

Éarlámh: Micheál D. OhUiginn
Uachtarán na hÉireann

Founded in 1937 by
V. Rev. J.M. Canon Hayes



Muintir na Tíre

Empowering Communities

1 October 2018

Mr Damian Byrne
Clerk to the Committee
Joint Committee on Justice and Equality
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Dear Mr Byrne

Opening Statement

I attach an opening statement from Muintir na Tíre in advance of our appearance on 3rd October next. If you require any further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards
Yours sincerely

Niall Garvey

Niall Garvey
CEO



Muintir na Tíre
Empowering Communities

**Opening Statement to
Joint Committee on Justice and Equality
From Muintir na Tíre
3 October 2018**

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1 Overview

1.1 Muintir na Tíre has operated Community Alert for over 30 years, in partnership with An Garda Síochána. Community Alert is the largest crime prevention initiative in Ireland. While relying on the age-old principle of neighbours watching out for each other, Community Alert has also been quick to utilise modern tools such as Text Alert.

1.2 Statistics show that levels of rural crime are not increasing in general. However, any levels of crime can be reduced. A very real issue in rural areas is the fear of crime. This does not always relate directly to actual crime levels. For example, whenever there is a high profile crime, or indeed reporting of a court case relating to a particularly heinous crime from several years earlier, we notice an increase in activity in Community Alert groups.

1.3 While crime obviously has rural and urban dimensions, the fear is a much greater factor in rural areas. This is because of isolation. When a person does not have an immediate neighbour, they are obviously more afraid of what might happen to them, whether anybody will come to their aid, and indeed when they might be discovered. Cases of elderly people being tortured, robbed, and left tied up, are thankfully rare, but they do occur, and further fuel these fears. Therefore, crime prevention and detection are important, but equally important is creating an environment that feels safe.

1.4 Muintir na Tíre and Community Alert play a vital role in providing this safe environment, through means such as Text Alert, the new mobile app, Cairde, and supporting other schemes such as the Seniors Alert Scheme. While communities can do a lot for themselves, they still need improved support from An Garda Síochána and the judicial and legislative bodies.

1.5 Muintir na Tíre has a memorandum of understanding with an Garda Síochána for the operation of Community Alert. This partnership, which also includes our funders – the Department of Justice and Equality and the HSE, works well. It has allowed for efficient and effective solutions to problems, such as the recently introduced Text Alert Rebate Scheme. It should continue to be the platform for providing solutions to rural crime and community safety.

1.5 The area of Community Policing is vital in providing this support. In the years of financial restraint from 2008, Community Policing has been hit particularly hard, locally and centrally. When resources were limited, the Community Garda was often the first role to be hit, as resources were directed towards what were thought to be more urgent areas. This has had the effect of damaging the relationship between communities and An Garda Síochána. This needs to be rebuilt urgently.



2 Introduction

2.1 Muintir na Tíre continues to actively promote the Community Alert programme in partnership with An Garda Síochána since 1985. This programme continues to harness the voluntary input of community members to provide a community crime prevention programme in over 1,400 Community Alert groups nationwide. Each Community Alert group has an elected committee and an associated Liaison Garda; it is a recognised structure in a local community. Collectively these groups represent an active and organised social partnership network contributing significantly to crime reduction efforts and support communities to actively help themselves.

2.2 The Community Alert volunteers regularly visit older and vulnerable Persons in their own home to alleviate loneliness and isolation. They organise the supply of socially monitored pendant alarms and other safety/security measures including smoke alarms for older people. Community Alert volunteers annually source almost 50% of the national budget for the Seniors Alert Scheme. There are approximately 130,000 older persons in possession of socially monitored pendant alarms. Community Alert areas throughout Ireland are readily identifiable by Community Alert Road signs on the roadways, as one travels throughout Ireland.

2.3 Muintir na Tíre through the Community Alert programme actively participates in crime prevention and reduction on behalf of communities. The programme actively encourages visits to vulnerable persons, providing a vital element of community care and encourages the provision of a safe community environment.

2.4 Muintir na Tíre communities also actively participate in, and contribute to, a civil society and in so doing improve the quality of life of their communities. Communities through Ireland have seen a reduction in services in the community arena by many statutory agencies, and this has led to an increased fear among rural dwellers, especially the older and vulnerable, of the consequences. This increasing isolation leads to illness, depression and loneliness among this cohort of the population. This in turn leads to excessive demands on other services as they feel they can no longer live in their own homes. Whilst modern Ireland must adapt to changing economic conditions it must also consider the fundamental implications on the social fabric of its society.

