

## **Minutes of Meeting of Firearms Consultative Panel**

**Monday 24 October 2016 at 12 noon**

**Department of Justice and Equality, 94 St. Stephens Green**

### **Update on Firearms Licensing**

#### **Centralised Licensing**

An Garda Síochána noted that the Commissioner has decided that there will be a single Chief Superintendent to decide on restricted firearm applications. As yet no decision has been taken as to which section within An Garda Síochána will be responsible but a decision is expected to be finalised in the near future.

#### **Update on ballistic database of firearms**

The Commissioner is not going to provide for the testing of all handguns at this time. The matter of ballistic testing will be dealt with on a case by case basis in accordance with Section 25B of the Firearms Act 1925 as amended.

The Sports Coalition outlined an alternative model for ballistic testing of handguns.

#### **Update on reloading pilot scheme**

There are two applicants for the pilot reloading project who are still working towards satisfying An Garda Síochána and Local Authority requirements on safety and security.

#### **Update from AGS/IFA re storage conditions for Firearms**

The Crimecall programme to be broadcast on October 24<sup>th</sup> will have a slot on safe storage of firearms.

#### **Update on Commissioners' Guidelines**

While much work has been done on the Guidelines further matters are to be considered for incorporation including decision making on restricted licensing and the proposals on night time shooting.

The Commissioner will send the guidelines to the Minister in due course for her consent.

The Sports Coalition raised the question of the establishment of a firearms assessment committee in advance of the establishment of the Firearms Assessment and Appeals Authority.

### **Update from NPWS on meeting regarding Night-time shooting/lamping**

The group established to examine issues around night shooting safety is to finalise best practice guidance on night time shooting during November and thereafter the guidelines are to be circulated to all members of the Firearms Consultative Panel.

An Garda Síochána and the National Parks and Wildlife Service is to put in place a mechanism for the sharing of information on firearms relevant to wildlife crime and wildlife convictions.

### **Update on European Union initiatives in relation to Firearms** **(A) Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons.**

Following the agreement reached between Ministers in June, the Directive is now the subject of negotiations between the Council led by the Slovakian Presidency, the Parliament and the Commission. The Department does not anticipate that the Regulation will have significant implications for firearms regulation in Ireland.

### **Commission implementing Regulation establishing common guidelines on deactivation standards and techniques for ensuring that deactivated firearms are rendered irreversibly inoperable**

The Department noted that it has received seven expressions of interest from firearms dealers who wish to be considered as deactivation entities and is awaiting further information from the majority of them.

The working group whose focus it is to revise the technical specifications in the annexes of the Deactivation Regulation is due to have further meetings in Brussels.

## **Safety Training for Firearms Ownership**

There is a shared concern that firearms certificate applicants should be competent in the use of firearms and be able to demonstrate same to the deciding member of An Garda Síochána.

While An Garda Síochána will not endorse any specific training course, it will consider amending the Commissioners' guidelines to place a greater emphasis on this area in particular for first time firearms certificate applicants.

The Department of Justice is drafting a best practice document for firearms dealers which will also provide guidance in this area.

The shooting groups acknowledged that they too have an important role to play in ensuring their members are competent in the use of firearms.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will on 15<sup>th</sup> February at 11.30a.m.