

MONAGHAN TOWN JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

Minutes of Monaghan Town Joint Policing Public Meeting held on Tuesday, 19th October 2010 at 8.00p.m. in the Market House, Monaghan.

Total attendance - 29.

At the outset, the Cathaoirleach of Monaghan Town Joint Policing Committee, Cllr. Seán Conlon welcomed everyone to the Public Meeting and stated that apologies have been received from Noel Hennessy, Monaghan Town Joint Policing Committee Member and Fiona McEntee, Youth Development Officer, Monaghan County Council.

Cllr Conlon explained that Joint Policing Committees have been established in each Local Authority administrative area and are to provide a forum where a Local Authority and the senior Garda Officers responsible for the policing of that area with the participation of Oireachtas members and Community interests can consult, discuss and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the area. Cllr. Conlon stated that JPC's are partnerships which are co-operative in nature and operate with the minimum of formality to identify, raise awareness of and find solutions for issues impacting on, or causing concerns for the local community in order to contribute to the improved safety and quality of life of the community. Cllr. Conlon stated that the Monaghan Town Joint Policing Committee meet about 4 times a year and the meetings are also attended by the Press.

Presentation by Garda Superintendent Michael Clancy on Policing Issues

Superintendent Clancy stated that JPC's fit into the Gardaí's Mission Statement – working with communities to protect and serve - to identify problems early and solve them. The Gardaí are of the view that the establishment of the JPC's are a great success.

Superintendent Clancy presented the following statistics to the Meeting:-

	to 18th October 2009	to 18th October 2010
Theft	144	143
Burglary	26	24
Armed Robbery	1	1
Fatal Road Traffic Accidents	2	0

The Superintendent referred to changes in patterns of behaviour of criminals – illegal importation of cigarettes for profit, diesel laundering, A.T.M.thefts, etc and these changes have presented new challenges to the Gardaí.

The Superintendent informed the meeting that the Gardaí work very closely with the Local Authorities and the Road Safety Authority in relation to traffic and road safety. Superintendent Clancy stated that areas where speed is prevalent in Monaghan include the Cootehill/Scotstown/Clones Roads and that quite a number of detections have been recorded on these roads and action has been taken by the Gardaí to deal with the offenders.

Superintendent Clancy stated that domestic abuse assaults have risen in the past year and attributed this form of offending to unemployment and the downturn in the economy.

Superintendent Clancy stated that there are now a large number of ethnic groups living in the Monaghan area and the Gardaí are examining how their needs can be serviced.

In relation to public order offences Superintendent Clancy stated that the Gardaí's public order policy is that offenders are arrested, brought to the Garda Station and then taken before the next court hearing.

Superintendent Clancy commended the work of the JPC for the work undertaken by them in relation to underage drinking. It was noted that new legislation has now been passed allowing the Gardaí to use "test purchasing" of alcohol which will allow the Gardaí to select young people with the consent of their parents to participate in test purchasing exercises.

It was noted by the meeting that the Gardaí are currently preparing their Policing Plan for 2011 which will identify challenges they may face in the year ahead. In preparing the plan the Gardaí will be taking the view of the JPC and the public on board.

Superintendent Clancy concluded his presentation by stating that Monaghan Town is one of the most peaceful towns in Ireland in which to live and is an attractive place to set up business.

Presentation by Siobhan McKenna, Manager, Tearmann Domestic Violence Service

Ms. Siobhan McKenna informed the Meeting that Tearmann was set up in 1997 and that they provide their service from the Primary Care Building at Rooskey. The service provides support for women and children in the Monaghan area suffering the effects of domestic violence and its consequences. Ms. McKenna outlined the services in detail to the Meeting and stated that the service which Tearmann provide to children is an important element of the organisations work given that domestic abuse in the home can have long lasting effects on children. Ms McKenna stated that 1 in 5 women suffer domestic abuse. Ms. McKenna stated that funding for their organisation has been cut by 26% and that they are facing further cuts of 12% in 2011. From the 1st January 2011 the childcare worker with Tearmann will no longer be employed and all staff will be on a 4 day week in order to provide 5 day cover.

Presentation by Mary Lynch, Regional Director, Youth Work Ireland on Teenage Alcohol Abuse Awareness.

Ms. Mary Lynch stated that underage drinking is a huge problem across County Monaghan and that drinking is seen as part of life's experience for young people aged 15/16 to go drinking. Ms. Lynch stated that drink is part of the culture but that drink is not the problem – the problem lies with the excessive use or misuse of alcohol. Ms. Lynch outlined the reasons given by young people for drinking at a young age – peer pressure, boredom, experimenting for courage, etc. Ms. Lynch stated that there is a need for more youth facilities to be established and stressed the need for parental responsibility.

Ms. Lynch referred to the recent efforts in Monaghan town to address the problem of teenage drinking. The campaign “Don’t Pour Your Dreams Away” was initiated to coincide with the release of the Junior Cert examination results in September 2010. Ms. Lynch stated that the campaign was very successful but many of the people who participated in it stated that initiatives needed to be directed at even younger people who are more at risk.

Discussion on the relevance of Joint Policing Committees within the Community.

Points highlighted by those present:-

Underage drinking – Convent grounds
Pensioners afraid to come into town at night
Need for Community Gardaí to “talk to people on their doorsteps”
Late night discos – urinating on street.
More Garda foot patrols required, especially at weekends
More liaison with Residents Associations/Community groups to resolve problems in built up areas.

The Cathaoirleach thanked everyone for attending and participating in the meeting.

This concluded the business of the Public Meeting.

Dated this the 9th day of November 2010.

Cathaoirleach