



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



Public  
Participation  
Networks  
Ireland

# Public Participation Networks

## Annual Report 2024



# Snapshot of the Year 2024



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



Public  
Participation  
Networks  
Ireland

# 20,421

## MEMBER GROUPS



## 16,383

Community and Voluntary Groups

## 3,217

Social Inclusion Groups

## 817

Environmental Groups



Public Participation  
Networks Ireland

2024 was an important year  
for the PPNs as it marked the  
**10th anniversary**



2024 was also a  
year of change  
and renewal for  
the Irish political  
landscape with  
**local, European  
and national  
elections held.**

# 834

## PPN REPRESENTATIVES

sat on **341** Boards and Committees bringing the voice  
of the community to the decision-making table.



## Global events

continued to impact locally in 2024  
with households still experiencing  
rising costs, hitting the lowest income  
households the hardest. With increasing  
levels of conflict and climate chaos across  
the world more people are on the move,  
including to Ireland. All of this has led to  
increased tensions and impacted on social  
cohesion in our communities.



As always, the Community and Voluntary  
sector proved to be a vital part of the  
national response to these issues at a local  
level highlighting time after time, just how  
necessary and vital the Community and  
Voluntary sector is.

**Local knowledge  
was key.**



**Local elections took place in May 2024, which resulted in SPCs having to be stood down and then reconstituted.**

**There was continuous engagement with member groups, ensuring that vital information was widely disseminated.**



**Limerick PPN and Limerick City and County Council hosted the 6th National Public Participation Network Conference in October.**

This year's event marked the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the PPNs across Ireland. The conference welcomed 160 delegates representing community and voluntary groups, social inclusion and environmental organisations from across the country, alongside local authority officials, elected representatives, and others who support the work of PPNs. The theme for this year's conference, "Collaboration for Resilient Communities," celebrated the essential partnerships needed for the delivery of government programmes at both national and local levels. The PPNs 'play a crucial role in facilitating these collaborations by providing representatives on committees and steering groups, sharing information, building capacity, and offering support'.<sup>1</sup>



The PPN Implementation Roadmap was published in July 2024. It was drafted by the Roadmap Working Group, made up of PPN stakeholders including PPN volunteers and staff, civil society groups, CCMA and relevant government departments. The Roadmap sets out tangible actions to strengthen PPNs and enable them to more effectively fulfil the overall objectives set out for them in the 2014 *Working Group Report on Citizen Engagement with Local Government*.

The PPNs continued to adapt in response to the changes experienced by their communities and develop innovative solutions using a bottom-up approach to problem solving.

Consultations continue to be a vital part of the work of the PPN and took place across a wide variety of topics.



**The PPNs continue to make  
a real difference to the  
communities they serve.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.limerickppn.ie/national-ppn-conference-2024/>

# Contents

<b>Snapshot of the year 2024</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Foreword by Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Foreword by the Chairperson of the Public Participation Network (PPN) National Advisory Group</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
Role of the National Advisory Group	9
Methodology	10
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Public Participation Networks – 2024</b>	<b>15</b>
Amplifying Community Voices	16
Reflecting Community Needs	17
Encouraging Community Inclusion	18
Enabling Community Climate Action	19
Acknowledging Community Challenges	20
<b>Section 1: Membership</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Section 2: Representation and Decision Making</b>	<b>23</b>
Vision for Community Wellbeing	24
Representation on Decision Making Bodies	24
Supports for PPN Representatives	24
Linkage and Thematic Groups	25
Municipal District Representatives	26
<b>Section 3: Training and Capacity Building</b>	<b>27</b>
Training provided to the PPNs	29
Stakeholder Online Training for PPNs	29

---

<b>Section 4: Management, Administration and Finance</b>	<b>31</b>
Meetings	31
Structure of the PPNs	32
Interagency Collaboration	33
Social Inclusion	39

---

<b>Section 5: Work with the Local Authority</b>	<b>45</b>
Local Authority Consultations	47
Specific Areas of Collaboration	47
Grant Eligibility	48
Training and Induction by Local Authorities	48

---

<b>Appendix 1: PPN Contact Details (August 2025)</b>	<b>49</b>
--	-----------

---

<b>Appendix 2: Overview of PPN Activity in 2024</b>	<b>52</b>
---	-----------

---

<b>Appendix 3: Impacts of the PPN in 2024</b>	<b>54</b>
---	-----------

---

<b>Appendix 4: Examples of Successful Consultations in 2024</b>	<b>61</b>
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# Foreword

**by Minister of State with responsibility for  
Community Development and Charities,  
Jerry Buttimer T.D.**

**It is my pleasure to introduce to you the 9th Annual Report of the work of the Public Participation Networks. The year 2024 was a very special year for the PPN Community as we marked a notable milestone, the 10th anniversary of the establishment of PPNs.**

Under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, for the first time in the history of the State participation of citizens in local government policy making was underpinned by legislation. On foot of that legislation, PPNs were established with the primary role of facilitating the participation and representation of communities on local decision-making bodies in a fair, equitable and transparent manner. By the end of 2024, the number of PPN groups nationwide stood at 20,421, a remarkable achievement and a testament of all your hard work and dedication over the past ten years.

As we reflect on ten years of progress, it is clear the PPNs are making a lasting impact. Strengthening participation, fostering collaboration and nurturing relationships between communities and their Local Authorities. This year's report showcases wonderful examples of this collaborative work in action and highlights the on-going commitment of each PPN to evolve and grow for the benefit of their community.

In 2024 my Department published the 'PPN Implementation Roadmap'. A vitally important document that sets out the future direction for PPNs. I want to thank the members of the Roadmap Working Group who worked so hard on this. The implementation phase of this project requires support from all PPN stakeholders and we can achieve so much when we work together in a spirit of collaboration.

I want to sincerely thank all of those who have contributed to the PPN in 2024 and also over the past ten years. The Secretariat Members, Representatives, volunteers and staff who make this work possible. I know there are many that have been involved since the very beginning. I hope you are immensely proud of what has been accomplished over the past ten years.

As we look to the future, my Department remains fully committed to supporting the continued development of the PPNs. Let's continue to work together on our common goal, to make sure PPN structures are the best they can be to fully enable sustainable participative democracy and local engagement across Ireland.

Here's to the next ten years and beyond.

Míle Buíochas,

**Jerry Buttimer T.D.**

Minister of State  
With responsibility for Community  
Development and Charities



# Foreword

**by the Chairperson of the Public Participation Network (PPN) National Advisory Group, Jake Ryan**

**2024 was a year of celebration, as it marked the 10th anniversary of the establishment of PPNs. It was 2014 when the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government made its recommendation to establish a Network for community groups in each of the 31 Local Authority areas in Ireland, and the enabling legislation was passed.**

Over the past decade the PPN's have gone from strength to strength, giving local communities a voice in local government policy. In 2024 the PPNs enabled 834 Representatives to sit on boards and committees throughout the country. The PPNs can take pride in how far they have come, since those early days in 2014.

We came together to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the PPN's at the annual PPN Conference in Limerick in October 2024. Limerick PPN in collaboration with Limerick City and County Council hosted a wonderful two-day event. The theme "Collaboration for Resilient Communities" was at the heart of the event. The highly valued work of the PPNs was showcased through presentations and workshops, and attendees got the opportunity to visit some of Limerick's member group projects.

In July 2024 the 'PPN Implementation Roadmap' was published. This document was initially developed as a follow-up to the PPN Structural Review. The Roadmap was devised by a Working Group of PPN stakeholders in collaboration with DRCD. It sets out tangible actions that will strengthen the future of PPNs. I would like to thank the Working -Group for their dedication to this project. The saying goes "nothing worth having comes easy" and it must be said, implementing the actions is proving time consuming. I have every faith that the Working Group will continue to work hard and persevere, in order to implement the actions set out in the Roadmap. I want to take this opportunity to ask the wider PPN community to take an active part in the implementation of the Roadmap actions, as it's clear that PPNs are most effective when they work together to pursue their goals.

This report highlights the huge amount of work undertaken by the PPNs and I hope everyone involved with the PPNs are very proud of what they have achieved in 2024 and over the past 10 years.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to my fellow members of the National Advisory Group. Your collective expertise, thoughtful insights and commitment to all things PPN are given generously and in good faith and you have served the PPN movement exceedingly well.

On behalf of the National Advisory Group, I wish to thank the PPN Community, Secretariats, Staff, Representatives and member groups for giving so much in 2024. Your efforts make a real difference to your community.

As we reflect on the past ten years, it is wonderful to see how much has been achieved. Here's to many more years of success.



**Jake Ryan**  
Chairperson, National PPN Advisory Group

On behalf of the Advisory Group and the PPN Community, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Bill Morrell, who sadly passed away recently. Bill made an enormous contribution to Kerry PPN, the Secretariat Network and the National Advisory Group. Bill was a devoted community volunteer, who served Kerry PPN and the Environmental Pillar with unwavering commitment. His dedication, clarity of thought and genuine kindness made him a deeply respected member of the Advisory Group. Bill's contribution will have a lasting impact, both in Kerry and nationally.

We will remember Bill with immense gratitude and admiration.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.



# Introduction

**A functioning healthy democracy relies on people being welcomed into the decision-making process, especially when those decisions directly affect them and their lives. Real participation goes beyond voting (representative democracy) to a situation where people and government work in partnership to co-create infrastructure and services, solve problems and work towards the wellbeing of all for this generation and the generations to come (participative and deliberative democracy).**

By definition, such an approach requires a leaving aside of power differentials and making a specific effort to ensure that the voices and views of people, who are not traditionally influential, are heard and considered.

It is becoming increasingly important to bring people together to share our commonality at a time when our differences are being weaponised. Discussion and deliberation allow us to share an understanding of the issues and even if full consensus cannot be reached, solutions can be found.

In 2014, the Local Government Act was amended to introduce Public Participation Networks (PPNs).

The PPN recognises the contribution of volunteer-led organisations to local economic, social, and environmental capital. It facilitates input by these organisations into local government through a structure that ensures public participation and representation on decision making committees within local government. These PPNs have been established in every local authority area in Ireland.

By the end of 2024, 20,421 community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations were members of a PPN. Over 834 PPN Representatives were elected to 341 committees dealing with strategic policy, local community development, access and inclusion and so on. 2024 proved to be yet another challenging year, with local elections and new committees impacting on the daily work of the PPNs.



Throughout, the PPNs continued to provide invaluable and necessary supports to their communities, displaying resilience and adapting to meet a wide variety of needs.

Local authorities and PPNs work together collaboratively to support communities and build the capacity of member organisations to engage meaningfully on issues that concern them. PPNs have a significant role in the development and education of their member groups, sharing information, promoting best practice, and facilitating networking. By bringing local knowledge and expertise to decision-making groups, they work to ensure that many different viewpoints are heard, ensuring more robust outcomes and ultimately better communities. Local authorities also have a vital role to play in facilitating participation through open consultative processes and active engagement.

“

Participation is about co-labouring for change, co-creating knowledge and co-creating the future. It is also a way of being that requires some humility and openness for others. Moreover, it is about acknowledging that we are all participants in nature.”

*Margaret Ledwith and Jane Springett,  
Participatory Practice, Pg 17.*

The report of the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government, set up in September 2013, made recommendations on more extensive and diverse input by citizens into the decision-making processes at local government level. The Working Group Report was published in February 2014.

That report outlined the ways in which structures and processes for securing the engagement of organised civil society with local government could be strengthened. To do this, the Report recommended that a Public Participation Network (PPN) be established in each local authority area to enable the public to take an active formal role in relevant policy making and oversight committees of the local authority.

The Working Group Report recommended that the work of PPNs should be monitored and evaluated regularly in line with best practice.

### Role of the National Advisory Group

The National Advisory Group now includes one representative each from the Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion sectors, three PPN Volunteers – one each representing the three different sectors, three PPN resource workers and two Local Authority staff (one at Director of Service level and one directly supporting a PPN). The Group is chaired by the Department of Rural and Community Development who also provide the Secretariat services for the Group. Membership during 2024 of the Advisory Group is set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Membership of the National Advisory Group during 2024**

	Name	Organisation
Chair	Ciara Bates Jake Ryan	Department of Rural and Community Development
Community & Voluntary Sector Representative	Susanne Rogers	Social Justice Ireland
Social Inclusion Sector Representative	Louise Lennon	Irish Rural Link
Environmental Sector Representative	Charles Stanley Smith	Irish Environmental Network
Resource Worker Representative	Paul Clabby	Roscommon PPN
Resource Worker Representative	Muriel Tobin	Waterford PPN
Resource Worker Representative	Sarah Wetherald	Sligo PPN
PPN Volunteer Representative – C&V Sector	Vincent Lyons	Galway County PPN
PPN Volunteer Representative – Social Inclusion Sector	Donal O'Shea	Laois PPN
PPN Volunteer Representative – Environment Sector	Bill Morrell	Kerry PPN
CCMA Representative	John Quinlivan	Fingal County Council
CCMA Representative	Ann Dillon	Offaly County Council

Along with its monitoring role, the Advisory Group is also charged with advising and supporting the Department of Rural and Community Development to develop the PPNs. This Annual Report, which gives an overview of the work done by PPNs in 2024 was developed by a subgroup of the National PPN Advisory Group for completion by PPNs and Local Authorities.

## Methodology

In mid-2025, a consultation template, devised and agreed by the Annual Report subgroup, was circulated to all PPNs and Local Authorities via survey monkey for completion. The completed returns were collated for analysis purposes.

We can report that 31 PPNs completed returns. Where possible, comparable data from 2023 is included, however this data will not be directly comparable to that contained in the Annual Report for 2023 as that report concerned 30 PPNs. In relation to the membership figures, these represent all 31 PPNs as per figures provided by Salesforce.

