

CARRICKMACROSS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of proceedings of Joint Policing Committee meeting of Carrickmacross Town Council held in the Old Union Workhouse, Shercock Road, Carrickmacross, on Thursday the 3rd February, 2011 at 7:00p.m.

At the outset An Meara Bhaile Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon apologised that he could not stay for the meeting therefore Cllr. Mark Clarke presided.

Present: Cllrs. Kerr-Conlon, Carolan, Carthy and Jankaitiene, Inspector Fintan McTiernan, Sergeant David Forde, Francie Cassidy, Eileen Gordon-Lonergan.

Also in attendance: Paul Clifford, Director of Services, Frances Matthews, Town Clerk, Joe Durnin, Engineer and Niamh O'Reilly, Clerical Officer. One member of the public Mr. Sean O'Raghallaidh was also in attendance. Apologies: - Cllr. McNally, Dr. O'Hanlon and Superintendent Noel Cunningham.

1. Confirmation of minutes of J.P.C. meeting held on the 4th of November, 2010.

The minutes were unanimously adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Conlon, seconded by Cllr. Carolan.

2. Presentation by Mr. Tim Murphy, Cavan/Monaghan Drugs Awareness Co-ordinator:

The meeting welcomed Mr. Tim Murphy who commenced his presentation. Mr. Murphy works with CDA which was established in 2001 and has a volunteer based workforce. Mr. Murphy opened by informing the group of some of the services they offer, including weekly support sessions for people with drink/drug problems, drug screening, drug testing, rehabilitation, family support and education. Many of the cases that come to them are diverted from the North East Regional Courts, while others come in voluntarily or are encouraged by family members.

He stated that they were actively trying to train younger people and educate them in the hazards of drink/drug usage. He said that one-off talks were ineffective and that ongoing lectures and workshops should be introduced into the school curriculum.

Other non substance abuse services they offered included 'Youth Reach' and 'Domestic Violence' programmes as well as 'Trust for the Homeless'.

Mr. Murphy said that under the National Drug Strategy, the main goals were prevention, treatment and research. He said that it is felt that many users don't normally appear until they are in the courts as a result of drug/drink related offences. This also has cost implications on society. Alcoholics are more likely to seek help for addiction as opposed to drug users, due to legal consequences.

Following a query from Cllr. Carthy, Mr. Murphy said that advice was available to anyone, not just referrals and that there was a steering group for Monaghan/Cavan for all forms of addiction. He said that in relation to teenagers the C.S.P.E. module did lightly touch upon some of the issues and they are doing evaluations for a drug awareness programme in schools. He stated that scare tactics didn't work and that badly constructed programmes can promote usage rather than prevention.

Cllr. Carolan asked how would the extended family member avail of support and how regularly are talks held. In response Mr. Murphy said that family members may be assessed and are then put on a waiting list of 2 to 3 weeks, then may attend a meeting.

Cllr. Carolan also enquired if ongoing training was proposed for G.P.'s in Monaghan to facilitate the treatment of locally. Mr. Murphy replied that Cavan was initially chosen and although they hoped to educate G.P.'s, not all wished to treat locally as patients were often problematic. Therefore responses to the proposed training were not great.

Cllr. Carthy stated that young people have indicated that cocaine was most largely used so why is this not a bigger issue? Mr. Murphy said that while medicine is available to alcoholics and methadone for heroine users, treatment for cocaine users is not as easy as it entails counselling and psychology mainly, therefore cocaine users were less likely to seek help.

3. Underage Drinking in Public Places:

Cllr. Carthy proposed to put this as an item for the next meeting instead, due to the absence of Cllr. McNally.

4. Details on Prescription Drugs

Mr. Murphy gave advice on where to access information on this topic. He warned of the dangers of prescription drugs stating that they had a street value and that they are potentially lethal when mixed with alcohol.

Mr. Murphy advised Cllr. Clarke that codeine was in the same class as heroine. The difference was availability meaning a different type of client can get access to difference drugs. Cllr. Carolan asked how prescribed drugs would affect drivers. She said that people were aware of the effects of alcohol on a driver but not of the hazards of driving while taking prescription drugs. Mr. Murphy responded that this was a definite issue with prescription drugs having a similar effect as alcohol, however many people were unaware that it was illegal to drive under the influence of drugs. Mr. Murphy said that it states on the bottle whether or not it is safe to drive while taking particular medication. He said if medication is taken properly there should be no danger, the problem only arises if it is abused and taken by someone it is not prescribed for.

5. Work Plan, 2011.

With regards JPC's, Mr. Clifford stated that there was a lot of repetition within meetings as in Monaghan alone there were 6 J.P.C. committees. At the meeting held in the Iontas Centre, Castleblayney in November, 2010, it was proposed to deal with county issues on a more strategic level with more joint meetings in which to share knowledge. Local issues, for example the Convent Avenue, would still be dealt with at a local level, however, drug awareness was a county wide issue and could therefore be dealt with at a joint meeting. He said that it was important to maintain a high profile and a news letter was proposed for public information as there was no interaction with the public, apart from committee members. It was also felt that more interaction with the non national community was needed.

In relation to the circulation of the security survey report on Convent Avenue which was prepared by Sergeant Noel Harraghy, Crime Prevention Officer, Cllr. Clarke asked if it could be discussed at the next meeting, with the possibility of providing fencing. Mr. Clifford said that he did not feel that fencing was a feasible solution. He advised that CCTV cameras were now in operation at the play park at Convent Lands. Cllr. Carthy raised concerns that CCTV was only useful after an incident took place, however, Mr. Durnin replied that the possibility to go back over the footage was still of benefit.

Cllr. Carthy added that he felt it important to get the public mindset to report immediately any damage to the play ground. Mr. Clifford proposed a public meeting to discuss same which Cllr. Clarke concurred with. Mr. Clifford also suggested that a sign be erected advising how to report any damage. Mr. Clifford advised that CCTV signage was currently in place.

It was agreed to hold the next J.P.C. meeting on Thursday the 14th of April, 2011 at 7pm in the Workhouse.

The meeting concluded at 8p.m.

Chairperson
Carrickmacross Joint Policing Committee

26th January, 2012
Date