2.5 Community Alert has thrived over the last 33 years as a practically minded and responsive programme. Its success is in large part due to its practical nature and ready recognition that communities are prepared to help themselves with support and guidance from our network of Development Officers.

2.6 In the last 12 months, Muintir na Tíre had to step in to prevent the collapse of Text Alert. We took on the service formerly provide by Grapvine Communications Ltd, who are now in liquidation. This sees us issuing approximately three quarters of the total Community Text alerts issued. The service has been rebranded as “BeAlert” and automated. Following on from that we have developed a mobile app, Cairde, which incorporates Text Alert and many other features.

2.7 The Department of Justice and Equality has just renewed the Text Alert Rebate Scheme for the third year. This scheme, which was lobbied for, and is administered by, Muintir na Tíre, provides much needed support for Community Alert Groups.



3 History of Muintir na Tíre

3.1 Muintir na Tíre is a national voluntary organization dedicated to promoting the process of community development. The organisation was founded in 1937. Muintir na Tíre aims to enhance the capacities of people in communities, rural and urban, to become involved in local social, economic, cultural and environmental development

3.2 Muintir na Tíre has been making a very real, positive and practical contribution to local and national development in Ireland for the last 78 years. From its involvement in the Rural Electrification and Group Water Schemes to the Building of Community Halls and Centres, to social service provision and local enterprise development, Muintir has always actively encouraged a bottom up approach.

3.3 Muintir is a membership-based organization, with 200 Community Councils and 1,400 Community Alert Groups entitled to membership. These groups elect the voluntary Board of Directors of the National body on an annual basis. The Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the organization and is supported by a small but dedicated staff.

3.4 Muintir na Tíre has always been to the forefront in identifying community needs and providing workable solutions. The Community Alert programme is yet again an example of the Muintir na Tíre ethos of self-help whereby the community engages and works alongside other statutory and voluntary agencies to provide services in addition to those already being provided for those who are in greatest need in communities.

3.5 Muintir Na Tíre established the Community Alert programme in 1984 in partnership with An Garda Síochána. It evolved in response to a rise of crime in rural Ireland, particularly attacks on vulnerable people (including the elderly) living alone. It is a voluntary crime prevention programme for rural communities and it encourages the community to actively participate with Muintir na Tíre and An Garda Síochána in improving the quality of life and safety of the community in general. An agreed Memorandum of Understanding between the partner organisations, which was signed on April 23, 2002, has strengthened the partnership.



4 History of Community Alert

4.1 This is a brief history of how Community alert evolved.

4.2 On the 19th November 1984, two major bridges were officially opened across the river Lee in Cork. Those bridges were used that very first night, to gain access to the rural countryside by a vicious gang. The gang drove from the city in a stolen car to the townland of Ballycureen, Glounthaune, in the parish of Carrigtwohill Co Cork. The three men in the gang forced a side window of the bungalow where John Willis (77) and James Willis (75) lived since retirement almost ten years previously from their farming career. Repeatedly, each brother in turn was beaten savagely until James died.

4.3 In Co Roscommon a week later in what was almost a copycat attack, two elderly unmarried sisters were savagely beaten with an iron bar; one of them died. The following night in Co Sligo, a relatively young 65 year old woman was attacked in her home by a gang.

4.4 The need for action was taken up by the leaders of the community organisation Muintir Na Tíre. At a meeting of Imokilly Region Muintir na Tíre, held in Dungourney on Friday 22nd November 1984, attended by eleven Community Councils, it was decided to initiate a series of open public meetings throughout East Cork, to discuss the tragedy and the concern about safety of the elderly especially in isolated areas. After this meeting it was Muintir na Tíre Imokilly Region Development Officer Mr Kevin Hickey who coined the term Community Alert. The term was first used on the posters advertising the various meetings, and was accepted as the actual organisation name later.

4.5 A meeting was held in Carrigtwohill December 6th 1984 where a large crowd, estimated at over 300, packed into the Community Hall. They listened to speakers, such as Muintir na Tíre National Secretary Sean Hegarty, and Chief Superintendent Tom O'Reilly who had come down from the Garda Community Relations section based in Dublin. Local T.D Michael Ahern spoke, he was a member of Carrigtwohill Community Council at the time and he gave valuable support to develop Community Alert from day one.

