

# SERIES OF EVENTS TO CELEBRATE CENTENARY OF AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

Several initiatives and events are taking place throughout the year to mark the centenary of the establishment of An Garda Síochána in 1922, the occupation of the Four Courts and the enactment of the Irish Free State Constitution.



**T**he Justice Sector Programme of commemorative events for 2022-2024, which forms part of the Decade of Centenaries Programme, was launched by the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee TD in April.

"The Decade of Centenaries Programme provides a critical opportunity to focus on the development of access to historical records and primary sources from this key period.

To this end, the Department of Justice will commence several projects to provide access to records from the early decades of the State. This will include the cataloguing of early 20th century departmental files for release to the national archives and the commissioning of a written history of the first 50 years of the

Department," the Minister noted.

"Over the past decade, we have collectively reflected on many of the formative events in the history of our State as part of the Decade of Centenaries. The period which we are now considering saw the foundation of the State and the establishment, or, in some cases, the handing over of many of the institutions and administrative pillars which have served us since then."

**DEVELOPMENTS AND TRANSITIONS**  
She noted 1922 was "a particularly significant year" with the foundation of An Garda Síochána and the advent of the Civil War and this was reflected in the occupation of the Four Courts, and with it the destruction of the Public Records Office.

"Both 1922 and the years that

followed saw many developments and transitions, including the end to the revolutionary Dáil Courts regime and the establishment of the Courts system of the new State. These were tumultuous years as the new State came into being. Both the Department of Justice, its forerunner, the Department of Home Affairs, and the various other parts of the justice sector were central to that time and that work.

"The Decade of Centenaries Justice Sector Programme 2022-24 will capture some of the importance of this work and help bring some new insights and understanding to those years. This must be an open and honest discussion, and throughout we will attempt to consider all aspects of our history – those that are well known, and those which may not

have received enough discussion in the past."

An Garda Síochána and the Courts Service are also leading comprehensive programmes during the year to mark the key events of the establishment of An Garda Síochána, the occupation of the Four Courts and the impact which this had on the operation of the Courts at the time, and the development and enactment of the Constitution of the Irish Free State.

The Decade of Centenaries Programme is an ongoing programme of commemoration of the period from 1912 to 1923. The justice sector commemorations programme is part of the recently published, cross-government Decade of Centenaries 2022 Programme which is co-ordinated by Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

The programme will run until 2024 to mark the centenaries of the Courts of Justice Act 1924 (which established a new system of Courts for the Irish Free State) and the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924 (which renamed the Department of Home Affairs as the Department of Justice).

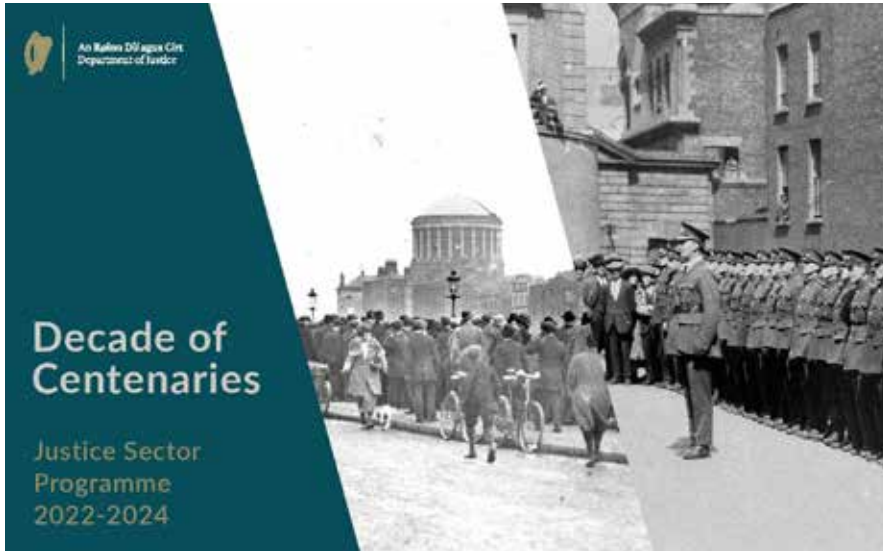


Minister for Justice Helen McEntee will lead a series of commemorative events during 2022. (Photograph: Gareth Chaney/Collins)



Civic Guards entering Dublin Castle in 1922 and pictured with Chief Superintendent Matthis McCarthy after they took over the Castle. (Courtesy of RTE Archives).