A note on the language used. As the bulk of the content is directly from 31 PPNs and Local Authorities, both identity first and person first language is used in this report as well as variations of LGBTQIA+.

# Glossary of Terms

There are a broad range of definitions covering the nature and scope of public participation and local government. Some of these are explained below:

**Advisory Group** means The PPN National Advisory Group (see also **NAG**).

**Associate Members** are groups that do not fulfil the full criteria for membership of the PPN.

**CCMA:** The County and City Management Association is the 'representative voice' of the local government management network. CCMA members are chief executives of the county and city councils and the assistant chief executives of Dublin City Council.

**Comhairle na nÓg:** These are councils for the youth located in 31 locations in the Republic of Ireland, which gives the youth in Ireland the opportunity to be involved in the progress of local services and policies.

**Community** refers to a place (such as a neighbourhood or wider area), identity (such as belonging to an ethnic group), or interest (such as a commitment in common with others, for example, disability rights).

**Community Safety Partnership** is a government initiative which brings together the community and voluntary sector, the community, various other statutory services, and local councillors to work together in identifying and tackling community safety issues on a local level.

The **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage** oversees the operation and development of the local government system and provides the policy framework within which local authorities work and deliver services to the communities that they represent and serve. In July 2017, the policy framework regarding LCDs, LECs and PPNs transferred from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to the Department of Rural and Community Development. Article 28A of the Irish Constitution recognises the role of local government in providing a forum for the democratic representation of communities and in exercising and performing powers conferred by law.

The **Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD / the Department)** was established in July 2017 to promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland. In relation to the PPNs, the Department is the majority funder, provides the Chair of the National Advisory Group and has overall responsibility for the development and oversight of the PPNs.

The **Elected Council** is the policy making forum of the local authority; the municipal district members make decisions that affect their Municipal District area. Elected Councils (operating at local authority or municipal district level) exercise 'reserved functions' defined in law across a range of legislation. The day-to-day management of a local authority is carried out by the executive, i.e., the full-time officials led by the chief executive. The chief executive has a duty to advise and assist the Elected Council in the exercise of its functions.

**Handbook:** A composite set of Guidelines and advice issued in November 2020 to assist PPNs and other stakeholders, replacing the previous User Guide.

**HSE:** The Health Service Executive is the publicly funded healthcare system in the Republic of Ireland.

**JPC:** Joint Policing Committee: A Local Authority Committee comprised of councillors, T.D.s, Senators, the Gardaí and external stakeholders such as PPNs which makes policy proposals on policing issues. Section 36 of the Garda Síochána Act provided for the establishment of JPCs in each Local Authority administrative area and as part of the Local Government structures.

**LCDC:** Local Community Development Committee – a Local Authority Committee with public and private members which oversees community development programmes in an area including LEADER and SICAP. PPNs typically have 5 members on that committee. The aim of the LCDCs is to develop, coordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.

**LEADER:** A funding programme delivered through the Local Action Groups (LAGs), which aims to support economic, social and environmental development of rural areas. LEADER is a programme that supports both private enterprise and community groups in delivering projects aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging the diversification of economic activity in rural areas.

**LECP:** Local Economic Community Plan - The purpose is to set out for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant Local Authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

**Linkage Group:** A group of PPN stakeholders in a particular issue who meet to make policy recommendations and work closely with a PPN Representative on a relevant board or committee.

**Local Authorities (LA):** City or County Councils. Play a key role in supporting economic development and enterprise at a local level. Local Government support on the ground is critical to the success of many initiatives which drive local communities. These include local festivals and events; design of streetscapes and village renewal schemes; support for micro-enterprises, business parks and incubation units; involvement in energy efficiency projects; promotion of rural broadband and planning for major investments in the green economy.

**Local Development Companies (LDC):** Organisations with a remit to support economic and social development in their catchment area. LDCs are typically contracted to deliver programmes such as the Rural Development Programme (LEADER), Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and Tús.

**Local Government Reform Act 2014** provides for a range of changes to the organisation and work of local authorities. Among other things, it provides for the amalgamation of a number of local authorities; the abolition of town councils; the abolition of city and county development boards; the establishment of local community development committees and it provides for a range of changes to the functions carried out by local authorities. Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 commenced on 1 June 2014 and provides the legislative basis which gives effect to the Framework for Public Participation and the Public Participation Networks (PPNs).

**MOU** means Memorandum of Understanding (agreement between Local Authority and PPN).

**Municipal District (MD):** A subdivision of a Local Authority area. Councillors meet at Municipal District level as well as in full council. MDs were established following the Local Government Reform Act in 2014.

**(n=XXX)** Denotes number e.g., number of replies, number who answered question.

**NAG** means the National PPN Advisory Group.

**Not for profit organisations** are organisations that work for the good of society, communities and/or specific interest. They do not make a profit and any income they do make that is above what they need to keep the organisation running is invested back into the organisation to improve it or to keep it going. No payments are made to any shareholders. It includes a vast range of organisations from very small groups with no income to large charities.



**PEACEPLUS** is a European Union funding Programme, designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

**Plenary:** All the member groups in a PPN. The Plenary is the ultimate decision-making body of the PPN.

**PPN Budget** means the annual amount of funding a PPN has available to it, derived from DRCD, the Local Authority and other sources.

**Salesforce:** a data and information management system that is common to all PPNs. The system itself allows PPNs to capture and manage information regarding member groups, store details on organisations and community and network groups, manage funding, manage campaigns such as email communications, generate custom reports and much more.

**Secretariat** means the administrative body of the PPN whose role is to put into practice the decisions of the Plenary; ensure that the PPN runs smoothly in between Plenaries; co-ordinate the activities of the PPN; communicate regularly with all PPN Member Groups and spread information about all PPN activities as widely as possible; and facilitate and enable the PPN Workers in their day-to-day activities to deliver PPN objectives.

**SICAP** (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme): is designed to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality. Each SICAP provider works with both individuals and community groups in a city / county or subdivision thereof, with a focus on people experiencing disadvantage and areas which are designated disadvantaged.

**Sláintecare** is a 10-year Government policy which aims to reform the health system and deliver universal health care.

**Social Inclusion:** activity centred on working to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment, using community development approaches to build sustainable communities, where the values of equality and inclusion are promoted and human rights are respected.

**SPC (Strategic Policy Committee):** local authority committees in city and county councils whose membership includes Elected Councillors, representatives of business, farming interests, environmental/conservation groups, trade unions and community and voluntary members. It is the task of the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), as committees of the council, to advise and assist the council in the formulation, development and review of policy. They have no remit in relation to routine operational matters regarding the delivery of services. The SPC system is intended to give councillors and relevant sectoral interests an opportunity for full involvement in the policy making process from the early stages.

**SPC Scheme** is the framework established by Local Authorities to govern the operation of the committees.

**Sustainable Development** is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Thematic Group:** A group of PPN stakeholders working on a cross-cutting policy theme, e.g., disability, social inclusion, sustainability.

**T.D.** - A Teachta Dála is a member of Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Oireachtas (the Irish Parliament).

**Tusla:** The Child and Family Agency, the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

**User Guide:** A composite set of Guidelines and advice issued in 2016 to assist PPNs and other stakeholders replaced by the Handbook in November 2020.

**Volunteer-led organisations** are those which are governed by a group of volunteers acting as a committee, board or other structure. They may also have paid staff who act on behalf of the board.

**Wellbeing** describes a community whose basic needs are met, where people have a sense of purpose and feel able to achieve important goals, to participate in society and to live the lives they value and have reason to value.

**Working Group** means the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government. This group was set up in September 2013. Its role was to make recommendations on more extensive and diverse input by citizens into the decision making at local government level. The Report of the Working Group was published on 28 February 2014 and its recommendations led to the establishment of the PPNs.

**Worker** means Resource Worker, Support Worker or other worker engaged by the PPN to carry out its duties.







# Public Participation Networks – 2024

2024 marked the 10th Anniversary of the Public Participation Networks. Twenty-three PPNs hosted an event to commemorate this milestone (some are due to be held in 2025). The plenaries were used as a vehicle for these celebrations and allowed for the 'opportunity to reflect on a decade of dedication and hard work with all our members'. Goody bags were distributed, music, BBQ and cake were enjoyed in a 'very joyous atmosphere' which was 'celebratory and fun'.

PPNs gathered together past and present Representatives and Secretariat alongside Local Authority staff and collaborative organisations to highlight the achievements and challenges of the past ten years, 'fostering a spirit of unity and reflection on a decade of community engagement and impact'. The PPNs made extensive use of social and local media across the year to champion and amplify the voices of the members. Individual contributions from long standing members who 'played a vital role in shaping the success and impact of the PPN over the past decade' were recognised as was the 'valuable experience and knowledge from volunteers who give up their time to represent the community sector'.

It was a year to reflect on 'what worked, what didn't and where improvements can happen' and 'recognising it as a network that has gone from strength to strength'. The PPNs are immensely and rightly proud of the 'strong partnerships it has built' and the members 'with a passion for the voice of the Community and Voluntary sector'. The PPNs celebrated their 'many achievements, some great, some small' and 'look ahead to many more'.

2024 was also a year of elections, local European and national. All of this brings a huge workload on top of the core work being done by the PPNs on a daily basis. Communities across the country were still struggling with rising costs, ongoing conflicts across the globe and the resulting impact of these on national and local budgets and service provision. The PPN is more important and relevant than ever as these shocks are impacting on the social cohesion of communities across Ireland. Ensuring that the voice of communities is brought to decision making fora is a vital part of creating safe, secure places where citizens can engage, grow and flourish.

PPNs were asked to give examples of specific proposals or actions that their Representatives have brought to decision making boards and committees and to outline the impacts that had. More detail on impacts reported by each PPN in their own words is included in Appendix 3.

## Amplifying Community Voices

At a review of the Wicklow County Council Litter Management Plan, the PPN Representative raised the issue of trucks transporting debris from quarries in West Wicklow and the importance of recognising this as littering/waste and the responsibility of waste management companies in covering their trucks. This resulted in the following being inserted into the Plan under the heading of 'Priority Issues to Address in Wicklow', "Poorly covered vehicles carrying loose items. Vehicles carrying waste are required, under the relevant waste collection permit, to keep the waste covered during transit. Poorly covered trucks - either through torn nets or no nets at all - will often lead to wind-blown litter. This type of litter is especially hard to pick up as it can be spread over quite a distance on busy roads".

Two of Louth PPN's Representatives held the positions of Chair and vice-Chair on Louth's Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). In these roles, they oversaw and led the development and approval of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), Local Development Strategy, and PEACEPLUS Action Plan. They were also responsible for overseeing the following programmes in relation to community development expenditure and resource allocation within the County: LEADER 2023-2027; SICAP 2024-2028; PEACEPLUS 2021-2027; Local Enhancement Programme 2024 and Healthy Ireland (Round 4). The appointment of PPN Representatives to these key roles within Louth's LCDC resulted in a community-led decision process on vital resource allocation across the county which was facilitated through Louth PPN's nomination of these Representatives.

Donegal PPN JPC Representatives have continued to oppose changes to the Garda Divisions in Donegal.

Following consultation with the Secretariat, Clare PPN made a submission in relation to the Scheme for SPCs which sought to ensure that our level of representation on SPCs was not lowered in this Scheme. We were not successful in this request, which for example has left us without a social inclusion Representative on the Economic SPC, however other elements of our submission were taken on board including clarity around expenses.

Leitrim PPN Representatives made a submission to Leitrim County Council in relation to the Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 -2029. Leitrim PPN conducted a comprehensive survey of Leitrim PPN Representatives and held a meeting with the managers and administrators of the Leitrim County Council (LCC) Committees during which the PPN shared the results of the survey and listened to the views of LCC officials.



This was followed by further engagement with officials in which their views were sought on a variety of issues raised by PPN Representatives. This engagement was very informative. The recommendations from the survey were developed further by two meetings of Leitrim PPN Representatives. Feedback from the National Secretariat of PPN was also considered. It was suggested that at the beginning of the new scheme term 2024-2029, there should be an in-person session where everyone gets together, gets to introduce themselves and what they are representing on the SPC, to get to know each other better and build relationships as a group. This took place in the Council Chamber in November for all PPN Representatives on SPCs.

The local elections in June 2024 triggered the PPN elections, as all Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) were dissolved and later reconvened. Dublin City PPN undertook an intensive recruitment process, as most existing Representatives had completed two five-year terms and were due to step down. The outcome was highly successful: all seats were filled, several elections were held using Election Buddy<sup>2</sup>, and some positions (such as the Culture SPC) saw strong interest, with six nominations. Earlier in the year, the PPN had gathered input and submitted feedback on the draft SPC scheme, contributing meaningfully to the process. By September, the newly elected Representatives were formally presented to Dublin City Council. This strengthened the relationship between the PPN and the local authority, created a renewed sense of purpose among Representatives, and enhanced understanding of their role in advising and assisting the council on policy. The draft SPC scheme can be accessed here: <https://dublincityppn.ie/resources/draft-strategic-policy-committee-spc-scheme-2024-2029/>

Galway County PPN Secretariat member presented updates to National Secretariat network with updated data on PPN membership figures across all 31 PPNs and also proposed to continue collating and presenting data on SPCs and the impact of PPN representation on local policy decision making process.

## Reflecting Community Needs

A Waterford PPN Representative from the Housing, Community, Sports and Recreation SPC was nominated to sit on a working group along with tenancy management members, elected councillors and members of An Garda Síochána to workshop the development of an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.

