

County Wicklow PPN End of Year Report up to 31st December 2023

Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 New member Groups – Total membership now: 422 • A list of all member groups is available on our website
Networking/Working Locally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging Engagement with Local Decision Making: Circulated WCC and MD Meeting dates and agendas to encourage public engagement with local decision making throughout the year. • Co Wicklow Volunteer Awards: Sponsored & presented the Ukrainian Response Special Project Award at the Co Wicklow Volunteer Awards 23rd Feb. • Disability & Inclusion Work: Actively participated in the WCC Disability & Inclusion Steering Committee. Members of the group were invited to introduce the DISC, its work and the development of the Toolkit for Community Groups at the Community Catch Up Meetings. A Wicklow Disability Strategy was developed during the year and launched at an event during Social Inclusion Week. A new committee page for DISC has been added to the PPN website under the representation & committees tag. • International Womens' Day: Collaborated with County Wicklow Partnership to run an event to celebrate International Women's Day 8 March. Over 75 women from diverse geographic and social communities discussed what community means to them. Wicklow PPN provided an update on what has happened since the community consultation held last year to develop a Vision for Community Wellbeing and feed into the Local Economic & Community Plan • Attended the Women of Wicklow Social Inclusion Network, in collaboration with Glencree Welcomes Refugees & the Women from the Sheds in Ballyraine event in The Colour Club 21 Oct. Interesting & welcoming conversations took place with women from Rwanda, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Afghanistan, Georgia, and Syria. • Municipal District Meetings/Community Catch Ups: Arklow MD 19/4, Baltinglass MD 26/4., Bray MD 3/5, Greystones MD 10/5, and Wicklow MD 17/5. Meetings were held in collaboration with WCC to provide feedback on the Vision for Community Wellbeing/Local Economic Community Plan consultations held in 2022 and as part of the Dormant Accounts Funded Engagement Project Pilot. Information also provided about the Wicklow Disability & Inclusion Committee, Wicklow Age Friendly Programme, and Wicklow Volunteer Centre. Groups were also invited to provide information about themselves and their activities. • Wicklow Age Friendly Programme: Introduced the Wicklow Age Friendly Coordinator, the programme, Strategy, and the Older People's Council at the Community Catch Up Meetings. Encouraging engagement with the Older People's Council. • Climate Change & Biodiversity: Met with WCC Climate Action Officer to support the roll out of consultations on the Wicklow Climate Action Plan. Met with newly appointed WCC Community Climate Action Officer and the newly appointed Biodiversity Officer Also met Environmental Awareness Officer and Assistant EAO. Community Climate Action Officer provided information about the Community Climate Action Fund at the PPN's summer & winter members meeting. • Social Inclusion Network Group (SING): As a direct result of the Dormant Accounts Funded Engagement Project work, a Social Inclusion Network Group has been formed as a subgroup of the Local Community Development Committee. This is also an action in the new Local Economic & Community Plan. The purpose of the network is to provide a forum for regular communication between marginalised communities/groups working with a social inclusion remit at local level and the local authority and other support agencies as well as providing an opportunity for networking amongst all member

organisations. It will also examine and discuss relevant plans and programmes and review their impact in the community as well as identifying and addressing any gaps/needs in service provision. The group met in July and October and will meet again in January 2024. More information on SING is available on the PPN website on the committees page.

- **Public Sector Duty:** PPN team attended a meeting to review the WCC Draft Assessment of Equality & Human Rights Issues for use in their ongoing implementation of the Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty
- **Comhairle na nOg:** Participated in the Wicklow Comhairle na nOg Steering Committee Meetings. Wicklow Comhairle Coordinator presented the Youth Participation Empowerment Deck as a method to facilitate youth engagement at the National PPN Conference. Attended the Wicklow Youth Summit.