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**KEY COMMEMORATIVE INITIATIVES**  
A series of commemorative events taking place during the year include the following:

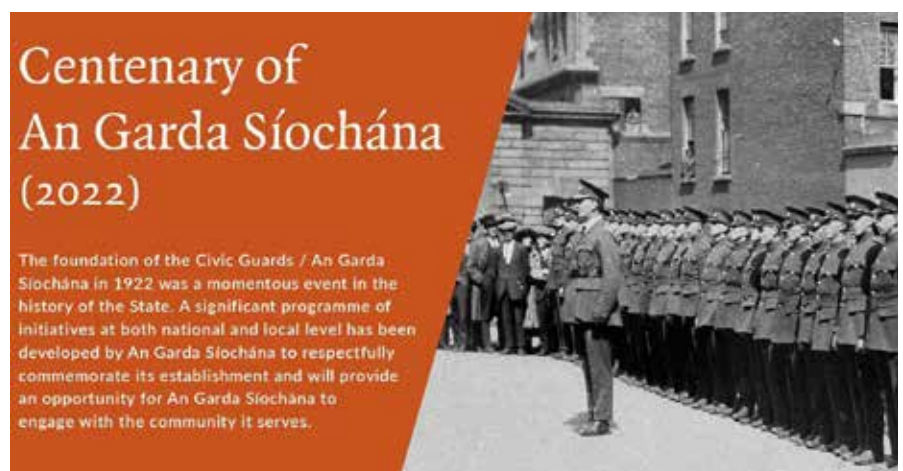
- In co-operation with An Post, a Garda Centenary stamp was launched in January 2022 and is available in all post offices. Special first day covers and souvenir items are also available.
- A 'Day in The Life' photographic project was launched on 21 February – 100 years to the day since the first member joined An Garda Síochána at the RDS in Dublin, this initiative enables Garda members and staff to take photographs, showing the public the depth and range of work undertaken across the organisation over 24 hours to keep people safe, particularly in those parts of the organisation that are not always public-facing.
- An Garda Síochána marched in this year's St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin. The Garda Band was also involved in the festival.
- An Garda Síochána and Kildare County Council hosted an event in Kildare on 16 April to commemorate the Kildare Mutiny.
- On 24 May, an event took place in the Gresham Hotel to mark the historic meeting, chaired by Michael Collins in the hotel on 9 February 1922, where the Provisional Government formed a committee to set up a new police service to replace the RIC. The first recruits were subsequently sworn in at a temporary training centre at the RDS in Dublin on 21 February. This event was initially

due to take place on 9 February 2022 but was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- An Garda Síochána will to launch a new, historical, online photo archive of policing in the first half of 2022.
- On 27 August 2022, the flagship national centenary commemorative event for An Garda Síochána will be held at Dublin Castle. The event will recreate the occasion in August 1922 when Commissioner Michael Staines led 380 Civic Guards through the Palace Street gates into Dublin Castle following its evacuation by the British Army. This was the first time that many uniformed Civic Guards appeared in public and was hugely symbolic. An open day will take place in Dublin Castle, providing the public with the opportunity to view displays and engage with members from a variety of Garda units. A specially commissioned piece of music by the composer Odhrán Ó Casaide will be performed by Garda Band at

the event. The Garda Museum and Memorial Garden will be open to visitors.

- Special commemorative medals will be issued to all serving and retired members in June/July, accompanied by a 'certificate of appreciation' signed by the Justice Minister and the Garda Commissioner, with a commemorative coin to be issued to Garda staff or civilian employees.
- Renovation of the memorial cenotaph at Garda Headquarters in the Phoenix Park.
- A book on the history and development of the force over the last 100 years, and the contribution of women to An Garda Síochána will be published this year.
- Several classic Garda cars and motorbikes are also being restored and these will create an 'historic fleet' for ceremonial purposes and other special events, including re-enactments of key events, ecumenical services, and commemorations.
- On 22 November a justice sector symposium, titled 'Justice in Ireland 1822-2022', will take place in the Printworks of Dublin Castle in partnership with an academic institution. Falling on the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the County Constabulary and the 100th anniversary of the establishment of An Garda Síochána, the symposium will provide academics and practitioners with an opportunity to consider the development of both policing and justice institutions more broadly over that time, including the evolution of the prison and probation services.
- Exhibitions about Garda history and heritage will also take place in the last quarter of the year in association with local authorities across the country.



