

**NAVAN ROAD COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

*The Navan Road Community Council was founded in 1968 and is an umbrella Organisation for residents & residents' associations, sports clubs and other Groups and associations in the Navan Road area in Dublin 7.*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

30<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.

Re: Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.

Dear Ms. O'Toole and Commission,

Navan Road Community Council (NRCC) represents residential areas between Phoenix Park to Royal Canal boundary, and extending from Skreen Road at City end to Ashtown at Fingal boundary, including all roads both sides Navan Road

We hold a monthly open meeting first Wednesday each month in Parish Centre, Navan Road to deal with local issues, such as planning, traffic, environment, liaising with Gardai, Local Authority and public reps, and encourage residents to do so.

We lobbied for a Navan Road Police Forum for many years, until eventually by the time DCC and Gardai finally agreed to allocate one for our area - a large new development had commenced on the re-zoned lands of Pelletstown on opposite side Royal Canal. The Navan Road/Pelletstown Police Forum was subsequently formed, Meetings are held 2-3 times per year in our alternative locations. NRCC have always liaised with our local Gardai and encourage our local residents to do so.

People do not refer to 'Police' generally in Ireland, they are, mostly, fondly called Gardai or the Guards. **OUR LOCAL GARDA STATION IS CABRA.**

**Blanchardstown Garda Station is the H.Q. for Blanchardstown/Cabra/Finglas.**

**Blanchardstown itself is about the size of Limerick City, which has 3 stations at Henry St., Roxboro and Mayorstone.**

**30% of population of Blanchardstown is under 18.**

Blanchardstown station is one of the five busiest garda stations in the country. Since 2009 Blanchardstown garda numbers have reduced by 40.

See hereunder comparison census figures Limerick and Blanchardstown.

## Census Figures from Central Statistic for Limerick & Blanchardstown

<b>Population and Actual and Percentage Change 2011 to 2016 by County and City, Aggregate Town or Rural Area, Sex, Statistical Indicator and Census Year</b>		
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Limerick City and County</b>		
State		
Both sexes		
Population (Number)	191,809	194,899
Actual change since previous census (Number)	7,754	3,090
Percentage change since previous census (%)	4.2	1.6

Below the population of the Constituency of Dublin West .

<b>Population per Member of Dáil Éireann 2011 to 2016 by Constituency, Statistical Indicator and Census Year</b>	
	<b>2016</b>
<b>Dublin West</b>	
2016 - Persons in each Constituency (Number)	121,897
2016 - Males in each Constituency (Number)	59,830
2016 - Females in each Constituency (Number)	62,067

### **COMMISSION PUBLIC CONSULTATION – Plaza Hotel, Blanchardstown 24/1/18**

Three of our Committee attended the public meeting held in Plaza Hotel, Blanchardstown last Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January where we first met with a Peter Stafford of Secretariat and later with Tonita Murray, to whom we conveyed our hopes and concerns - details noted by both.

#### **GENERAL - ‘Communities’**

There has been enormous growth in the Navan Road area since Cabra Station first opened/early 70’s. Large new developments of Ashington, Kempton, the Paddocks, Beleville. In 2000 Pelletstown was re-zoned and planned. First Action Plan,2000 contained 4,500 units, more than half now built with so many extra residents.

There is a lot of anti-social behaviour in these newer developments with bicycles stolen from underground parking areas and balconies, car parks broken into, anti social behaviour in shops. Also on towpath area of Royal Canal – bag snatches, people attacked by stone throwing from new flyover bridge at Ratoath Road.

As a consequence Cabra Station, with about half number Gardai since before the recession period has to attempt to cope with double the area within Navan Road & Pelletstown, as well as wider area of Cabra itself and a deteriorating anti-social behaviour all over.

**NOTE;** Gardai from Cabra are lost to the station when called to do certain duties at Aras an Uachtarain. We submit this should be army duty.

Since 2011 Cabra station opening hours have been reduced and it is closed to public overnight. Community Gardai doing a good job, but numbers have also been reduced, leaving them under extreme pressure and possibly in more danger.

Anecdotal accounts from residents say phones are often not answered. When a crime occurs complainant is often told 'No car available' -

reason for this -

Cabra has no cells and often the one car is used to transport a suspect to Finglas Garda Station. It can take up to 10 hours to get a Garda response to arrive at the site of a crime.

Difficulties for residents in the areas bordering different garda divisions e.g. Pelletstown when reporting a crime, complainant is often referred to neighbouring garda division, in this case Finglas Garda Station.

Suggested partial solutions to all above .

- i. Cabra Station be re-opened 24/7. All local residents request this;
- ii. Throughout the country Garda Stations be re-opened – need is proven by frequent burglaries into families' private homes;
- iii. Blanchardstown requires a second Garda Station to cope with the growing population.

‘DIGITAL INNOVATION ‘

Reported incidents of crimes are not put on Pulse Computer it seems.

All Garda Stations be connected to Garda IT system.

All reported crimes to be allocated a computer Pulse Number which should be given to the complainant to allow follow-up.

All Gardai to be issued with Mobile Hand Held Devices (to replace existing note books) to record a crime without returning to the station.

All Gardai to be issued with name tags/business cards to give to complainants - (who are often too upset to remember a garda's name).

## VEHICLES;

Installation in all garda vehicles of GPS Trackers to allow nearest vehicle to get to an emergency or crime scene faster. This will improve overall vehicle productivity.

