

**MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2005 AT 7.30PM
IN MAGHERA LEISURE CENTRE, COLERAINE ROAD, MAGHERA**

PRESENT Cllr K Lagan, Chairperson
Cllr P McLean, Vice-Chairman
Cllr Rev Dr R T Wm McCrea, MLA
Mr J Conlon
Mrs M Donnelly
Cllr T J Catherwood
Mr J Campbell
Ms S Ewing
Miss A Scott
Cllr P McErlean
Cllr G Shiels
Ms F Symington
Cllr J A McBride
Dr D Shortall
Mrs M McCormack
Cllr J Junkin

Also present Mr J A McLaughlin, Chief Executive, MDC
Mr M McCrory, DPP Manager
Ms P Shaw, Secretary

1 Apologies

Cllr R A Montgomery.

2 Declarations of Interest

No member had any interest to declare.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

PROPOSED by Cllr McErlean,
Seconded by Ms F Symington, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Report by the District Commander

Inspector Harry Johnston explained that Superintendent Tom Wiggins was presently on leave and that he would be deputising for him.

Inspector Johnston presented the report (Appendix I) for the months of November - December 2004. He highlighted that the most significant features were:

- (a) Domestic burglary - 12 incidents compared to 13 during same period the previous year
- (b) Vehicle crime - 7 compared to 9 during the same period the previous year.
- (c) Drug seizures - 5 compared to 7 during the same period the previous year.
- (d) Violent Crime - the detection rate for the period was 65%.
- (e) Criminal damage - 68 incidents compared to 86 during the same period the previous year.

Members Questions

- (a) Dr Shortall enquired if offences against the person included alcohol related offences, and if so, what proportion were they the total.

In reply Inspector Johnston stated that they did include those that were alcohol related in addition to other types such as domestic violence.

- (b) Dr Shortall also enquired how successful the introduction of CCTV cameras had been in Maghera.

Inspector Johnston stated that they had been very successful and that the police had been very proactive in their use of it. He added, however, that he felt that its main benefit was that it acted as a deterrent to crime.

- (c) Cllr Rev McCrea stated that he believed that there were still some problem areas which were not being covered by the CCTV cameras.

In reply Inspector Johnston stated that it was hard to cover everywhere. However the CCTV Partnership would in time review the coverage. It was however, true to say that the vast majority of the crime hotspots were presently being covered.

- (d) Cllr Rev McCrea stated that although the police seemed to be of the opinion that drugs were not a major problem in this district, the young people of the area would openly say that drugs were very readily available. This seemed to be in sharp contrast to the views held by the police.

In reply Inspector Johnston stated that people were being arrested for the provision of drugs, that the police were not being complacent and that if they received appropriate information that it would be acted upon.

- (e) Mr J Campbell enquired if the clamping down on the licensing hours at Christmas had been a success in terms of a reduction of criminal damage.

Inspector Johnston replied stating that there had been a 38% drop in crime over the Christmas period and that there had been zero crime recorded on both Christmas night and Boxing night.

- (f) Ms F Symington enquired what was included in the statistic of 7 vehicle crimes.

Inspector Johnston replied saying that it included a range of crimes ranging from theft from, to theft off cars. He thought for example that 3 or 4 cars had been stolen during the

period. Inspector Ard added that the local DCU had taken the initiative of writing to car owners advising them that if possible not to leave property in view of the public inside their car.

(g) Mrs M Donnelly enquired how the neighbourhood watch scheme in Beechland and Glenburn was progressing.

Constable Anderson stated that co-ordinators for the scheme in both areas had been identified and that the scheme was progressing.

(h) Cllr Paul McLean enquired as to how the campaign to reduce underage drinking was progressing.

Constable Anderson stated that he felt that this problem was now reducing and that police had instigated a poster and leaflet campaign. Due to the nature of this problem it was extremely difficult to provide statistics. He felt however that the licensees were now much more aware of their responsibilities and that overall that instances of this type of drinking was reducing.

(i) Cllr McLean then enquired how the local DCU was progressing in finding a police house in Castledawson.

Constable Anderson stated that the police were still seeking a suitable premises but that a balance has to be struck between what was available and what the police had to spend.

(j) Cllrs McLean and Rev McCrea together with Miss A Scott stated that they would not allow the local DCU to drag their heels in providing this facility for Castledawson. After all it had been promised to them by Superintendent Shevlin when it was decided to demolish Castledawson Police Station.

(k) Cllr McBride enquired what percentage of the road traffic accidents were a result of excessive speed. Constable McKenzie stated that there was 129 road traffic collisions last year of which only 15 were due to excessive speeding. The majority had been caused by careless and reckless driving. Presently, the crime analyst was analysing these statistics in order to identify accident blackspots.

(l) Members made comment on the locations where the police carried out speed detection operations and also of the problem of motorist using mobile phones whilst driving

(m) Cllr Rev McCrea stated that, recently notices had been erected stating that it was an offence to drink in public places. Notices highlighting the penalties for “dog fouling” had also been erected. However the “drinking in public places” notices had been placed further up telegraph poles than the dog fouling notices and because of this they were more difficult to read and he enquired why this was so.

Mr John McLaughlin replied saying it was necessary to place the “drinking in public places” notices further up the poles in order to deter drunken from revellers removing them.

6 Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

7 Presentation by Police Ombudsman

The Police Ombudsman Mrs Nuala O'Loan gave a presentation (Appendix II) outlining the nature of her organisation. She presented statistics on the type of complaints received and the results and actions taken as a result of these complaints being investigated. Members sought clarification on issues such as the type of complaints which were not investigated, clarification on the types of complaints originating from the Magherafelt District, the religious makeup of her office, the terms of her appointment, how she felt the public viewed both her and her department together with the recommendations which as a result of her investigations had resulted in additional training being required for the PSNI.

Mrs O'Loan answered all of these questions and thanked the member for the opportunity to clarify her work and that of her organisation.

The Chairperson, Cllr Lagan thanked her for her attendance.

Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next public meeting would be held in The Rural College, Derrynoid Road, Draperstown on Monday 4 April 2005 at 7.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.

J A McLaughlin

The foregoing Minutes are hereby Confirmed.

_____ (Chairman)

_____ (Date)