The foundation of the Civic Guards / An Garda Síochána in 1922 was a momentous event in the history of the State. A significant programme of initiatives at both national and local level has been developed by An Garda Síochána to respectfully commemorate its establishment and will provide an opportunity for An Garda Síochána to engage with the community it serves.

# MARKING THE HISTORIC TRANSITION TO AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

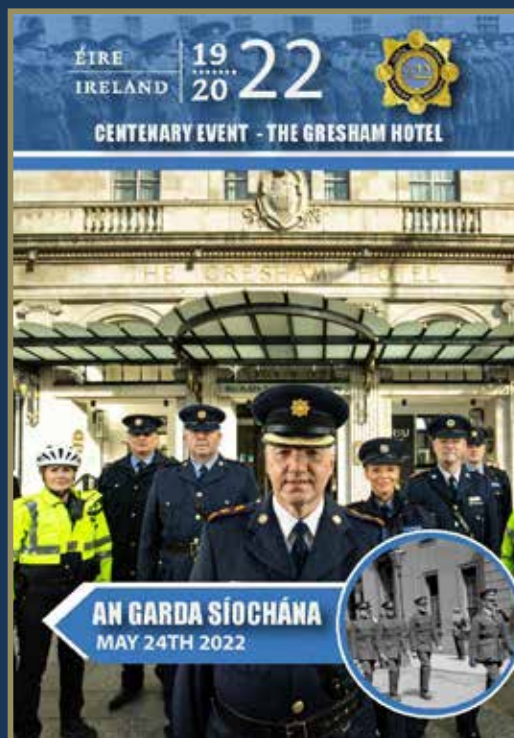
A special event took place at the Gresham Hotel on 24 May to mark the historic meeting chaired by Michael Collins in 'Room 85' at the hotel on 9 February 1922, where the Provisional Government formed a committee to set up a new police service to replace the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) – the police force in Ireland from 1822 until 1922.

"In its transition from the RIC and to what later became An Garda Síochána, the formation of the Civic Guard that night paved the way for stability in Ireland and the establishment of the nation's unarmed police service. By that September and following the passing of the Constabulary (Ireland) Act in Parliament, members of the new police service began arriving in cities, towns and villages to begin working in and with communities," noted Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, during his opening address.

"Today, there are over 14,000 highly trained Gardai working nationwide. The breadth of duties has shifted considerably, and our responsibilities now extend into many areas – nationally and internationally.

"We are now an organisation working across specialist and dedicated units in areas of priority like drugs and organised crime, roads policing, and domestic and sexual abuse. We also continue to put in place major ICT infrastructure suitable for the modern day. We are introducing a new operating model to provide more localised services.

"Through the decades, Gardai have prevented and detected significant amounts of crime. We are having an impact on targeting and disrupting organised crime groups – an area where we have recently seen considerable progress. As a police service we have encountered and responded



to deeply unsettling periods in Ireland's past. Through the decades, members of An Garda Síochána have willingly faced danger to protect people's safety.

"That fact is sadly made clear when we think of our 89 Garda colleagues killed in the execution of their duty, who we remembered at our Memorial Service on 21 May, and we also remember all those injured in the course of their duties.

"We continue to strengthen our service based on our strong tradition of policing by consent

and in partnership with people and communities. The development of community-based policing in Ireland over the past century has played an integral part in how we operate today. An Garda Síochána is also unique in that we have a dual mandate – the national police service and the national security service.

"Over 11,000 people have applied, as part of the recent recruitment campaign, to become members of An Garda Síochána. It is encouraging that so many people are prepared to step up to protect and support communities. About 40% of applicants are women and there has been an increase in numbers applying across a range of ethnic backgrounds.

"We now also have over 3,300 Garda staff providing a range of critical functions to support policing delivery including IT systems, financial management, crime analysis, legal advice, HR and health and wellbeing services. Their input and insights have been invaluable in the development of the organisation into a modern police service."



Commissioner Drew Harris