

**COMHAIRLE CHONTE NA GAILLIMHE**

**Minutes of the Galway County Joint Policing Committee Meeting held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup>  
November 2021 via MS Teams**

***I LÁTHAIR:***

***Council Members:*** Cllr. Jim Cuddy (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr. Mary Hoade  
Cllr. Michael Maher  
Cllr. Joe Byrne  
Cllr. Peter Roche  
Cllr. Karey Farag McHugh  
Cllr. Andrew Reddington  
Cllr. Shelley Herterich-Quinn  
Cllr. Liam Carroll  
Cllr. Gerry King  
An Comh. Dáithí Ó Cualáin  
Cllr. PJ Murphy  
An Comh. Pdraig Mac an Iomaire

***Deputies:*** Deputy Catherine Connolly

***An Garda Síochána:*** Chief Supt. Thomás Curley  
Supt. Karen Maloney  
Insp. Brian Ryan  
Sgt. Mick Walsh  
Sgt. Sinead Cunniffe

***Community Reps:*** Mr. Aodán Mac Donncha  
Mr. Martin Ward  
Mr. Pat Flanagan  
Mr. Gerard Costello  
Mr. Gerry Larkin

***Oifigigh:*** Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Service  
Ms. Orla McCarthy, Meetings Administrator, Corporate Services

***Other Officials:*** Ms. Noreen Moughty, Corporate Services  
Ms. Ann Dolan, Environment Section

***Apologies:***

**Item No. 1 – Minutes of the JPC Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Maher and seconded by An Comh. Ó Cualáin, it was agreed the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be adopted.

Cllr. Cuddy, on behalf of the members of the County Galway Joint Policing Committee expressed sincerest sympathy to Ms. Ita Martyn, Meetings Administrator, on the passing of her Mother, Bridie Cavanagh, RIP.

**Matters arising from the Minutes:**

An Comh. Ó Cualáin, queried the number of Gardaí currently in An Cheathrú Rua, he noted that there was a reduction from 2017 levels, where 6 Garda and 1 sergeant were in the An Cheathrú Rua Garda Station and in 2021 it is now 3 Garda, 1 Sergeant and 1 Inspector. He questioned whether there was difficulty obtaining Gardaí for An Cheathrú Rua and, how often Gardaí from Conamara were called in to assist at Salthill Garda Station.

Chief Supt. Curley explained that there are currently 2 vacancies in An Cheathrú Rua, they had sought expressions of interest with Level 4 Irish but had received no interest from the Division, the request has now gone to Garda HQ, to seek transfers into the Galway Division. He stated that Recess station is covered by Clifden, due to the state of the building.

An Comh. Ó Cualáin sought clarification on the timeline for filling the two vacancies and the number of Gardaí, 3 or 4 as stated in official report.

Chief Supt. Curley explained that he could not give a timeline on the filling of the vacancies as it has already been referred to headquarters.

**Report from An Garda Síochána**

Chief Supt. Curley outlined the Garda Report for the end of September 2021 in comparison to the same period in 2020. He also gave a breakdown of figures in accordance with the different fraud types.

Cllr. Hoade thanked the Chief Superintendent for the detailed report and the Gardaí for their work. She noted that although it was not mentioned in the report and it had been brought up at the City JPC, the issues in Eyre Square recently, she noted that constituents had questioned the safety of their young people going to the City.

Cllr. Carroll noted that while most figures were going in the right direction, there is an increase in the sale of cannabis and cocaine which is worrying. He also noted that with the increase in theft from vehicles, many in cases where the vehicles were left unlocked, that it would be good to get the message out to be always vigilant. Chief Supt. Curley agreed that figures are high for cocaine.

Mr. Larkin concurred that it was a good detailed Garda report and he said that the scourge of young people driving on rural roads doing donuts/rings needs to be stopped.

Chief Supt. Curley replied to say that witnesses should ensure that a call is made to a Garda station at the time, and it will be dealt with.