Westmeath PPN delegates elected to the Municipal Districts of Athlone - Moate and Mullingar - Kinnegad, presented submissions from community groups on local issues to both Municipal Districts. These submissions are considered by the local Councillors and staff. The submissions encompass a wide variety of issues including environment, road safety and lighting among others. Some successful submissions included the installation of a new speed ramp in St. Michaels Estate, Mullingar which will help to improve road safety. In Abbeylands, road markings in the estate have been carried out. A submission from Athlone Access Action was successful in asking for a wheelchair access ramp whose lip was too high to be fixed. Many other submissions are still to be considered and will be taken into account when budget decisions will be made.

Sligo PPN Housing Thematic Network launched their five-paper series on community housing. The event coincided with the start of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) week and throughout the presentation, speakers discussed the current accommodation crisis in terms of Ireland's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals.

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2 Election Buddy is an online voting platform for running elections and polls.

Particular focus was given to SDG 11 'Sustainable cities and communities' and the role that appropriate housing policy and delivery plays in achieving this. The initiative first came about from the Sligo Vision for Community Wellbeing, which highlighted a lack of appropriate accommodation as a key factor influencing the health and wellbeing of people in Sligo. Given the complexity of housing policy, the network decided to compile detailed information and evidence of community need that could be brought to local policy and decision-making committees. Partnering with Social Justice Ireland, five papers were created focusing on key areas of accommodation need. The Thematic Network and this series of papers is one example of how the community can take an active role in local policy making though the PPN network and the papers will inform and be a research base for decisions made through SPC1 Housing and Governance.

Laois PPN Representatives played a key role on the LCDC, ensuring a strong community voice in local decision-making. They were actively involved in the development and approval of the Laois Local Economic and Community Plan 2023–2028, with a PPN Representative proposing the motion to adopt the final framework. PPN Representatives also served on the SICAP subcommittee, shaping the 2024 Social Inclusion and Community Activation Plans to prioritise youth, education, and disadvantaged communities. They contributed to reviewing and approving community grant allocations supporting both established and new groups. Throughout the year, PPN members provided oversight, accountability, and grassroots insight, acting as a vital link between local communities and statutory bodies. Their leadership and collaboration ensured that inclusion, fairness, and local priorities remained central to county development initiatives. The contribution of Laois PPN Representatives was recognised with the election of a Laois PPN Representative as the Chair of the LCDC.

## Encouraging Community Inclusion

A detailed and comprehensive disabled parking audit was carried out in Kilkenny City by the Kilkenny Access Group (KAG), in collaboration with the county engineer, facilitated by the PPN. The audit included on street disabled parking bays and disabled parking bays in council car parks. The bay-by-bay audit was done by a youth worker and two young people from Ossory Youth. KAG and Ossory Youth presented the findings to the Municipal Council. The Councillors and Directors of Services present complimented the young people from Ossory Youth for their in-depth work which illuminated several shortcomings and offered recommendations. In particular, it was noted that many of the bays audited needed maintenance and improvements to signage, painting etc. Recommendations were made around the provision of larger parking bays to accommodate larger vehicles and buses for visitors and tourists with disabilities. Although none of the upgrades and recommendations were implemented at the time, the KAG continues to work with the PPN to bring this issue forward and will approach the Older People's Council (OPC) to collaborate and press this issue.

Longford PPN Disability Representative raised concerns with the Infrastructural SPC about accessibility issues caused by National Roads Authority (NRA) roadworks on Battery Road, which impacted access to the designated polling station for the Referendum. The roadworks, combined with Friday traffic, created significant challenges for people with disabilities and others requiring assistance. Following this intervention, the Council reviewed arrangements and, in consultation with the PPN Disability Network, introduced improved parking, accessibility measures, and traffic management plans for the June local elections and future national polls.

Under the Social Inclusion Pillar, Offaly Disability Equality Network (ODEN) PPN Thematic Group put forward a proposal to Offaly County Council in relation to the need for a Changing Places facility in Offaly. This would allow people in wheelchairs who require restroom assistance to visit, attend events, shows and exhibitions in Offaly knowing that there are suitable restroom facilities available. Through the PPN SPC Representatives, this was presented to both the Community, Culture and Emergency Services SPC and also the Housing SPC. It went further and was presented to the Planning and Economic Development SPC. The group presented the value, benefits, the floor area requirements, the dimensions and examples of Changing Places facilities in other counties. While the submission was too late for the New Arts Centre in Tullamore, a Changing Places facility is now part of the plans for a new library and community facility in Edenderry. This illustrates the value of the community representation on SPCs and other Boards and Committees.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown LCDC worked in partnership with the PPN to deliver a series of training sessions to the PPN membership raising awareness of LGBTI+ issues and the development of guidance and signposting tools, etc. The minutes of the Community Culture SPC record that a presentation was given by the PPN Network manager and that the PPN is working with DLR Integration Forum to make it more inclusive.



## Enabling Community Climate Action

Tipperary PPN Environment and Climate Action SPC Representatives positively influenced the SPC programme during the consultation process of same. The Environment and Climate Action section kept the programme to only a yearly one, with annual reviews for the other four years, rather than an overall higher level 5-year strategy with annual plans emerging from it, as the PPN Representatives and the National SPC Review had suggested. The Representatives met initially online to discuss what would be best for planning and accountability of the SPC. In writing a submission to the Environment and Climate Action section, they then suggested changes to make the programme more effective over the SPC cycle. For example, instead of only linking to the Corporate Plan Environment and Climate Action theme to the SPC work, they identified a need to name related strategies and programmes to the functions of the SPC. These are now recorded in tabulated form on the programme document, for reviewing and cross-cutting impact reasons throughout the county council's target needs.

A Roscommon PPN Representative submitted a proposal to the Local Authority to fund energy master plans for community areas. These were later financed through bridging loan mechanisms. This approach allowed communities to access essential strategic planning funds to advance local climate action initiatives.

Additionally, many of these master plans have the potential to support future funding applications.

Meath PPN Environment Representative made a proposal to linkage group for a Keep Cup scheme, similar to one already rolled out in Killarney, to be replicated in Trim. This was brought to SPC and subsequently a meeting between the Climate Action Team, PPN Representative, and volunteers from the Killarney group came together and discussed how it could happen. The project is to be launched in 2025.

Cork County PPN prepared a submission for the Cork County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 Public Consultation process. Some proposals included encouraging people to grow their own food (through “Food not lawn” initiatives/competitions), to sow native wild flower meadows or leave areas of grass uncut to encourage (and save) our 98 bee species, to reduce the use of solid fuels for better air quality and a healthier population, to promote local SECs (Sustainable Energy Communities), to encourage refill/no waste shops, to install water refill stations (reduce use of plastic), to plant native trees around the city and towns, to increase public transport and safe separate cycle lanes, to lease cheap land for small scale vegetable producers and to ensure access to immersive fun, outdoor and nature education (forest schools for primary schools). Cork County PPN has worked well on the Environment SPC towards a more sustainable county.

A Carlow PPN Environmental Representative on the Planning, Environment, Climate and Biodiversity Action, Energy and Agriculture SPC requested an update regarding 12 acres of Strawhall Woodland in Carlow. Following submissions, Carlow County Council confirmed that the area has a proposed zoning for open space and amenity. It was also stated that no reply has been received from Greencore with reference to the request for the land to be donated to Carlow.

All Kerry candidates running in the local elections were invited to attend an Environmental Linkage group meeting where presentations were given on three policy proposals in the areas of tree management, pesticide, herbicide and fungicide use, and the provision of community allotments. This meeting informed candidates of the priority areas that Kerry PPN Representatives on the Environment, Climate Action, Marine and Emergency Planning SPC would be looking to progress during the 2024-2029 term. There was a relaunch of the Tralee Allotments Programme, supported by the Kerry PPN Representative on the SPC and the Development Worker. Work is ongoing on progressing all three of the policy positions at SPC level.

## Acknowledging Community Challenges

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Cavan PPN had a severe lack of feedback from Representatives in 2024. An independent facilitator was hired to work with them to identify a user-friendly system whereby they could finally feedback information from 2025 onwards. This came on foot of a third failure to institute Representatives’ interests in Linkage Groups and a significant lack of any reports from meetings they were attending.

Despite extensive training and support to Monaghan PPN Representatives on the theoretical workings of the SPCs and other decision-making bodies, the on-the-ground experience of influencing these committees has not reflected expectations. Most Representatives identify that when they do attempt to bring things to the table they are either deferred, or no action is taken. For this reason, we are unable at this point to put forward any specific proposals that have been actioned.

Kildare PPN report that due to the SPCs being stepped down in May 2024, many PPN Representatives only had the opportunity to attend one meeting, which naturally limited their overall impact. While we do not have specific examples of proposals or motions brought forward during this period, the presence of Representatives at the table remained valuable. They consistently contributed by raising thoughtful, community-informed questions and offering perspectives that challenged and enriched the discussions. Their participation ensured that the voice of the community continued to be heard, even in a limited timeframe.





# 1. Membership

**Membership of a PPN offers many benefits. By joining a PPN an organisation will get:**

- Access to relevant information on funding and grants coming through the Local Authority.
- The opportunity to advertise their activities via the PPN newsletter, website, emails etc.
- Access to capacity building and training events which will support them in their work.
- Access to information on decisions and proposals being made in their county or city and the ability to comment on and input to them, along with other PPN member organisations.
- An opportunity to network with and learn from other organisations in the county or city who may be involved in similar types of projects.
- The opportunity to become part of a linkage Group for a board or committee of interest and be able to have their views heard and contribute to local policy
- The opportunity to nominate members to sit on a board or committee on behalf of the PPN.

Each organisation must choose to be part of one College which represents their primary interest – Community and Voluntary, Environment or Social Inclusion.

At the end of 2024, PPN membership totalled 20,421 member groups (**including Associate Members**) across 31 PPNs. These figures were gathered using the PPN Salesforce Database. Community and Voluntary organisations continue to account for the majority of members (80.2%), followed by Social Inclusion organisations (15.8%) and Environmental Organisations (4%). Table 2 below provides a breakdown of membership by type of organisation and shows the comparative changes in each area over 2024.

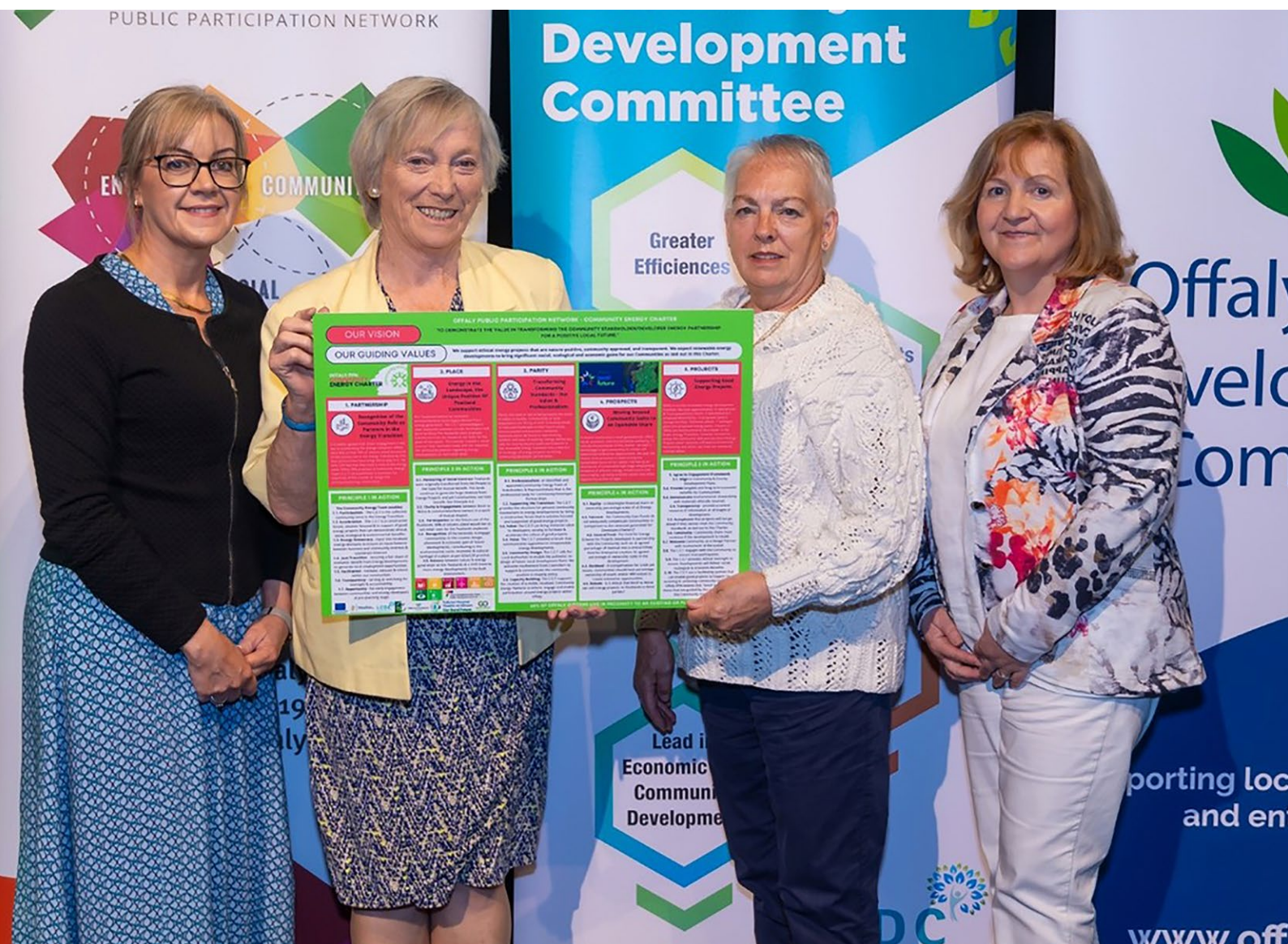


**Table 2: Composition of PPN membership 2023 and 2024**

College	2023 (n=31)	2024 (n=31)	Change in No.	% Total 2024
Community and Voluntary	15,242	16,383	+ 1,141	80.2%
Environmental	730	817	+ 87	4%
Social Inclusion	3,081	3,217	+ 136	15.8%
Total	19,063	20,421*	+ 1,358	

\*Please note with regards to the 2024 total figure - there are 4 groups registered to a PPN unassigned to any college.