Networking/Working Regionally & Nationally

- **PPN Conference:** PPN National Conference 2023 took place on 5 & 6 Oct. 200 delegates from across the country represented PPN Secretariat & Reps, local authorities, local government reps and national government in the Arklow Bay Hotel. Presentations were provided on the National PPN Roadmap, the Westmeath Protocol. A social inclusion focused excursion took delegates to Beyond the Trees Avondale, while a community & voluntary focused excursion brought delegates to Aughrim Sports & Leisure Centre to meet many of the voluntary groups working in Aughrim. Environmental interest groups took a walk around Arklow to learn about coastal erosion, the wastewater treatment plant, and the harbour to headways project, while heritage interest groups had a guided tour of the Arklow maritime museum, the Abbey lane excavation site and mural and the Arklow castle, as well as finding out about Arklow's pyramid and pottery heritage. A community expo provided delegates with the opportunity to meet some of Wicklow PPN's member groups from across the county. Workshop topics included: Clare Anti-Poverty Strategy, Waterford Community Safety Partnership, Tipperary Community Climate Coaches, How we Network and Communications. Speeches, presentations, workshop materials and photographs are available on the PPN website.
- **Dormant Accounts Funded Engagement Project** Wicklow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was 1 of 4 LCDCs that received funding from this scheme. Wicklow PPN worked in partnership with WCC and Dr Harriet Emerson to identify and pilot engagement strategies that will encourage the participation of harder to reach communities in local planning & decision making. As a direct result of this work WCC produced a "Wicklow LECP – Delivering for Communities – from Policy to Action", a booklet that links the Local Economic & Community Plan to direct & visible development in the county. The new Social Inclusion Network Group was also developed as a sub-group of the LCDC. Wicklow's work was presented at the showcase event run by Pobal and the Dept Rural & Community Development in October and at the national Community & Voluntary Civic Forum meeting in November. It is also included in the new edition of "A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning & Decision Making".
- **PPN Communications & Publicity Campaign:** Provided Wicklow Case Studies to be included in a national PPN Re-launch campaign. Wicklow was one of four PPNs who had projects included in the campaign, resulting in a delegation from Wicklow attending a Dept. Rural & Community Development (DRCD) photo shoot. DRCD, through Alice PR have devised a uniformity across PPN logos, developed a national PPN logo, and developed a PPN information animation. PPN promotional materials were launched across various local & national media platforms.
- **Minister of State Visit:** Joe O' Brien, Minister of State at the Dept. Rural & Community Development, and the Dept. of Social Protection with special responsibility for Community

Development & Charities and the Dept. Children, Equality, Disability Integration & Youth with special responsibility for integration met with PPN Staff & Representatives in CEART, Wicklow Town 25/5. The minister showed particular interest in the PPN's hosting arrangement with Wicklow Travellers Group and how well it works.

- **PPN Workers Network:** Attended PPN Worker Meetings & linked with PPN Workers in other counties to provide peer learning, shared experience & support. Attended a 2-day retreat for PPN Workers in Athlone for training, peer support & networking. Collaborated with colleagues to submit a response to recommendations made in the National PPN Review.
- **Southeast Regional PPN Network:** Worked with PPN colleagues in Waterford, Wexford, Tipperary, Carlow, & Kilkenny to identify and collaborate on mutually beneficial projects including running a workshop with the Law Reform Commission to inform and hear members views on the consultation on the responsibility of unincorporated groups as well as supporting our PPN Representatives with training to help them be effective at local authority committee meetings.
- **Irish Environmental Network:** PPN Development Officer attended an Irish Environmental Network webinar on The Rights of Nature movement in Ireland. This meeting focused on the work of PPNs within this movement and included presentations from Clare, Tipperary, Galway, and Monaghan PPNs
- **PPN National Advisory Group:** Attend meetings as 1 of the 3 PPN Worker Representatives on this committee chaired by the Dept. Rural & Community Development. Also participated in **Annual Report Sub-Group & Review Oversight Committee**
- **PPN National Secretariat Network:** A Secretariat member attended regular meetings & participated in sub-groups of this peer support network.
- A representative from Wicklow Travellers Group (PPN Hosting Organisation) attended a Dept. Rural & Community Development webinar on the different forms of PPN hosting arrangements across the country 25 Oct. A recording of this session will be made available on the department's website.
- **PPN National Housing Reps Network:** Newly established in the autumn, this is expected to provide support & networking opportunities for PPN Reps that sit on local authority Housing Strategic Policy Committees

