

Waterford Public Participation Network (PPN)

Constitution

Waterford Public Participation Network is the collective voice for all community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion organisations in Waterford. Its purpose is to improve people's well-being by involving the community in local decision-making

Summary

Waterford Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in July 2014 as the representative voice for all Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion groups in Waterford.

Waterford PPN will identify the issues that matter and try to influence policy in a way that improves the quality of life and opportunities for people within the Local Authority area of Waterford.

Membership of the PPN is open to all community and voluntary groups, clubs and organisations in Waterford, working on a voluntary, co-operative or not-for-profit basis for the benefit of the community.

Waterford PPN is overseen by a Secretariat of 11 members elected by full member groups of the network.

Waterford PPN elects representatives to committees and organisations to speak on behalf of all member groups of the network.

Waterford PPN is the main link through which Waterford City & County Council and other decision-making bodies in the Local Authority area connect with the community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion sectors.

Waterford PPN is committed to working in an open, inclusive and transparent manner on behalf of all member groups.

Waterford Public Participation Network

1. NAME

The name of the organisation is Waterford Public Participation Network (PPN).

2. MISSION STATEMENT

Waterford Public Participation Network is the collective voice for all community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion organisations in Waterford. Its purpose is to improve people's well-being by involving the community in local decision-making.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF WATERFORD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

The aims and objectives are as follows:

- 3.1 To provide an open, inclusive and transparent representative structure for all community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups in Waterford.
- 3.2 To consult with the community so as to encourage and enable public participation in local decision-making and planning of services;
- 3.3 To facilitate the selection of community representatives onto decision-making bodies and to support those representatives to be effective in their roles;
- 3.4 To foster, in particular, the inclusion and empowerment of groups and organisations with a focus on tackling disadvantage and social exclusion including rural isolation;
- 3.5 To support the member groups of Waterford Public Participation Network so that: they can develop their capacity to do their work more effectively; they can participate effectively in PPN activities; they are included and their voices and concerns are heard;
- 3.6 To support a process that will feed a broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals from PPN member groups into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers;
- 3.7 To facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and efficient information exchange between environmental, community and voluntary and social inclusion groups and between these groups and Waterford City & County Council and other decision-making bodies;
- 3.8 To ensure that the views expressed by PPN representatives are mandated by Waterford Public Participation Network member organisations;
- 3.9 To promote and make known Waterford Public Participation Network and its aims and objectives, particularly to potential members;
- 3.10 To develop and promote the Public Participation Network so that the work of the PPN is clearly recognised, acknowledged and understood by local decision-making

bodies and the PPN has a strong community voice within the Local Authority area of Waterford;

4. PRINCIPLES OF WATERFORD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

Waterford Public Participation Network and its member organisations are committed to the following principles and practices:

- 4.1 Working with a community development approach to address issues of all our member groups and issues of social exclusion;
- 4.2 Maintaining open, inclusive and transparent organisational structures;
- 4.3 Being accountable to the member groups;
- 4.4 Acting as a vehicle to gather feedback and input into policies reflecting the diversity and range of views of member groups;
- 4.5 Implementing and abiding by best practice governance structures;
- 4.6 Working in a collective and supportive way with all member groups.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF WATERFORD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

Membership of Waterford Public Participation Network is open to any community and voluntary group or club, environmental group and any organisation addressing issues of social exclusion, working on a voluntary, co-operative or not-for-profit basis for the benefit of the community within Waterford.

Waterford Public Participation Network is made up of full member groups and associate member groups. Associate Members are Member Groups that don't fulfil the conditions for full membership of the PPN and cannot vote.

Criteria for Membership

- 5.1 Member Organisations must have a base in and/or be active in Waterford.
- 5.2 Operate on a not-for profit basis.
- 5.3 Are volunteer-led (organisations may have paid staff, but must be under voluntary control).
- 5.4 Are independent and this can include local and regional branches of national organisations.
- 5.5 Have at least 3 members and are open to new members.