Fifteen PPNs offered Associate Membership. This is generally for organisations who did not meet the full membership criteria, but who wished to be involved and receive information.







## 2. Representation and Decision Making

The PPNs were asked to report on how they consulted with their member groups, from distributing information, to attending consultation events and making written submissions. Table 3 provides a summary of the actions taken by PPNs to support their membership to engage in a more deliberative democracy.

**Table 3: Participation in Consultations, 2024**

Method	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Distributed information to member groups about local consultations/surveys	28	2	0	1 <sup>^</sup>
Distributed information to member groups about national consultations/surveys	26	4	0	1 <sup>^</sup>
PPN Representatives attended consultation/survey events representing the PPN	9	18	2	2
Resource Worker attended consultation/survey events representing the PPN	12	16	2	1 <sup>^</sup>
Made written submissions to consultations/surveys as the PPN or as a subgroup (linkage group, etc.)	5	18	5	2 <sup>#</sup>
The PPN organised consultations/surveys with its membership (i.e. organise meetings and surveys to feed into a consultation submission)	6	18	5	2

Note: <sup>^</sup>In 2024, the PPN responding never to these questions did not have staff in place.

<sup>#</sup> One PPN did not provide an answer to this question, so the total does not add to 31.

As can be seen in Table 3, the vast majority of PPNs always provided their members with information about local and national consultations taking place. Resource Workers or PPNs Representatives attended consultation events on behalf of the PPN ‘Always’ or ‘Sometimes’ in most cases, and again a majority reported that it either made written submissions or organised its own consultation events with its members ‘Always’ or ‘Sometimes’.

PPNs gave examples of successful consultations in 2024 and shared models of best practice. These are contained in Appendix 4.

### Vision for Community Wellbeing

Supported by funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), 25 PPNs reported having a completed Vision for Community Wellbeing (VCW). The PPNs with completed Visions note that some are due for revision. The PPNs report the Visions have been the base for policy documents.

### Representation on Decision Making Bodies

One of the key areas in which PPNs can directly influence the decisions made at local government level is by representation on boards and committees, such as Strategic Policy Committees, Joint Policing Committees, County Boards and so on.

**Table 4: Participation of PPN Representatives on Boards and Committees, 2024**

2024	
No. of Representatives	834
Male	419
Female	411
Other/Prefer not to say	4
Proportion Male: Female: Other	50:49:1*
Total No. of Boards and Committees	341

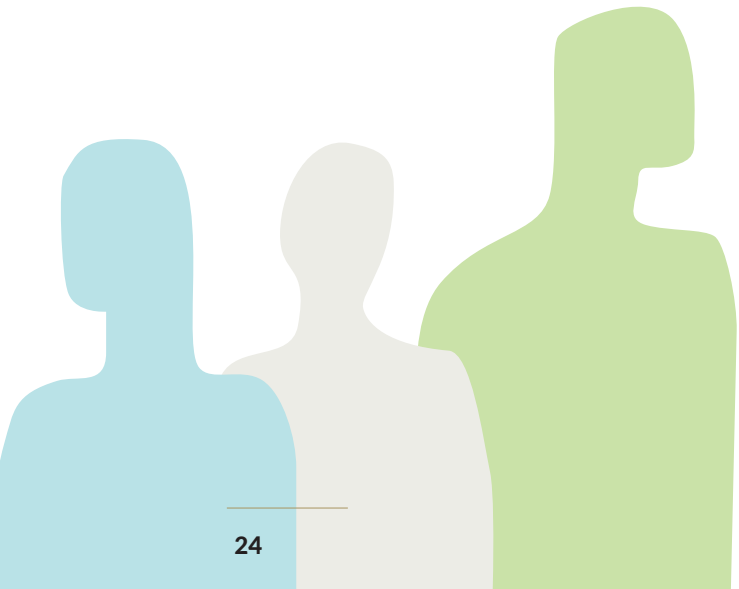
Note: \*Number rounded up.

The overall number of Representatives reported decreased from 926 in 2023 to 834 in 2024. It should be noted that the 2023 report covered 30 PPNs, while 2024 was a year of change due to local elections. The number of boards and committees on which the Representatives sit decreased from 343 across 30 PPNs in 2023 to 341 across 31 PPNs in 2024.

The number of open seats available for PPN representation on boards and committees at the end of 2024 was 101.

### Supports for PPN Representatives

The vital role of PPN Representatives is acknowledged across the PPN network and their volunteerism and experience are greatly appreciated. A range of supports have been put in place across the PPNs for their Representatives. Table 5 provides greater detail.





**Table 5: Supports for PPN Representatives 2024**

Type of Support	No. of PPNs (n=31)	No. of Groups (if applicable)
Linkage Groups	23	79
Thematic / Activity Groups	21	49
Representatives Charter	28	
Specific Training for PPN Representatives	29	
Training for Linkage Groups	11	
Meeting Feedback Forms completed by Representatives	28	
Local PPN Representatives Network	13	
One-to-One Support	27	

### Linkage and Thematic Groups

Where linkage or Thematic Groups exist, these can either take the form of overarching areas (for example, Social Inclusion, Housing and Infrastructure, Environmental, Health and Wellbeing, Community and Voluntary, Rural Development, Planning and Strategic Development, Economic Development, Community Safety/Crime and so on) or more specific areas of interest (for example linked to specific committees or related to Youth, Older People, Climate Change and Biodiversity, Disability Networks, Culture and the Arts, Sports, Water, Tourism, Diversity, Transport and so on).

Some of the PPNs reported that using college/pillars and municipal district membership as linkage groups works well, especially when combined with all-college pre-meetings for Representatives before each meeting of their committees.

This helped to ensure Representatives from different colleges/pillars are aware of each other's concerns, their objectives for the meeting and build a shared understanding.

Some of the PPNs found maintaining the requirement that a linkage group must meet 3 times annually in order to be deemed active brings about an additional time commitment. This affected both Representatives and members. One PPN notes that 'members have been reluctant to take on the additional responsibilities and time commitments involved, often citing meeting fatigue and a resulting sense of disconnection'.

What has proved useful is using Plenary meetings between Representatives, Secretariat and Members as a 'more effective and inclusive platform for fostering linkage and engagement among members and Representatives. These formats offer valuable opportunities for connection without adding to members' existing workloads. Providing more informal opportunities for membership and Representatives to engage is proving very fruitful.

Local Elections in 2024 resulted in new Boards and Committees being established which proved challenging for some as Linkage and Thematic networks also had to shift to remain aligned. Some of the larger counties note that whilst the local authority has fully merged, HSE areas have not and this can cause issues.



## Municipal District Representatives

In 2024, PPNs ensured that all Municipal Districts (MDs) or geographical areas were engaged with by:

- Having Representatives and Secretariat from each Municipal District.
- Holding Community Roadshows across all MDs – (Waterford PPN were short-listed for an Excellence Ireland Award in the Municipal District Initiative category as a result of theirs).
- Hosting Linkage group meetings in various Municipal Districts.
- Actively reaching out to all member groups across the region.
- Holding plenaries and Secretariat meetings in different areas of the county.
- Facilitating a wide variety of networking and inter-agency events.
- Combining in-person, hybrid and online meetings to reach as many members as possible.
- Providing information sessions on a wide variety of topics across the MDs.
- Engaging digitally with member groups via newsletters and social media.
- Working with member groups to provide solutions to issues of accessibility.
- Circulating the Council Municipal District meeting agendas to all member groups in the area and encouraging engagement with the elected Representatives on items of interest.
- Facilitating 'Meet the Candidate' sessions for the local elections for each Municipal District.
- Holding PPN information sessions in each MD to raise awareness and strengthen local engagement.
- Conducting outreach visits to community groups in all districts, particularly focusing on new member groups, to support integration and foster cross-community networking.
- Completing a 'mini-Well-being Statement' on an annual basis (Cavan PPN).
- Sending targeted emails to groups registered in an area when something affects a specific geographic area, e.g., a development plan for a specific area.

PPNs who do not have Municipal Districts also report rotating events, meetings, etc., across different parts of their area to ensure coverage and inclusion.





### 3. Training and Capacity Building

**PPNs provide invaluable free and low-cost training to their membership, Secretariats and Representatives to support them to fully engage within their communities. This training can be technical in nature (for example, how to write funding applications; governance; data protection) or more soft skills based (for example, self-advocacy workshops; leadership skills; thematic showcases).**

The organisation and provision of this training and capacity building function is time and resource intensive. However, it is an important part of the work of the PPNs to support their community groups to participate in local decision making.

In 2024, the PPNs provided a wide array of training, capacity-building programmes, and information and awareness campaigns. The following are some examples of the types of training provided by PPNs in 2024.

Carlow PPN made a significant impact by organising a month-long Voter Registration Campaign, 'Let's Make Sure All Voices Are Heard in Carlow', followed by hosting a Voter Registration Day in a high footfall area in Carlow Town. This initiative focused on increasing civic participation ahead of the local and European elections.

An in-person event offered face-to-face support to help people register to vote, particularly targeting young people, new residents, and minority communities. During the event, dozens of individuals were supported in checking or updating their registration, with many registering for the first time. The campaign promoted the message 'It's your super-power – make sure your voice is heard in Carlow', emphasising inclusivity and the importance of democratic engagement. By empowering more residents to take part in the electoral process, Carlow PPN strengthened community representation and helped foster a more engaged and informed local electorate. (Note that many other PPNs held similar events as 2024 was a year of elections in Ireland).



PPN Limerick worked with a developer to create [www.whichcandidate.ie](http://www.whichcandidate.ie). This website is a “quiz” whereby after answering a series of questions, the user can see which candidate is most aligned to their personal views and attitudes. The questions for the candidates were sourced from the PPN membership. This allowed for issues local to Limerick as well as more general matters to be put to the candidates. This was launched in advance of the elections and was a fantastic resource for people to more easily access information regarding those seeking election.

Donegal PPN organised adult literacy awareness workshops across all MDs. It is very important to make sure community groups empower individuals to participate more fully in their communities and enable the groups to use universal design and Plain English in their advertisements, posters, emails and across their social media feeds as well as meet the digital literacy needs of older members of the community. This programme demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of the PPN and the resourcefulness of its staff and Secretariat to respond to community needs and their awareness of their community.

Dublin City PPN held its November 2023 Plenary at the Riu Plaza Hotel, just one week after the Dublin riots. The event was marked by serious reflection on how the PPN could better support anti-racism work among its member groups. In response, it was agreed to offer anti-racism training in 2024. This took the form of three in-depth sessions, led by a facilitator whose expertise and engaging facilitation gave participants practical frameworks for addressing complex issues within their own groups. Encouragingly, this work inspired a broader commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), now due to be embedded in the 2025 workplan. Reflecting this momentum, the autumn 2024 elections saw nominations from six candidates with migrant backgrounds, which is an important step toward greater representation and inclusivity within the PPN and across its structures.

EDI work has been especially important for Dublin City PPN’s Migrant/Minority Thematic Group. The conversations sparked at the November 2023 Plenary laid the groundwork for deeper engagement throughout 2024, shaping how the group approached its priorities and collaborations. As EDI initiatives developed, they helped build confidence, visibility, and capacity within the Migrant Thematic Group. This evolving focus is now playing a key role in the group’s growth and development, supporting its efforts to foster stronger connections across communities and influence policy, from lived experience.

Leitrim PPN provided training programmes for around 50 Representatives, utilising their different skills to enable them to advocate and report more effectively. This also involved engagement with the Leitrim County Council personnel and committees, SPC planning and ongoing preparation of training packs for training of new PPN Representatives in particular. The impact was enormous with a 40-page training pack to support the PPN Representatives produced and available on Leitrim PPN website.

PPNs report in general that ‘all the member training organised by the PPN had a positive impact for PPN member groups, increasing their knowledge, skills and awareness on the many important topics covered’.

### **Examples of Training and Capacity Building programmes provided by PPNs in 2024**

- Built Heritage Investment Scheme webinar
- Boards and Committees Responsibilities Training
- Representative/ Secretariat Induction Training
- Zoom/Canva/Digital Tools Training
- Voter Registration Day (with a focus on migrant communities)
- Project Management
- UL Citizen’s Assembly



- Meeting Skills – Role of a Chair, Minutes Writing
- Financial Oversight for Board Members
- Grant Information and Making Funding Applications
- Succession planning
- Community Leadership Skills
- Mindfulness as a Tool in Managing and Empathy Fatigue
- Social Media
- Digital Inclusion
- Charities Governance Code
- Sustainable Development Goals and Circular Economy Workshops
- Volunteer Management Training
- Carmichael Training Programme Partnership
- Conflict Resolution
- AI/ChatGPT for Non-Profits
- Bystander Training
- Introduction to “theory of change”
- Understanding the Green Paper on Disability
- Public Sector Duty
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) Rochtain “Democratising Advocacy” training
- Facilitation Skills
- Summer Schools with Dublin City University (DCU)
- Diversity, inclusion, inter-cultural and anti-racism awareness
- Strategic and Project Planning
- World Day against Trafficking in Persons Workshop
- UCC/Horizon Europe Workshop
- Understanding and Influencing Local Policy Structures

- Adult Literacy Awareness Workshop
- Climate and Biodiversity Action
- Basic Bookkeeping

In line with their community ethos, where appropriate, training is available to all members and groups in the area. Specific training is provided for particular groups (for example the Secretariat and Representatives).

