention/ Personal Safety Sub Committee. She said that the role of Crime Prevention Officer was a vital and necessary role and thanked Sgt. Walsh for facilitating the Sub Committees proposal to hold have a Crime Prevention Presentation as part of today's JPC meeting. She said this topic was particularly relevant at this time of year to make one more

alert coming into the winter months. She said that everyone had a role to play in crime prevention and she commended the Community Alert Schemes who were undertaking such valuable work and need to be applauded.

Cllr. Hoade welcomed Mr. Pat Flanagan, to the JPC and his membership on the Crime Prevention/Personal Safety Sub Committee. She commented Mr. Flanagan's input and dedication to the JPC Committee in his previous role as Crime Prevention Officer, and the valuable input he gave to the Committee. She said he would bring a wealth of knowledge to the Committee and the Sub Committee looked forward to working with him.

Cllr. Hoade said the Sub Committee would like to consider and pursue the linkage with Foróige / Youth Clubs to assist with community alert /personal safety initiatives within their own communities and said that the Committee would consider this going forward to see how best to move forward on this and any advice/support would be appreciated.

Education and Awareness Sub Committee

Cllr. Joe Byrne expressed his sympathy, on behalf of the Education and Awareness Sub Committee, with Cllr. Donohue on the recent sudden passing of his brother, Michael Donohue RIP. Cllr. Byrne said that the Committee had recently been active around Road Safety and Personal Safety with thanks to the Committees Co-Ordinator, Ms. Deirdre Caulfield, who organised a number of events in line with Road Safety week.

Cllr. Byrne said that in respect of Road Safety and Personal Safety, the Committee, Aughrim National School and An Garda Síochána co-ordinated the 'Be Safe, Be Seen!' initiative with the aim of encouraging pupils to wear their high visibility vests when walking or cycling to school. He said that Ms. Deirdre Caulfield, Road Safety Officer, Galway Co. Council, and Inspector Conor Madden, An Garda Síochána, were present on the day and advised the children on the Safe Cross Code and gave tips on walking, cycling and seat belt wearing.

Cllr. Byrne said that it was hoped that by highlighting road safety awareness to the children, they would see the importance of being visible at all times. He said that hi-vis jackets were available in County Hall and in the Gort Area Office for the public.

Item No. 3 – Report from An Garda Síochána:

Chief Supt. Tom Curley outlined the Garda Report for the period 1st January 2018 to 30th September 2018, in comparison to the same period in 2017.

Regarding Property Crime, Chief Supt. Curley said while these figures had decreased in comparison to the same period last year, there was an increase in recent weeks of theft from cars outside GAA and Rugby clubs which was of concern.

Cllr. Hoade said it was important that a message go out from the meeting on the importance of the public being ever vigilant especially at this time of year when people were visiting cemeteries and outside sports clubs and events. She urged motorists to be vigilant and not let valuables be visible inside cars and ensure their car doors are locked.

Cllr. Byrne commended the work and commitment of Gort Neighbourhood Watch and Supt. Sean Glynn who meet religiously every Monday night. He said it provided a great opportunity to raise awareness of issues locally. Chief Supt. Curley said he couldn't praise the Neighbourhood Watch highly enough. He said that these Groups work closely with An Garda Síochána and community leaders and this co-ordinated approach was a measurement to their success.

In response to Cllr. Connolly who referred to a car broken into in Moylough over the weekend, Chief Supt. Curley expressed the need for people to be vigilant and take ownership of their property and not leave vehicles doors unlocked with property on display in vehicles.

In reply to Comh. O'Cualain's concern, Chief Supt. Curley said no reports of hay and fodder theft have been reported but urged farmers to undertake crime prevention measures such as locking gates and storing hay and fodder in sheds out of sight if possible.

In respect of Drugs, Chief Supt. Curley said the figure for sale or supply was up in comparison to the first nine months of 2017 by 41% but explained this highlighted the increase in detection rates. He outlined the value of the drugs seized for the first nine months of the year. He said the value of cocaine seized at €125,200 showed the improved disposable income in the economy. Cllr. Hoade expressed concern over this increased drug figure. Cllr. Maher acknowledged that the increase in the drugs figures highlighted that people were getting caught. Deputy Rabbitte said that a dedicated Garda Dog Unit in the Galway Division would provide invaluable assistance to the Gardaí if introduced.

Chief Supt. Curley said while speeding offences was down 27%, the 'Gatso' van was decommissioned which could have influenced the figures. He said that traffic enforcement is high priority and advised that Galway was recently recorded as having the highest detection rate for traffic offences.

