

Wicklow PPN Work Winter Plenary Report

January – November 2025

Strategic Plan Goal 1 – Representation

- **PPN Representatives:** Launched nomination process for vacant Secretariat & Reps seats. Supported Reps in attending meetings & fulfilling their role. Contacted Reps individually to provide support and encourage networking/peer support. Liaising with WCC Climate Action Team to discuss connections with the newly formed Tidy Towns Network and to facilitate a meeting between them and the PPN Environmental Reps. PPN Reps attended Dept Rural & Community Development SPC induction training ran in collaboration with the Association of Irish Local Government, Public Participation Networks Ireland, and the Institute of Public Administration. Reps attended online peer support meetings during the year as well as the committee meetings that they have been nominated to. Liaising with WCC Local Community Safety Partnership Coordinator to support the establishment of the LCSP with five PPN Reps.
- **Municipal District Meeting Agendas:** Monthly MD meeting agendas circulated to members for the 5 MDs: Arklow, Baltinglass, Bray, Greystones and Wicklow.
- **National PPN Workers Network:** Staff attended meetings throughout the year with Wicklow & Carlow PPN organising, facilitating and recording the February meeting. Agenda items usually include: a Dept Rural & Community Development & the Gaeltacht update, Update from the National Secretariat Network, the PPN Annual Report, the Annual Conference, Budgets, updates on proposed PPN development through the PPN Roadmap. Meetings also provide an opportunity to raise challenges and provide peer support
All 3 Wicklow PPN staff members attended the annual National PPN Workers Network Continuous Professional Development & Retreat in Galway 27 & 28 March. The event provided an opportunity to network and learn from each other and was of particular benefit to new staff members.
- **National PPN Emergency Response Consultation – 17th July 2025.** *Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise - Theme: Building Community Resilience for Times of Emergency.* Supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG), this landmark event brought together PPN representatives from across Ireland to strengthen national collaboration and community preparedness. This resulted in the development of a National PPN Report, “Building Community Resilience for Times of Emergency” which was launched at the National PPN Conference
- **South-East Regional PPN Meetings:** Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Cork City, Cork County, Tipperary, Kilkenny and Carlow PPNs are members of this network. Staff attended meetings throughout the year with the aim of providing peer support and identifying where resources could be shared and collaborations undertaken. Actions this year included: Reps from the Southeast Region meeting in Kilkenny for peer support and learning with presentations from the PPN National Advisory Group, the Irish Environmental Network and the Association of Irish Local Government, an online session with the Central Statistics Office Census Engagement Team took place to support PPN members to use CSO data to help with their lobbying and advocacy work.
- **National PPN Annual Conference:** Wicklow, having run the Conference in 2023 sat on a PPN Conference Subgroup to support Meath PPN in organising Conference 2025 which took place on 16th & 17th October. 6 Wicklow delegates attended the National Conference which provided an excellent opportunity to learn from the work of other PPNs and their member groups.

- **National Secretariat Network:** Gerorda Stamps represents the Wicklow Secretariat on this national network. The network provides Secretariats with the opportunity for peer support & learning.
- **International Women's Day Event:** Attended the Women of Wicklow Social Inclusion Network and Croi Rath Naoi's Visible Voices Combating Patriarchy event. Inputs were made by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, Bray Refuge, the Addiction Services and the Wicklow Women's Invisible Voices Photographic Exhibition. The event focused on the necessity of supporting women to speak out, the vital importance of listening to them and providing them with the help they need.
- **Concern Climate Café:** The Climate Café was held in Hollywood on Saturday 14th June. It offered a welcoming and informal space for people of all ages and backgrounds to come together to discuss the impacts of climate change on their communities and to help shape a submission that Concern Worldwide will make to the Irish Government ahead of COP 30. Over 30 people attended this event, which was run in collaboration with Concern Worldwide, West Wicklow Environmental Network and the PPN
- **SING (Social Inclusion Network Group):** A subgroup of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), this group meets quarterly. PPN Staff and some member groups attend. Issues identified during the meetings this year have included: unconscious bias, food poverty, young people being groomed into drug dealing & trafficking, lack of affordable community spaces, Arklow Ukrainian Hub losing their meeting space (CWP worked with the community to source alternative possibilities), Refugees in NTMK being moved to alternative accommodation. The Wellbeing Hub – Bray Wanderers inclusion project, was highlighted as a positive initiative. Suggestions were made into identifying ways to pool resources to allow all groups and service providers to access statistical information to help them in their work. **Hear My Voice** is a subgroup of SING. Secretariat members and PPN Representatives attended Hear My Voice events organised by the SING committee and held in the Glenree Centre for Peace & Reconciliation. The first event explored all aspects of Community Development and the second focused on Community & Environment. A report will be written up and will be submitted to the LCDC to feed into the Local Economic & Community Plan
- **DISC (Disability & Inclusion Steering Committee):** Staff continue to participate in this committee. Items of note this year include: A subgroup being set up to make Bray beach more accessible, suggestions for accessibility actions to be included in the Wicklow Recreation Strategy, efforts are ongoing to encourage & promote accessible tourism, refurbishment of courthouse on the Boghall road will include a changing places facility, DFI (Disability Federation Ireland) has recently published a report on disability and local authorities, WCC is to undertake an accessibility audit of their website, Arklow & Greystones are working to becoming Autism Friendly Towns, WCC is promoting disability champions through their HR department, 20 WCC staff are undertaking training in plain English, WCC engineers are working towards making Delgany Village more accessible, Wicklow Sports & Inclusion Officer provides updates on greater accessibility in sports, a campaign was run in relation to the impact of dog fouling for People with Disabilities, a review of the WCC Disability Strategy was conducted.
- **National Voter Registration Day:** Wicklow PPN developed an information bulletin to promote the day across all communications media, advertise any specific Wicklow events and encourage people to register. Staff continue to work with KWETB & WCC to encourage voter registration.
- **Wicklow Food Poverty Forum:** Following on from the Exploration of Food Poverty in Co Wicklow Research Report this group was set up with the aim of providing opportunities for collaboration, interaction and the sharing of information for organisations delivering community food supports. Regional food provider networks have been established. The

