

South-West Inner City Community Safety Meeting

St. James' Primary School, Basin Lane, Dublin 8

09/10/23

Present: Evan Moore (Chair), Sgt. Pat Culhane (Gardaí) James Conlon (Gardaí), Linda Fanning (DCC), Frank Murphy (DCC), Aisling Golden (Solas Project), Máire Devine (Cllr.)

Facilitator: Ali Warner

Minutes: Cillian O'Donoghue (covering for Valerie Scott, DSCP)

Ali opened the meeting and explained the format and process to those in attendance. She introduced the different members of the forum. It was noted by the chair that there was a lower attendance than the previous meeting earlier this year.

Tables were then instructed to begin discussing the two questions of:

- What is working well in terms of community safety in your area?
- What are the challenges relating to community safety in your area?

What is working well in terms of community safety in the area?

- Decrease in verbal harassment from groups of young people.
- No fires lit since last meeting in the local area.
- Linear Park and new playground are major positives in the area, while the Weaver Park area has seen improvements in community safety.
- There was a decrease in anti-social behaviour after there was an increase in Garda visibility after the last CS meeting. A general increase, even if temporary, in Garda visibility in the area was noted by the residents as having a positive influence.
- There is a sense of pride and connection in the local community among residents.
- Some residents associations in the area are very strong.
- Plans for Halloween festivals are positive, especially those that engage older children and teenagers.
- The Solas and Foróige youth services have seen positive developments recently.
- Recent developments to the Meath Street area were welcomed.
- The regeneration plans for Basin Street are also seen as a positive.

What are the issues /challenges affecting Community Safety in your area?

- Loud motorbikes being driven by younger people are intimidating residents.
- After a temporary increase since the last meeting in Garda visibility locally, visibility then decreased again, which then saw a subsequent rise in anti-social behaviour.
- There is a need for new neighbourhood watch signs in specific locations of Dublin 8.
- There are known young people in the area at risk of engaging in criminal activity that need intervention.
- There are major parking issues for local residents around South Circular Road relating to events at the National Boxing Stadium.
- An increase in crack-cocaine use in the area has been noted, while there is persistent and blatant drug-dealing in certain areas.
- Un-muzzled dogs have been noted by residents and can be intimidating.
- Communication and advertising of the meeting was not timely or comprehensive enough, this was noted by multiple attendees. Attendance of the meeting was lower than last time.
- Services for vulnerable people in the area need further and continued support. This includes housing for vulnerable people coming into the area, as well as vulnerable people already housed in the area.
- Public drinking and urination has been noted by residents.
- It was noted in relation to plans for local regeneration, that houses alone will not address criminal behaviour and local safety issues, and that planning and consultation to address such issues needs to be a part of regeneration plans.
- Rat infestations have been noted in certain spots by residents.

Suggested Solutions and Further Questions

- Is there a policing plan in place for the increase in local vandalism, theft and door to door scams?
- Is there any update on issues around Margaret Kennedy Road?
- Is there any update on the follow-up with young people involved in the burning that took place in Weaver Park earlier this year?
- There needs to be comprehensive public consultation with the local community around the plans for the regeneration of the Basin Street area, as well as the new park that is being planned for the area. This also needs to include consultation on crime-prevention for the longer-term. This could use some of the successful elements that were adopted as part of the Linear Park public consultation process.
- Housing for vulnerable people in the area needs to be further supported by services.
- In terms of issues related to dogs, there is new legislation coming in it was noted, but that these issues, especially un-muzzled dogs, is common and worrying for residents across the wider area. There is a need for more public information campaigns and education around breeds that need to be muzzled.
- The lack of awareness of the meeting and lower meeting attendance was noted as a serious issue, local flyering should be better and more leaflets for local services to hand out are needed.

DCC Response

- Will follow-up on new neighbourhood watch signs for specific locations in Dublin 8.
- In terms of parking near National Boxing Stadium, this issue will be raised and a response provided by parking enforcement.
- There are continued meetings and planning ongoing around Linear Park issues, DCC can be contacted by anyone wishing to report something, while there is continued engagement with community representatives.
- In terms of dog related issues, an Animal Welfare Inspector is due to sit on future CSF meetings to address questions and provide information, as this has been made clear to DCC that it is an important topic.
- In relation to housing nominations and vulnerable people, people are vetted before being assigned housing and there is an awareness of concentrations of vulnerable people in the area. Allocations for housing are made on what is most appropriate and best for people where possible. While housing from DCC links with local health services in relation to issues of vulnerability.
- DCC can only address drug related issues if the people involved are identified as DCC tenants, while there are people involved in drug-dealing that come in from other areas.
- There will be a community information session in November for consultation around new developments and regeneration in the area, this will include crime-prevention consultation and recommendations. It is noted though, that there can be difficulties in balancing community-retention goals with crime-prevention goals.
- Specific spots in the area noted as problematic by residents in relation to community safety can be addressed personally at the end of the meeting.
- Though DCC itself hasn't dealt with follow-up responses for individuals involved in the Weaver Park burning, it was noted that Solas Youth Project has been engaging in positive interventions in relation to this.

Gardaí Response

- Common themes and issues have been noted.
- Garda visibility is related directly to resourcing issues. However, there is a new allocated budget for community Gardaí to be placed on the beat either walking or cycling locally. These will focus on hot-spots for crime, be in pairs, and will aim to spread out as much as possible across the wider area.
- With Halloween approaching, there is a policing operation in place and resources being allocated. Local festivals are a positive diversion for younger people from crime or dangerous activity.
- In terms of on street drug-dealing, drug and alcohol use, and public urination, an increased Garda presence in coming months will likely help improve these issues, but resourcing still makes this a difficult problem to tackle.
- There is a robust drugs unit in place that can react quickly and has had recent success in certain areas. While there is also a dedicated Community Response Team for hot-spot areas over periods of days or weeks.
- The Community Policing unit works closely with local outreach services and teams to address more visible on-street issues. In addition, there is ongoing work linking in with Youth projects locally to address anti-social behaviour. There is a desire to further engagement around referrals in this area for diversion. Parking issues around the National Boxing Stadium will be addressed in conjunction with DCC.
- Community Gardaí are linking with other units around dog related issues to make them aware of legislations in this area. Reports are also being fed back to decision-making structures on these issues. In addition, potential projects around education for local schools and communities on these issues is being looked into.

Ali concluded the meeting, noting the issues raised and feedback given, as well as positive responses.

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