



Co Wicklow Public Participation Network

Communications Policy

1.Responsibility for approval of policy	<i>Secretariat</i>
2.Responsibility for implementation	<i>Resource Worker, Secretariat, Host</i>
3.Responsibility for ensuring review	<i>Secretariat</i>
4. Date of Adoption	<i>6/12/2022</i>
5. Date for Review	

Co. Wicklow Public Participation Network is committed to having a communication policy to support and guide effective and positive communication with all our stakeholders.

Communications Objectives:

Co. Wicklow PPN's main aim through communications is

- To raise awareness of who we are and what we do
- To facilitate communication with and between all stakeholders *.
- To support PPN Reps in their role as community representatives on county policy and decision-making committees
- To act as an information hub for local community and voluntary, environmental, and social inclusion groups and organisations
- To facilitate communication to support building the capacity of community & voluntary groups in the county.
- To help us achieve our overall mission and objectives
- To promote and further our mission, objectives and principles

** PPN Stakeholders:*

- *Member groups*
- *Representatives*
- *Employees*
- *Partner organisations*
- *Public Representatives*
- *Broader Community & Voluntary sector in Co. Wicklow*
- *Funders*
- *Regulators*

Guiding Principles of Co. Wicklow PPN Communications

Co. Wicklow PPN communications should:

- Be relevant, accurate, sensitive, and timely
- Be open and honest
- Be clear and cordial
- respect confidentiality
- use plain English
- reflect the views of Co. Wicklow PPN and not the individual
- be non-partisan
- not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, or racially offensive
- Enable meaningful engagement with stakeholders.
- Reflects the principles of confidentiality, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and other relevant legislation.

Guiding Procedures of Co. Wicklow PPN Communications

PPN's are apolitical organisations. Co. Wicklow PPN Representatives and Secretariat members may not use membership to promote party political messages.

All communication with Co. Wicklow PPN should in the first instance be directed to the Resource Worker or Support Worker.

All formal correspondence must be sent to the Resource Worker/Support Worker for recording and for distribution to the Secretariat, as appropriate.

All members of Co. Wicklow PPN are encouraged to communicate with other members of the Network in an open, transparent and positive manner.

Groups can use the PPN social media platform and regular news update to publicise details of their project/activities. Information can be submitted to these platforms through the PPN Resource Worker or Support Worker.

Decisions about the information displayed on the PPN social media platform and in the News, update are decided in the first instance by the Resource Worker/Support Worker, who can refer the decision to the Secretariat if necessary

Email addresses and other contact details of Co. Wicklow PPN member groups will not be shared without first receiving permission

The format for some communication may vary to suit the needs of the target groups or individuals.

Co. Wicklow PPN Representatives should be guided by the Representatives Charter and Code of Conduct in how they communicate in their role as a PPN Representative. Co. Wicklow PPN's stance on an issue/topic must be clearly communicated to Reps. This could be through informal communication ahead of meeting or through Pre-meetings of Reps.

In all communications, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a key consideration. For further guidance please see Co. Wicklow PPN Data Protection Policy.

Thematic Networks and Electoral College reps will decide on a mode/s of communication with their linkage group/electoral college members (while taking account of Co. Wicklow PPN's other relevant policies).

While the PPN encourages the use of online communication the PPN will make specific efforts to communicate with members who are not online

When speaking as members/representatives of the PPN all communication should include a declaration as to whether person is reflecting own, own group or PPN stance when speaking.

Methods/Types of Communication

The communications principles and procedures outlined in above apply equally to all forms of communication used by Co. Wicklow PPN.

Co. Wicklow PPN will communicate with all member groups through, but not limited to, the following methods:

Plenary

The Plenary is a meeting for all Member Groups in a PPN. The Plenary is the ultimate decision-making body of the PPN on operational and local policy issues.

The Plenary delegates the administrative and day-to-day functions of the PPN to the PPN Secretariat.

Plenary meetings are an ideal forum for Member Groups to meet and network and to hear about matters of interest to them. It is also a really important meeting for the PPN as a whole as it sets the direction for the PPN.

Work and financial reports and plans are presented to members at this meeting for discussion and ratification.

For more details on the organisation of the Plenary see Co. Wicklow PPN Constitution.

Emails (including group e-mails)

Email is the method of choice for Co. Wicklow PPN communications as it saves both time and money and provides a clear audit trail. Therefore, all communications, including our regular news update, will be sent by email. In exceptional circumstances stakeholders will be contacted by letter post when email is not possible / available.

All emails should:

- Contain a title in the subject field
- Be signed off formally with the name of the author and contact information.

Group emails should not contain contact information or mailing list details.

SMS text

Co. Wicklow PPN will use SMS messaging primarily to send 'reminder' messages to members of PPN events and voting deadlines.

