

**Approved Minutes of Tipperary Joint Policing Committee
held on the 10th September, 2021 at 2.00 p.m. via Zoom**

In Attendance Via Zoom:-

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart, Cllr Noel Coonan (Chairperson), Pat Slattery Director of Services, Eddie Meegan (Secretary), Deputy Martin Browne, Cllr Ger Darcy, Cllr Hughie McGrath, Cllr Pat English, Cliona Tobin (TCC)

Also in Attendance Via Zoom:-

Judy Higgins (Policing Authority Observer), Eoin Kelleher (Media), Simon O'Duffy (Media), Darren Keegan (Media), Aileen Hahessy (Media), Sandra Quinn (Media)

Apologies:

Cllr Marie Murphy, Imelda Walsh, Deputy Michael Lowry, Cllr Ann Marie Ryan, Cllr Fiona Bonfield, Margaret Sheehy, Anne Williamson (PPN), Cllr David Dunne, Michelle Aylward, Cllr Siobhan Ambrose.

Welcome

Cllr Noel Coonan (Chair) opened the meeting, welcomed all present and noted apologies received.

Confirmation of the Minutes of previous meeting

Verification of the minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 14th May, 2021 were approved on the proposal of Deputy Martin Browne seconded by Cllr Ger Darcy.

Item 1 – To Review levels and patterns of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in the County

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart gave a presentation on the Tipperary Division Statistics up to 1st September, 2021, in respect of:-

1. Domestic Abuse Incidents
2. Property Crime at a Divisional Level (broken down by District)
 - Additional attention afforded to Burglary
3. Crime Against the Person at a Divisional Level (broken down by District)
 - Additional attention afforded to Assault
4. Proactive Policing Measure
 - Includes Possession of Drugs, Sale of Drugs, Firearms and Offensive Weapons
5. Traffic
 - Fatalities/Serious injuries figures YTD
 - Drink Driving and Drug Offences
 - Life Saver Offences

All information is based upon operational data from the PULSE System as was available on the 1/9/2021, unless otherwise stated, and is liable to change. Crime counting rules are applied, unless otherwise stated. Incident counts are based on date reported.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart gave a presentation on the statistics for each of the Municipal Towns in the County - Nenagh, Thurles, Clonmel, Tipperary and Cahir.

The statistics for the overall Tipperary Division indicated:-

- An increase in Domestic Abuse Incidents which include Breach of Interim Barring Order, Breach of Protection Order, Breach of Barring Order, Breach of Safety Order, Domestic Dispute – No Offence Disclosed, Breach of Emergency Barring Order; and any incident with Domestic M.O. (modus operandi) up 6.7% YTD
- A reduction in Property Crime which includes all robbery, all burglary and various theft offences – down 10% (858 to 775) – Detections are up 20% YTD (357 to 427)
- A decrease in Non-Aggravated Burglary which includes residential and non-residential – down 19% (186 to 151)
- An increase in Crimes Against the Person which includes murder, murder threat, all assaults, harassment, child abandonment and neglect or abuse – up 8% (346 to 372)
- An increase in Assaults which include assaults causing harm and minor assaults – up 15% (249 to 287)
- An increase in Proactive Policing measures - overall searches up 21% within the division
- No change of Possession of Offensive Weapons 0% change (44 to 44)
- A decrease of Possession of Firearms – down 25% (4 to 3)
- A decrease of Possession of Drugs for sale/supply – down 20% (109 to 87)
- An increase in Possession of Drugs for personal use – up 13% (383 to 434)
- A reduction in Serious Injury Road Collisions – down 13% (24 to 21)
- An increase in Fatal Collisions – up 75% (from 4 to 7)
- 1,323 MIT Checkpoints conducted in the division – (up 15% from 1,152 YTD last year) which resulted in 200 driving while intoxicated offences (down 15% from 236 YTD last year) this figure includes 63 drug driving offences – down 28% from 88 YTD last year.
- An increase in phone usage whilst driving – up 32% (514 to 677)
- A reduction in non-wearing of seat belt – down 19% (192 to 156)
- An increase in driving over the speed limit – up 41% (2,250 to 3,170)