PPN Support Worker attended the West Wicklow Food for Thought event 2nd April with the aim of establishing a peer support network for food providers in West Wicklow. Staff attended “Food for Thought” on 25th September. The event focused on tackling food insecurity through community collaboration. Representatives from emerging food partnerships in the county, the Open Food Network and Food Cloud provided an opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other.

- **Greystones Climate Action Forum Event:** 5 PPN Representatives attended a meeting on the 12th April. The forum was established by the Wicklow County Council Climate Action team to enable community and business groups from across the Greystones Municipal District to come together to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing and action planning. The meeting included presentations from: Department of Environment, Climate & Communications, Moby E-Mobility Bikes, Greystones 2 Go Cup Scheme, Community Climate Action Programme, Eire Og Experience Programme, Green Clubs Programme, Sustainable Energy Communities Programme for Sports Clubs, Community Benefit (Codling Wind Bank), Wicklow Partnership and the Lawpro Community Grants
- **Our Rural Future 2026 – 2023:** PPN Staff member attended the Public Consultation on ‘Our Rural Future’ Mary Hurley, Secretary General of the Department, welcomed attendees and expressed gratitude for their participation. She emphasised the importance of inclusive dialogue in shaping the next phase of rural development policy. The consultation centred on: Opportunities and challenges facing rural Ireland and government actions needed to build a more resilient future for rural communities. Attendees were encouraged to share their perspectives on how rural policy can better support sustainable development, community wellbeing, and economic vitality. Key Message from the event: The new ‘Our Rural Future’ policy is a vital framework for shaping life in rural Ireland. Ensuring broad public engagement is essential so that every voice is heard, especially those from underrepresented groups.
- **Sustainable Energy Communities:** Staff & Environmental Secretariat Reps met with the Sustainable Energy Communities mentor to examine if the PPN should register as an SEC and what supports this would lever for member groups. Staff and member groups also attended a SE Systems Community Fund webinar. As a result, Wicklow PPN is now registered as a Sustainable Energy Community allowing our members to access supports for their sustainable energy journey.
- **Sustainable Development Goals Week:** Each day during SDG week Wicklow PPN shared a short video of someone wearing the SDG Cardigan (made by PPN Resource Worker Alice McDonnell) and talking about their work and how it relates to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets.
- **Kildare PPN – Working Together for Public Participation:** Staff attended this event which brought together Councillors, KCC staff, PPN representatives, Secretariat members, and PPN Advisory Group members to look at how they can all work together for the benefit of communities across Co. Kildare. The Wicklow PPN Staff member facilitated one of the interactive workshop sessions, where groups discussed how the PPN and KCC can communicate more effectively, break down barriers to participation, and identify shared projects to work on together in 2026
- **Consultations & Submissions:** Advertised 77 National and & 55 Local Consultations. Made written submissions to the following consultations: Co Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan, Local Democracy Taskforce Stakeholder Engagement, Stakeholder Consultation on a New Strategy to Support the Community & Voluntary Sector in Ireland