4.6 This meeting in Carrigtwohill was also significant due to the decision by RTE to record in Carrigtwohill the following morning a Nationwide program dealing with the robbery and murder aftermath. Much of the Community Alert ethos and ideas, which were coalescing over the past two weeks hardened into a "to do" list that night. It was a unique moment in time, and in the lives of those present that night - Community Alert was born.

4.7 Community Alert has continued to develop since that time and, perhaps unfortunately, is just as relevant today. The issues of rural crime have not changed significantly in those 33 years, but the methods of dealing with it have. A constant though is the desire and ability of local communities to deal with these issues themselves once they are given the framework in which to do so. Muintir na Tíre and An Garda Síochána continue to provide that framework through continuous review and improvement, including the provision of new services, such as Community Text Alert.



5 Current Structure and Operations of Community Alert

5.1 Mission Statement

The current Community Alert Mission Statement is as follows:

“Prevent crime and increase social cohesion”

5.1.1 Community Alert Objectives:

- To promote measures to reassure people living in rural Ireland, particularly older and vulnerable people.
- To raise the level of awareness amongst all people of the need for greater social inclusiveness including crime prevention measures.
- To foster greater collaboration between the Community and An Garda Síochána.
- To seek to involve young people to ensure continuation of groups in local areas.
- To foster the involvement of national and secondary school pupils, their teachers and youth clubs in the process.

5.1.2 Partnership in Action:

That Community Alert will promote the best quality of life for people, and particularly older people, in rural communities by:

- Crime Prevention
- Neighbourliness and Self-reliance
- General Community Safety and Well Being
- Accident Prevention
- Promotion of Personal Safety
- Anti-Poverty Focus and Awareness of Social Inclusion

5.2 Principal Partner Organisations

There are five principal partners to the program, as follows:

Muintir na Tíre	Co-manages the program. Provides the staff and resources to deliver the program.
An Garda Síochána	Co-manages the program. Provides liaison through Community Relations division.
Department of Justice and Equality	Provides financial support.
Health Service Executive	Provides financial support.
Local communities	Provide the manpower, enthusiasm and financial resources necessary for anything to happen at a local level.



5.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The Community Alert Program is delivered through a partnership structure between Muintir na Tíre and an Garda Síochána, with the following key personnel:

Garda Community Relations:

- Chief Superintendent
- Sergeant

Muintir na Tíre:

- CEO, and National Co-Ordinator
- Development Officer – Northern Region
- Development Officer – Southern Region
- Development Officer – Western Region
- Development Officer – Eastern Region
- Development Officer – South Eastern Region



5.4 Muintir Support Structure

Muintir na Tíre is managed by a CEO who also acts as National Co-Ordinator for Community Alert. The five Community Alert Development Officers report to him. A number of other Muintir na Tíre staff support the Community Alert Programme but are not currently funded for doing so.

5.5 Partner Liaison

5.5.1 The President and CEO of Muintir na Tíre meet with the Senior Garda Management Team (usually the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner) as the need arises.

5.5.2 There is a National Steering Committee consisting of the CEO and the Chief Superintendent from the Garda Síochána. This meets approximately twice per year and has overall responsibility for policy and strategy.

5.5.3 The Management Committee consists of the above plus the Community Alert Development Officers. This group meets formally approximately 6 times per year to review work and identify common issues. There is informal contact between these group members on a daily basis.

5.5.4 The CEO meets with funders (Department of Justice and Equality and the HSE) approximately twice per year.

5.5.5 Community Alert Development Officers liaise with the Joint Policing Committees in all of their counties and attend as many meetings as possible. Recent structural changes mean there is no formal representation for national bodies on JPC's and therefore we must try to get representation through Public Participation Networks etc. This is an area that needs further debate and action.



5.6 Regional Development Officers

5.6.1 The Community Alert programme is delivered by 5 Regional Development Officers – one for each Garda Region excluding Dublin City. They hold an average of over 3 formal meetings per week, with many more informal meetings and telephone support. Formal meetings can consist of:

- Garda focused meetings (e.g. Divisional and District meetings).
- Meetings with individual Community Alert Groups (either new or existing).
- Other meetings with a Community Alert focus (Older persons' fora etc.).

They also promote Community Alert through media interviews, attendance at events, and other activities.

5.6.2 Each Development Officer at local level has regular interaction with HSE, Public Health Nurses, Home Helps, Caregivers, Day Care personnel, An Post staff, Clergy, Local Partnership Companies, County Development Boards, Community Fora, Government Departments, Vincent de Paul, Fire Service, Lions Clubs, Social Services, Community area based services (e.g. Warmer Homes) and County Councils to meet the demands of individuals and communities. Each Development Officer is in regular contact with Community Alert District Sergeants and Divisional Inspectors in all divisions.

