

**MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 7 JUNE 2004 AT 7.30PM
IN THE BRIDEWELL, CHURCH STREET, MAGHERAFELT**

PRESENT Cllr P McLean, Chairman
Cllr Miss K A Lagan, Vice-Chairperson
Cllr Rev R T Wm McCrea, MLA
Mr J Conlon
Mrs M Donnelly
Cllr T J Catherwood
Mr J Campbell
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, Ms S Ewing and Miss A Scott.

2 Declarations of Interest

No member had any interest to declare.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

PROPOSED by Ms F Symington,
Seconded by Mr J Campbell, and

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

4 Matters Arising

1.The Chairman informed the meeting that Cllr Montgomery had now been in hospital approximately a week and suggested that the Partnership should send their best wishes for his speedy recovery.

The above was agreed unanimously.

2. Mrs M Donnelly enquired if there was any feedback on the meeting concerning the amalgamation of Magherafelt and Ballymena DCU's. The Chairman informed Mrs Donnelly that the meeting would take place the following day.

3. The DPP Manager advised that the website had been amended in order to highlight the Partnerships policy of not responding to anonymous letters.

5 Report by the District Commander

The District Commander Superintendent John Lindsay introduced to the meeting Inspector Stevie Martin and Sandra Hyndman, Crime Prevention Officer.

The District Commander presented his report (Appendix I) both for the year 2003/04, as well as specific details for the months of March, April and May 2004.

He began by giving a breakdown of the crime types for the Magherafelt DCU in the 2003/04 year. In total 1710 crimes were committed during this year compared to 1673 during the previous year. This represented an increase of 2.2%. It was noted that the number of incidents of criminal damage and offences against the person had both increased, whilst theft had decreased. In percentage terms the overall breakdown of crime was as follows:

Criminal Damage 31%
 Offences against the person 29%
 Theft 18%
 Burglary 13%
 Vehicle crime 8%
 Robbery 1%

It also highlighted the DCU's performance against policing plan targets for the year was:

- level of domestic burglaries - **on target**,
- level of vehicle crime - **better than target**,
- level of drug seizures - **on target**,
- level violent crime detections (%) - **on target**,
- level of criminal damage - **not on target**.

In addition for the three months of March - May there had been:

- (a) 6 drugs finds, with 3 arrests and 3 persons reported
- (b) 3 children from Ardrath found to have smoked cannabis
- (c) organised crime - transit van found with 2 x 1000ltr tanks of fuel, 5 stolen caravans seized, counterfeit currency and 2300 litres of fuel
- (d) 70 arrests and/or interviews
- (e) 73 PACE searches
- (f) hoax bomb at Hazeldene, Magherafelt
- (g) pipe bombs at Hazeldene, Magherafelt and Main Street, Maghera

Members Questions

- (a) Mr J Conlon enquired if street searches was a useful tool in finding drugs.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that it was of limited use. An officer would have to become suspicious of a suspects behaviour before stopping him and then searching him for such a reason. Normally most police activity in relation to drugs searches was

intelligence led. Inspector S Martin highlighted that an Officer would have to have reasonable grounds to be suspicious in order to justify searching an individual.

(b) Ms F Symington enquired about the incidents of drink and driving offences over the Christmas period.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that 28% of all drink and driving offences had occurred over the Christmas period. All drink and Driving detections were followed up with a prosecution, whilst seat belt offences attracted a ticket penalty.

(c) Cllr Rev McCrea enquired about what action was being taken in relation to the ongoing vandalism in the Westland Road. He stated that this had been going on too long. Some of the vandals were destroying private gardens and he enquired if this vandalism was included in the official statistics.

In reply both Superintendent Lindsay and Inspector S Martin stated that they were fully aware of the problem and were committed to committing resources to eradicate the problem. They were endeavouring to find if there was a pattern to this problem before taking action. Superintendent Lindsay stated that any crime reported was included in the official statistics, but he could not be sure if all of the vandalism had been reported.

(d) Cllr McErlean enquired what volume of traffic was necessary before installing a pedestrian crossing.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that this was an issue for the DRD and not the PSNI. However he felt that it was common practice for DRD to carry out a traffic survey and if the volumes of both traffic and pedestrian reached a certain level, then a pedestrian crossing would be built.

(e) Cllr Rev McCrea raised the problem of the ongoing destruction of trees in Fern Drive, Hospital Road, Coolshinney Road, etc. He felt that the problem was much worse than what had been reported to the police, since the public were now not reporting every incident. Mr Jim Campbell endorsed Cllr McCrea's remarks.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that again his officers were attempting to establish a pattern to this vandalism. As the incidents appeared to be quite sporadic it was difficult for his officers to apprehend someone whilst they were in the process of committing such a crime.