Regular E-news updates

A regular e-news update will be used to meet our objective of acting as an information hub for local community and voluntary, environmental, and social inclusion groups and organisations.

This update will be sent via mass email to all contacts of member groups and to other stakeholders who have expressed an interest in receiving this mailing.

The update is also uploaded to our Website.

Mail

Wicklow Travellers Group is the postal address for Co. Wicklow PPN.

Incoming: All post is received by the Resource Worker who will ensure that it is opened promptly and dealt with in an appropriate manner. Where appropriate, documents received by post will be scanned and circulated and filed in electronic format.

Outgoing: All outgoing mail should be printed on headed paper, signed and dated. A digital or paper copy should be retained and filed appropriately.

Phone

Co. Wicklow PPN staff both have mobile phones. Voice and text messaging services are installed to receive messages when they are not available to take a call, or the office is closed. Staff will check for messages and return calls promptly where a number has been left.

Meetings, Training/Information sessions & Consultations

From time-to-time Co. Wicklow PPN engages stakeholders in meetings, training/information session and /or consultations. These may take many forms and be formal or informal in structure.

Events will always have a specific objective which will be clearly communicated.

Resources presented at meetings/events will be shared via email and website. Minutes of meetings and consultations will be recorded and shared with those in attendance and in line with the objective of the meeting/event.

Social media platforms

Facebook is the only social media platform currently used by Co. Wicklow PPN. The Facebook page is managed by the Resource Worker and Support Worker.

All Co. Wicklow social media interaction will be from our authorised social media account and will be managed by the Resource Worker/Support Worker.

All posts will be limited to factual information and social media will NOT be used to interact, answer questions, express opinions nor issue 'likes'.

All Co. Wicklow PPN Staff or Representatives who uses personal social media accounts to communicate about Co. Wicklow PPN work they do, should make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the PPN. They should use a disclaimer such as: "The views

expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the membership of Co. Wicklow PPN.

The Co. Wicklow PPN website (<https://countywicklowppn.ie/>)

The official Co. Wicklow PPN website: www.countywicklowppn.ie is managed by E-Power Design. The PPN staff have administrative access and are responsible for managing content.

Co. Wicklow PPN will maintain an up-to-date website. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Details of PPN Meetings – Minutes and reports
- Details of Committees that PPN Representatives sit on
- PPN membership directory
- Online membership form
- PPN policies and procedures
- Submissions made
- Finance and Audit Reports
- New updates
- Details of Funding opportunities and events
- Details of any significant on-going projects with up-to-date reports.
- Additional information may be added as and when deemed appropriate by the staff/Secretariat.
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Press – Local Newspapers and Radio

The Resource Worker will be the main point of contact for the press and may contact the media if Co. Wicklow PPN wants to provide information or make a statement relating to its work.

In the course of day-to-day work, the Resource Worker will draft and release, press releases and other routine media communications. The Guiding Procedures of Co. Wicklow PPN Communications as outlined in this Policy should be adhered to when preparing a press release.

Advertising – Posters & Flyers

Co. Wicklow PPN primarily advertise upcoming events via online means. For some specific events hard copy posters & flyers are produced and circulated through various channels depending on the event (e.g., Libraries, local community noticeboards, local retailers and community groups).

Communications in a Crisis

A crisis is any situation concerning the PPN that is threatening or could threaten to harm people or property, seriously interrupt the work of the PPN, significantly damage the PPN's reputation and /or negatively impact the financial viability of the Network. In responding to any crisis, the PPN will:

- Head off any potential crisis through the established risk analysis procedures
- Ensure that the key spokesperson is the most appropriate person to deal with the specific crisis. Note: the Resource Worker is the primary contact for the organisation but may not necessarily be the best spokesperson depending on the particulars of any potential crisis
- Notify all Secretariat members
- Establish if the crisis is being discussed in the public domain. If so, formulate a plan to monitor what is being said and prepare a formal response
- If approached by the media or other third parties before a formal response is finalised a variation on one of the following statements may be appropriated:
 - *The Secretariat of Co. Wicklow PPN have been made aware of the situation regarding An investigation is underway, and a formal statement will be released by the Secretariat in the coming days. Co Wicklow PPN remain committed to their mission, objectives and core principles.*
 - *This is an evolving situation. There are a number of statutory organisations involved in the investigation and it would be inappropriate to comment at this time. Co. Wicklow PPN are committed to being as open and transparent as possible and will release a full and frank formal statement in due course.*
 - *The recent events have resulted in The Secretariat of Co. Wicklow PPN are assessing the impact of this on the organisation and are formulating a plan to Co. Wicklow PPN remain committed to serving their mission and member groups.*

Complaints and Grievance:

Any complaints or grievances arising from communications activities, either internal or external, involving any stakeholders operating under this document, will be dealt with in line with the Co. Wicklow PPN Complaint Policy.