The above information is based upon operational data from the PULSE System as was available on 6/9/21 and is liable to change. Incident counts are based on date reported.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart also updated the Committee on the following Pro Active Policing Measures:-

➤ Animal Welfare –

- A woman appeared before Carrick-on-Suir District Court on Thursday 1st July 2021 charged with handling stolen property, contrary to Section 17 of the Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) Act, 2001.
- At request of ISPCA gardai from Carrick-on-Suir attended the scene of where dogs were being kept in deplorable conditions. Carcasses of deceased dog also present. ISPCA seized all three live dogs of which neither were microchipped. Deceased whippet dog had been microchipped under the name Stan and had been reported lost – suspected to have been stolen.
- Judge convicted the woman and remanded the case to October 2021 for €500 compensation to be paid.
- On 1st August 2021 gardai discovered a horse drawn carriage with one male and two small children on board. The two small children were not secure on the carriage. Gardai spoke to the operator of the carriage and explained safety concerns for them. The horse was seized under Control of Horses Act and the matter is under investigation by gardai in Clonmel.
- Court update – A motorist who allowed his passenger to lean out of the car and film a horse running along the public road while it pulled a sulky in January 2019 was convicted and fined for careless driving at Nenagh Court on 22nd July, 2021.

➤ Community Engagement –

- Little Blue Hero event recently took place in Clonmel District to welcome Honorary Garda Greyson Reid, Honorary Garda Joey Moss and Honorary Garda Shane Hearn to the force.
- Gardai from Nenagh were delighted to welcome their newest member to their team in August Honorary Garda Ben Hogan became the first Little Blue Hero in Nenagh.
- Clonmel Gardai showed the Garda Pride Patrol vehicle in support of Tipperary Clonmel Community Pride on 28th August, 2021
- Diversity and engagement with LGBTQI groups commenced in the Nenagh District (Roscrea).
- Inside Out Initiative – ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’ booklet came about as a result of growing concerns around the amount of people with disabilities and older people in our community that have been victims of crime in the past. This is a joint programme with Anne Bradshaw HSE Disability Services and Inspector Des Bell, Thurles.

➤ Fleet –

- Since the last JPC we have had four (4) vehicles added to the Divisional Garda Fleets as follows:-
 - 3 to Thurles District (to include RPU Templemore); 1 to Nenagh District

➤ CCTV –

- Borrisokane CCTV Application has been forwarded to Garda National Community Engagement Bureau.
- National CCTV Advisory are meeting 8th September and will view Borrisokane CCTV powerpoint presentation and review applications.
- Clarification awaited on Joint Data Controller document.

- Drugs –
 - On 24th August 2021 – Clonmel District – Vehicle observed and gardai approached vehicle where they observed suspect throw a package under a ditch.
 - Package retrieved which contained 24 deals of heroin and 5 deals of crack cocaine (pending forensic analysis).
 - Suspect arrested and conveyed to Clonmel Garda Station. Mae subsequently released and file being prepared for direction.
 - On Saturday 4th September Gardai from Cashel seized €13,000 (pending analysis) in drugs at Hugh’s Lot East. Investigation ongoing.
 - On 27th August 2021 Gardai from Carrick-on-Suir searched a premises and seized cocaine to the value of €1,000 and Benzodiazepines to the value of €3,000 (pending analysis). Male arrested at scene and subsequently released pending directions.

First half of 2021 - €450,000 value of illegal drugs seized in Division.

- Roads Policing –
 - Various vehicles seized or intercepted by gardaí across the Tipperary Division over last number of months mostly using Mobility Devices.
 - Devices mainly issued to operation gardaí and Roads Policing Units to reduce the amount of administration required for Road Traffic Offences.
 - 214 mobility devices in use across the Tipperary Division.
- National Youth Awards –
 - A postponed (due to Covid-19) presentation for the 2020 Garda Youth Awards from the Tipperary Division took place in August 2021
 - Some of the recipients were;
 - Cian Halley – Individual Award
 - Alice Everard and Anna O’Callaghan – Community Safety Award
 - Mandy Doyle – Special Achievement Award
 - Eabha O’Brian – Special Achievement Award
- Clare/Tipperary Garda Division Operating Model Update -
 - Chief Superintendent – Ennis
 - Regional Chief Superintendent – Tipperary
 - Community Engagement Superintendent – Thurles, Clonmel and Ennis
 - Performance Assurance Superintendent – Tipperary Town
 - Detective Superintendent - Nenagh

