



**Submission to Wicklow County Council Elected Members:
Re the possibility of establishing usage charges on Co Wicklow
Recycling Centres**

By

County Wicklow Public Participation Network

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Introducing County Wicklow Public Participation Network

County Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in July 2014 under the directive of the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and in accordance with legislation in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Section 46). Public Participation Networks were established to be an independent structure that would become the main link through which local authorities connect with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in a process to facilitate communities to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system.

Co Wicklow PPN has **402** diverse member groups, some of these groups are networks in their own right. PPN representatives serve as a voice for the community on structures including: the Local Community Development Committee, all of the Wicklow County Council Strategic Policy Committees, Wicklow County Childcare Committee, Co Wicklow Children & Young People's Services Committee, Co Wicklow Local Sports & Recreation Partnership, Co Wicklow Volunteer Centre, County Wicklow Partnership, South East Fisheries & Local Action Group, Ring a Link, Wicklow Heritage Forum, and Co Wicklow Joint Policing Committee. PPN Representatives strive to ensure that the needs of the community sector are prioritised within local policy processes.

Consultation with Communities

Throughout, May 2022, Co Wicklow PPN in collaboration with Wicklow County Council held consultations across the 5 Municipal Districts of Co Wicklow, asking people "What is your vision for your community?" We asked them to consider this question under the following headings:

- Environment & Sustainability
- Health (physical & mental)
- Work, Economy, & Resources
- Social & Community Development
- Participation, Democracy & Good Governance
- Values, Culture & Meaning



The purpose of these consultations was twofold:

- Inform the development of the new Co Wicklow Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)
- Prepare the new Co Wicklow PPN Vision for Community Wellbeing Statement. This document is used by the PPN to help to monitor and identify actions that can be undertaken by local and national government as well as by communities to work towards our shared vision.

We are currently documenting the responses we have received, To date, we have gathered information from 9 workshops (8 held in person and one held online) and through an online survey.

We received approximately 2,000 inputs (ideas/issues/suggestions) from over 300 people who represented 74 community groups & networks.

This submission is based on what we heard during these consultations

At the end of this submission, we have included a brief section on connecting Our Vision for Community Wellbeing to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development

Concern for the current Climate & Biodiversity crisis and care of the environment was a predominant topic throughout all the consultation platforms and it spanned the six wellbeing headings that formed the basis of the consultations.

Waste management factored significantly in many conversations. People talked about the need for producers & suppliers to reduce packaging, the significance of reducing consumption where possible, and the importance of encouraging people to reuse and recycle. People called for more incentives and opportunities to encourage recycling.

What People Specifically Said:

“(We need) initiatives and incentives to encourage recycling”.

“Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!”

“Incentivise the return of glass bottles”.

“(We need) initiatives to stop dumping e.g., mattress amnesties, heavy plastics i.e. toys”.

“Bottle banks and recycle collection needed in Aughrim and every local community”.

“(We need) regular incentives to reenergize people to reduce reuse and recycle”.

“(We need) community schemes supported by WCC – compost – garden waste – wood chipper”

“Developing smaller recycling centres in each town”.

“More Recycle Units in more Towns”

“(We need) a depot for recycling furniture etc”.

“Retailers and manufacturers packaging must be recyclable and compostable”.

“We should reinforce sanctions on littering and dumping”

*(*Some of these statements were repeated across all the consultation sessions)*

The National Climate Action Plan includes specific targets to combat waste including reductions in household waste, landfill reliance, plastics, and food waste. It also sets out ambitious recycling targets for municipal plastic and packaging waste. Policy frameworks are to be developed in 2022 to encourage and promote the circular economy as it is understood that recycling offers a way to keep useful resources working for us and avoids the need to use new materials through mining metals, cutting down trees or drilling for oil (Dept. Environment, Climate Action, & Communications).

We believe that charging people to use the counties recycling centres will not lead to the targets in the National Climate Action Plan being met. It will not encourage a change in behaviour for those that do not currently recycle, and it will cause an added financial burden to those who are trying to do the right thing. In the current cost of living crisis this could have disastrous consequences as some people are struggling to meet their regular daily financial costs and are consequently having to choose which bills to pay. Applying charges to use the recycling centres will not incentivise people to recycle their waste and could be a false economy should it lead to increased dumping

Co Wicklow PPN hopes that the County Wicklow Elected Members finds this submission informative and useful and that you will consider the voice of these communities when asked to consider possible levies for using the recycling centre

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Global Goals, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are a **universal plan of action for people and planet** to be achieved by the year 2030. These 17 goals aim to end poverty, combat climate change and ensure that we p13leave peaceful, just and equal societies for future generations.

These goals are **universal** in nature, applying to developed and developing countries alike, and place sustainable development at their core.



Connecting the Local to the Global

Working towards realising our community vision for wellbeing has a direct impact on achieving Ireland's targets for the sustainable development goals