PPN Meetings/Specific Work

- **Strategic Plan Development:** A Strategic Plan sub-group of the Secretariat was formed, and a tender for support to develop the Plan was issued in March. Dr Harriet Emmerson was engaged. She issued a survey to member groups & other PPN Stakeholders in May. Results were shared with the PPN Secretariat & Representatives and a draft Strategic Plan was prepared which was adopted at the PPN Winter Plenary (members meeting)
- **Secretariat:** The Secretariat continued to advise and support the Resource Worker & Support Worker. Meetings were held in Jan, March, May, July, September and November along with Emails, texts and calls when further help was needed.
- **Liaison Sub-Group:** A group consisting of 1 rep each from the Secretariat, the hosting organisation and WCC along with the PPN Coordinator. The group ensures that all local PPN Stakeholders are informed of the PPN's development & progress. 2 meetings held
- **PPN Policy Development:** This subgroup of the Secretariat reviewed the PPN Constitution in relation to membership criteria, the Election Policy in relation to the voting process and Cyber Security Policies. The Service Level Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding for 2023 were finalised and signed by relevant parties.
- **Summer Plenary (Members Meeting):** 29 Wicklow PPN members attended the meeting held in The Avon in Blessington. Work reports & Financial Reports were presented and the meeting ratified new members, new Reps and revisions to our Constitution and Election

Policy. Kim Townsend Smyth, the WCC Community Climate Action Officer gave a presentation on the upcoming Community Climate Action Fund.

- **PPN Annual Report:** The PPN Team (Secretariat, Representatives and PPN Workers) collaborated to complete the 2022 Annual Report. Over 80 questions sought information about; PPN membership; structures & networks; governance; representation; support; training; and events.
- **Winter Plenary (Members meeting):** 32 individuals representing 27 PPN member groups attended the meeting held in Arklow Presbyterian Church Hall. Work Report including finances, new members & new PPN Reps were presented and ratified. Wicklow PPN Strategic Plan for 2024-2029 presented and approved. Attendees also heard about the following funding schemes: LEADER (presentation from Alison Keogh, CWP) & the Community Climate Action Fund (presentation from Julie Sammiller, Wicklow Co. Co).
- **Governance:** Day to day correspondence, accounting, and reporting for PPN members, Secretariat, Host organisation, WCC and Dept. Rural & Community Development. Updating policies and procedures & running tendering processes where necessary.
- **Re-registration:** In line with both the PPN National Guidelines and our own Re-registration protocol we are required to undertake a formal Re-registration process with our member groups every three years

Representation/Consultation/Submissions

Submissions available on the PPN website

- **PPN Representation/Committees:** At the end of Dec 2023 42 PPN Representatives sat across 18 committees & boards (This includes the Secretariat. The committees and our Reps are listed on our website). PPN Reps continued to represent the community on the committees they were assigned to. PPN Representative reports are available on our website.
- **PPN Representation/elections:** Ran nomination and election processes for various PPN representative positions throughout the year. 8 new Reps elected in 2023.
- **Supporting PPN Reps:** Facilitated introductions & inductions for new PPN Reps. In addition, held peer support meetings with SPC Reps, Held two meetings for Secretariat and PPN Representatives in Roundwood Community Centre (21 Jan), Wicklow Heather (5 Nov) and two meetings online (23 Jan & 21 Nov). These meetings facilitated information exchange/sharing and peer support. Attendees identified some supports they need to help them fulfil their role and prioritised issues for the PPN to highlight and work on in 2023.
- **Submissions Made:** Arklow Transport Study, The public consultation the Law Reform Commission opened in relation to the Liability of Clubs, Societies and Unincorporated Associations, Draft Wicklow Local Economic & Community Plan, Local Authority Baseline Funding Review, Ireland's 4th Open Government National Action Plan 2023-2025, Seanad Public Consultation on the Future of Local Democracy.
- Participated in a discussion with the Public Service Transformation Policy Unit of the Dept. Public Expenditure NDP Delivery & Reform on the [PPN Submission to the 4th Open Government National Action Plan 2023 – 2025.](#)
- PPN Coordinator attended a focus group meeting to inform the refinement of the Draft PPN Implementation Roadmap with Crowe (an advisory group engaged by the Dept. Rural & Community Development) 13 Oct
- **Consultations Highlighted:** Highlighted 58 opportunities for people to feed into various national plans & strategies and 26 local plans & strategies