Noel thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart for a comprehensive report. He acknowledged the work of the community policing unit and acknowledged their work and to let it be known it is appreciated by the general public. He questioned if the levels of crime may increase when the country ‘opens up’ – such as harassment and crime against the person – he asked if there is support for lesser off families who are subjected to threats from loan sharks. He opened the floor for questions or comments.

The following questions were asked by members:-

Q. Cllr Pat English thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart for the comprehensive report and commented he is disappointed to see the amount of Domestic Abuse incidents increase and asked if there was an underlying reason for this and has there been an increase in barring orders. He questioned if there

was any way of tackling theft of catalytic convertors. He noted the current garda roster is working well however the increase of drug debt and use of crack cocaine in Clonmel is two thirds higher than the rest of the County which is huge. He asked about the possibility for a dedicated drugs unit for the County as it is causing problems for families. He asked for an update on the new garda station for Clonmel and an update on CCTV for the town. He commented that it was great to see Community Engagement from gardai in promoting the pride festival held in Clonmel recently.

Q. Deputy Martin Browne thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart for the presentation and asked if the anti-social behaviour in Sergeant's Lane, Irishtown Clonmel could be addressed as quickly as possible. He asked for comment on the thousands of undocumented 999 calls if it may have happened in Tipperary. On the drugs issue he asked where the biggest increase is and can we ask the public to use the confidential phone line. Is there any particular reason for increase in assaults can we have a quick overview. Under the active policing measures - for drugs and drink driving and speeding is there a connection or have people left their guard down. Regarding animal welfare - where are we regarding dog theft or has it changed since change in pandemic regulations.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied to the questions as follows:-

Covid has had an impact on crime and types of crime being committed - thefts in shops has increased but cooperation with shop owners with CCTV systems has helped. Crime figures haven't increased as much as thought but expectations are that it may increase. The issue of loan sharks hasn't been brought to the attention to gardai although there is increase in strong advertising from financial regulator. He appealed to people if they find themselves in this situation or is concerned for someone who is to talk to the gardai they need to be informed. Regarding catalytic convertors it is difficult to match it with cars as there is no ID. There are a couple of high-profile gangs in Dublin area carrying out this crime but we have our own system from CCTV recordings we can try and match convertor with car and stand over in court to identify convertor was taken from that car. Regarding support for gay pride parade Chief Superintendent Derek Smart acknowledged the work of Superintendent Leahy. Regarding the roster for gardai this is being discussed by garda representatives at national level - the current roster is in place until the end of October and if there is any change he will let the JPC know.

Issues with drug debts can be addressed by Inspector James White dedicated drugs unit who represents the whole division. The size of the County is challenging as there is 5 units assigned. A position for new drugs Sargent has been advertised to liaise and oversee the unit. There's no update on the new garda station in Clonmel it has moved one or two stages regarding the planning of it but should know more early next year.

Regarding anti-social behaviour at Irishtown Clonmel Chief Superintendent Derek Smart has not been made aware of this issue he will talk with Superintendent Leahy regarding same. Tickets can issue for Public Order Offence and get them barred. There is a rise in drunk and disorderly and public order offences everywhere. Regarding undocumented domestic calls there were three incidents and the calls were dropped by person calling as everything was ok by time they called the gardai - in once case the gardai were outside the house when call was dropped. Regarding drug use he can't say what specific area as they are everywhere - if any concerns let the gardai know. The number of searches are up we need warrants put in place which is a challenge.

Garda Roads Policing have seized a lot more cars from unaccompanied L permit drivers or disqualified drivers. There were no recent reports of dog theft – maybe be due to change in trend and successful prosecutions.
Phishing is on the increase – don't share financial details with anyone and end the call as soon as you suspect it.