## 'RECRUITMENT TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT'

Encouragement of diverse community recruitment;

Blanchardstown alone has enormous new diverse communities – with a danger of ghettoisation in the future ;

Early school visits by Gardai be used to encourage diverse recruits. Care be taken to understand different use of English (a Newspaper report some time ago referenced an Immigration official deciding some people were lying by referring to 'Auntie' or 'Uncle' about a non-relative; all older people would be addressed as 'Auntie' or 'Uncle' by younger persons as a mark of respect in many African countries.

The writer, who lived in Nigeria for some years, was herself addressed as 'Auntie' by younger non-relatives - as a mark of respect.

In reverse - colloquial Irish sayings should be made understood by all newcomers, and respected.

## TEMPLEMORE;

Bicycle training is not a part of general training which results in extra time being wasted sending Gardai back to Templemore for another week's bicycle training. Proper wet gear should be provided.

Among most frequent requests at our meetings is for VISIBLE GARDAI WALKING ON THE STREETS interacting with local population. Their

visits to local schools are always greatly appreciated. Children come home with very positive thoughts about Gardai.

Getting to know local Gardai of utmost importance, with hope of young people getting to like and trust them, as they grow into teenage years.

Gardai on Bikes is the second most frequent request.

#### OFFICE WORK;

Reduce Paperwork:

Increase in the number of Civilians in the force to handle paperwork. Change in law, if needed, to allow these civilians to handle items not currently allowed.

#### TRAFFIC;

Parking fines to be issued to all offenders;-  
(speeding, illegal parking, parking in cycle lanes, parking outside schools, parking on footpaths) - far too many of such behaviour are simply ignored.

The installation of cameras at 4-way Junction traffic lights to record and prosecute those breaking the lights. Would reduce traffic accidents, and the revenue from Fines would pay for these cameras in the long run.

#### MOST VITAL SOLUTION:

Resources needed from Central Government to address the above listed points. All items referenced above we submit must be considered nationwide – not just for our area.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with some members of the Commission on 24<sup>th</sup> January last.

We must hope that all of your efforts will not be ignored by our Government, and the written evidence and suggestions from such as

ourselves within communities, do not end up on the many overloaded shelves of endless REPORTS gathering dust over the past years.

\*\* from 'About us' on Garda web page

"An Garda Síochána has a long established tradition of working closely with communities all across Ireland. By fostering and maintaining effective community partnerships, and ensuring a more visible Garda presence, we work to achieve a reduction in crime and the fear of crime in our communities"

From their own words – our submission is summed up nicely.

Yours sincerely,

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See notes below 1 – 4 from our research - on above requirements.

1.

Five busiest Garda stations in Ireland .

The five busiest Garda stations in the country – Pearse Street, Store Street, **Blanchardstown**, the Bridewell and Tallaght, all of which are located in Dublin – each recorded more than 5,000 crimes last year.

As the statistics do not provide a population for the catchment areas covered by each Garda station it was not possible to give an indication of crime rates per head of population. 1/26/2018 One third of all crimes recorded in 20 busiest Garda stations in 2012 <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/one-third-of-all-crimes-recorded-in-20-busiest-garda-stations-in-2012-1.1538958> 2/2

The next busiest station was Mill Street in Galway, where 4,843 crimes were recorded. This was followed by Henry Street in Limerick with 4,725 recorded crimes; and Waterford, which recorded 4,720 crimes last year.

Dublin stations dominated in a number of crime categories including weapons and explosives offences with Tallaght (123), Store Street (118), Pearse Street (94) and **Blanchardstown (92)** recording the highest numbers of such offences.

2.

## PULSE SYSTEM

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This story first appeared in the Irish Examiner.



3.

**HOW POLICE USE GPS FOR PERSONAL AND VEHICLE TRACKING.**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Published 18/7/14.

4.

## **MOBILE HAND HELD DEVICES**

|  
West Yorkshire Police West Yorkshire Police is leading the way in one of the biggest technological advancements in modern policing. In October 2014, the Force began the roll out of 4,500 mobile hand-held devices to front line officers and staff, replacing old pocket note books. They contain online ‘apps’ which allow the user to record a crime without having to return to a station. Assistant Chief Constable, Andy Battle said it means more time spent in our communities: “This initiative exploits technology to maximise the capability and effectiveness of policing at the frontline. “As a result of this project, we are seeing an increase in the amount of time that officers are able to spend out on the streets, dealing with crime and public safety. “The device includes an e-notebook which enables them to record information and make intelligence submissions via secure mobile police apps. “Officers can enter electronic witness statements and complete missing person forms without having to put pen to paper back at base. “Similarly, the device allows users to view and update incidents whilst on the beat, increasing their visibility, responsiveness and presence on the streets “Similarly, the device allows users to view and update incidents whilst on the beat, increasing their visibility, responsiveness and presence on the streets.” “According to a national audit conducted in 2012 which looked at mobile working in policing across the UK, an average of 18 minutes of additional time on the streets was generated. From a West Yorkshire perspective, one minute of extra time on the street per officer, per day equates to a million pounds worth of additional policing annually. “We continue to look for ways to revolutionise the way we do business, creating efficiency savings that will ultimately benefit the communities we serve long into the future.”

West Yorkshire Police web pages.

END.