

A Truly Unbelievable Decision

On the Lanesboro Ballyleague notes I submitted to the Longford Leader on 4th October, I welcomed the arrival of our new Garda Sergeant Gary Loughrey to be based at Lanesboro Garda station.

As I was writing my words of welcome to Gary there were a number of people in the parish suffering great distress with their houses being entered and robbed and indeed in the following week's notes I commented on the culprits being caught and arrested. The amount of distress and angst that these robberies caused in the entire area had to be seen to be believed. Never before have I seen such a passionate reaction to these reprehensible deeds – the community response was one of total and extreme vexation. The swift action of our local Gardaí in apprehending these thugs has to be commended and has reassured local people of the great work being done in their protection by our understaffed local Garda force.

But, and this is a huge but, our joy is being short lived, instead of increasing the number of Gardaí into an area that stretches to almost Ballymahon semi circling back through Killashee/Clondra we see our numbers again being decreased. As I have stated in articles on 16th June and 12th October of last year, the area served by Lanesboro Garda station urgently needs to be brought up to the previous numbers where the local Gardaí were not being stretched to breaking point.

In the past few weeks we have seen an increasing number of serious incidents occurring in the Kenagh region. Kenagh is covered by the Lanesboro Garda station and the good people of Kenagh deserve full protection and resources as much as any other area and this cannot happen with the depleted force that is currently stationed in Lanesboro.

Our new Sergeant who we welcomed and indeed took a leading part in the recent robbery investigations has now been moved to Longford and indeed this is another disgraceful deed bestowed on us by the powers that be thus ignoring the plight of the affected communities and the under staffed Lanesboro Garda force. It has be the shortest appointment ever made in Lanesboro and it shows a total disregard for the wellbeing people of Lanesboro and the parishes that the local Garda station serves. It begs the question of the local Superintendent in Longford, the Chief Superintendent in Roscommon, the Garda Commissioner and Minister for Justice and Law Reform, Dermot Ahern TD as to the function of the Garda force stationed in Lanesboro. Are they aware of what is happening to us or more importantly do they care! Their indifference to the people of the communities served by Lanesboro Garda station truly beggars belief.

Unfortunately, the absolute silence of all our public representatives is without doubt deafening and leaves a lot to be desired.

We not only ask for our new sergeant to be returned to his Lanesboro base but we

ask for additional Gardaí to ensure an adequate Garda force to deal with the growing number of incidents in the region policed by Lanesboro Garda station. We ask that when considering extra numbers, we get enough Gardaí to be able to police the parish of Kilgefin from Lanesboro and not from Roscommon and Boyle – yes, Boyle- as is the present situation, which is totally unacceptable and intolerable.

On the Garda website www.garda.ie under the heading 'Working with Communities to Protect and Serve' you read of the aims and ideals of the Gardaí – unfortunately this is asking too much of the resources that the higher powers within the Gardaí provide in Lanesboro. The Gardaí in Lanesboro are doing a tremendous job under the strain of diminishing numbers and we can only acknowledge their utter determination and dedication towards serving us all under the trying circumstances that they have to work under.

Now the onus is on everyone, both individually and as local community groups, served by Lanesboro Garda barracks to make their feelings known to the Chief Superintendent, Roscommon Town, local Superintendent, Battery Road, Longford and the Minister for Justice and Law Reform, Dermot Ahern TD, Department of Justice and Law Reform, 94 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 of our abhorrence of the manner they are treating our communities.