5.6.3 Development Officers continue to assist many groups with issues concerning the Seniors Alert Scheme of Grants for personal monitored alarms. This scheme allows elderly people to continue living independently but securely in their own homes. Muintir na Tíre groups constitute the majority of groups offering this scheme.

5.6.4 Groups are also encouraged to actively seek out grants which could help to alleviate isolation in their communities and also provide small scale services such as friendly call service or a community visitor programme.

5.6.5 Our Development Officers fulfil a critical role in local government, beyond what was ever expected of them. They act as a liaison between community groups and individuals and the new formal Local Government structures through engagement with Public Participation Networks, LEADER partnership companies, SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation) providers and many other bodies. They operate where there is often inadequate engagement with communities and often provide the link between citizens and supports. Having supports available is essential but informing citizens of those supports, informing the providers of potential recipients, and linking them is even more important.



5.7 Community Text Alert

5.7.1 Community Text Alert was formally launched as a Community Alert programme in 2013, in partnership with IFA, Neighbourhood Watch, and an Garda Síochána. It has certainly caught the public imagination. Over 700 groups have registered for the initiative in that time and it receives regular positive media attention. Currently well over 1,000,000 texts per annum are being issued. Text Alert is often quoted as having provided the vital cog in crime detection, and local Garda management often point to reduced crime in areas where Text Alert is properly implemented.

5.7.2 Text Alert areas are highly visible through the erection of highly visible and identifiable signage. This signage includes the telephone number of the nearest 24 hour Garda station to which suspicious activity can be reported. On receipt of such a call, the Gardaí will verify the information and can then issue an SMS text to all registered recipients in the area. There is also the option to include surrounding areas where this might be useful (e.g. with a moving vehicle).

5.7.3 The success of Text Alert is due to the fast and efficient dispersal of information between communities and the Gardaí. There is also a deterrent effect through the visible signage. However equally effective, though less obvious, benefits arise through the very organisation of Text Alert groups – volunteers visiting houses to explain and gather contact numbers, neighbours watching out for older or more vulnerable neighbours, etc.

5.7.4 The last 12 months have seen much change in Text Alert, with Muintir na Tíre having had to take over the role as the main issuer of texts, and also with new technology being introduced. The new Cairde mobile app from Muintir is an example of this.

5.8 Other Community Alert Activities

The projects undertaken by Community alert groups are many and varied, with one common theme – to improve the quality of life in their areas. Examples include:

5.8.1 Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms. We have recently been awarded funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund to roll out these vital devices to elderly and isolated people. This will be done through the Community Alert structure.

5.8.2 *Crime Prevention Ambassadors*. A number of Community Alert Groups have participated in this pilot project. The initiative selected and prepared active older people and community representatives to become Ambassadors to support older and vulnerable people in their community by delivering crime prevention information to them. The project was specifically designed to empower older people within the community by working in partnership with An Garda Síochána.

5.8.3 *Community CCTV*. There is growing interest around the country in providing community CCTV as a crime deterrent and detection measure. Community Alert Groups have been particularly active in this area. However, administrative difficulties have meant the grant programme has practically ground to a halt.

5.8.4 *Bottle in the Fridge*. This is an initiative where people store their medical information in a specially marked bottle in the fridge and place a special sticker inside the front door so that emergency responders will know they are participating in the scheme.

5.8.5 *Remove all Valuables*. This campaign by Cork Community Alert Groups saw the groups, in partnership with Cork county Council, erecting signs to warn owners parking cars to remove or secure their valuables.



6 Issues Arising in Community Alert Groups

6.1 The vast number of contacts between Muintir na Tíre and community groups, enable us to identify the many issues arising. There has been much publicity in recent years suggesting an increase in rural crime. For the first time in several years, recent CSO figures have shown certain crimes increasing in certain areas. This has given credibility to some groups who were being told that the statistics did not support their fears. It is also worth noting though that many areas have shown decreases.

6.2 While rural crime should be highlighted and dealt with, it should not be over hyped as the fear of crime can be almost as harmful as the actual effects of crime, particularly amongst vulnerable and isolated people. However Muintir na Tíre supports the rights of communities to seek to have no crime, or at least a negligible amount.

