

## **Public Forum Meeting Blakestown/Mountview Tuesday 5th October 2010**

**Present: Chair:** Breffni O Rourke

**Facilitator:** Philip Jennings

**Gardaí:** Inspector John Kelly  
Sergeant Nicola Brady  
2 Community Gardaí

**Fingal County Council** Ruairi O'Dulaing (Parks)

**Apologies:** Paul Donnelly Safer Blanchardstown Community Rep

**Minute taker:** Tanya Brunt (Blakestown CDP)

**In attendance:** Cllr Matt Waine

**Attendance:** 20-25

### **1.0 Introductions:**

Breffni O Rourke opened meeting by welcoming all present. Chair related to meeting the main issues which arose when last public meeting took place in Blakestown/Mountview area (Sept 09) i.e.

- Drug taking & Dealing,
- Reports of licence breeches
- Restructuring of Garda Clinics
- Careless parking at schools
- Illegal dumping & skips
- Graffiti
- Scrambler bikes in public open spaces

Chair asked Council and Gardaí to address progress on these issues in their report. Chair handed meeting over to Philip.

Philip explained the rules of the meeting to people and stressed the importance that no names may be given publicly. People are encouraged to voice their concerns and issues during the meeting but to speak in private to Fingal County Council and the Gardaí after the meeting if they have any confidential information they wish to pass on.

### **2.0 Garda report:**

**2.1** Inspector Kelly reported to the meeting that there are now 20 Gardaí and

2 sergeants

at present in the Community Policing section

**2.2** Gardaí remain 100% committed to community policing and to tackling issues

identified by members of the community.

**2.2** In order to facilitate this there has been a

restructuring of roster working times in the community policing unit which has

proven to be beneficial in tackling issues and in increasing Garda presence in all

areas.

**2.4** License inspections are more frequent in Blanchardstown than any other area.

**2.5** Junior cert night was calmer than normal. This was due in no small part to the Gardaí

pro-actively calling in to each off-licence advising them to be aware that young people may try to purchase alcohol. Gardaí also warned licensees that they would be

watching closely for any breaches of the liquor licensing Act.

**2.6** A plan is in place for Halloween and Gardaí are working closely with Fingal County

Council to reduce the number of bonfires this year

**2.7** Over the past 3 months records prove a drop in arrests and although cutbacks have

been made the community police remain committed to their work.

### **3.0 Feedback from residents to Garda Report**

**3.1** Residents welcomed Garda Report

### **4.0 Issues for Gardaí**

**4.1** Bottles are continuously being broken on Fortlawn Avenue, across from Salmons

Public House and Off-licence by youth drinking (**Underage Drinking**); this has now

led to breaking windows of houses.

**4.2** People underage are being sold alcohol. It was suggested that the off licenses use a

**bag system** where bags are coded and off licenses can be identified.

**4.3** Residents reported that **Drugs** are being sold in the field on Fortlawn Avenue and that

syringes have been found in the bushes at the entrance to Blakestown senior school on a number of occasions. (Residents to speak to Gardaí in private after meeting)

**4.4** Young person produced sharp weapon (**Knife**) on an adult in Hillbrook Woods. Can young people be searched?

**4.5** Illegal and **Careless Parking at Schools** and on public pavements adjacent to schools is a continuous problem for residents living close to schools in the area.

**4.6 Burglaries** that are taking place in the area seem to be seasonal and with the transition from autumn to winter and darker evenings & nights residents are concerned that burglaries will increase.

**4.7 Fireworks** are becoming an increasingly worrying problem for neighbours as they sound like bombs going off and can do a lot of damage if put through a letter box. A house in Sheepmore had a window broken after a firework was thrown at the house.

**4.8** Bullets fired at house in Fortlawn was possibly a mistaken identity (resident to speak to Gardaí in private after meeting)

## **5.0 Garda Response**

**5.1** Garda will investigate and monitor **Underage Drinking** in the area and try to catch the culprits who are breaking bottles in the area

**5.2** The **Bag System** was initiated in another area and proved to be a success although the initiative did have its limitations. Gardaí are looking at different ideas and options for the Blanchardstown area one of which is to encourage the National Age Card as the only form of identification at point of sale.

**5.3** Gardaí will pass on information relating to selling of **drugs** to their drugs unit who

will investigate thoroughly Philip will inform Blakestown/Mountview Community Drugs Team of the reported needle find and insure that they are fully aware of the problem

**5.4** Gardaí are unable to search young children under the age of 12. But if they have reason to believe a particular child needs to be searched or is carrying an offensive weapon such as a **knife**, they will be brought to the station along with their parents and will be searched.

1 Gardaí are involved in an ongoing initiative to tackle this issue which targets **Careless Parking at Schools** on a rotating, though random basis. This is in order not to allow those who park illegally to be able to predict when Gardaí will target any particular school. Any car found to be blocking footpaths or driveways will be ticketed.

1 Gardaí said that they continue to successfully combat **Burglaries** in the Blanchardstown area but Gardaí cannot predict where and when burglaries will take place. One of the best ways to prevent burglaries is for neighbours to watch out for each others property and immediately report any suspicious persons or activity to the Gardaí. The Neighbourhood Watch scheme is being re-launched in Blanchardstown and residents are encouraged to arrange to become part of the scheme for their area.

1 Blanchardstown Gardaí are working closely with Gardaí from the inner city in order to try to stem the flow of **Fireworks**. The inner city is where the majority of fireworks are coming from.