- 5.6 Have an appropriate governance structure e.g. set of rules / constitution / financial procedures.
- 5.7 Are in existence for at least six months and meet regularly.
- 5.8 Are non-party political.
- 5.9 Each member organisation must then choose to be part of one of the three electoral Colleges – Community and Voluntary; Social Inclusion; or Environmental.
- 5.10 Because of the separation of the functions of public representatives and the PPN, councillors, TDs, Senators, and MEPs should not be the PPN contact point for member organisations.
- 5.11 Member Organisations must carry out their activities in an open and transparent manner
- 5.12 Associate Member Organisations do not have the power to make nominations, or have voting rights, however they can put forward motions; receive information and access training etc.
- 5.13 An organisation's membership of the PPN may be reviewed by the Secretariat if at any time the organisation claims to speak on behalf of/or represent the PPN without mandate;
- 5.14 A member organisation shall cease to be a member of the PPN if the organisation no longer qualifies under the conditions laid down for membership.

The following are not eligible for full membership of Waterford Public Participation Network:

- State or semi-state bodies;
- Local development agencies;
- Groups who have representation through other pillars of social partnership e.g. trade unions, farming and business organisations.

6. PLENARY MEETINGS

The Plenary (all the member organisations together) is the key decision maker of the PPN on operational issues, meeting at least twice a year.

- 6.1. Member Organisations must be given at least 21 days' notice of a Plenary Meeting.
- 6.2. Notice of a Plenary Meeting should include details of any elections that will be taking place (see Section 11).

- 6.3. The quorum for a Plenary Meeting shall be 15 full member groups (i.e. a minimum of 15 persons representing 15 separate Full Member Organisations).
- 6.4. An Extraordinary Plenary Meeting (EPM) may be called by the Secretariat or by notice in writing by 10 Full Member Organisations. At least 14 days' notice shall be given of an Extraordinary Plenary and the notice must contain a specification of the business to be discussed at the meeting.
- 6.5. As the Public Participation Network develops, Plenary meetings will be arranged at a Municipal District level. The notice period for a Municipal District Plenary shall be the same; however the quorum shall be 6 full members (i.e. a minimum of 6 persons representing 6 separate Full Member Organisations).

7. SECRETARIAT

Waterford Public Participation Network will be overseen by a Secretariat of 11 members elected by full member organisations. The Secretariat is a flat structure (i.e. there are not elected officers). Meetings will be chaired on a rotational basis. The purpose of the Secretariat will be:

- 7.1 To ensure the aims and objectives of Waterford Public Participation Network are met;
- 7.2 To ensure that member groups are informed of developments relevant to their groups;
- 7.3 To represent member group' interests;
- 7.4 To ensure the proper functioning of the PPN between Plenary meetings;
- 7.5 To facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the Plenary
- 7.6 To support the Resource Worker/s to achieve the PPN's objectives through the implantation of the Annual Workplan;
- 7.7 To develop Waterford Public Participation Network into an effective collective voice for community groups in the Local Authority area.
- 7.8 To engage with the PPN Representatives as laid out in the PPN Representatives Charter

8. SECRETARIAT MEETINGS

- 8.1 The Secretariat will meet 9 times a year or as deemed necessary.
- 8.2 The quorum for Secretariat meetings is half or more of the current members.

- 8.3 If after 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time, a quorum is not present the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the Secretariat.
- 8.4 If at an adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within 30 minutes from the appointed start time, the members present shall be a quorum.
- 8.5 The Secretariat will strive to make decisions by consensus. In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, those present will make decisions by way of a simple majority vote.
- 8.6 Where possible all reports given at Secretariat meetings and general meetings should be written and circulated in advance.
- 8.7 The appropriate method of reporting for some meetings may be verbal.

9. REPRESENTATIVES – CRITERIA AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Waterford Public Participation Network elects representatives to sit on committees and organisations on behalf of all member organisations of the network. To be eligible for election as a representative of Waterford Public Participation Network a person must be:

- 9.1 An active member of Waterford Public Participation Network Full Member Organisation;
- 9.2 Nominated by their Member Organisation;
- 9.3 Committed to the aims, objectives and principles of Waterford Public Participation Network;
- 9.4 Willing and able to attend meetings of the relevant body that he/she is to sit on;
- 9.5 Willing to be representative of all member organisations of Waterford Public Participation Network, effectively acting in the interest of the PPN as a whole;
- 9.6 Willing to uphold, support and defend the policies, decisions and position of Waterford Public Participation Network;
- 9.7 Able to articulate, discuss, debate and negotiate on behalf of Waterford Public Participation Network;
- 9.8 Readily contactable by other member organisations.