## Training provided to the PPNs

### Stakeholder Online Training for PPNs

DRCD in conjunction with Social Justice Ireland continued to provide online training to the PPNs in 2024. The PPN Stakeholder training was delivered online via pre-recorded sessions. The modules comprise of 8 sessions, some of which are divided into two videos to ensure engagement. Each module also has a feedback form, quizzes which allow for participants to gauge their own learning and additional materials relevant to the topic for download. Of the 78 registrations received in 2024, the largest stakeholder group are PPN Representatives with 33 participants. This is followed by the Secretariat with 21 and PPN staff at 13. Local Authority Staff registered 9 and 2 Councillors registered in 2024.

DRCD continued to fund the provision of an additional support service for PPNs by The Wheel in conjunction with Adare HRM into early May 2024. The service was intended to give PPNs access to specialised professional advice on HR, governance and conflict resolution queries. A mediation service was also offered as part of the service, as well as online training on the following:

- Human Resources
- Strategic planning
- Governance
- Leadership
- Sustainable Development Goals

## Salesforce training

DRCD also continued to fund the provision of support to PPNs on the use of Salesforce, commissioning South Dublin Volunteer Centre (SDVC) to continue to train online for new and advanced users. In 2024, SDVC provided the following support:

**444**  
individual  
cases dealt  
with 521  
hours of  
support given  
to these cases

**35**  
training  
sessions in  
total

**122**  
staff  
attended  
one or more  
training  
sessions

**72**  
hours of  
training was  
delivered





## 4. Management, Administration and Finance

### Meetings

A total of 75 Plenary and 283 Secretariat meetings were held in 2024 across all 31 PPNs. An additional 262 Secretariat subgroups (e.g. staff liaison/HR subgroup, policy subgroup, finance subgroup, etc) meetings were held as well as 137 Management/Liaison meetings with the Local Authority.

The PPNs report that:

- For some, there are difficulties in hosting whole county plenaries due to the size of the county/ network.
- In 2024 there was also a number of changeovers in staffing which again causes issues with organising larger meetings.
- In general, meetings are well attended, worthwhile and effective.
- Meetings always have an agenda and minutes of previous meeting.
- With the number of meetings taking place, a great deal is expected of volunteers who give their time while balancing work, raising families, or dedicating their retirement to serving on committees at local, regional, and national levels. Their commitment and contributions are deeply valued and merit ongoing recognition and appreciation.



- With reference to subgroups, one PPN notes a reluctance for Secretariat members to engage beyond the basic Secretariat meetings. This then impacts on their ability to deliver on their workplan points or support staff beyond the six meetings themselves. This has been raised with the Secretariat.
- Secretariat meetings are the backbone of the PPN, providing structure, accountability, and strategic direction. One group meets online on the second Tuesday of each month to share updates, hear from staff, and support the ongoing development of the network. In 2024, it was agreed that each Secretariat member would link in with either a pillar working group or a thematic group to help streamline communication and improve the feedback loop, which is making the process more efficient and manageable for volunteers. This approach is a work in progress but already strengthening connections across the network. Without a strong, committed, and engaged Secretariat, the PPN simply couldn't function. Their dedication (often behind the scenes) is what allows the wider network to grow, evolve, and promote meaningful participation in local democracy.
- A blended meeting works very well for Secretariat meetings and has resulted in obtaining the required quorum to meet regularly and progress the agreed Work Plan.
- While the number of meetings listed provides a snapshot, it does not fully reflect the significant commitment and workload undertaken by the voluntary Secretariat. In addition to attending Secretariat meetings, members actively participate in all Plenary sessions, PPN networking events, Representatives network meetings, and strategic planning sessions. Many Secretariat members also represent the PPN at local events, launches, and on local decision-making committees, as well as attending national conferences and meetings. Beyond their PPN roles, they continue to be active contributors within their own community groups. This high level of dedication and involvement illustrates the vital role the Secretariat plays in sustaining and strengthening the PPN. Their continued efforts, often behind the scenes, are essential to ensuring effective community representation and the successful delivery of PPN activities.

### Structure of the PPNs

PPNs may be established and operate under a number of legal and administrative structures. Of the 31 PPN respondents, 20 were hosted by the Local Authority; seven were hosted by another Community Organisation and four operated as independent companies.

Of the **31 PPN respondents,**

**20**

were hosted by the  
Local Authority

**7**

were hosted by  
another Community  
Organisation

**4**

operated as  
independent  
companies



## Interagency Collaboration

Twenty-nine PPNs reported engaging in some interagency collaboration in 2024. It was noted that collaboration with other organisations/agencies adds huge value to PPN activities.

Below are gathered some examples:

Carlow PPN collaborated with Carlow Age Friendly Alliance, Carlow County Council, Carlow Older Person's Forum and other partners to support a consultation survey aimed at making the community more age friendly. The survey, which informs the Carlow Age Friendly Strategy 2025–2029, was part of a Healthy Ireland-funded initiative aligned with Age Friendly Ireland and the World Health Organisation's Global Age Friendly Framework. Carlow PPN promoted the consultation through its network, facilitated participation in MD areas from hard-to-reach communities, and ensured inclusive representation and strong engagement, highlighting the PPN's role as a connector between local authorities and community voices.

The Climate and Environment section of Wicklow County Council expanded significantly in early 2024. Wicklow PPN organised an event for member groups to meet the new team including the Climate Action Coordinator, the Climate Action Officer, the Community Climate Action Officer and the Environmental Awareness Officer. The new Biodiversity Officer was also introduced. Each individual team member described their role, and participants were given an insight to their areas of expertise and their current and future work. Participants also got to meet the Director of Services for Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity and the Senior Engineer for the Environment. The meeting took place in An Tairseach Organic Farm and Ecology Centre, a member group of Wicklow PPN. Further conversations took place during a tour of the farm and lunch. The meeting was instrumental in developing connections and increasing communication between the local authority team and communities on the ground. It has encouraged and facilitated more engagement with various plans and strategies and most recently the development of a Tidy Towns network in the county.

Mayo PPN works closely with key local organisations to ensure community voices are heard and supported. It actively participates and sits on committees alongside Comhairle na nÓg, Healthy Ireland, and the Local Community Development Committee working group. Through this collaboration, Mayo PPN contributes to strategic planning and decision-making processes that impact community wellbeing. Additionally, Mayo PPN regularly attends local events and promotes a wide range of activities and initiatives to engage and empower the community. By fostering strong partnerships and maintaining an active presence, Mayo PPN helps to create a more inclusive and connected Mayo.

Fingal PPN collaborated with Age Friendly on consultation/questionnaires around Age Friendly Strategy.

Galway City Community Network attended Men's Health Week event in collaboration with Healthy Ireland.

Limerick PPN shared information regarding Leader funding information events prior to launch.

Dublin City PPN strengthened its collaboration with Dublin City Council through a range of activities and events, including Africa Day, Inclusion and Integration Week, the Dublin Learning City Festival, and several family fun days held at parks and indoor venues. This partnership has grown deeper and more collaborative, with a strong focus on shared goals and mutual support. While the PPN recognise that the council manages an extraordinarily busy and full portfolio of work, it is hoped that this collaboration will continue to be grounded in mutual respect and professional integrity. Dublin City PPN looks forward to building on this foundation in 2025, fostering meaningful engagement, learning, and community connection.

Donegal PPN assisted Donegal Youth Council in the running of elections to elect the new Youth Council 2024 – 2026.



Collaboration continued to be a strong working aspect of Tipperary PPN. The Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), LCDCC, Comhairle na nÓg, Age Friendly Ireland, Tipperary County Council and Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB) all have close connections with the PPN and its members. There is a PPN Representative on the ETB Wellbeing Forum, working to support the 22,000 further education students as they progress their educational attainments. A new structure in 2023 was the ETB Regional Adult Literacy Coalition (RALC). In 2024, this proved to be a great place for Tipperary PPN to strengthen their links with the county Library services, HSE disability services and others, such as local Traveller groups and Citizens Information. Tipperary PPN, Citizens Information Centres and Terra Nua, the unemployment agency, now work together to support each other in updating the individual services' policies and resources. During 2024, Tipperary PPN suggested a flat structure approach to the quarterly meetings. This was agreed and the PPN coordinator is now the facilitator for the first year and also attends any major literacy events to support the RALC coordinator. Further regional and national literacy networking has created useful connections in this educational field. Where literacy needs are being met, this is a form of equality and, in turn, this has influenced Tipperary PPN's own equality work. To ensure any new publications are now in plain English, all staff have completed literacy training. Two staff showed interest in further training and are looking to be accredited literacy champions in 2025. They will be trained along with other staff from member organisations of RALC and so this ETB based collaboration continues into every level of the PPN.

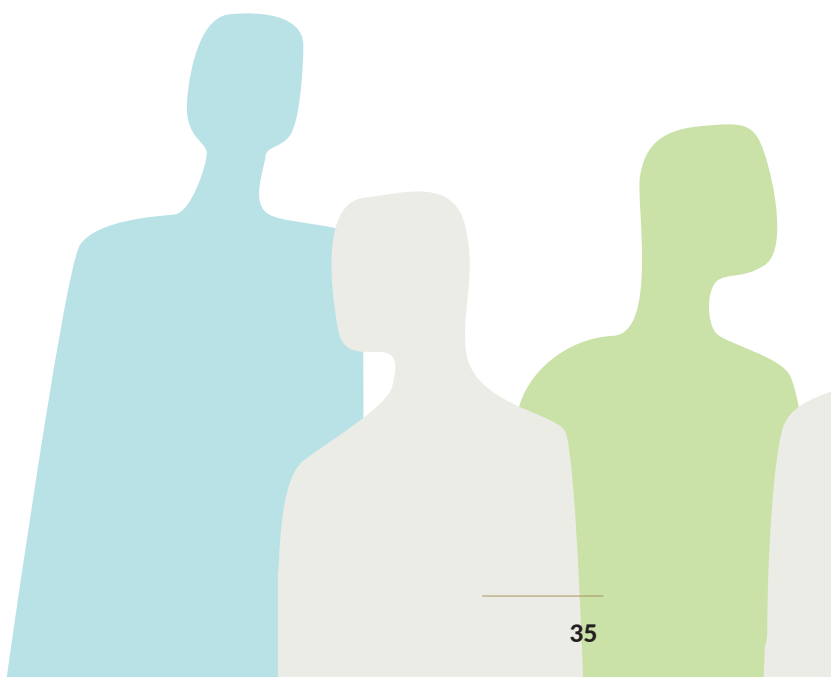
Laois PPN in collaboration with Laois County Council hosted the Laois Community and Voluntary Awards 2024. All the nominees are PPN member groups. The Awards recognise and celebrate the community groups and volunteers in Laois who enhance the quality of lives in our local community. Laois PPN's Property Marker is a crime prevention initiative. Laois PPN rolled out this crime prevention initiative in collaboration with An Garda Síochána, supported by Laois County Council. Laois PPN is a member of the Age Friendly Alliance and is identified as a key stakeholder in the implementation of the Age Friendly Strategy. Laois PPN is a member of the steering group of Comhairle na nÓg. Laois PPN supported the empowerment of young people through Laois Comhairle na nÓg and supported them in achieving their workplan for 2024. Laois PPN have ongoing collaboration regarding mental health and suicide prevention. Laois PPN supported the Age Friendly and Healthy Laois coordinators with the Live Well Expo, through promotion of the event and attendance on the day. The Live Well Expo provided valuable information on health and wellbeing services tailored to local needs. Many of the attendees are members of active retirement and other community groups in Laois.

Roscommon PPN delivered a bespoke “County Roscommon Community Training Programme” in 2024 which is an interagency collaboration responding to community training needs. The initiative is led by Roscommon PPN in association with Roscommon LEADER Partnership and Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board and is informed by a training needs analysis conducted with 400+ community groups in the county. Over the course of 2024, 12 community training workshops were delivered with over 100 attendees.

The Wexford Age Well Expo and Home Energy Clinic is a collaboration with Age Friendly Wexford and Age Friendly Ireland Healthy Age Friendly Homes. The Expo was a showcase of services, supports and activities to future proof for tomorrow. On the day information stands included a digital hub, libraries, Local Link, information on county council grants, a credit union, Healthy Wexford access office, fire safety, Garda Síochána, Wexford Mental Health, Family Carers, Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board, HSE, Alzheimer Society of Ireland and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. Energy advisers were available to provide one-to-one advice on home energy upgrades. There were informative talks on crime prevention, being fraud smart, fire safety and keeping your brain active. The event was free and open to all. Light refreshments were served. The Expo was very well attended and feedback from attendees was very positive. There are plans for further Age Well Expo collaborations in 2025. Other collaborative work included inviting speakers on home energy conservation from South-East Energy Agency and Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) to speak at our plenary meeting and we also collaborated with Wexford County Council’s Climate Action Office on an ongoing basis throughout 2024. A community growers’ event was held in March 2024 in collaboration with Healthy Wexford.

Kildare PPN worked collaboratively with a range of partners including the LCD, Healthy Ireland, and the Age Friendly Programme to support the promotion and delivery of community focused initiatives across the county. A key element of this collaboration was the strategic use of our e-Bulletins and social media platforms to ensure wide and inclusive dissemination of information. The impact of this collaboration was clear: greater community reach, improved awareness of local opportunities, and stronger engagement between community stakeholders and decision makers. All of which was made possible through the consistent, trusted communication channels of the PPN.