Cllr. Byrne advised the meeting that the County Roads Speed Limit Review was ongoing and said that the Loughrea Municipal District recently approved that a periodic speed limit of 50km was agreed (*at school drop off and school pick up times*) for a number of National Schools in

the Loughrea MD area. Chief Supt. Curley welcomed and said the An Garda Síochána would support this initiative and advise Supt. Noel Kelly who had responsibility for traffic.

Chief Supt. Curley referred to drink driving offences which had decreased by 6%, which was worrying that people were still not getting the message not to drink and drive.

Cllr. Byrne said that the use of mobile phones whilst driving was a very serious and worrying issue. Chief Supt. Curley concurred and said that speed, use of seat belts and use of mobile phones whilst driving were three priority road offences.

Chief Supt. Curley referred to the 5% decrease in public order offences and the 32% increase in assaults causing harm, compared to the same period last year.

Chief Supt. Curley referred to the 14% decrease in public order offences and the 2% increase in breach of barring/safety/protection orders and a 28% increase in sexual assaults (not aggravated) compared to the same period last year. He welcomed the establishment of a Protected Services Unit which would be resourced by 2 Detective Sergeants and 10 Gardaí and would work in liaison with Túsla.

In reply to Deputy Rabbitte and Cllr. Hoade, Chief Supt. Curley advised that following the successful promotion of Gardaí to the post of Garda Sergeant, there was approx. 21 vacancies at Garda level. He acknowledged that staff are continuously needed as 10 staff would be moving to the Protected Services Unit and 9 Gardaí would be retiring next year.

In reply to Deputy Rabbitte's query re staffing at Athenry and Tuam, Chief Supt. Curley said that additional Gardaí were recently temporarily transferred to the Athenry Garda Station and confirmed he had recently met with the Superintendents in Tuam to discuss staff numbers in their area. He clarified that staffing in all Stations, within the Galway District, was under constant review taking into consideration crime levels and trends for each area.

Comh. O'Cualain welcomed Supt. Damien Flanagan to his appointment in Clifden and welcomed the filing of the posts in Carna and Rosmuc. In reply to Comh. O'Cualain's query re filing of vacant posts at Recess, Chief Supt. Curley explained that it was important that a Garda, proficient in Irish, would be placed in this area. He said that recruits with high-level Irish had recently been recruited and a request had been sent to the Human Resource Management Section of Garda HQ for staff to include staff proficient in Irish.

Cllr. Hoade acknowledged the work of the Gardaí on the management of the traffic and safety for both the Galway Arts Festival and Galway Races. Deputy Rabbitte concurred.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Roche complimented the work of An Garda Síochána, the ISPCA and especially the Ballinasloe Fair & Festival Committee who deserve credit for the manner in which the Ballinasloe Fair was organised and managed.

Cllr. M. Connolly complimented the Ballinasloe Fair & Festival Committee on their excellent management of the Ballinasloe Fair. He praised the voluntary committee and the event management committee and Council staff who worked with the Gardaí and ISPCA to ensure high standards were maintained and said he seen no evidence of cruelty to animals as was reported on some social media sites.

Chief Supt. Curley acknowledged the work of the Ballinasloe Fair & Festival Committee who engaged the Garda presence.

Cllr. Healy expressed concern around road safety at a recent long distance running event. In reply, Chief Supt. Curley advised that if a Garda presence was required, this would be at a cost to the organisers. He explained it would be normal practice for organisers to advise the Gardaí of the event and a Risk Assessment and Site Safety Plans to be prepared with insurance provided by the organisers of the event.

4. Any Other Business

Post match convoy activity

The Cathoirleach, Cllr. Roche, advised the Meeting he wished to raise a concern he had received from a member of the public regarding children leaning from car windows during a post-match convey of cars. He explained while he did wish to be a spoilsport, this area of concern required persons to act responsibly to ensure safety.

Chief Supt. Curley said it was normal practice that parish and community get involved in after match celebrations, but it was not being killjoy, as one accident could have disastrous consequences. He said celebrations could be held but should be organised in a safe and controlled fashion. He said accidents have happened and insurance companies will not stand over them so one needs to be careful. Chief Supt. Curley advised that the Gardaí can act under Section 13 (Endangerment) of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997 which outlines that *"A person shall be guilty of an offence who intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of death or serious harm to another"*.