Appendix A details many of the issues being reported by Community Alert groups around the country. Some may have practical solutions, some many not. We have highlighted what we believe may be practical solutions in the recommendations section. Issues may be broadly summarized as:

6.3 *Seniors Alert Scheme* – the recent fundamental changes to the Seniors Alert Scheme were carried out without adequate consultation. While it led to some improvement, it also created difficulties, particularly for smaller groups, such as Community Alert groups. However Muintir na Tíre will continue to support groups in making applications in any way we can. This programme, which provides socially monitored alarms (eg panic buttons and pendants) to the elderly, has long been a core activity of Community Alert groups, who are the main users of the programme.

6.4 *Garda resources* – the closure of rural Garda stations was rationalized as leading to better policing, with the existing resources being deployed patrolling the area rather than confined to a physical building. Unfortunately this coincided with a general reduction in Garda resources and the public perception is that there was no increase in patrolling. Recent announcements on new recruits and vehicles will hopefully represent an improvement in this area.

6.5 *Judicial system* – these is major concern over the issue of repeat offenders. Several recently reported cases have involved individuals with huge numbers of convictions, often reoffending while on bail for another charge. Similarly there is concern over free legal aid being granted without restriction or any consideration of previous offences. There is a feeling that some of this cost could be re-directed into other areas of the judicial system. There is also much concern over the amount of time taken to get to trial.

6.6 *Deterrent* – There is seen to be a lack of real deterrent to committing crime, particularly for repeat offenders where the punishment is obviously not a deterrent. Recognising that prisons are expensive, we need a suite of solutions which might include lower grade prisons, community service, tagging, curfews, restriction on transportation and other innovative solutions.

6.7 *Funding* – communities are concerned at the imbalance of funding given towards preventative measures such as Community Alert or Text Alert, where the communities themselves have to pay the full costs, including VAT, and the funding given towards the rights of the criminal. This has been alleviated somewhat by the Text Alert Rebate Scheme.

6.8 *Victim support* – there have been some recent improvements in feedback to victims but this needs to be expanded further. Rather than just a letter at the end of the process, victims would appreciate updates along what can be a long process. Also communities who support the Gardaí through Text Alert would value feedback by text, but not at their own expense.



7 Community Policing

7.1 Policing in Ireland is famous for its reliance on the support of communities and the public at large.

7.2 In previous decades, most rural communities had a resident Garda. This changed because of the financial constraints since 2008. Many rural Garda stations were closed. It was explained that resources could be better used by having more Gardaí on patrol rather than sitting in a station. It was promised that community engagement would continue but using such resources as Gardaí being available at certain times in public buildings, such as community centres. This never happened to any great extent.

7.3 During the same period, as resources tightened in Garda districts, one of the first casualties in many was the Community Garda. These were reassigned to roles that were seen as more pressing. While this might have been necessary in the very short term, it has had a long term impact. Most people do not now know a local Garda and this has serious implications for fear of crime, and indeed for the passing of information to An Garda Síochána. Text Alert has alleviated this somewhat, but this is currently a one-way communication tool. Note that this change primarily affected rural communities – greater numbers in urban communities meant community engagement could continue to a great extent.

7.4 During the same period, resources for Community Policing at a central level were also severely cut. The Garda Community Relations office has reduced in numbers to now having only one sergeant responsible for the entire country. While we greatly appreciate his help, and work very well together, this severely curtails what can be achieved in our partnership.

7.5 These inadequate resources, coupled with the Garda management structure, hinder the central dissemination of best practice. This leads to practical difficulties in areas such as Text Alert. None of this is a criticism of individual Gardaí, with whom we have an excellent working relationship. It is simply the end result of inadequate resources.

7.6 We would like to see increased resources at a central level. We would also like to see a return to each community having an allocated Garda, who is known to the community. We appreciate these are operational matters, outside of the direct control of this committee, or indeed the Department itself. However, we believe the issues must be highlighted. In this regard, we welcome the recent report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, particularly in relation to District Policing.



8 Recommendations for Action

8.1 We suggest the establishment of a special purpose committee to examine rural crime. This could be similar to the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) which had a limited time and budget but was asked to make specific and practical recommendations. This would allow for more public consultation that this committee has time for and would instil a sense of participation in communities who took part.

8.2 We strongly support the recommendations of the Criminal Justice (Burglary of Dwellings) Bill with regard to consecutive sentencing and refusal of bail for repeat offenders. We agree that the rights to freedom and the presumption of innocence need to be weighed against the constitutional protection afforded to a citizen's dwelling and feel that this bill offers a balanced approach to these often conflicting rights.

