



Public Meeting
DUBLIN 12 LOCAL POLICING FORUM
Mother McAuley Centre
Tue 4th February 2020

Chair: Cllr. Pat Dunne

Attendance: Superintendent Frank Ferry, Inspector Paul Sargent, Chris Butler and John Paul McCabe (Dublin City Council)

Apologies: **Minutes:** Rea Lavelle

Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the audience and introducing officials present, including councillors and TD's. Community Gardaí for the area were also present and can be contacted on a new email community.crumlin@garda.ie.

Chair also spoke of importance of follow-up to issues brought up at public meetings; a two-page progress report on issues reported most often in 2019 was distributed at all the tables. Inspector Sargeant read out the crime statistics from the area and listed figures for each crime from the end of 2019 and 2018 corresponding figures.

The meeting was conducted in a World-Café format, with Pat Tobín from Community Action Network guiding this. Discussions were held in small groups at tables with a host from the Forum's management committee at each table. Everyone would be encouraged to speak. The participants were asked their views on the following two questions:

- 1) What is happening in your community currently that is making you feel unsafe?
- 2) What is happening that is helping it to be safer?

Pat Tobín reminded the meeting that names of individuals should not be discussed; if anyone wanted to discuss specific persons they could do so privately with the Gardaí or Dublin city Council afterwards.

Issues raised relating to question 1. fell under the following categories:

Vandalism/Antisocial behaviour: New smart bins had been destroyed at Brickfields, Pearse and Stannaway parks and expensive damage done to numerous playgrounds too by fires and other vandalism. More household bins have also again been stolen. A number of doorbells had been recently ripped out of houses in one area. Further comments from the public included that the lights at Suir Road LUAS stop are being destroyed all the time. Stones are thrown at houses. Benmadigan Green had been destroyed on Christmas day by antisocial youths; a family despite spending the day on the phone to Crumlin Gardaí, had been unable to leave the house all day.

Is increased CCTV the answer? Area between St. John Bosco and the hospital is very dark (lighting mentioned 3 times) and full of young people loitering.

Safety along the Canal and LUAS: Issues with LUAS safety were mentioned by most tables. Canal area very dangerous and many stated they do not walk on it any longer. One participant stated he now has to walk on the road, which is dangerous too. A police force dedicated to the LUAS was called for, to enable public to use this transport safely, and this idea drew a lot of support from the

room.

Criticism of Garda response/visibility: Most tables reported being disappointed with response from An Garda Síochána to longstanding and acute issues. A table commented that sometimes more Gardaí are seen but this is often inconsistent and possibly mostly happens when new Gardaí join the area. Some members of public claimed to never see Gardaí patrolling the area. AGS patrols need to be far more frequent. One table expressed general disappointment with the Gardaí. Individual comment was made of lack of Garda response to an issue that continued throughout Christmas day. AGS communication could be better said another table. AGS are not visible enough. Suggestion was made that Gardaí on bikes would look more approachable than in cars and bikes would also be good for chasing.

Criminality/ racism: Open drug-dealing was reported by every table. Burglary gangs/burglaries were reported by three tables. A racist motivated assault had taken place in a park recently. Shop-workers also receive racist abuse. Residents had intervened in racist incidents within a neighbourhood, but AGS involvement had been disappointing. Feeling unsafe makes people change their behaviour and stay isolated indoors more.

Concern for young people/parents responsibility: Even though activities of young people were making life difficult for many residents (Young teenagers cycling dangerously at night on bikes also mentioned at least twice), many tables also expressed concern for young people involved. Not enough targeted youth work in the area. Children being taken advantage of by drug gangs. Underage children seem to be hanging around public spaces openly drug-dealing during school-hours. 14-18 age group needs more attention. More resources needed, somewhere for young people to go on a Friday night. Parents' responsibility highlighted at least three times, as well as the seeming lack of consequences for children acting up (from parents OR criminal justice system). It was seen sad that the young people not causing any trouble are also suffering; funding for schools and clubs important too, not just to police the ASB young people.