Strategic Plan Goal 2 – Member Support

- **PPN Membership:** 523 Member groups. 44 new members this year.
- **Group Insurance Scheme:** circulated information and supported members to avail of the Tidy Towns Insurance Scheme
- **Member Training/Information sessions: Grant Writing and Funding Workshop:** Held on Saturday 13th September in the Brockagh Centre, Laragh over 30 attendees learned how to make successful funding applications as well as hearing from representatives of funding streams such as LEADER, WCC grants, and the Community Climate Action Fund. Participants also had a great opportunity to network and learn from each other, while funders were able to hear about the challenges that communities encounter in the funding space. **Governance Training for Voluntary Committees:** Run across 4 sessions, 3 online in 2025 and 1 in person in 2026. Over 30 attendees to date have attended this excellent training under the guidance of Senan Turnbull. The training provides participants with information, advice and tips to ensure groups meet the Charities Governance Code requirements. The last session will provide an opportunity for peer support and networking. **Local Enhancement Funding Information Provision:** Ran an online information session on Monday 24th February attended by 33 individuals representing various community groups. Susanne Hall, WCC Community Section provided the information and answered questions. PPN staff received a significant number of queries about the grant and membership has increased as a direct result of the grant.
- **Outreach & PPN Connects:** PPN (through Staff & Secretariat) attended community events including: PPN Connect Events, Wicklow Pride Queer Coffee Morning, Art Exhibition and the Pride Parade, Tinahely Show, Greystones Plaza Market, Bray Library, West Wicklow Environmental Network Community Climate Action Funding information evening, Wicklow Older Person's Council Expo on 30 Oct.
- **Member Re-registration:** Wicklow staff participated in a national sub-group to re-view and simplify the member re-registration process. The process is currently being piloted in Wexford. Wicklow will run a re-registration process in early 2026. Members are asked to make sure to re-register next year to keep receiving the benefits of PPN membership
- **One to One Member Support:** Ad hoc phone calls and meetings took place throughout the year to support groups in relation to governance, funding, insurance and making beneficial connections.
- **Funding:** Circulated information about 115 funding streams open for application

Strategic Plan Goal 3 – Communications

- **PPN Newsletters:** 19 newsletters circulated
- **PPN Website:** Regularly updated. Updates for new SPCs and Reps. Archiving & tidy up of content.
- **IT Systems & Applications:** continually work to ensure that all IT systems and PPN communication media are working properly
- **PPN Facebook Page:** multiple daily posts of relevant information, funding, consultations, and events
- **PPN Instagram:** Newly set up this year it provides posts of relevant information and news.
- **Coproduction Sessions** –Dynamic coproduction session took place with excellent attendance from across County Wicklow. The purpose of the session was to co-create engaging content that promotes the message of the Wicklow PPN and encourages broader community involvement. The session brought together a rich tapestry of knowledge, skills, and lived experiences, ensuring that every voice was heard and valued. Through collaborative effort, participants contributed to the development of a comprehensive suite of materials, including:

- **Presentation PowerPoint** – visually engaging slides to communicate the PPN’s mission and opportunities.
- **Lesson Plan for Presenters** – structured guidance for delivering the presentation effectively.
- **Script for Media & Voiceover** – clear messaging for radio, video, or online platforms.
- **Visual Supports** – graphics and visuals to enhance understanding and accessibility.
- **Group/Organisation Welcome Letter Template** – a warm and informative introduction for new members.
- **Checklist for Engagement** – practical steps to foster active participation.
- **Mentoring Programme Guidelines** – framework to support peer learning and leadership development.

Next Steps - A pilot test of the presentation delivery is planned, followed by a comprehensive evaluation. Feedback from this phase will inform revisions and improvements to ensure the materials are impactful and inclusive.

Strategic Plan Goal 4 –Governance & Operations

- **Secretariat Meetings:** Our Secretariat continues to meet every 2 months to provide advice and oversight of the Wicklow PPN’s Workplan, governance and finances. Minutes of Secretariat meetings are available on the PPN website here: <https://countywicklowppn.ie/about/secretariat/>
- **Staff Induction & Support:** Following a recruitment process the Wicklow PPN New Resource Worker (Job Share), Alice McDonnell, officially began her role on 8th April. An induction has taken place with Wicklow Travellers Group, as the employer & hosting body and regular support is being provided by the current PPN staff & Secretariat. Regular Support & Supervision is provided to all members of the staff team.
- **PPN Review:** Supported & facilitated by Omra Support Agency the Wicklow PPN Secretariat, Staff and members of the Board of the Hosting Organisation (Wicklow Travellers Group) are examining their roles, responsibilities and how this fits/works with other PPN stakeholders i.e. Members, WCC, Dept. Rural & Community Development. Meetings took place on 15th February & 12th April. The aim is to develop a clear understanding of how the PPN should work with all its stakeholders in a respectful, prudent and efficient manner. Further meetings will take place early in 2026
- **Staff Training:** Support Worker attended The Wheel webinar on Grant Writing Tips, the new Resource Worker undertook Salesforce coms platform training
- **Finance:** Amended 2025 Budget figures on confirmation of WTG apportionment costs. Monitoring finance monthly. Drafted 2026 Budgets
- **Policy Development:** The Service Level Agreement between Wicklow County Council (WCC) and Wicklow Travellers Group (WTG) pertaining to Wicklow PPN, the Memorandum of Understanding between WCC and Wicklow PPN, and the Memorandum of Understanding between WTG and Wicklow PPN was reviewed, amended, approved and signed for submission to the Dept. Rural & Community Development
- **Reporting:** Work & Financial Reports are developed monthly and are available on the PPN website here: <https://countywicklowppn.ie/about/finance-governance/>, **2024 Financial Report** submitted to Dept. Rural & Community Development along with policies above and other requested information, **Annual Service Delivery Plan and the Performance Indicators** provided figures relating to membership numbers were provided to WCC, **Lobbying Authority** quarterly lobbying reports are submitted on time.