He also updated the committee on the Formal appointment of Detective Inspector James Tierney to the Tipperary Division.
Detective Sergeant competition underway in addition to Drug Sergeant Competition. Detective Garda Competition underway also.

Noel thanked Chief Superintendent Derek Smart and asked for an update on the Clare division and a timeline for when it will come in to affect. If he could expand a bit more in relation to same.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied by stating the HR hub will be set up in Ennis. The finance hub is up and running. BSFA (Business Services Functional Area) commenced on 19th April 2021 based centrally at Thurles Garda Station— Thurles, Tipperary Town & Cahir Districts
14th June 2021—Clonmel District joined
Nenagh Ennis and Kilrush expected to join on 3rd October 2021.
Assistant Principal Officer will be based in Ennis. The Superintendent in Nenagh will support the two divisions.
Regarding a date there is no update. The operating model is very much still on the table.

Regarding Deputy Martin Brownes query about the proposed redeployment of gardai at Ballyporeen – the 2? garda stations remain open? Superintendent Whelan? Recruitment has slowed down due to Covid however we are getting the best use out of resources.

Item 2 – Property Marking

Eddie Meegan updated the Committee as follows:-

15 replies were received for Property Marking training which will take place on 25th September. We are currently working on policy to loan out the property marking machine. More details will be available early next year.

Item 3 – CCTV

Cllr Ger Darcy thanked the gardai and the County Council and the community in Borrisokane who done all the work up to now. He is aware it was the Data Controller was the issue and asked for timeline in relation to getting something on the ground.

Cllr Hughie McGrath asked for an update on the CCTV in Nenagh – he asked about the quality of the cameras are they due an upgrade.

Cllr Noel Coonan asked for an update on the CCTV in Roscrea and if there were any difficulties that need to be ironed out.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart replied by stating Borrisokane CCTV was discussed the previous day and there are a few minor issues identified that need to be addressed. There is a meeting next week and again on the 23rd September.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed and agreed by both parties. The CCTV joint data controller document is with the garda legal department to be signed off. He hasn't received any update on Littleton or Fethard CCTV and if he receives any updates he will forward to Eddie to forward to the Committee.

Pat Slattery added that CCTV systems get out of date very quickly and the whole system needs to be replaced in Carrick on Suir not just the camera the monitoring unit etc. In Nenagh the cameras only are being replaced? Rosemary Joyce? is looking after that. Margo Hayes is to be back directly with an update on CCTV in Roscrea.

Any update will be sent to Eddie Meegan to forward to the committee.

Item 4 – Presentation on the Migrant Strategy

Eddie Meegan updated the group on the Migrant Strategy Consultation Analysis Report on behalf of Margo Hayes.

Cll Pat English thanked Margo for the Report and stated the problem with integration now is with Covid and the restrictions more difficult to migrate in to community. He is looking for migrant representative for the JPC Committee and suggested Margo might be the best person to advise.

Item 5 – AOB

Eddie circulated the Community Garda contact details list previously to the Committee.

Regarding Cllr Bonfields concerns raised at the May JPC regarding drugs issues in secondary schools Eddie stated that a representative from the Mid-Western Regional Drugs Task Force is available to go in and talk to schools.

Cllr Ger Darcy raised the issue of speed on national, regional and local roads – he has never seen as many cars speeding outside schools. The volume of traffic has increased significantly.

Cllr Hughie McGrath raised the issue of e-scooter. He stated they are very fast on our footpaths and has highlighted the issue with the local gardai and the Council.

Chief Superintendent Derek Smart stated there is plenty of legislation regarding electric scooters – its been discussed at local level?

Regarding Domestic Violence people are being supported now through Protective Services Unit in Tipperary Town and there is a mechanism in which to report the purple dye initiative in designated chemists.

Judy Higgins Policing Authority Observer commented on the worthwhile meeting and assured the committee the Joint Policing Committees aren't being disbanded.

Item 6 – Date of next meeting

The next meeting is set for 17th December, 2021 at 10.00 a.m. at Thurles Municipal District Offices and Zoom.