Traffic/Parking/Cleaning/Parks: Scramblers and dangerous cycling. Electric scooters dangerous. Parking issues around Children's Hospital were mentioned at three tables; issues for wheelchair users.

Is there a tree replacement programme for Brickfields Park?

Cleaning of laneways and other areas overlooked in the area that seems to fall between DCC and South Dublin County Council.

The following comments were made in response to question 2:

- Volunteers such as those from Drimnagh Tidy Towns Initiative are cleaning up parks, but should DCC do more? Suggestion to train volunteer clean-up groups in needle pick-up safety or who to contact. Clean-up groups are active on social media.
- Park runs had seemed to dampen antisocial behaviour somewhat
- Two tables reported that more Gardaí had been seen patrolling the area. Rolling check-points were also reported as a positive.
- Local youth service had launched a programme to target 8-10 year-olds since Christmas. Strengthening Families programme also positive.
- Halloween community events had been positive.

Superintendent Frank Ferry response:

Superintendent Frank Ferry responded that legislation was currently being drafted regarding electric scooters. For the time being, advice is to light up and not go on footpaths if using an electric scooter.

Superintendent acknowledged that there are persistent issues around ASB involving underage youths. AGS in the Crumlin district have a youth initiative, which also works with local schools, to try prevent issues; JLO system also in operation. Criminalising young people is also not always ideal. Gardaí do target hotspot areas, such as parks, and will increase attention to parks with spring/summer. A case management system also in place.

There has been a 100% increase in community policing numbers in the district in the past few years, and 10 extra Gardaí have recently started. Sectoral policing means that there is now a dedicated Garda for each small area who can be contacted for all non-emergency community safety issues.

Over 1 arrest per week for sale and supply of drugs took place last year.

Some Gardaí are trained for mountain bike use, however resources and funding for this service are still pending.

A scrambler incident, in which a young woman and a baby could have lost their lives, is under investigation and Superintendent appealed for the public's assistance with this.

AGS are working very closely with TRANDEV around LUAS security, and have put on extra patrols at the weekends, however cannot police LUAS on 24-hour basis.

There has been recent incidents recorded as racist crimes. A national office monitors these. A gang of young people under investigation for these.

Superintendent also admitted that burglaries had increased by 10% last year; these seemed to mainly happen during daytime hours. Investigations ongoing by detectives and it is hoped that this figure will decrease.

Dublin City Council Response:

Area Manager Chris Butler from Dublin City Council outlined the initiative that had been set up in Drimnagh to tackle antisocial behaviour by young people in parks, which was also detailed in the handout provided at tables. The initiative has recently commissioned a researcher to identify the exact gaps in youth services in the area. Separately, TUSLA, DCC and AGS, through the Canals Local Policing Forum, are currently setting up a multiagency group to tackle the issue of ASB/Criminality on the Canal. DCC had also removed a large number of trees in Brickfields Park to improve visibility, and extra CCTV had been installed. There are issues where strong lighting can cause disturbance to residents in close proximity to it, as well as data protection issues associated with CCTV, however Chris will have the relevant section to assess adequacy of lighting in reported problem areas. Damaged or sick trees will be replaced and if a particular tree needs attention this can be brought to DCC's attention.

In 2019 DCC issued 43 litter fines for illegal dumping in the D12 Area. 15 Litter fines were paid with a payment plan in place for one other fine. 7 fines were cancelled on appeal. 20 summonses were issued for non payment of fines and the Probation Act was applied in 1 case. Seven Smart "Big Belly" bins were installed in the D12 Area in 2019 and a number of cast iron bins were also installed in the area. In addition, covert cameras cover some of the known hotspots for illegal dumping, and DCC undertake street cleaning of the main thoroughfares.

DCC Community Section will devise information to community clean-up groups on needle collection. DCC also has a service for collecting and disposing of used needles, which can be contacted through the litter hotline **1800 251 500**.