**Minutes of Meeting of County Cavan Joint Policing Committee held in the Council Chamber, Cavan on 4th May 2018 at 3pm.**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** Cllr Sarah O’ Reilly, Cllr Shane P O’Reilly, Cllr Winston Bennett, Cllr John Paul Feeley, Cllr Paddy Smith, Cllr Madeleine Argue, Cllr Damien Brady.

**Community Representatives:** Vanessa Clarke, Brian Mc Dermott, Bob Gilbert, Noleen Brady, Frank Mc Dermott

**Executive**: Tommy Ryan (Chief Executive), Eoin Doyle, (Director of Services), Gráinne Boyle (Community & Enterprise).

**Garda Officers**: Chief Superintendent John O’Reilly, Superintendent James Coen, Superintendent Paul Dolan, Inspector Nial McKiernan

**Oireachtas Members:** Deputy Brendan Smith, Senator Joe O’Reilly

**Apologies:** Cllr Paddy Mc Donald, Cllr Carmel Brady

**In Attendance:** Eddie Butler (Northern Sound), Declan O’Reilly (CAB), Stephen Meehan (CAB), James O’Neill (Property Marking Management)

The chair John Paul Feeley wished to thank Emer Coveney for her support to the JPC over the past few months and welcomed Gráinne Boyle back from her maternity leave.

He also welcomed Superintendent Paul Dolan to the meeting and wished him every success in the new role. Cllr. Shane P. O’Reilly also wished him well and said that his predecessor Superintendent Leo Mc Ginn did a great job over his time. Deputy Joe O’Reilly seconded this.

**Minutes from meeting 9th February 2018 & Matters Arising**

Previous minutes were proposed by Cllr Shane P’ O’Reilly and seconded by Cllr Damian Brady.

Cllr. S. P. O’ Reilly wished to express his disappointment in the response received from the Department in relation to a motion put forward by Cavan JPC to introduce a CCTV Scheme for rural dwellers. He went on to say that due to the poor uptake of the current Community CCTV Scheme, he would hope that this would be reconsidered. He believes the current Community CCTV is not fit for purpose and sought unanimous support from Cavan County Council that any unspent money under the scheme is re-directed into a rural scheme. An Garda Síochána also need to be recruiting and re-deploying Gardaí to rural areas within the county.

Chair J. P. Feeley referred to the agenda and said that the Community CCTV Scheme is an agenda item which will be dealt with later in the meeting.

**Crime Statistics for Quarter 1 2018 compared to Quarter 1/17**

Chief Superintendant James O’Reilly talked through the crime figures for Quarter 1/2018 as compared to Quarter 1/2017, broken down for each Garda District.

There has been a large increase in the number of burglaries between these periods within the Cavan District. The national programme Operation Thor is targeting repeat offenders and also the Property Marking Initiative, once rolled out, should have a positive impact on reducing these figures also in the future. He said that there are a number of cases before the courts at present, he acknowledged his staff in enabling this to happen but also said that the local communities involvement has been vital.

Drug offences have been on the increase but inroads are being made here also with the setting up of the Divisional Drugs Unit.

Chair John Paul Feely backed his comments in relation to the importance of community involvement. He queried the low number of convictions for drug dealers. Superintendent James Coen responded that generally this number would be higher towards the end of the year and operation ‘Clean Street’ is now in operation and tackling this, however it can take a long time for cases to go to trial.

Senator Joe O’ Reilly said that the two arrests made after the recent burglary in Ballyjamesduff will help restore the public belief in the gardaí and he also wished to congratulate the gardaí on the good work in apprehending the criminals. He did however want to raise the point that there is quite a high level of activity taking place in the Drumnavaddy area. He also wanted to back the earlier calls made in relation to extra gardaí being needed. Chief Superintendent James O’ Reilly noted Senator Joe O’Reilly’s comments in relation to Drumnavaddy.

Cllr. Shane O’Reilly commented that with the recent good weather there has been an increase in the level of anti-social behaviour taking place within Bailieborough, particularly around the Lake Amenity area and local chippers.

Cllr. Damian Brady queried the large decrease in the figures for dangerous driving within the Cavan district in 2018 compared to 2017. Chief Superintendent James O’ Reilly explained that the figure is likely to increase as there has been a deficit of gardaí to address this issue and road policing units are getting back up now to where they once were.

**Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB)**

The chair welcomed Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin, Declan O’Reilly and Stephen Meehan from CAB to the meeting.

Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin thanked the JPC for the invitation to present to them. He commenced his presentation by explaining what CAB is and how it is working to recover the proceeds of crime based in the community. CAB is a state body that works locally, nationally, and internationally to recover the proceeds of crime. They have a broad range of staff employed from ranging from the Gardaí, Revenue and Social Welfare. They depend very much on the community for information, people are not required to give evidence and it is a purely confidential service. It is recognised that the community know the local problems and are best placed to raise concerns to CAB. He referred to the statistics for the Cavan/Monaghan Division, commenting that they are not high by national standards.