Sligo PPN Representatives and members were very involved with the Sligo Age Friendly Alliance throughout 2024 and contributed to the development and implementation of “Sligo Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2026”. PPN Representatives at Age Friendly Alliance meetings brought insights and concerns from PPN member groups, particularly those working with older people (meals on wheels, nursing homes...etc.). This ensured that the priorities of Sligo’s diverse older population were considered in the strategic planning (access to services, social participation initiatives). By having PPN representation, the Age Friendly Alliance gained a direct channel to grassroots organisations, facilitating and developing an age friendly county, and ensuring that policies and services address the needs of older people across Sligo.





Kilkenny PPN worked in collaboration with Healthy Kilkenny to promote the service and in the delivery of identifiable actions. As part of this process, the PPN participated in the development of a research report on health and wellbeing in an area in Kilkenny City where there are higher levels of poverty and deprivation, with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of the people in these areas. Kilkenny PPN continued to work in collaboration with Kilkenny Older People's Council in relation to the management, identification of participants, insurance and distribution of the Age Friendly (computer) tablets. While this was initiated to mitigate social isolation among members of the older population in light of Covid-19 restrictions, it continued to progress and became a collaborative project in its own right. Kilkenny PPN continued to assist the Kilkenny Access Group, the advocacy group for people living with a disability in Kilkenny. It also is a member of the Kilkenny Community Integration Forum which is made up of key stakeholders around the county who work in unison to assist members of the Ukrainian community, immigrants and refugees to transition to life here in Kilkenny, and part of the Forum's communication subcommittee tasked to promote positive messaging.

Clare PPN have an agreement with a cross-directorate group from Clare County Council to pilot a new initiative aimed at providing basic training and induction for councillors and incoming PPN Representatives together at a conference-like event with workshops and a chance to network and get to know each other. We worked together on the project planning for this event which Clare County Council generously funded. Our aim was to break down barriers between those who would work together on the SPCs and to ensure a shared level of introductory training on crucial issues such as their public sector duty and the equal status acts, roles and responsibilities of local government, the socio-economic indicators for Clare and the role and remit of Clare PPN.

Galway County PPN collaborated with Galway County Council on the Cathaoirleach Awards 2024. In collaboration with Healthy Islands, PPN staff travelled to Inis Mór and Inisboffin as part of information sharing with all groups. The PPN collaborated with the Arts office for Culture Night in September which was the biggest ever attended in County Galway.

Leitrim PPN collaborated with Healthy Leitrim on two events targeted at the over 55s. Leitrim PPN was on the organising committee with An Garda Síochána, Leitrim County Council, Leitrim Development Company and Age Friendly Leitrim.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown (DLR) PPN shares information from a wide variety of organisations, including DLR Sports Partnership. The PPN sits on the advisory committee of Comhairle na nÓg and provided them with opportunity to promote their activities on our community radio programme. We collaborated closely with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Social Inclusion Unit for the Building Connections event. With Dublin South FM, we collaborate on the Community Connections monthly podcast that promotes local groups and their activity. One important collaboration with DLR County Council was in relation to the DLR Community and Volunteer Awards. The PPN was invited to help decide the categories, promote the awards, and sit on the panel that assessed the entries.





Kerry PPN collaborated on the 'Women in Local Government Initiative' with Kerry County Council and Kerry Age Friendly. The initiative sought to encourage the participation of women from a diverse range of backgrounds to become involved in local and national decision making. An in-person event was held which included an introduction to local government, presentations on active citizenship, engagement and participation by Kerry PPN staff and Secretariat members followed by a panel discussion with Q&A with female elected Representatives from Kerry County Council. A booklet 'Increasing Diversity and the Engagement and Participation of Women in Local Government in County Kerry' was also developed as a reference guide for women interested in learning more about pathways to participation and the structures of local government.

Cork City PPN was invited to sit on the 'Climate Neutral Leadership Group' in Cork City. This group includes multiple stakeholders across the city, and the goal is to reduce our carbon emissions by 80% and become climate neutral by 2030. Cork City PPN also sits on the Healthy Cities committee and inter agencies across the city. This ensures that the PPN is visible to those working in communities and helps to increase awareness of the PPN and the impact and benefits that joining has for community groups.

Cavan PPN worked closely with Cavan Disability Network to host their AGM and annual workplan. From this arose a close working partnership which culminated in a joint celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities. We hope to replicate this proactive and demonstrable manifestation of partnership with other key collaborative partners.

Longford PPN partnered with Longford County Council to deliver a series of funding information roadshows across the Granard, Ballymahon, and Longford Municipal Districts. These events provided community groups with direct access to information on available funding opportunities, application processes, and supports, helping them to secure resources for local projects. The collaboration strengthened links between the Council and community groups, empowering participants to take forward initiatives that benefit their areas.

Meath PPN worked with Healthy Meath/ Louth in the development, research and consultation phases of the Community Connect project, mapping resources in each county and devising a plan to train community champions.

Westmeath PPN facilitated a very successful collaboration with Healthy Ireland. A 'Grow Your Own' workshop held in September was attended by 15 people in conjunction with Healthy Westmeath. The workshop highlighted the importance of growing your own food which is nutritious and healthy and can also help combat obesity. Growing your own food also helps to combat climate change by reducing carbon footprint. The distance that the food must travel is greatly reduced and there is less use of pesticides.





Louth PPN Resource Worker sits on a number of boards and committees. They are part of the Secretariat of the Volunteering Framework Implementation Board and chair the communications / awareness subgroup. Louth's LCDC Health and Well-Being subcommittee is tasked with overseeing the implementation of Louth's Health and Well-Being Plan. They are also a member of Louth's Creative Ireland Committee which oversees the allocation of funding for Creative Ireland projects in the county and the progression of these projects through to completion. Membership of these committees facilitates information-sharing across different departments and organisations which in turn leads to greater collaboration on projects and more effective use of available resources. Examples of other stakeholders on these committees include Louth Volunteer Centre; Louth County Council (Healthy Louth, Age friendly, Creative Ireland and Climate Action Officers), Louth Local Development, Chamber of Commerce, Youth Work Ireland, Louth / Meath Education and Training Board, HSE, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Local Sports Partnership, An Garda Síochána, Louth Libraries and various service providers. Louth PPN regularly collaborates with the HSE to relay health related information to the community via the weekly publication of our newsletter. One of Louth PPN's Secretariat is the Louth Co-ordinator of Comhairle na nÓg in Louth. This collaboration resulted in the creation of the iLLUminate youth e-zine, an online publication issued quarterly which is designed and written by youth members for youth members, with information, support services and useful resources relevant to youth members across the county.

Monaghan PPN met regularly with the Monaghan LCDC equality subgroup and discuss issues in relation to gender-based violence, the Migrant Integration Strategy, and Social Inclusion Week. Updates are also provided from the equality subgroup stakeholders at these meetings in relation to items like child poverty, Autism Friendly Monaghan and the Planet Youth Programme. The PPN, in association with the Monaghan Women's Assembly also carried out a series of Women's Walking safety audits in five locations in Monaghan during 2024 and the findings were reported to the relevant Municipal Districts. Monaghan PPN met a number of times in 2024 with the Comhairle na nÓg steering committee and updates were provided from the group on the progress of the Comhairle workplan for 2024. The findings of the 'Let's Talk' event in the summer were presented to the elected members of the council by four young Comhairle Representatives. The main issues to arise among young people were exam stress, mental health, transport, and issues for the LGBTQI community. Monaghan PPN attended the Comhairle na nÓg Annual Youth Conference in the Hillgrove Hotel which was youth led and showcased some of the areas of work delivered throughout the year, with specific emphasis on the 'Let's Talk' event. Monaghan PPN assisted in organising key stakeholders relevant to working with young people to provide information stands at the event.



Waterford PPN roadshows ran from February through May and gave local communities the opportunity to connect directly with the PPN as well as Waterford City and County Council partner organisations. Hundreds of attendees received guidance on establishing community groups, accessing funding for local initiatives creating stronger, more inclusive, and vibrant communities. Another huge positive was the connecting and networking between the stakeholders at these events and how much value it was to run these in a collaborative effort. The programme was initiated by Waterford PPN and Healthy Waterford in partnership with a range of organisations, including the Community Safety Partnership, Waterford LEADER Partnership, Waterford Area Partnership, Creative Waterford, HSE, the emergency services, and Waterford Sport Partnership, among others. The Roadshows were also shortlisted in the 'Chambers Ireland Excellence Awards' that took place in November 2024 in the "Municipal District Initiative" category. The award recognises the impact of initiatives that maximise the contribution of the municipal district members to local authority effectiveness, particularly in terms of governance, local representation, conduct of council business, community engagement, and economic, social and local development generally.

## Social Inclusion

PPNs are uniquely placed within communities to engage a whole range of marginalised groups and to support them to engage in democratic processes. Twenty-eight PPNs (note that some PPNs had staffing shortages in 2024) reported having actively supported the inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination, including Travellers to enable them to participate at local and county level in 2024. Some examples of actions taken on behalf of the PPN in furtherance of their social inclusion agenda have included:

Seventy attendees attended Limerick Migrant Forum meeting with stakeholders. The Migrant Forum was established with the support of Limerick PPN and in 2024, three members of the Forum became PPN Representatives on Council Strategic Policy Committees following mentoring and support.

At the first Plenary event of 2024, Carlow PPN actively supported the inclusion of socially excluded and marginalised communities by hosting a panel discussion and cultural celebration that amplified their voices and encouraged participation at county level. Groups such as the Africa Support Group, AHA Storytellers, Steadfast Creations, and Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre, representing communities experiencing poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, shared their challenges, achievements, and contributions to Carlow life. The evening culminated in a powerful African music and storytelling performance, celebrating cultural identity and fostering intercultural understanding. This event provided an accessible, welcoming platform for under-represented communities, including ethnic minorities and those facing hardship, to engage with the PPN, influence local conversations, and feel valued within the broader community. It highlighted the PPN's commitment to inclusion, diversity, and empowering all voices to shape Carlow's future.

Mayo PPN ran an initiative called 'Community Inclusion Spotlight', inviting community groups across County Mayo to share how they are welcoming new communities into their area. This campaign highlighted inclusive practices and celebrated local efforts in building a more connected and diverse Mayo. Each week, a different group was featured, showcasing the creative and practical ways they involved newcomers in their organisations, including community radio stations, tidy towns groups, family resource centres and youth projects. These inspiring stories were shared on Mayo PPN website and social media platforms, helping to spread awareness and encourage other groups to adopt inclusive approaches in their communities. Due to the popularity of this initiative, Mayo PPN are continuing to promote the good work taking place throughout the communities.



Galway County PPN were very well received on a trip to Oughterard for integration groups because of the information given to community groups to get involved. Also, the Healthy Islands trips with Healthy Ireland to the Aran Islands were so well received by all members of the community.

Westmeath PPN attended the Cavan Disability Network regional networking event in Cavan Town. This proved invaluable in meeting people in the disability sector in surrounding counties. Disabled people experience high levels of discrimination, unemployment and poverty. Presentations gave insight into the achievements of the Cavan Disability Network and what could be replicated elsewhere as well as giving insights into what could be done at county stadia to improve the experience of people with disabilities, including having a quiet room for people with autism. This allows children and adults with autism to fully participate in activities with friends and family. Other issues addressed included plans to make Cavan Town more accessible, and explanations of different levels of visual impairment. The lessons learned from this meeting were then discussed at the next community Linkage group meeting with future actions planned.

In tandem with the Cavan Multicultural Network, Cavan PPN published a migrants' flyer for the general membership. This outlined the facts and dispelled common myths surrounding migrants and migration. The flyer was designed to quell the growing flames around discontent about immigration and support a more inclusive and accepting society of vibrant and diverse communities.

One of Dublin City PPN's greatest successes in 2024 was demonstrating how excluded groups can meaningfully participate in local decision making through collective action. Our written submission to the Local Economic Community Plan, showed that with the right resources, dedicated time, and a clear framework, small community groups (which are often times run by just a few volunteers) can collaborate effectively without being overwhelmed by complex processes. This submission highlighted the critical role of having someone to initiate and guide the work. At the May Plenary, Dublin City PPN showcased new features of its website designed to support socially marginalised groups. The website management team, Neo-Archaic, delivered an engaging and interactive presentation highlighting resources tailored for groups with limited budgets and capacity. This initiative aims to empower under-resourced community groups by providing accessible tools and information. Work on enhancing these resources will continue in 2025.

These support sections can be accessed on the Dublin City PPN website here:

<https://dublincityppn.ie/in-dublin/community-supports/>

<https://dublincityppn.ie/in-dublin/members-facilities/>

<https://dublincityppn.ie/in-dublin/dublin-stories/>

Offaly PPN participated in a number of social inclusion actions with those most socially excluded. The PPN were central to coordinating, assisting, and making presentations on the PPN and how the members can engage and participate effectively in the PPN. Offaly PPN is central in the promotion of all of the social inclusion activities that take place in the county. These events are excellent opportunities to network and speak to people on a one-to-one basis. Some examples of these events are: Offaly Traveller Movement mental health awareness campaign; Traveller Pride; Ukrainian Independence Day in conjunction with the Volunteer Centre; Offaly Africa Day; Offaly India Group Independence Day; Offaly Pride; Disability Awareness Week; Social Inclusion Awareness Week; Offaly Age Friendly and Older Persons Network events including Bealtaine, and Culture Night.



