

Kilkenny County Council – Joint Policing Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th October, 2018 at 2.30 p.m. Council Chamber, County Hall, Kilkenny

PRESENT: Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Chairperson, Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. David Kennedy, Cllr. Joe Malone, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Melissa O’Neill, Cllr. Maurice Shortall, John Hayes.

Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes, Kilkenny Garda Station
Superintendent Derek Hughes, Kilkenny Garda Station
Detective Inspector Lonergan, Kilkenny Garda Station
Inspector Anthony Farrell, Kilkenny Garda Station
Superintendent Gerard Egan, Thomastown Garda Station.

Ms. Colette Byrne, Chief Executive, Kilkenny County Council. Mr. Tim Butler, Director of services. Ms Anne Maria Walsh, Senior Executive Officer, Teresa Mahon, Staff Officer, Kilkenny County Council

Apologies: Deputy Bobby Aylward, T.D. Deputy John Paul Phelan

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Chairperson - opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Tributes were paid to Bishop Laurence Forristal retired Bishop of Ossory and to Emma Mhic Mhathúna on their passing. A minute silence was held.

Cllr. Doherty congratulated Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes on his People of the Year award and all present joined in. Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes thanks everyone saying he was honoured to be nominated and accepted the award on behalf of his colleagues.

Item No. 1: Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings:

Minutes of Meeting of Kilkenny County Council Joint Policing Committee held on 27th June, 2018:

Proposed by: Cllr. Pat Dunphy
Seconded by: Cllr. Michael McCarthy
And Agreed:

“That the minutes as presented to the meeting are hereby adopted.”

Item No. 2: Crime Statistics

Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes welcomed Detective Inspector Anthony Lonergan who gave an update on the crime statistics:

- Property Crime down 60%
- Burglary down 1% - from an already low base.
- Unauthorised taking of Vehicle – reduction of 24%
- Theft from persons – reduction of 54% across the County

- Theft from shop – reduction of 12% - from a low base
- Theft from Vehicle – reduction of 38%
- Theft from other property – reduction of 38%
- Crimes against a person at night time – incidences of assaults down 18%
- Criminal damage – reduction of 18%
- Public order offences down
- Drug offences – deduction rates up 38% on last year due to increase work by the gardai

All Members present congratulated the Gardaí for their work in reducing crime and wished Anthony success in his promotion. They asked questions about increase in resources, community policing, visibility of gardai, property marking day, writing to the Department and making people feel safe. Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes responded to the questions. He explained about a new dedicated Divisional Unit that has been set up to manage investigation in the area of criminality, sexual assaults, rape and human trafficking. This new unit will give support to other units. He gave an update on new recruits, crime detection, information stands and confirmed that he is continuing to push for more staff.

Item No 3.

Road Safety Engineering Works

Mr. Seamus Foley, Senior Executive Engineer, gave a presentation on the road safety engineering works that Kilkenny County Council has and will carry out in the County for the prevention of fatalities and injuries and for the protection of property as outlined in the Road Safety Plan 2016 - 2020. He gave details of the Major Improvement Schemes, Minor Improvement Schemes and the Pavement Schemes. He explained how areas are classified under different headings:

HD15 – Locations on the national roads where TII have identified as HCL (High Collision Locations)

HD17 –Locations on the national roads where TII appointed consultants have identified as having road safety risks.

HD28 – TII undertook skid resistance testing of all roads on the national network -

and the reviewing process that takes place in developing solutions to these road safety risks.

He also gave detail on the B12 Maintenance schemes, Low Cost Accident Schemes , Discretionary Grant Funding ,Clar funding and Public Lighting.

All the Members present thanked Mr. Foley for his presentation and raised queries in relation to:

- Muckalee/ Castlecomer Road N77
- Car parking on the side of the road near schools in particular outside Ballyhale School
- N24 – Junction at Rathkieran
- Black spots with new LCD lighting
- Safety issues on Lisdowney road
- N25 Junction at Kylemore
- Possibility of adding schemes together
- Road Accidents forms

Chief Superintendent Hayes, Mr. Foley and Mr. Butler addressed the above queries. The Council is in discussion with the TII over several of the above issues and hoping to have funding in place for the priority works over the coming years. Mr. Foley explained that grants under specific schemes has to be spend on specific schemes and roads. It is only our local funding streams that can be added to together. Chief Superintendent Hayes clarified that the forms CC68 are sent to the Traffic Bureau and then shared with all relevant bodies.

Ms. Colette Byrne, Chief Executive, acknowledged the work of Mr. Seamus Foley and all the team in Road design. She also recognised the role of Mr. Tim Butler, Mr. Seamus Kavanagh and all the Road Engineers. She outlined that road schemes take time to design and involves a lot of relationship building with landowners. She acknowledged the good relationship that the Council had with Inspector Anthony Farrell.

4. Ask for Angela Update

Superintendent Derek Hughes explained that “Ask for Angela” is a voluntary initiative where staff from public houses and hotels are aware of this as a code-word for people who feel unsafe on a night out. A meeting with the Vintners was held on the 22nd September where the initiative was reviewed. Some of the hospitality trade have confirmed that it has been implemented but due to its voluntary nature it can't be enforced. He stated that the Gardai will continue to support the initiative. He also confirmed that harassment is a crime and is taken seriously by the Gardai.

5. CCTV.

Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes spoke of the recent public meeting in Urlingford and the work the local community had done in relation to making the town a safer place. He acknowledged that there are issues around data protection and governance for CCTV systems but solutions are being sought.

He confirmed that An Garda Siochana has acquired sizable funding for improving CCTV in Kilkenny City to ensure the City is protected from any major emergency and crime. A question in relation to other community groups looking for CCTV systems was address by Ms. Anne Maria Walsh. She explained about these grants are available from Pobac and confirmed that Ronan Ryan would circulate drafts of the scheme to all members.

6. AOB

The following matters were raised under any other business;

- Concerns were expressed over the increase in drug activity in the County. Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes confirmed that it continues to be a problem but an increase of 38% in detection rates was encouraging. He did admit that addressing the problem continues to be a huge challenge. When one source of supply is stopped another source opens up.
- Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes confirmed that he and the Assistant Commissioner Michael Finn are hosting an awards night to recognise the achievements and voluntary work of the community text alert schemes at a special event in Cilin Hill on 18th October. All are invited to attend.
- Inspector Liam Connolly is setting up a divisional youth awards scheme which will identify young people who stand up for good causes. The young people will be put forward for the national awards. The initiative will feed into the safer socialising and the behaviour of younger people in the County. It is his intention to role this out in all the schools in the County and the final will take place in April next year.
- Request for an update from the Victim Engagement Officer for the next meeting.
- Funding for text alert schemes. Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes confirmed that this issue is being raised with the Minister. Members spoke about the text rebate scheme and the engaging with the service providers to get better deals.

- Members congratulated the young Garda for his quick action in raising the alarm in relation to fire on John Street.

Next Meeting Scheduled for 23rd January 2018 at 2.00pm in Council Chambers.