Cllr. Roche noted that by and large it is a positive report, other than the stated fatalities and offered his sympathies to those who had lost loved ones. He remarked that it was great to see a reduction in farm theft, which could possibly be accredited to more people working from home. He questioned when meetings would return to the Council Chamber and Cllr. Cuddy advised, depending on the Covid restrictions in place and when it is safe and meetings will resume in the Chamber. Chief Supt. Curley updated that there had been a number of burglaries in rural areas in recent weeks, as the economy is beginning to open with the easing of restrictions and darker evenings, everyone needs to be more vigilant.

Deputy Connolly raised concerns regarding the Domestic Incidents in the Report, she remarked that it is not an incident, it is a serious assault, and the word incident does not convey the enormity of the violence being carried out. Also, that there are not enough safe places for people to go, she has serious concerns with the rise in figures. Chief Supt. Curley replied that on their computer systems, all reports to Gardai are referred to as Incidents and all Domestic violence incidents are fully investigated. Call backs are carried out with all injured parties.

Deputy Connolly also raised the ongoing issues in Eyre Square. She acknowledged the tremendous work carried out during the earlier restrictions of Covid-19 and the increased visibility of the Gardaí however, she felt that there is a need for a more proactive policing plan in conjunction with the management of the City Council. Chief Supt. Curley advised that they have met with management of City Council and that more manpower will be deployed on foot patrols in and around Eyre Square for a six-week period up to Christmas which will also include Community Policing.

Cllr. Cuddy asked that the meeting focus on County issues, he appreciates that representations were received from constituents within various areas.

Mr. A. MacDonnacha observed that vehicles were using the bus lane and overtaking on the inside, as he entered the village of Baile Chláir from Leacht Seoirse the previous weekend and he queried if this was an ongoing occurrence. He suggested that there should be a fixed camera placed at this location and that Fixed Charge Notices should be issued. Chief Supt. Curley advised that there is enough signage in place and would ask the Road Policing Unit to monitor it.

Cllr. Byrne feels that Covid has impacted on the statistics in the report, he requested that, if possible, could figures be prepared from 2019 – 2021. Chief Supt. Curley replied that reports

are prepared year to year and that from March 2022 it will have been 2 years since Covid and that it is more beneficial to monitor trends.

Cllr. Byrne also complimented Community Policing in the Gort local area and especially their support with the Gort Neighborhood Watch AGM, which Supt. Karen Maloney attended. He requested an update on resources in the Kinvara Station, Chief Supt. Curley replied that there is currently an ongoing national competition for Sergeants and that while they would be replacing the Sergeants, he could not yet confirm if they would be located in Kinvara or Gort.

An Comh. Ó Cualáin welcomed the report. He noted his concern in relation to the burglaries in rural areas, especially with the long winter months. He queried whether the figures in relation to speeding being down was due to detections being down due to reduced resources or whether the public were actually getting the message. He also suggested that a message be sent to Gardai Headquarters that more resources are required for Eyre Square, albeit, in the City. He said that constituents were concerned for the safety of their young people in the City Centre and he enquired if there is a Public Order Unit in the Garda Station.

Chief Supt. Curley replied that there are personnel with Public Order training who could be deployed at short notice. An Comh. Ó Cualáin also asked about the reports on Social Media about needle spikin. Chief Supt. Curley, said to-date, there were no reports of an incident of same in Galway.

Cllr. Reddington advised, in recent times, that several nursing staff that were on night duty, had reported concerns to Gardaí, that Boy-racers were closing sections of the Curraghline, N84, to allow for dangerous driving activity. He understood that they used CB Radios and were aware of where the Garda are coming from and he questioned how to request speed vans. Chief Supt. Curley repeated that as previously advised it is vital that all incidents are reported at the time, so that they can be dealt with and that speed van requests can be made via National Road Safety Authority.