Mr. Larkin concurred with Cllr. Roche and said the practice needs to be discouraged totally as it was a fatality waiting to happen. He welcomed that legislation was in place and said zero tolerance should be observed. He said while it was not widespread, it does happen and said the Cumann Luthchleas Gael should discourage such practice. He advised he would raise same with the Galway GAA County Board Management Committee to ensure people were educated to cease the practice. He favoured the Gardaí to work with the GAA in relaying information and educating people against this dangerous practice.

Mr. MacDonncha concurred and said there should be a protocol advising against this practice as it is highly dangerous.

Cllr. Kearney stated that this practice applied to all sporting bodies and not just the GAA. He said the practice normally occurred in the immediate aftermath of a match when people were wrapped up in enthusiasm following a match. He explained that the 'Tour of the Parish' which often occurred several days later was generally pre-planned and within a controlled environment.

Cllr. Kearney also expressed concern with the placing of bonfires very near the public road at post match celebrations.

Cllr. Byrne said it was important this message of caution gets out to prompt all organisations to think about post match celebrations.

Wearing of Hi-Vis vest

Cllr. Maher expressed the need for all persons, but especially those walking, running, cycling on the roads in the dark to wear hi-vis vests.

Cllr. Kearney advised that a proposal was made by Cllr. Thomas and himself in February regarding the wearing of hi-vis vests being compulsory for all walkers, runners and cyclists. Cllr. Kearney said the Proposal was to issue to the Minister, with a lead in time of 2 years and with a start date of 1st January 2020 for the wearing of hi-vis jackets to be compulsory.

Cllr. Hoade said it was important that adults as well as children wear hi-vis vests, both at morning and evening, and said it must be encouraged and promoted coming into the winter season. She said it was a personal responsibility on each person to ensure they could be seen on the roads.

Cllr. Eileen Mannion concurred said she regularly distributed high-vis vests to walkers and cyclists on the road. Cllr. Thomas said cyclists must also ensure their bicycles were lit, in addition to wearing the hi-vis vest.

Cllr. Roche, Cathaoirleach of the JPC, concurred and said that visibility on the roads is a huge issue. He said that hi-vis vests were available free in many locations, including Council offices and Garda Stations, and a message must come from this meeting that everyone needs to wear one.

County Galway Joint Policing Committee Public Meeting

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Roche, advised the Meeting that the next JPC Meeting would be a Public Meeting which would be held, as agreed at the February JPC Meeting, on 5th November 2018 in O'Sullivan's Hotel Gort.

He advised that a Public notice was placed in the Connacht Tribune inviting the public to attend, to express their views and any person affected by the policing of the County of Galway may put questions to the Joint Policing Committee on general policing matters affecting the policing of the County of Galway. He explained that questions concerning the policing of the County of Galway should be submitted in writing to reach the Administrator of the Joint

Policing Committee no later than Thursday 18 October 2018 by post or e-mail and must include the name and address of the person submitting the question, which will not be publicised.

Cllr. Maher recommended that each Sub Committee outline at the Public Meeting their years activities as this would be an ideal opportunity to show the public what the Sub Committee and collectively the JPC have achieved.

Presentation by Sgt. Mick Walsh, Crime Prevention Officer, An Garda Síochána:

Cllr. Roche introduced Sgt. Mick Walsh, Crime Prevention Officer who presented a briefing to the Members on Crime Prevention.

Sgt. Mick Walsh, Crime Prevention Officer referred to the *Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy – Putting Prevention First 2017* which articulates how Garda resources would be used to prevent and reduce crime. He said that the *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* had been developed as an overarching strategy which includes actions under the following headings: Principles of good practice; Effective crime prevention strategies; Key fundamental features; Priority crime issues and monitoring, review and governance.

Sgt. Walsh explained that Crime Prevention Officers (CPOs) were trained to encourage, promote and advise on crime prevention in both private and business communities and had a range of functional areas including Personal Safety, Vehicle Safety, Home Security, Cybercrime, Farm Watch, Neighborhood Watch, Community Alert, Business Watch, Campus Watch. He said that the CPO also provides Crime Prevention Stands at events and promotes advise through the media and social media. He said that the CPO also assists with Firearms Security, Pharmacy Drug Storage and works with Financial Institutions in the provision of advice and assistance. Sgt. Walsh said he also sits on the National CPO Committee.

Sgt. Walsh referred to the recently set up Garda Síochána Western Region Facebook page and outlined his contact details.

In reply to Cllr. Hoade, Sgt. Walsh said that he understood that his contact details had been forwarded to the Community Gardaí and Muintir na Tíre but he was available to anyone who wished to contact him.

CRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINIÚ ANSIN.

Signed: 
Cathaoirleach County Galway Joint Policing Committee

Date: 15/10/2018.