The social inclusion linkage group of Kilkenny PPN is open to all social inclusion members and actively targets members from other groups to participate and engage in decision making processes. The group is very active in identifying issues that affect their community and those most marginalised within society. The group engages well with Kilkenny PPN social inclusion Representatives, ensuring a constant flow of information. Through the work of the social inclusion Linkage group, the PPN continues to work to include and represent the most vulnerable and marginalised groups. Kilkenny PPN has elected Representatives from the communities that are socially and economically deprived onto SPCs, LCDC and the Secretariat. Kilkenny PPN throughout 2024 continued to work with the Kilkenny Access Group, an advocacy group for people with disabilities, who with the support of the PPN has become the go to group in relation to access issues for people with disabilities.

Cork County PPN coordinator sits on Cork County Council Integration Forum, with department leaders in the council, community leaders, HSE, Religious, Garda, HSE, Dept. of Education, social welfare, Local Link, Tusla, and six Local Development Companies, all working to strengthen the community response for people coming into the country and ensure that they are met with a coordinated response. The PPN coordinator has been on this Forum for three years and many subcommittees.

Roscommon PPN, in partnership with other local development stakeholders within the county's Social Inclusion Measures Network, established a project steering group to create a social inclusion profile for Ballaghaderreen, a town significantly affected by deprivation, social exclusion, and poverty. Working collaboratively, the PPN and partners examined the key challenges and opportunities facing communities in the area, developed a targeted action plan, and used the resulting profile to address issues related to resourcing, community capacity, and social integration.

As a direct result of the Dormant Accounts funded engagement project work undertaken by Wicklow PPN and Wicklow County Council, a Social Inclusion Network group was formed as a subgroup of the Local Community Development Committee in late 2023. Wicklow PPN remains an active member of this developing network. The network elected a Chair and Vice Chairperson in January 2024 and set up subgroups to progress agreed pieces of work. Wicklow PPN led a subgroup to raise awareness of activities and supports available during social inclusion week. Another subgroup worked on running an event to support the inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, while another worked on supporting youth initiatives. The network ensures that social inclusion actions in the LECP are implemented and highlights any developing issues and gaps in service delivery.

Donegal PPN work closely with our social inclusion and integration teams in Donegal County Council, Donegal Intercultural Platform, Donegal Travellers Project and the Local Development Companies in enabling participation. We have various events during the Council's Social Inclusion Week each year.

Laois PPN supported community representation from social inclusion groups to a wide variety of policy and decision-making committees. As 2024 was an election year a significant number of vacancies arose. Laois PPN now have social inclusion Representatives representing active retirement age groups, disabled persons' organisations as well as those from socially and economically disadvantaged areas and groups. The election of social inclusion Representatives enables them to participate at a local and county level on policy and decision-making committees.

Longford PPN supported inclusive community development at Ardnacassa Community House in Longford Town, where a PPN Secretariat member leads a women's community education programme. This initiative provides a welcoming and supportive space for women from diverse backgrounds, including those experiencing poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination, to learn new skills, build confidence, and connect with others. With PPN support, the programme has strengthened community bonds, encouraged active citizenship, and created pathways for participants to engage in local decision-making structures. The project has become a positive example of how grassroots initiatives can empower individuals while promoting inclusion and equality in the wider community.

Galway City Community Network worked with Galway Traveller Movement on a submission to Galway City Council on the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029. This ensured the voices of Travellers were at the forefront in what is a critical programme for the community. The incidence of homelessness is particularly high for the Traveller community in Galway City so the inclusion of Traveller voices was imperative.

Tipperary PPN, using HSE National Lottery funding, developed and co-delivered a 'Facilitation skills for beginners' training course over five mornings in the autumn of 2024, to deepen the skills of a facilitator as opposed to a Chair. Eighty per cent of the participants were from the social inclusion pillar, including LGBTI, Roma, Ukrainian, domestic abuse services and lone parents. Both the Roma and LGBTI participants are in local and regional decision-making structures, with the Ukrainians working for a development company. The course had to be run with an awareness of English being a second language for some of the participants, and literacy levels being low for some attendees also. Interactive small groupwork was a common tool with community development principles as a basis to the design of the programme. The course was well evaluated with many participants saying they found the sessions empowering and they felt encouraged to facilitate within their groups in the future.





Waterford PPN participates on the Traveller Interagency Group committee and actively engages with a wide range of social inclusion member groups. We collaborate closely with SICAP, Treo Port Láirge CLG, Renew Waterford, Waterford New Communities, the community integration team, Age Friendly initiatives and the community safety programme under the Community Services Programme. In addition, our social inclusion Representatives serve on numerous boards and committees ensuring that the voices of socially excluded groups are effectively represented.

Kerry PPN has been included as part of the Local Area Integration Co-Ordination Team. PPN staff meeting bi-monthly with groups and agencies working with new communities, migrants, IPAS applicants and beneficiaries of temporary protection (BOTP) to hear the challenges they face, provide necessary support and information sharing. Many of the groups now attend Kerry PPN events and training, developing networks with other established community groups within the county.

Sligo PPN supported the establishment of Sligo Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO), a network of disabled people acting on behalf of the Sligo disabled community. Working in partnership, Sligo PPN supported the DPO to devise a unique access and equality training programme delivered directly by disabled people to groups and organisations looking to meaningfully ensure they are operating as inclusively as possible. The training has been delivered to organisations such as the HSE and a proposal is in for Sligo County Council to avail of the offer. The training is also available to groups across the PPN network. The PPN has also connected Sligo DPO with key decision makers in Sligo County Council with specific remits around planning and the public realm to try and ensure that accessibility is at the forefront of new infrastructure and capital works. The support in the relationship works both ways and the DPO has nominated a number of people to PPN Representative roles, as well as supporting Sligo PPN to create a suite of accessible templates for community group governance.

Clare PPN works closely with, supports through board membership or has helped to establish the following groups in Clare; Quare Clare LGBTQIA+ support and social group; Clare Traveller Community Development Project; Clare Leader Forum and Clare Solidarity Network. Clare PPN is deeply involved in empowering and including the most marginalised voices in our county. Our work with these groups includes assisting with event management and organisation, administrative support for boards and steering groups, compiling submissions, and ensuring that their voices are heard in local and national consultations and within the PPN itself. Specific examples of our efforts in this regard would be our work on the voter registration initiatives, a project which reached out to the groups listed above including Travellers, those living in homeless accommodation, those seeking protection in Ireland and our work with disabled persons' organisations to respond to policy proposals in the Green Paper on Disability Reform which seriously concerned them.

Monaghan PPN constantly strive to ensure that socially excluded groups are able to participate at local and county level in training, meetings, events etc. The PPN remains an active member of the LCDC equality subgroup which includes the Integration Support Unit. The PPN liaise with the Community Link Worker (Integration) to see how we can all work together to create a positive community and how the PPN can assist in this role. We also liaise with the Traveller Integration Worker who is employed by Monaghan Integrated Development to carry out a consultation with Travellers in the county to provide a case study to the HSE in order to secure a full time Primary Care Worker for Monaghan. Monaghan PPN also attended a LGBT+ Awareness session on understanding and supporting the LGBT+ community.

Kildare PPN played a key role in promoting inclusion through our coordination of County Kildare Social Inclusion Week. Working with community groups, we ensured that the voices of socially excluded communities, including Travellers, people with disabilities, etc. were reflected in both the planning and delivery of the week. Through direct engagement with member groups, the PPN helped shape a diverse and accessible programme of 28 events across the county. These included cultural showcases, awareness workshops, and community conversations that highlighted real issues and encouraged participation at both local and county levels. The initiative not only increased visibility and representation for marginalised groups but also strengthened community connections and built confidence among participants to engage more actively in civic life. It showcased the PPN's commitment to inclusion and meaningful, grassroots led collaboration.

Meath PPN held two separate events in Mosney Village, the largest International Protection accommodation centre in the country. The sessions focused on how adults can interact with the PPN, receive information and engage with plenaries, linkage groups etc. This highlighted the need for more online methods of holding meetings but also where events are in person, the question 'is there the opportunity to engage with other services who may be able to provide transport?' was asked. Meath PPN was also involved in the 'Louie & Frankie' book project aimed at young people going through difficult emotional situations in their lives. The books' characters and storytelling provide a gentle framework for young people to incorporate into their everyday lives.

Leitrim PPN attended a Traveller open day event. Leitrim PPN invited socially excluded groups to have a stand at the plenary and socially excluded groups are always encouraged to enter the 'Love Where You Live' awards.

The Cork City Local Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce seeks four Representative seats from the PPN. These seats are specifically allocated to certain groups within the social inclusion pillar, e.g. one needs to be filled by a group working with Traveller/Roma communities, one to be filled by groups working with those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, one from those who are working with migrant communities or are a member of the migrant community, and one from the LGBTQI+ community. Cork City PPN also began the process of developing our 'Vision for an Inclusive City' (VfIC) document in 2024. This document was inspired by the Cork City Vision for Community Wellbeing. The process of developing that vision uncovered an appetite to take a closer look at inclusion in the city and we began creating this vision in response to the interest that was shown. The VfIC is not an exhaustive list of every action which could support Cork City to become a more inclusive place, rather it is a start. It identifies fifteen barriers to inclusion which the people who contributed to this vision were most concerned about. It also contains ideas and proposals to help overcome these barriers. The document itself will be completed in 2025.

Louth PPN is open to all and actively supports inclusion of socially excluded groups to take part and participate in Louth PPN. Throughout 2024, Louth PPN engaged with socially excluded sectors of Louth's community through regular attendance at community events with follow-up one to one meetings with select members of these groups. This resulted in an additional 12 social inclusion groups joining Louth PPN in 2024, an 8.6% increase in social inclusion member groups in 2024. Louth PPN strived to reach migrant-led community groups, previously under-represented in Louth PPN's membership. The provision of Active Citizenship workshops, participation through Louth's Inter-Agency Migrant Forum and attendance at community events resulted in an additional 12 migrant-led community groups joining Louth PPN in 2024.



## 5. Work with the Local Authority

The PPN Handbook<sup>3</sup> states the “PPN will be the main link through which the Local Authority connects with the community, voluntary, environmental and social inclusion sectors” and “PPN will enable the public to take an active formal role in the policy making and oversight activities of the LA’s area of responsibility”. The intention is for a collaborative partnership approach. Positive relationships between PPN and the Local Authorities are essential for success.

As part of the Annual Report process, Local Authorities were asked to provide examples of how they had supported the development of PPN and the active participation of environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary organisations in policy and decision making, information sharing and

capacity building (other than the provision of the Budget allocation or the core duties of the Resource Worker, where the Resource Worker is employed by the Local Authority). Table 6 provides a breakdown of supports identified in respect of all 30 Local Authority areas for which responses were received.

3 <https://assets.gov.ie/97296/79d48b54-0557-493e-9aa1-1d910364d41e.pdf>



**Table 6: Local Authority Supports to PPNs, 2024**

Support Mechanism	Number (n=30)
Active Memorandum of Understanding in place for 2024	28
Memorandum of Understanding reviewed in 2024	25
Service Level Agreement (SLA)	17
Assist, where appropriate, the PPN in achieving its work plan	29
Supported the PPN to be active actors in the LECP	28
Cross-departmental participation in PPN events	28
Involvement of Local Authority PPN Contact Person in PPN	27
Provided additional core funding to the PPN to support its work	18
Provided additional funding for specific PPN projects	7
Specific campaigns to promote the work of the PPN within the Local Authority	13

### Examples of Supports provided by the Local Authority

- Cavan PPN provided great support to our Housing Section and particularly for estate grants. They provided essential community engagement in 2024 to instigate the re-opening plans for a community crèche within an estate which had been closed for years.
- We have supported Clare PPN on various initiatives over the course of 2024. These resulted from constructive meetings with the PPN staff where ideas that were mutually beneficial to the Local Authority and the PPN. We supplied funding, staff and links to other directorate staff in support of these initiatives.
- Cork City Council have a continuing PPN promotional campaign both internally and externally whereby engagement with all relevant sections and directorates where relevant, is consistently promoted through internal communications and external newsletters.
- Local Authority staff are encouraged to learn more about the PPN through the PPN Bulletin and attending events.
- Fingal Local Authority's PPN contact person provided enhanced supports to the Secretariat with a recruitment process for a PPN Resource worker and has been continuously supporting the induction of the new Resource and Support worker who began their employment in mid-2024. The L.A. PPN contact person provided support to the PPN Secretariat in the development of an SLA and provided advice from the perspective of the L.A. in relation to additional core funding to support the work of the PPN. Before the Resource Worker was recruited in March 2024, the Local Authority provided a full time Staff Officer to the operation and continuous work of the PPN including the coordination of the linkage groups and plenary.
- Laois PPN coordinator and administrator are employed by Laois County Council. The L.A. community section engages regularly with Laois PPN and collaborates wherever possible. Laois PPN is also contacted in relation to other work items, including climate and environmental awareness, social inclusion, and active travel. Laois County Council ensures that the PPN is included in all consultations relating to policy and plans, both by the local authority and other organisations/agencies.

- Roscommon County Council remains committed to fostering a strong and collaborative relationship with the PPN and its associated stakeholders. Throughout 2024, the Local Authority partnered with the PPN on a range of events, initiatives, and activities, generating synergy and achieving shared objectives that benefited all parties and promoted PPN events and activities across various Local Authority media channels including internal media, social media and weekly publications in local newspapers.
- The 'Increase Participation of Women and Diverse Groups in Local Decision Making' project, devised by Tipperary PPN, was approved by the Women's Caucus for national funding for 2025. The 'Power of People and Place' county mapping project was being developed and designed in 2024 for delivery in 2025. There was engagement with partners, and the survey and scope of the project delivery was worked on. Tipperary County Council are funding it with Tipperary PPN as full partners. The county review of the new SPC scheme and standing orders was done with full engagement of Tipperary PPN.

