

Name of Committee: Joint Policing Committee

Name of Representative: Liz Ferris

Date of Meeting : Monday 5th Feb 2018, County Buildings, Wicklow.

The meeting was chaired by Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council as the chairperson and vice chairperson were unavailable to attend.

CAB

The meeting was opened with a presentation from Chief Superintendent Patrick Clavin, chief bureau officer with the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB).

CAB was set up in 1996 after the death of Veronica Guerin. He explained that CAB only target “really good criminals”. They look at 3 main factors;

- Previous convictions
- Associates
- Assets

Resources for CAB were ensured by government in 2016. A local profile officer can hold seized assets for 24 hours. The Chief Bureau Officer can hold them for a further 21 days, at which time a case must be ready to be presented in the High Court. There are 6 profilers in Wicklow and 6 ongoing investigations.

CAB are appealing to the public for assistance in bringing suspected criminals to their attention. Some of the things that might arouse your suspicion are holiday homes and flash cars. There are a lot of these holiday homes in Wexford but some in Wicklow also. The CAB motto is ; “They flaunt it; You report it; CAB takes it away.” Reports can be made to CAB directly or through CrimeStoppers.

In answer to questions from the floor:

“...anonymity is guaranteed as no evidence is required by whoever is reporting suspects. Once the suspects have been brought to CAB’s attention they build the case against them.”

“Monies seized go back to central funds including Revenue and Social Welfare”

“CAB works with similar bodies in Europe and Worldwide.”

“Extradition is not a problem for CAB as they go after the asset, not the person.”

“CAB continues to keep up to date with the change in crime and was one of the first forces to seize bitcoin.”

Crime in Wicklow – 2017 figures

Following the CAB presentation Chief Superintendent John Quirke gave a presentation on 2017 figures in Wicklow. There was no dramatic rise in crime although some figures did show an increase. It was pointed out that percentage increases may seem alarming but it may be up from a low base.

Theft from the person – up 29 on last year

Burglary – up 10%

Theft from a vehicle – up 5% (mostly at night, people encouraged to make sure their cars are locked)

Theft of cars – down 7%

Theft of bikes – up 28% (mostly from DART and bus stations)

Rape – up 31% (this was due to a serial rapist in West Wicklow who is now thankfully in custody and a case is before the courts)

Public order offence – up 16% (detection of public order offences has increased mainly due to the 19 new probationers that are out and about)
Drug (personal use) – down 23%

The Gardaí are targeting prolific offenders and are trying to get the courts to do the same.

The Roads Policing Unit is now based in Newtown and there are 20% more Gardaí actively involved in this unit.

Of 7,957 checkpoints there were 29 positive breath tests. 1,327 vehicles were seized for no tax, insurance or NCT.

The Gardaí are continuing with their test purchasing of liquor. There were 33 such operations last year.

In relation to questions from the floor:

- Cllr. Stephen Matthews was assure that parking on bike lanes was illegal and should be treated as such.
- Alice O'Donnell inquired if it was worth introducing an engraving scheme for bike identification purposes –
- Community policing in Bray and Greystones is believed to be at acceptable level but the rest of the county need improving, as Gardaí numbers improve this area will be targeted.
- School programmes are run in 5th & 6th class primary schools and for transition year students in secondary schools.
- The question of internet safety and internet bullying was raised and at the request of PPN Rep Alice O' Donnell, there will be an internet safety presentation at the July meeting.

Next Meeting : Public Meeting in April, which will be held in Arklow. Date to be confirmed.

The next JPC Meeting will be held on the 2nd July.