8.3 We welcome the establishment of the second Special Criminal Court and hope it will significantly reduce the time to process cases. However it must be adequately resourced and not simply see a reallocation of resources from elsewhere in the Courts Service.

8.4 We request a review of the Free Legal Aid programme; of its costs and efficiency of delivery. While recognising a right of legal representation we feel this should be reviewed for repeat offenders, similar to the review of bail above. Consideration should be given to reducing the representation for repeat offenders and treating the costs of such representation as a repayable loan.

8.5 We also request a review of the allocation of resources between crime prevention and crime detection and punishment. We believe a slight shift towards prevention could have significant impact. This would include an expansion of programmes such as Community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Prevention Ambassadors, etc.

8.6 Such a review should also value voluntary input and examine ways of recognising it. For example it may be possible to make a contribution towards the costs of properly established Text Alert programmes where the communities must cover all costs (texts, insurance, signage, etc.) including the addition of VAT.

8.7 We request a review of the prison system, including a review of the cost/security mix. Such a review should also consider non-custodial options which might be appropriate in certain cases – tagging, curfews, transport restrictions, expanded community service programmes etc.

8.8 We suggest a review of anti-social behaviour in built-up areas, villages or estates, and how it is currently dealt with. In particular the issues of practical and fast sanctions should be examined, as should expediting the ability of a landlord to terminate the lease of an undesirable tenant.

8.9 Current difficulties in the Community CCTV grant scheme need to be resolved. There is funding available to establish new schemes, and many communities ready to do so. However, difficulties, particularly over the role of Data Controller, mean this scheme has effectively ground to a halt.



Appendix A

Specific Issues Arising at Community Alert Meetings

These are issues which have arisen repeatedly at meetings in the recent past. We are reporting them as issues without necessarily commenting on how they can be solved.

1. The need for strategic policy to have adequate deterrents for criminals with multi agency support.
2. Reform of Legal Aid There is a sense of serious imbalance in rights of victims of crime compared to offenders. The public see situations very differently and more often than not all detail is not publicly available. Therefore people feel the system is in favour of the criminal Consider deductions from Benefits. Consider each application as a separate loan.
3. Consider limitations to the abuse of its use. For example, a gang convicted for a raid in Tipperary, had 315 previous convictions.
4. Cease the practice of having multiple Solicitors covering different charges of same individual. One solicitor per client.
5. Provide Legal Aid to Victims of Crime.
6. Provide regular updates to Victims of Crime.
7. Publish submissions made to shorten a convicted criminal's sentence. By this we mean that names of applicants and the submissions that they make on behalf of a criminal be on the record, particularly where public figures are involved.
8. Reform Bail Laws.
9. Introduce GPS / SIM Tagging of graded low risk, early release, or on licence prisoners.
10. Privatise the monitoring of tagged individuals.
11. Introduce a range of alternative unwelcome deterrent options where a fine has not been paid.
12. Develop the use of Community Service Orders as a deterrent particularly for minor local offending.
13. Provide the resources required by the Prison Service and the Probation Service to fund the reforms sought.
14. Introduce a lengthy driving ban (loss of licence) on all individuals who are identified as having been in a vehicle used during the course of a robbery.
15. Introduce a confiscation of passport scheme, for habitual criminals.
16. Extend the Scrap Metal legislation.
17. Restorative justice is seen as a possible solution but at the same time there is a fear of it.
18. Call for a Retail Theft bill to impose a minimum sentence for those found guilty of retail theft while organized as group or gang.
19. Adopt a positive attitude that Reforms will be made, rather than quoting reasons why not.
20. The theft of metal and cable has been prolific and costs to replace and repair are out of proportion to the value taken.
21. Create a specialised unit to combat export of stolen property.
22. Provide more X-ray units at our ports to examine container traffic into and out of the country.
23. Advocate that a three tier system of Low Security - Low Cost, Medium Security and High Security High Cost jails be created. Low Risk offenders are presently taking up high security space that should be put to better use. Prisoners to make a working contribution to society rather than simply enjoy free education.
24. Provide adequate resources to foster rather than barely support Community Alert.



25. Early intervention community development led safety programmes.
26. Further development of crime prevention aspect of community planning.
27. Determine the cost of State funding given in various ways, by various providers of services to the minority of the Irish population who commit an enormous percentage of burglaries, robberies, and fraud.
28. Determine the real extent of cross jurisdiction policing and how this operates on the ground. This is particularly important in anticipation of Brexit.
29. The need for a better and more practical system of property marking and tracing.