Training, Capacity Building & Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, Secretariat & Reps Training: UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and the public sector duty training, Digital Media & Communications Strategy Training, Media Spokesperson Skills & Plain English, Cybersecurity & Compliance for your Nonprofit, Community Safety & Innovation Fund webinar, Sligo PPN & Sligo ATU Community Climate Action Funded Project Introduction to an Environmental Toolkit for Community Groups, LGBTQI+ Training, and Grant writing tips and tricks, 40 PPN Reps from Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow attended Influencing Local Authorities Strategic Policy Committees training. • Supporting Member Groups: Facilitated session for Rathdangan Community Council to support them in developing a new local area community plan 20th Feb. • Resources: All presentations & training resources available on our website. • Training Opportunities: Highlighted/Advertised over 20 Training Opportunities through social media and newsletters. Organised an ran “Dealing with Financial Institutions as a Nonprofit Organisation” training facilitated by Carmichael. 12 people attended from Wicklow (the majority), Wexford & Carlow • Funding Supports: Highlighted/Advertised over 100 Funding Opportunities/Competitions through social media and newsletters. • Attended a national focus group organised by DRCD and facilitated by Pobal to identify and discuss training needs and their delivery for small community groups.
Communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members Update Ebulletin: 31 newsletters and information updates sent to our member groups to date. Two special focus editions prepared: National Volunteer Week & National Biodiversity Week. • Presentations: Presented the Wicklow Dormant Accounts Funded Project at the Pobal Showcase event & launch of the Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement & Decision Making. Presented 2 updates on the project to Wicklow LCDC. Presented the background & development of SING to the 2nd national Civic Forum meeting. • Publicity Materials: Designed and printed promotional pull up banner, leaflets, notebooks, pens and business cards • Acronyms: Developed a guide to acronym use in the voluntary/statutory sector • Website: Updated website throughout the year and added new pages for PPN National Conference, Wicklow Disability & Inclusion Steering Committee, and Wicklow Social Inclusion Network Group. • Facebook/Social Media: Regular updates on Social Media throughout the year. Increased “likes” by 69 up to 1974 and increased followers by 90 up to 2408. We also manage “Include Us In” a Facebook Page dedicated to Social Inclusion information. • Local Publicity: 9 articles/adverts/reports Re Minister of State Visit, Community Catch Up Meetings, and pre/post National Conference
Outreach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held a discussion with consultant contracted by the Community Foundation for Ireland to do some preliminary work around the Community Benefit Fund for the Millvale Solar Farm in Co. Wicklow. Provided links to community groups in Rathnew, Ashford and Glenealy 16 Jan • Meet with representative from Wicklow Pride 27 Jan • Met with Local Authority Waters & Community Officer Representative to discuss West Wicklow Projects 8 Feb • Attended the Wicklow Tidy Towns, Estates, and Sustainable Development Awards 13 Feb

- Attended the launch of the Co Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy 27 Feb
- Attended the Africa Irish Society of Wicklow's celebrations for Africa Day 20/5
- Attended the Wicklow Older People's Council AGM 26/5
- Attended the launch of the Bray North Wicklow Ukrainian Community Centre by Minister Joe O' Brien 29/6
- Attended the first Wicklow Pride Festival 1/7
- Attended Tinahely Agricultural Show 7/8
- Attended Donard Community Hall 25 year Celebrations 12/8
- Attended National Learning Network event 17 Oct (Social Inclusion Week)
- Secretariat member represented the PPN at the launch of the Delgany Public Realm plan on Monday 13th November.
- Secretariat member represented the PPN at the Jennie Wyse Power commemoration event held in Baltinglass on the 17th November.
- Attended Bray Area Partnership Christmas Community Lunch & Networking 4th December
- Attended celebration event for Wicklow Pride of Place winners 4th December
- Attended International Human Rights Day event ran by ANU Wicklow Domestic Violence Supports/Bray Women's Refuge 8th December
- Hosted a stall at the Arklow Community Excellence Community Fair in Bridgewater Shopping Centre 14th December
- Attended Wicklow Child & Family Project event to celebrate the work of its manager, Christine Keegan, on her retirement 20th December.