Representatives of Waterford Public Participation Network will seek to:

- 9.9 Promote understanding of the issues and difficulties facing the community sector;

- 9.10 Present the views and policies of Waterford Public Participation Network to the meeting and ensure that they are taken into account in the decision-making process;
- 9.11 Bring issues of relevance to the community sector back to Waterford Public Participation Network for the information of all groups in the form of a written report,
- 9.12 Advise Waterford Public Participation Network of issues which require a response, formulation of policy or other action;
- 9.13 Receive instruction from Waterford Public Participation Network (through a Linkage Group/ Thematic Network, Plenary meetings, or the Secretariat) as to how the PPN should be represented;
- 9.14 Attend Waterford Public Participation Network Plenary Meetings, relevant Linkage Group/Thematic Network meetings and joint meetings between the Secretariat and PPN representatives;

10. CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE SECRETARIAT MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO RESIGN THEIR POSITION

Secretariat Members and Representatives would be required to resign their position if they:

- 10.1 Are no longer a member of the Member Organisation that nominated them;
- 10.2 No longer have the formal support of their nominating Member Organisation;
- 10.3 Fail to attend three consecutive meetings of the Secretariat and/or committees they were elected to without reasonable explanation;
- 10.4 Declare as a candidate for local, general or European elections.

11. ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS AND VOTING

- 11.1 Nominations for Waterford Public Participation Network representative roles and seats on the Secretariat shall be invited through electronic communication with member groups.
- 11.2 When the number of nominations received exceeds the number of seats available a ballot will take place.
- 11.3 Each Full Member Organisation shall be entitled to one vote only.
- 11.4 Individuals can only represent and vote on behalf of one Full Member Organisation at any Plenary meeting.

12. ELECTIONS TO THE SECRETARIAT

There are 11 seats on the Secretariat, which must be filled as follows:

- 12.1 Full Member Organisations from each of the municipal districts of the Local Authority area elects a representative from their area (*there are 5 MDs in Waterford: Comeragh, Dungarvan/Lismore, Tramore & Waterford City West, Waterford City East and Waterford City South.*
- 12.2 Full Member organisations which operate on a Local Authority area-wide basis or across more than one municipal district elect one representative;
- 12.3 Full Member Organisations from each of three electoral colleges: Community and Voluntary; Environmental and Social Inclusion. Two representatives from each.
- 12.4 Election is for a maximum term of five years (the Plenary may decide on a shorter term);
- 12.5 No person may serve more than two consecutive terms on the Secretariat;
- 12.6 Waterford Public Participation Network will strive to achieve a gender balance on the Secretariat;
- 12.7 To help prevent loss of all experience from the group at one time, it is preferable if the Secretariat is renewed in line with Section 6 of the PPN Handbook 2020.
- 12.8 Members of the Secretariat who are standing down are eligible for re-election; however no person is eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms on the Secretariat.
- 12.9 Should a member of the Secretariat be required to resign, or otherwise be unable to continue in their role, the Secretariat shall contact full member groups of the relevant Municipal District or College seeking nominations for a new representative, who may be elected at a Plenary meeting, or agreed through electronic correspondence.

13. ELECTION OF PPN REPRESENTATIVES

A current list of Waterford Public Participation Network representative positions is shown on www.waterfordppn.ie

- 13.1 The criteria for and responsibilities of representatives of Waterford Public Participation Network are set out in Section 9.
- 13.2 Representatives of Waterford Public Participation Network will initially be elected at a Plenary meeting, and as Linkage Groups/Thematic Networks (see Appendix 2) are formed, by the relevant Linkage Group/Thematic Network;

- 13.3 Election is for a maximum term of five years (the Plenary or the Linkage Group/Thematic Network (see Appendix 2) may decide on a shorter term);
- 13.4 Should a representative be required to resign, or otherwise be unable to continue in their role, the Secretariat shall contact the relevant Linkage Group/Thematic Network (see Appendix 2) seeking nominations for a new representative, who may be elected at a meeting of the Linkage Group/Thematic Network, or agreed through electronic correspondence with the Linkage Group/Thematic Network.
- 13.5 Members of the Secretariat of Waterford Public Participation Network may be elected to a representative role.
- 13.6 It is preferable that a person would hold only one PPN representative role, and a representative may not hold both a seat on the Local Community Development Committee and a Strategic Policy Committee, or seats on two Strategic Policy Committees.
- 13.7 Representatives of Waterford Public Participation Network who are standing down are eligible for re-election; however no person is eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same role.