**Action: Philip to inform Blakestown/Mountview Community Drugs Team of the reported needle find and insure that they are fully aware of the problem**

## **6.0 Fingal County Council Report:**

**6.1** Quality Bus Corridor work on Blakestown Way is now finished, some landscaping

work still needs to be done and a plan for this is underway which will be carried out in the planting season from Oct-March.

**6.2** Multi use games area in Whitestown is proving a great success and Fingal County Council would like to extend their thanks to Blakestown CDP and local residents for support with this initiative. Some minor work still to be done in the vicinity of the games area e.g. foot paths to be fixed, this is ongoing and will be completed soon.

<sup>1</sup> Hartstown Park, at present there is a draft master plan to enhance and utilise the facilities and help improve every aspect of the park i.e. entrances and exits, footpaths, pitches.

**6.4** It is envisaged that in order to progress the issues, improve the look, build a sport facility etc we will need to consult with sports clubs, scouts and any interested local groups/clubs. This will happen over time through planning and public consultation.

**6.5** Halloween preparations are underway and as already stated Fingal County Council are working closely with the Gardaí and plans are in place.

**6.6** Fingal County Council continues to respond to calls regarding materials hidden for bomb fires and remove same. Residents are encouraged to report any stock-piling of bonfire material as soon as it is noticed to the Council.

**6.7** Millennium Park will continue to be improved mainly as a result of income generated from the park i.e. money paid by funfairs and circus is put back into the park.

**6.8** The park is at present undergoing some reinstatement of verges and other repair work due to heavy usage.

**6.9** A new all-weather football pitch is under construction in the park and new outdoor fitness equipment will be installed soon.

**6.10** Ruairi stated that if any issues raised were relevant to housing or environment he will bring the issues back to those departments.

**Action: Landscaping to be carried out in the planting season form Oct-March.**

## **7.0 Feedback from residents to Council Report**

**7.1** Residents welcomed the report

## 8.0 Fingal County Council Issues

**8.1** Numbers 61 & 62 Fortlawn Avenue are both **Boarded up Houses** and are being used to stockpile material for bonfires Residents are afraid that the whole lot including the house and those living close to it will be set on fire. One of these houses is privately owned and the landlord should be made to take responsibility for property.  
\*NB it was noted by chair that this was reported as a problem last year s well.

**8.2** Residents wondered if over the **Halloween** period there is a record made of where stock piling of material for bonfires is being kept and are their ongoing checks made from year to year at obvious places of storage. If resources are at a minimum a suggestion was made to close all the parks and use park rangers to enhance the number of personnel on Halloween clean up.

**8.3** Anti-Social behaviour is a repetitive problem. Fingal County Council needs to develop a strategic plan to tackle the ongoing issue of **anti-social behaviour**.

**8.4** One answer to the problem of people holding on to large items of furniture etc is for the council to provide **free skips** as they did in the past. This would allow for residents to dispose of large bulky household items such as chairs & sofas in an appropriate manner.

**8.5** Can **CCTV** be installed in the area as a response or deterrent to anti-social behaviour?

**8.6** Resident finding dumped waste outside home but has to pay at recycling centre to get rid of this rubbish. Resident felt that **Litter Wardens** are very unsympathetic when dealing with this issue.

## 9.0 Council Response:

**9.1** Fingal County Council will look into this as part of the planned response to Halloween and will pass on residents concerns relating to **Boarded up Houses** of to housing section

**9.2** As stated by the Gardaí there is a plan in place for **Halloween** which includes the Gardaí & Housing, Parks and Environment sections of Fingal County Council working together to tackle this issue. One part of the plan is to target areas previously used to store material and any newer locations that are reported to the Council. Overtime for staff to work over the weekend of Halloween has been approved so staffing levels should not be a problem. Both FCC and Gardaí will ensure that regardless of a small reduction in resources, the same or higher level of commitment will be used to tackle issues on Halloween.

**9.3** Fingal County Council Housing department is at present developing an **Anti-social behaviour** strategy that will apply to all Fingal tenants.

**9.4** This issue of the provision of **free skips** will be brought to the Environment dept.

**9.5** In the Corduff area this was done but funding for this type of initiative has dried up. There is **CCTV** in Millennium Park which is recorded and not live but does work as a deterrent. It is unlikely that **CCYV** will be installed in the foreseeable future.

**9.6** The problems of residents finding waste outside door and issues with **Litter Wardens** will be brought to the Environment dept.

## **10.0 Issues for Safer Blanchardstown**

**10.1 Resident wished to know how the Community Policing Forum can keep women safe in the area?**

## **11.0 Safer Blanchardstown Response**

**10.1** We will continue to work in supporting partners to develop initiatives with the aim of keeping all citizens safe especially women.

## **11.0 Close**

**11.1** Philip thanked the Huntstown community centre for the use of the hall for this evening meeting and again reminded residents that the Gardaí will make themselves available if residents wish to speak to them confidentially. The audience were also reminded of the Dial to Stop Drug Dealing confidential number and encouraged to use the number to report suspicious activity.

**11.2** Philip passed meeting back to chair.

**11.3** Chair thanked Residents, Community reps, Garda partners Fingal County Council and Scoil Mhuire for participation and support. Chair assured audience that issues would be followed up by relevant agencies and feedback would be provided locally on progress.