Cllr. Murphy asked about the availability of cover in the Ardrahan area, he said that it is currently every Wednesday for 1 hour and that they need more cover. He also commented that there was a need for a community-based Garda. He queried the delay with issuing gun licences as there is a delay of between 12 and 15 weeks in the Gort and Craughwell areas and the national average for issuing licences is only 5 weeks and that this had resulted in several young people missing the hunting season. Cllr. Murphy highlighted the number of attacks on sheep by dogs in recent weeks (16 in total) and noted that these attacks had happened during daylight hours. He also highlighted the theft of livestock, namely 12 bull weanlings and queried whether the Gardaí liaise with the Depart of Agriculture in relation to same.

Chief Supt. Curley replied that they are currently finalising the placement of a full-time Garda for Ardrahan. However, due to the repair works required and lack of funding the Garda will not be accommodated in the Ardrahan Garda house. He advised that gun licences are usually

returned very quickly, however, there are additional checks and possibly training required for 16-year-olds which can delay the process. He agreed that it was a good suggestion for the Gardaí to liaise with the Dept. of Agriculture in relation to the bull weanling thefts.

### **Update Sub Committees**

Cllr. King provided the following update from the Education & Awareness sub-committee; that various Community issues were discussed including Cyber Crime and especially Scam calls, Road Safety programme for roads in winter including reflective safety gear for all areas having schools involved with education in wearing of helmets and Drive for life for TY students.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn thanked Cllr. King for his update. She advised that youth and drugs are a particular concern in her area and questioned whether there was a Plan in place for addressing same and she highlighted the plan that was being used in Iceland.

Cllr. Maher provided an update on illegal dumping and awareness. He thanked Ann Dolan and Evan Mulvey for all their continued support and work on illegal dumping. He advised of the great clean ups in Pollboy and Gort, the installation of new barriers in Sonnagh, introduction of a new litter fines application, a new fencing project in Tuam (contractor appointed),. The Civic Amenity sites took approximately 1,000 bulky goods around the County, that approximately 400 bicycles went to Africa under the Ballinasloe Capital Assistance Scheme and of a new Awareness campaign for billboards and magnetic signs for the Community Warden vans. In relation to the Waste Presentation Byelaws, this process has begun whereby the Council will find out from households who takes their rubbish and if they have bins from an authorized collector. This will be followed up with Enforcement/fines. In relation to CCTV, the Waste Management and Litter legislation needs to be amended and there is a need to write to public representatives to get this moving. Cllr. Maher also congratulated Gerry Larkin who has raised approximately €30,000 for various charities around the County.

### **AOB**

Gerry Larkin thanked Cllr. Maher and noted that he is a very active participant himself. In relation to Cllr. Murphy's comments about roaming dogs, he stated that this is a huge issue with dogs not on leads and out of control and requested with permission of the Chair that this be followed up by the Environment Section to check if they have a dog license. Cllr. Cuddy replied that this issue could be raised at Plenary meeting.

In response to Cllr. Herterich-Quinn in relation to her query whether something could be done in relation to dealing with drugs within the schools, Chief Supt. Curley advised that he was o

aware of a video that is shown under the National schools' programme but that he would make an enquiry before the next meeting. Cllr. Maher advised that the GRETB is rolling out the programme (similar to the approach in Iceland) and will revert to Cllr. Herterich-Quinn regarding same.

Cllr. Roche queried when the public JPC meeting would take place. Cllr. Cuddy replied that it had been scheduled for November Meeting but due to current Government advice it has been deferred to 2022.

Cllr. Cuddy thanked Sgt Walsh for all the great work he is doing, especially in relation to all the articles in local newspapers. Sgt. Walsh advised he had arranged a virtual Webinar on Crime Prevention for 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and that he would circulate details of same in due course.

Cllr. Cuddy advised that the next meeting would take place on 7th February 2022 and wished all a Happy Christmas.

**CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIÚ ANSIN**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cathaoirleach of the County Galway Joint Policing Committee**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_