14. FINANCES

- 14.1 Waterford Public Participation Network finances will be overseen and monitored by the Secretariat and will be hosted by a Waterford City & County PPN CLG with an agreed MOU/SLA in line with their financial policy; however the Secretariat shall operate robust financial controls with regard to all income and expenditure.
- 14.2 True accounts shall be kept of all sums of money received and expended by the PPN and accounts will be made available to all members prior to the Plenary Meeting.
- 14.3 The PPN may introduce an annual member group fee at the Plenary Meeting sufficient to cover costs associated with the work of the organisation. If this arises, there will be a differential rate for funded and non-funded organisations.

15. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

- 15.1 Any Member Organisation may put forward a motion to amend the Constitution.
- 15.2 Motions to amend the Constitution must be made in writing to the Secretariat 14 days in advance of a Plenary Meeting.
- 15.3 Member Organisations must be informed of any motions to amend the Constitution at least 7 days in advance of a Plenary meeting.

- 15.4 Motions to amend the Constitution must be discussed at a Plenary Meeting and shall require a two-thirds majority of Full Member groups present and entitled to vote;
- 15.5 The Secretariat will ensure that a formal review of Waterford Public Participation Network constitution will take place at least every 3 years.

Appendix I

As of 1st of January 2021 Waterford Public Participation Network has representation on the following bodies, and will deal with requests from other groups for community representation should they arise:

- Joint Policing Committee (JPC)
- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Strategic Policy Committee (SPCs)

- Economic Development & Enterprise SPC
- Environmental Protection SPC
- Housing, Community, Culture, Sport & Recreation SPC
- Planning & Corporate SPC
- Transportation & Infrastructure SPC

Other Boards/Committees

- Connecting for Life
- Decade of Commemorations Committee
- Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG)
- Healthy Waterford
- Heritage Forum
- Social Prescribing Steering Group
- South East Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force
- St Declan's Way
- Traveller Interagency Group (TIG)
- Waterford Heritage Forum
- Waterford Leader Partnership
- Waterford Migrant Integration Forum
- Waterford Purple Flag Working Group
- Waterford Restorative Practice Network
- Waterford Sports Partnership

Appendix II - Explanation of Terms

Social Inclusion College

A Social Inclusion Organisation is one whose main activity is working to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment using community development approaches to build sustainable communities, where values of equality and inclusion are promoted and human rights are respected. It does not include formal education (schools colleges), or large institutional health or social service providers.

Environmental College

Environmental Organisation is one whose primary objectives and activities is environmental (i.e. ecological) protection and/or environmental sustainability and includes Green Communities Groups that work to empower community groups to improve their local environment, enhance biodiversity and reduce their resource usage and local Environmental Action Networks that work to promote the well-being, protection and enhancement of the environment.

Community & Voluntary College

A Community & Voluntary Organisation is one whose primary activity is other than social inclusion or environmental protection and/or environmental sustainability and amongst others covers groups working in the following areas: community development; tidy towns; arts and culture and sport.

Linkage Group /Thematic Network

Community Linkage Groups/Thematic Networks are made up of community groups who have registered an interest in a particular issue or committee. They offer an opportunity for groups to come together, network, exchange ideas, get informed, discuss important issues affecting the community and feed into policy making.

Secretariat

The Group elected by the PPN to coordinate the activities of the PPN and communicating and disseminating information with the PPN membership

Plenary

A Plenary is a meeting of all the groups registered with the PPN

Municipal District

There are five municipal districts/areas in Waterford and they are:

Comeragh

Dungarvan/Lismore

Tramore/Waterford City West

Waterford City East

Waterford City South

(Tramore/Waterford City West, Waterford City East & Waterford City South combined are also referred to as the Metro MD)