Chair John Paul Feeley thanked Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin for his presentation and said that CAB has been a great success story.

Deputy Brendan Smith agreed with the Chairs comments and asked if they have good co-operation with Northern Ireland and other countries, he also asked if the bureau deal with the issue of fuel smuggling. Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin responded that there has been great co-operation with the PSNI and English police and they do deal with the issue of cross border fuel smuggling, having been involved in a very significant court case recently involving fuel laundering. CAB also works well with international bodies such as the European Commission and Camden Assets Recovery Inter-agency Network (CARIN).

Senator James O’ Reilly also commented on the success of CAB, saying that its success lies in that it hits people in the pocket. The Irish model of CAB is now becoming a model for the rest of Europe to follow. He also thanked Declan O’Rourke for his good work with CAB. He wanted to call on the community to report suspicious activities to CAB.

Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin agreed that the Irish model is indeed getting recognised internationally as a model of good practice and said that Malta is currently considering establishing this model after visiting Ireland recently to learn more about it.

Cllr. Damian Brady asked if CAB targeted convicted people and Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin said that they work closely with the local gardaí in relation to this, but he also stressed that they also need the input from the local community in order to effectively target them.

Cllr. Sarah Reilly wanted to point out that she carried out an internet search on CAB but noted they are not on Facebook. She suggested that they need to get more active on social media in order to raise their profile. Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin acknowledged this but said there is a balance between getting the message out there and ensuring the confidentiality of those who come forward to use the service, but this is something they are working on.

Cllr. Sarah Reilly asked if a disclosure is made to CAB what would be the timeline between assets being seized and an investigation taking place.

Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin replied once research/investigation commences they are 90% of the way there but they do not want to alert the public to this fact too soon. He said that it is difficult to answer this question however as every case is different with varying complexities involved. They can respond very quickly however if necessary.

Cllr. Winston Bennett enquired if referrals die a death if no case can be made on them. Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin responded that they need to be careful of referrals and ensure that they are not just neighbourly disputes, but real criminals are being reported on. If the latter is the case, they will be followed through on.

Deputy Brendan Smith suggested that CAB should avail of local radio stations and media sources top promote their work if they are not already doing so. Chief Bureau Officer P. Clavin replied that they are currently attending all JPC meetings throughout the country and they hope the message will get out through the local media sources this way. They hope that local councillors will spread the word also.

Chair John Paul Feeley thanked Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin for his presentation. Their work is very relevant for catching smaller scale criminals within our region. Chief Bureau Officer Patrick Clavin said that they have seized assets as low as €12,000, he wanted to add however that they are not bound by values. If you can deal with low scale criminals it stops them progressing further so it can be a preventative measure in the long term.

**Community Protect (Property Marking Initiative)**

Chair John Paul Feeley welcomed James O’ Neill to the meeting.

James O’ Neill commenced his presentation by saying that his organisation is now registered as Property Marking Management. They are set up as a charity body. Research commenced three years ago in relation to the property marking initiative. He was originally involved in working with Detective Alan Cunningham in setting up the Community Alert Scheme.

Monaghan Co. Co. is the first council in Ireland to purchase a Property Marking Machine, and Cavan is the second. Sligo Co. Co. are about to order one and Donegal is also considering it. He said that there is a good opportunity for a cross border initiative to be created here and he is to make a presentation to the PSNI soon as they are also interested.

The Property Marking Initiative was originally piloted in West Cork. 33% of the population within the area piloted were 65 years and over, living in a rural isolated community. He said this is representative of many parts of rural Ireland and the ageing population is only going to increase. There were four key objectives to the initiative:

1. Strengthen partnerships between the community and the Gardaí
2. Lower the number of burglaries
3. Lower the fear of crime
4. Enable the community to take the lead on the initiative

They found that there was a dramatic reduction in crime levels within the pilot area once the initiative was implemented.

He said that the initiative would be of great importance to Community Alert areas, leading them to become even safer communities. He explained that signage is also available for Community Alert groups to use once they undertake the initiative within their areas and showed the JPC members samples of the signage. The signage would be put up strategically in conjunction with the Community Alert Groups and in partnership with the An Garda Síochána. He also explained that there is a registration system which should be used for all households and businesses who participate in the marking initiative so that their belongings can be logged.

James O’ Neill envisages the initiative will run over four to five years and ultimately its success will be in all Community Alert groups implementing the initiative. He would like to see the initiative rolled out on a uniformed basis throughout the border counties and that there would be good co-operation levels amongst participating members on it.

