

County Wicklow PPN

Minutes of Secretariat meeting held 11th June 2020 by Zoom Call

Attendees: Aoibhinn McCloy, Gertie Salley, Grainne Quinn, Helen Howes (Chair), Mai Quaid, Phyllis Farrell and Stephen Kearon.

Apologies: Aisling Foran, Diana Gallagher and Niamh Wogan.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

Minutes of the 29th April 2020 were approved on Gertie's proposal and seconded by Mai.

2. Correspondence

The following correspondence were read into the minutes:

- Dept CVSP6/2020 – Travel and Subsistence for PPNs
- Dept Email – which requested from each PPN an outline of how the PPN as a whole and the secretariat can continue to operate over the coming months.
Helen outlined her proposed response to this Dept email to the meeting. Reply to outline work plan for the remainder of the year and reference to changes in work plan and practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action:

Helen to prepare and submit email to the Department by the 15th June.

3. Finance

Helen presented the May Finance Report, to the meeting and thanked the Secretariat for approving the upfront payment to the Website Developer.

Finance report approved: proposed by Mai and seconded by Phyllis.

4. Workplan 2020

Membership & Re-registration

Grainne informed the meeting that one group had joined the PPN since the April meeting: Kilcoole Community Development Association.

She also informed the meeting that the re-registration of member groups was continuing and there were 20 groups still to re-register. The following was agreed in relation to re-registration:

- Re-registration of member groups would be conducted every 3 year.

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- In relation to group still to re-register - It was agreed that a hard copy letter will be sent to them. The letter will encourage groups to re-register and give a 60-day cut off point after which a group's details would be removed from our mailing list.
- It was also agreed that group member details in the PPN constitution should be reviewed to take account of the re-registration process.

Action:

Grainne to prepare and circulate the hard copy letter to groups still to re-register.

Meet the Elected Representatives for your Municipal District.

Helen outlined the plan to move these events online and hold them in the Autumn, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat were asked for feedback and suggestions in relation to the holding of these events. The following were suggested:

- Organise the events as a moderated Zoom call
- Open the zoom call to member groups
- Run each event for max 2 hours
- Ask Elected Representatives to commit to join for at least the first hour
- Ask member groups to submit questions prior to the event
- PPN to put a few questions to the Elected Representatives
- Questions to be circulated to Elected Reps prior to the Zoom call.
- A few groups to be selected to put their questions to the Elected Reps during the Zoom call
- Groups encouraged to use the chat function during the call to raise questions/issues.

Action: Helen/Grainne to continue to progress work on these events.

Secretariat Meetings

The possibility of returning to 'in person' Secretariat meetings was raised and discussed. The meeting was informed of the move by the County Council to hold 'in person' committee meetings at the Wicklow County Campus.

Action: Helen to contact the Council and the Campus to explore holding the next Secretariat meeting in person at Wicklow County Campus.

Policies

Helen informed the meeting that the Procurement Policy was circulated to member groups for feedback. No feedback was received by the closing date (2nd June 2020) therefore, the Procurement Policy was adopted for Co. Wicklow PPN.

The meeting was also asked to consider the Co. Wicklow PPN Representatives Code of Conduct, which was circulated with the agenda for the meeting. The meeting agreed that this draft policy be considered further by the Secretariat and that feedback be submitted to Helen/Grainne within a week of this meeting.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the discussion in relation to returning to physical meetings there was some discussion on other possible policies that should be drafted:

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- Working in a different way due to the Pandemic, templates for protecting ourselves, staff and reps; proper protocols and procedures in place in relation to attending meetings. Aoibhinn offered to share documents Wicklow Travellers Group were preparing in this space. There was some discussion at the meeting in relation to the role of the HR subgroup on some of these issues.
- Communications

Action:

- Members of the Secretariat to review the draft Co. Wicklow PPN Representatives Code of Conduct policy and submit feedback to Helen/Grainne within a week.
- Aoibhinn to send Wicklow Travellers Group policies and procedures relevant to this discuss to Helen/Grainne
- HR subgroup to consider role in relation to staff working procedures etc in light of COVID-19
- Helen to contact Reps to reassure them that attendance at meetings on behalf of the PPN was entirely up to themselves under the current circumstances – ‘if you don’t feel comfortable attending in person don’t go’

Plenary and Election of PPN Representatives

The meeting was informed that the call for nominations for the vacant PPN seats was open until noon on Friday 12th June. They were also notified about the number of nominations received to date in respect of the vacant seats. Helen told the meeting as the number of nominations received in respect of the Community & Voluntary seat on the LCDC exceeded the number of seats available an election would be required. Helen also informed the meeting that the Department confirmed the timing of replacing existing reps who had completed two terms on the LCDC since its foundation. Helen informed the meeting of the plans to hold this election online, in light of the previous decision by the Secretariat to explore holding the Plenary remotely (zoom call).

The meeting agreed that it was important not to leave Rep seats vacant.

Questions were raised around the compliance, with the PPN constitution, of the plans for online voting and a zoom call Plenary. This issue was discussed at length and it was agreed, proposed by Stephen and seconded by Aoibhinn, that:

Co Wicklow PPN seek advice from the Department in relation to the holding of a virtual Plenary.

