

To whom it may concern,

In my view, Community Gardaí are the single most important aspect of policing. A Community Garda embedded within a community has an opportunity to get to know local residents on a personal level. A community Garda knows the strengths of a community and potential weakness and issues that may arise.

It has proven that where a Community Garda is known to make sporadic appearances on the beat crime within an area will be down. It must be said that on every occasion where I have had dealings with community Gardaí it has been positive and they are nothing but very helpful and supportive.

My frustration as outlined to commission members last week is what I see as a lack of commitment to community policing from the top down. On a local level, I appreciate staffing restrictions and low numbers in the force are restrictive for the Chief Superintendent in allowing him provide the required number of community Gardaí. Equally, he must call on those he has for various other activities therefore taking them from the very place they need to be.

Examples are a Friday night if Galway United play, the first Gardaí sent to police that are the community Gardaí in many cases. Secondly, if a prisoner needs to be transferred to Castlerea - a community Garda may be used to accompany this prisoner.

In years gone by, people knew their community Garda by name, they were active on the beat in estates and communities and were a deterrent to most of the crime we have seen increases in.

Nowadays, through no fault of the Community Gardaí themselves, they are not afforded the chance to get to know their community in many cases.

How many people in Galway know the name of their community Garda?

Until we see an appreciation of the local Community Garda from the top down and a respect for the role he/she plays in a community everything else is simply lip service in my opinion. We can run as many campaigns to deter crime, we can send patrol cars through estates which appears as a deterrent but until we have Gardaí on the beat at the heart of the community I feel the Gardaí at the very top are failing communities across the country.

Regards,

Cllr Mike Cubbard

Chairperson of the Joint Policing Committee

Galway City