(f) Mrs M Donnelly addressed the issue of drug supply and the targets which had been set. Specifically she enquired if searching suppliers homes had yielded many drugs.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that raiding known suppliers homes used to be successful in so much as they used to find significant quantities of drugs for resale. However this was not now yielding the same quantity of drugs as it would appear that suppliers were now storing their drugs elsewhere – in anticipation of the PSNI raiding their homes.

(g) Cllr Junkin highlighted the problem of agriculture contractors, such as silage cutters, silage trailers, etc. travelling in convoy. He stated that these convoys were very "tight" together which made it impossible for motorist to pass - unless he passed the entire convoy in the same overtaking movement. He stated that this posed the obvious problem

for impatient motorists and asked if it was possible to give tractor drivers advice to space their convoys out more.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that his officers were powerless to tackle this problem - if the tractor drivers were committing no offence as such. He could only take action if either the tractor drivers or the impatient motorist was guilty of dangerous driving.

(h) Dr Shortall stated that he had recently heard a report on the radio which stated that the police were now placing mobile units at accident black spots. He felt that this would be a very useful initiative in that it would reduce the level of fatalities.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that there were no accident black spots as such in the district, or at least any such black spots did not feature high enough on the statistics in order to have such a resource allocated to them.

Cllr Rev McCrea stated that he did not agree with what Superintendent Lindsay had stated. He argued that Moneymore Road and Muckleheaney Hill in particular was an accident black spot. Only last week a motorbike rider had been killed and that there was a long history of fatalities on the Moneymore Road.

(i) Cllr Rev McCrea enquired what action had been taken as a result of the police breaking up "the cruise" in the Union Road car park, and what action has been taken concerning the school windows which had been broken. He further raised the issue of the impending resurfacing of Broad Street and the disagreement amongst the trader, DRD etc. as to when the best time would be to carry out this work.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that fixed penalties had been issued to those guilty of motoring offences at "the cruise" in the Union Road car park, that a 14 year old had admitted breaking the school windows and that the DRD were not duty bound to consult the police in relation to the Broad Street resurfacing. However should they be consulted he would discuss it with his officers and make their views known to the DRD.

(j) Cllr McBride enquired if the CCTV was working the Magherafelt town.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that it would be operational in two weeks time.

(k) Cllr Shiels highlighted what he perceived to be a flaw in the road layout design at either end of the Toome bypass, where two lines of traffic were approaching the roundabout but that there was only one line of traffic allowed to exit the roundabout. He stated that he felt that it would inevitably lead to an accident.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that he was not aware of this problem but that he would enquire into it.

(l) Cllr Lagan highlighted the problem of cars parking on the footpath but also of quads driving on the footpath in Draperstown. The police had been informed, but no action had been taken.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that he would look into this matter and report back.

6 Crime Prevention Presentation

Mrs Sandra Hyndman, Crime Prevention Officer gave a presentation on personal security, concentrating on measures to help the elderly and those living alone.

The presentation highlighted the importance of locked doors, locked windows, UV pens and protecting oneself against bogus callers.

Cllr Rev McCrea raised the question of the alarm and speaker system which was being promoted by the Cookstown Community Safety Partnership. After some discussion it was

PROPOSED by Cllr Rev McCrea,
Seconded by Cllr McBride, and

UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that the DPP in conjunction with the CSP should progress the Lock Out Crime Scheme within the Magherafelt district as quickly as possible.

The Vice-Chairperson, Cllr K Lagan questioned if it was true that burglars could easily remove double glazing panels.

In reply Mrs Hyndman stated that this was possible but that recently the design of these type of windows had been changed so that the panels could now only be removed from the inside.

7 Questions from the Public

There were no questions received from the public before the deadline.

8 Annual Report 2003/2004

The DPP Manager Mr M McCrory tabled a draft 2003/2004 report for the Magherafelt DPP. He stated that it was necessary to have the report finalised and forwarded to headquarters prior to the next meeting. He asked if the membership would agree to forward this draft as the final report if members raised no issues concerning it. Ms F Symington stated that she was happy that this be the case but felt that the report should include a summary of the training undertaken by the members.

PROPOSED by Cllr J Junkin,
Seconded by Cllr Catherwood, and

UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that the draft report be adopted as the final report subject to the members raising no further issues.

Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next public meeting would be held in Maghera Leisure Centre on Monday 9 August 2004 at 7.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

J A McLaughlin

The foregoing Minutes are hereby Confirmed.

_____ (Chairman)

_____ (Date)