Action:

- Helen to contact the Department to seek clarification in relation to holding the Rep election online and holding a Plenary remotely.

PPN National Conference

Helen informed the meeting that a decision has been made to postpone the PPN National Conference until 2021 and that discussions were still underway to find a suitable date in 2021:

- Feb was suggested, but with some opposition, also some reluctance to postpone until Oct 2021
- A move back to a Thurs/Fri conference is also being considered

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Action: Helen to discuss possible dates with the Arklow Bay Hotel and work with the National Sub-group to finalise a date in 2021 for the PPN National Conference.

Update from Sub-groups

COVID-19 Response

Helen presented an update on the County Community Response Forum. The Forum is now meeting every two weeks. The call line is now reporting fewer calls. Decisions in relation to the continuation of the Call Line will be made nationally. Helen will continue to represent the PPN on this Forum.

Disability Awareness Working group

The Secretariat was given an update of the collaborative work being undertaken by this group:

- the development of resources for community groups to raise awareness of disability issues and support them to work towards making their facilities/services more accessible and inclusive.
- Accessing DFI training online.
- Bray Disability website – when launched, sharing it and inputting to it.
- Raising awareness amongst local Elected Reps of challenges posed to people with disabilities by the changes proposed in town scapes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action: Helen/Grainne to continue to work as part of this group.

Social Inclusion Week

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the Social Inclusion Week will not go ahead as originally planned. Work will now focus on the development of a County Social Inclusion Facebook Page and using that vehicle to raise social inclusion issues and share relevant information.

Action: Helen/Grainne to continue to progress this work

Environmental

The Meeting was informed of the work undertaken by the PPN staff and the two Environmental Reps on the CABA SPC to prepare a submission to the Wicklow County Council Tree Management Strategy. A survey was prepared and circulated to PPN member groups and on Facebook seeking their input which would inform the submission. Helen told the meeting that 255 responses were received and that the focus was now on preparing the submission based on the information gathered.

Helen also informed the Secretariat that work is continuing with Jim Callery, WCC to explore how to set up a system to map community and other activity within the County against the Sustainable Development Goals.

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Action:

- Helen/Grainne to work with the CABA SPC Reps to prepare and submit a submission to the WCC Tree Management Strategy.
- Helen/Grainne to work with Jim to progress the mapping project.

NAG Report

Helen updated the meeting on discussions/developments from the National Advisory Group:

- PPN User Handbook - The first part of the Handbook will be ready for circulation in July. It will not be printed but will be available in soft copy. The Handbook will be presented in sections, to facilitate easy access to relevant information.
- PPN Annual Reports - most of the PPNs have submitted their annual reports to the Department.
- PPN 2020 Underspends - Concerns have been raised by some PPNs around 2020 funding underspends as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions on physical distancing. PPNs are asking if underspends can be carried over to 2021. The Department have agreed to issue a letter on this, it is expected that the letter will encourage PPNs to spend in accordance with their original budget if possible and were underspends do occur they will accommodate due to the very specific circumstances of 2020.
- 2021 PPN Funding - The Department have confirmed that 2021 funding for the Support Workers is in the budget. However, as with all public projects, it is subject to the funding allocation to the Dept.
- A National PPN Coordinator position – The Dept. have stated that there is currently no funding available for this position.
- National Secretariat Network – the Dept have agreed to extend the contract with the Facilitator of this Network by 2 months.
- GDPR issues - arising as a result of centralised emails sent to all PPN member groups. This issue was raised. The Dept state that the need to circulate the information during a National Emergency necessitated this action. The Dept are working with their Data Protection Office to assess PPN structures and come up with a framework and policies.

Collaboration with IEN/IHREC Funding

Helen informed the meeting of her discussions with Attracta Ui Bhroin. Attracta approached Co. Wicklow PPN to ask if she could work with us in relation to a project she has submitted to IHREC for funding. The project aims to work with disadvantaged groups to; identify issues affecting their representation in the planning process, and to ensure their voice is heard as part of this process.

Action: Helen to continue to liaise with Attracta.

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Website Development & Other IT issues

The meeting was informed that work on this project has begun. The meeting also discussed the established of PPN email addressed for members of the Secretariat and Reps. It was agreed that PPN emails be set up for members of the Secretariat.

Action:

Helen/Grainne to continue to work with the Website developer.
Helen/Grainne to work with Stephen on email addresses.

Training

Supercharge Your Self-care

The meeting was informed that the first of the planned six session will commence on Wed 17th June at 11am Avril Bailey is working with the PPN on this training and it will be delivered via Zoom call.

Group Governance Training & Resources

The Secretariat was informed that discussions are underway with Colette Bennett, SJI in relation to the development and delivery of online training for member groups. This work would be delivered in place of the traditional Training Fair in 2020.

Action: Helen/Grainne to continue to work on this project.

5. Date for Next Secretariat Meeting

Possible dates identified:

Monday 13th July afternoon

Wed 15th July afternoon

Action: Helen to explore the possibility of holding this meeting in the Wicklow County Campus or in the Brockagh.