

An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



Mr. Robert Collins
Meetings Administrator
Meath County Council
Buvinda House
Dublin Road
Navan
County Meath

Via email: robert.collins@meathcoco.ie

Our Ref: DRCD-MoS-00032-2022

7th March 2022

Dear Robert,

I refer to your recent correspondence on behalf of the members of Meath County Council, concerning the adoption of a motion regarding small community-based groups and the Charities Governance Code.

The Charities Regulatory Authority (the ‘Charities Regulator’) was established in October 2014 pursuant to the Charities Act 2009. The Authority is the State organisation responsible for registering and regulating all of Ireland’s charities. The Department of Rural and Community Development has been assigned responsibility for the Charities Regulator. It is important to note however, that the Regulator is fully independent in the performance of its statutory functions, including compliance and supporting best practise in the governance, management and administration of charities.

Community organisations in Ireland are only subject to the Charities Governance Code if they have registered as a charity. Any organisation that decides to register as a charity and subsequently receives registration, must comply with the provisions of the Charities Act 2009.

It is no secret that the confidence of the Irish people in the charity sector has been dented in recent years and that the reputation of the sector has been negatively impacted by the actions of a few. Proper regulation and guidance to the sector, operated independently through the Charities Regulator, protects the charities sector and gives our citizens the confidence needed to continue to give generously to many worthy charitable causes.



Good governance involves putting in place systems and processes to ensure that charities achieve their charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way. The Charities Governance Code sets out the minimum standards that charity trustees should meet to effectively manage and control their charity and is based on legal requirements and best practice.

This Code was launched on 7th November 2018, with the aim of being proportionate. Indeed, it was written with volunteer-only charities and charities with small numbers of paid staff in mind. It therefore includes core standards that all charities, irrespective of size or composition, are expected to meet.

For these reasons, the Code is relevant for every charity operating in Ireland.

In respect of the practical application of proportionality, in its information note *Charities Governance Code - Reporting on Compliance in 2021*, the Charities Regulator “...recognises that for some registered charities, particularly smaller charities that are run entirely by volunteers, achieving full compliance with the Code may be an incremental process”.

In addition, it must be recognized that additional governance standards have only been applied to more complex charities (those with higher incomes / complex organisational and funding structures and / or significant number of employees).

Whether an organization is a charity or a non-profit, it is important that we strike the right balance between necessary regulation and proportionate governance. The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Charities Regulator are continuing to work strongly with the community and voluntary sector in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Joe O'Brien T.D.,

Minister of State for Community Development and Charities

*The Minister is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015
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