Chair John Paul Feeley enquired into the costs of the signs and the process for ordering them. James O’ Neill replied that four signs would be adequate per area. The erecting of the signs should be carried out in conjunction with the Community Alert Group and the Gardaí. The County Council engineer will need to sign off on the signage. There are set costs for the signs as laid out in an order form from the supplying company. Within Monaghan, the County Council has set aside a budget to pay for signs (once 50 houses within a Community Alert area have participated in the initiative), but it is up to individual councils to decide for themselves how they want to do this. A company has been selected to provide the signage for the initiative which groups participating in the initiative should be asked to use as they will have all the detailed specifications for the signage.

Chair John Paul Feeley commented that the initiative would be very beneficial in preventing homes and business break-ins. The theft of tools from houses, sheds or garages for those who may be uninsured can be devastating, particularly for a self-employed person. James O’ Neill agreed and said that they would explore opportunities for local businesses to sponsor the purchase of a machine and this would be a way of targeting the business community.

Noleen Brady welcomed the initiative and asked how it would be rolled out in County Cavan. Gráinne Boyle explained that Cavan County Council have only recently received the machine and are currently getting their documentation in order for it. They will follow the process as recommended by Property Marking Management and initially concentrate on lending the machine out to Community Alert Groups within the county. Community Alert Groups will be notified once it is ready for borrowing; they in turn will be able to host Property Markings Events within their own local communities.

Cllr. Winston Bennett suggested to James O’ Neill that sponsorship should be sought from insurance companies to purchase a machine. If it can be proven there are less claims for insurance within areas covered under the initiative, this will be beneficial to them also.

Vanessa Clarke wished to acknowledge the support Cavan County Council under this initiative. A lot of predevelopment work will need to be completed with the Community Alert groups in advance of the initiative so that they can prepare to host property marking events within their communities.

**Community CCTV Scheme**

Chair John Paul Feeley concurred with Cllr. Shane P. O’ Reilly’s earlier points in relation to the Community CCTV Scheme.

Inspector Nial Mc Kiernan reported that Ballyjamesduff are ready to submit their application. The other two groups, Project Belturbet and Ballyconnell Town & District Council are also progressing fast.

Cllr. Damian Brady thanked Inspector Nial Mc Kiernan for his support on the ground with the groups in preparing applications. He also wished to back Cllr. Shane P. O’ Reilly’s earlier comments. Brian Mc Dermott also wished to thank Inspector Nial Mc Kiernan for his support to Project Belturbet, he is very happy with their application and believes that it will make a real difference locally.

Cllr. Sarah O’ Reilly said that she has learned that only four groups have been approved nationally to date under the Community CCTV Scheme.

Cllr. Shane P. O’ Reilly wanted to reiterate his earlier points, adding that it is unfair to Inspector Nial Mc Kiernan and his colleagues and the great work they are doing locally on the ground with groups. The fact that groups have to raise up to 40% in match funding in order to apply for the scheme places a huge hurdle for many communities in applying for funding and this is of particular concern for communities on the eastern side if the county. He believes the scheme should be administered by An Garda Síochána in conjunction with the County Council’s directly and the responsibility should not be placed on communities. There are strong concerns around data protection and he believes issues will arise for communities operating the scheme in the future if they are not dealt with sufficiently now.

Deputy Brendan Smith also referred to Cllr. Shane O’ Reilly’s point in relation to the low uptake of the funding under this scheme nationally, adding that he had raised this question himself in the Dáil. He also agreed that the new data protection legislation is going to make it very difficult for all involved; it’s also a concern for elected members when making representations on behalf of their constituents. There is still no clarity relating to this issue at present.

Chair John Paul Feeley commented that while it is great to see that there is interest locally amongst groups in the scheme he does not believe that the County Council or community groups should be given the responsibility of managing the scheme. The scheme needs to be reviewed at the national level.

Cllr. Shane P. O’ Reilly enquired if further clarification has been provided for community groups on the importance of the new data protection legislation and the implications for them. Inspector Nial Mc Kiernan responded that the County Council will be responsibility for the data protection as they are the Data Controller appointed under the scheme.

Chief Executive Tommy Ryan concluded the discussions by commenting that the impending data protection legislation is of significant importance as there will serious consequences for those who are not compliant with it.

Chair John Paul Feeley requested the JPC to endorse two letters of approval for applications for the Community CCTV Scheme. These were for Project Belturbet and Ballyconnell Town & District Council. This was proposed by Damian Brady and seconded by Brian Mc Dermott.

**JPC Annual Report 2017**

The JPC report for 2017 was noted.

**Next meeting**

The next Cavan JPC meeting will be held on Friday 7th September at 3pm. (This was changed to 14th September 2018)