## Local Authority Consultations

The PPNs can and should be a key mechanism for Local Authorities to gather the views of their communities in response to calls for consultations. They are best placed to engage with a membership of community groups and have a track record in producing and supporting submissions. Table 7 provides an overview of the number of consultations undertaken by Local Authorities in 2024 and the engagement with PPNs during this process.

**Table 7: Local Authority Consultations, 2024**

Consultations	No. of (n=30)
Notifications of consultations sent to the PPN	376
Local Authority Consultations carried out via PPNs as the main vehicle	67
Consultation workshops jointly hosted by the PPN and the Local Authority	40

The number of consultation notifications sent to PPNs in 2024 was higher than in 2023 (from 357 to 376). The number of consultations carried out via PPNs as the main vehicle in 2024 was also higher than in 2023 (from 60 to 67) and the number of consultation workshops jointly hosted has decreased slightly from 48 to 40.

## Specific Areas of Collaboration

The Local Authorities repeatedly acknowledge the significant contribution of the PPN and that the strong working relationship and ongoing collaborations showcase both the PPN's commitment to community development and reinforces the value of ongoing collaboration with the Local Authority.

Local Authorities and PPNs also collaborated on a host of other events and initiatives in 2024. These include:

- Connecting Communities Roadshows
- Municipal District Roadshows
- Community and Voluntary Awards
- Town Centre First Regeneration consultation
- Age Friendly County Strategic Plan
- Funding Workshop for Community Groups
- Project Management Training for Groups

- Love Where You Live 2025 Award
- Age-Friendly Expo
- 5-Ways to Well-Being Community Event
- Development of the Local Economic and Community Plan
- Development of the County Council Corporate Plan
- Cathaoirleach Awards
- Affordable Housing Survey
- Portumna Town Trail
- Derryfadda Wind Farm Consultation
- Women in Local Government Initiative
- PPN National Conference 2024
- Climate Action Programme
- Voter Registration Projects
- Hosting National PPN Staff Retreat
- Community Health and Wellbeing Roadshows
- Community Showcase Event
- Disability Strategy Working Group
- Youth Council Events
- Older Persons Committee Events
- Inclusion and Integration Week
- Africa Day
- Dublin City Learning Festival
- Fingal Vintage Picnic
- Make Way Day
- Flavours of Fingal
- OECD Review of Ireland's Rural Development Policy
- Support for Community Groups with the New Online Funding Application Process
- Host a Repair Café Expo

## Grant Eligibility

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PPNs act as an information hub for community groups in accessing information and supports about Local Authority grants. In recognition of this, and the role of PPNs in enhancing the efficacy of community groups through capacity building, training, networking and so on, some Local Authorities have made membership of the PPN an eligibility requirement for accessing grants. In 2024, from the 30 replies, 21 required community groups to be members of the PPN to be eligible for grants and 9 did not. Dublin City Council report that they are 'committed to removing the requirement for member groups to join the PPN as a condition of grants eligibility, recognising that this criterion does not best serve the interests of the PPN or its member groups'.

## Training and Induction by Local Authorities

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Seventeen of the 30 Local Authorities reported providing specific induction or training to newly nominated PPN Representatives in 2024. Local Authorities also reported the provision of capacity building training, Strategic Policy Committee training, Public Sector Duty training and induction packs (containing for example standing orders, code of conduct, conflict of interest policy, LECP, copies of last 3 agendas, copies of last 3 meeting minutes, a list of members, a review of the operational plan for the committee, a typical agenda, procedures of the committee, claim forms for expenses incurred and statement of outcomes, Annual LCDC Report).

Fifteen Local Authorities reported providing training of Local Authority staff and elected members on public participation and the PPN.



# Appendix 1

## PPN Contact Details (October 2024)

PPN	Email	Website	Vision for Community Wellbeing Statement
Carlow	carlowppn@carlowcoco.ie	www.carlowppn.ie	<a href="https://www.carlowppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Presentation-Vision-and-SDGs-FINAL-presented-at-Plenary.pdf">https://www.carlowppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Presentation-Vision-and-SDGs-FINAL-presented-at-Plenary.pdf</a>
Cavan	info@cavanppn.ie	www.cavanppn.ie	<a href="https://www.cavanppn.ie/wellbeing-statements">https://www.cavanppn.ie/wellbeing-statements</a>
Clare	sarah@clareppn.ie	www.clareppn.ie	<a href="http://www.clareppn.ie/wellbeing/">www.clareppn.ie/wellbeing/</a> <a href="http://www.clareppn.ie/publications/">www.clareppn.ie/publications/</a>
Cork City	info@corkcityppn.ie	www.corkcityppn.ie	<a href="https://www.corkcityppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/PPN-Cork-City-Doc-B-241021-single-pages-WEB.pdf">https://www.corkcityppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/PPN-Cork-City-Doc-B-241021-single-pages-WEB.pdf</a>
Cork County	ppn@corkcoco.ie	www.corkcountyppn.ie	<a href="https://corkcountyppn.ie/community-wellbeing-vision/">https://corkcountyppn.ie/community-wellbeing-vision/</a>
Donegal	donegalppn@donegalcoco.ie	www.donegalppn.net	
Dublin City	info@dublincityppn.ie	www.dublincityppn.ie	<a href="https://dublincityppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/DCCPPN-Vision-For-Community-Wellbeing-2024-pdf.pdf">https://dublincityppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/DCCPPN-Vision-For-Community-Wellbeing-2024-pdf.pdf</a>
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown	enquiries@dlrppn.ie	www.dlrppn.ie	<a href="https://www.dlrppn.ie/vision-for-community-wellbeing-statement-dlr-ppn/">https://www.dlrppn.ie/vision-for-community-wellbeing-statement-dlr-ppn/</a>
Fingal	info@fingalppn.ie	www.fingalppn.ie	
Galway City	info@galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie	www.galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie	<a href="https://www.galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/GCCN_POLICIES_POSITIONS_2023-approved-compressed.pdf">https://www.galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/GCCN_POLICIES_POSITIONS_2023-approved-compressed.pdf</a>
Galway County	administrator@galwaycountyppn.ie	www.galwaycountyppn.ie	
Kerry	ppn@kerrycoco.ie	www.kerryppn.ie	<a href="https://kerryppn.ie/our-vision-for-community-well-being-in-kerry/">https://kerryppn.ie/our-vision-for-community-well-being-in-kerry/</a>
Kildare	admin@kildareppn.ie	www.kildareppn.ie	<a href="https://www.kildareppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Kildare-Wellbeing-Statement.pdf">https://www.kildareppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Kildare-Wellbeing-Statement.pdf</a>

PPN	Email	Website	Vision for Community Wellbeing Statement
Kilkenny	ppnkilkenny@kilkennycoco.ie	www.kilkennyppn.ie	<a href="https://kilkennyppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Vision-for-Community-Wellbeing-Booklet.pdf">https://kilkennyppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Vision-for-Community-Wellbeing-Booklet.pdf</a>
Laois	ppn@laoiscoco.ie	www.laoisppn.ie	
Leitrim	info@leitrimppn.ie	www.leitrimppn.ie	<a href="https://leitrimppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Strategic-Plan-LPPN-2025-2028-Final.pdf">https://leitrimppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Strategic-Plan-LPPN-2025-2028-Final.pdf</a>
Limerick	ppn@limerick.ie	www.limerickppn.ie	
Longford	ppn@longfordcoco.ie	www.longfordppn.ie	<a href="https://www.longfordppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/PPN-Community-Wellbeing-booklet1-1.pdf">https://www.longfordppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/PPN-Community-Wellbeing-booklet1-1.pdf</a>
Louth	ppn@louthcoco.ie	www.louthppn.ie	<a href="https://louthppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Louth-PPN-Final-Community-Well-Being-Statement.pdf">https://louthppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Louth-PPN-Final-Community-Well-Being-Statement.pdf</a>
Mayo	mayoppn@mayococo.ie	www.mayoppn.ie	<a href="https://mayoppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Mayo-Wellbeing-Booklet.pdf">https://mayoppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Mayo-Wellbeing-Booklet.pdf</a>
Meath	meathppn@meathcoco.ie	www.meathppn.ie	
Monaghan	ppn@monaghancoco.ie	www.ppnmonaghan.ie	<a href="https://www.ppnmonaghan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Monaghan-County-Final-Vision-Index-for-Reps.pdf">https://www.ppnmonaghan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Monaghan-County-Final-Vision-Index-for-Reps.pdf</a>
Offaly	ppn@offalycoco.ie	www.offalypn.ie	<a href="https://offalypn.ie/ppn-structure/community-wellbeing-vision-statement">https://offalypn.ie/ppn-structure/community-wellbeing-vision-statement</a>
Roscommon	info@roscommonppn.ie	www.roscommonppn.ie	<a href="https://roscommonppn.ie/resources/county-vision-for-community-wellbeing-in-roscommon/">https://roscommonppn.ie/resources/county-vision-for-community-wellbeing-in-roscommon/</a>
Sligo	ppn@sligococo.ie	www.sligoppn.com	<a href="https://www.sligoppn.com/health-and-wellbeing/">https://www.sligoppn.com/health-and-wellbeing/</a>
South Dublin	info@sdcppn.ie	www.sdcppn.ie	
Tipperary	coordinator@ppntipperary.ie	www.ppntipperary.ie	<a href="https://www.ppntipperary.ie/our-vision-for-community-wellbeing-in-co-tipperary/">https://www.ppntipperary.ie/our-vision-for-community-wellbeing-in-co-tipperary/</a>

PPN	Email	Website	Vision for Community Wellbeing Statement
Waterford	waterfordppn@gmail.com	www.waterfordppn.ie	<a href="https://www.waterfordppn.ie/about/wellbeing/">https://www.waterfordppn.ie/about/wellbeing/</a>
Westmeath	ppn@westmeathcoco.ie	www.westmeathppn.ie	<a href="https://westmeathppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Final-Print-version-A5-Westmeath-Community-Wellbeing-Vision-22-June-2020.pdf">https://westmeathppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Final-Print-version-A5-Westmeath-Community-Wellbeing-Vision-22-June-2020.pdf</a>
Wexford	mary.byrne@wexfordcoco.ie	www.wexfordppn.ie	<a href="https://wexfordppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Our-Vision-For-Community-Wellbeing-Final-Brochure.pdf">https://wexfordppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Our-Vision-For-Community-Wellbeing-Final-Brochure.pdf</a>
Wicklow	info@countywicklowppn.ie	www.countywicklowppn.ie	<a href="https://countywicklowppn.ie/our-vision/">https://countywicklowppn.ie/our-vision/</a>



# Appendix 2

## Overview of PPN Activity in 2024

\*Note that these figures relate to the returns made to the survey and are not the same as the Salesforce data contained above.

PPN	Number of PPN Representatives	Number of Plenary Meetings Held	Number of Local Authority Boards and Committees with PPN Representatives in 2024	Hosting Arrangement	*Total Membership (incl. Assoc.)	*Social Inclusion Pillar Members	*Environment Pillar Members	*Community Pillar Members
Carlow	25	2	7	Hosted by Local Authority	358	50	21	287
Cavan	23	2	18	Hosted by another Community Organisation	495	107	35	353
Clare	18	2	10	Operating as an independent company	423	59	28	336
Cork City	19	2	8	Hosted by another Community Organisation	220	74	20	126
Cork County	60	12	14	Hosted by Local Authority	685	98	36	551
Donegal	64	2	15	Hosted by Local Authority	736	71	22	643
Dublin City	21	2	8	Hosted by another Community Organisation	856	231	28	597
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown	29	2	29	Hosted by another Community Organisation	668	123	16	529
Fingal	17	1	8	Hosted by Local Authority	856	140	47	669
Galway City	26	4	11	Operating as an independent company	190	53	11	126
Galway County	26	2	10	Hosted by Local Authority	1347	267	51	1029
Kerry	10	3	9	Hosted by Local Authority	1077	120	34	923
Kildare	15	2	8	Hosted by another Community Organisation	813	77	34	702
Kilkenny	20	2	11	Hosted by Local Authority	469	89	32	348
Laois	27	2	12	Hosted by Local Authority	678	87	28	563

PPN	Number of PPN Representatives	Number of Plenary Meetings Held	Number of Local Authority Boards and Committees with PPN Representatives in 2024	Hosting Arrangement	*Total Membership (incl. Assoc.)	*Social Inclusion Pillar Members	*Environment Pillar Members	*Community Pillar Members
Leitrim	40	2	6	Hosted by another Community Organisation	414	90	17	307
Limerick	18	2	7	Hosted by Local Authority	232	64	10	158
Longford	33	4	10	Hosted by Local Authority	602	75	16	511
Louth	35	2	14	Hosted by Local Authority	619	152	23	444
Mayo	22	2	9	Hosted by Local Authority	1309	192	55	1062
Meath	22	2	9	Hosted by Local Authority	714	91	22	601
Monaghan	38	2	12	Hosted by Local Authority	709	120	41	548
Offaly	22	2	19	Hosted by Local Authority	713	89	13	611
Roscommon	28	2	7	Hosted by Local Authority	415	54	16	345
Sligo	24	1	15	Hosted by Local Authority	664	55	15	594
South Dublin	15	3	7	Hosted by Local Authority	305	68	10	227
Tipperary	51	2	10	Operating as an independent company	1690	225	61	1404
Waterford	27	2	7	Operating as an independent company	662	71	25	566
Westmeath	19	2	9	Hosted by Local Authority	984	196	18	770
Wexford	10	1	11	Hosted by Local Authority	515	74	21	420
Wicklow	30	2	11	Hosted by another Community Organisation	758	129	51	578
Totals	834	75	341		21,176	3,391	857	16,928

# Appendix 3

## Impacts of the PPN in 2024

In 2024, the Department asked each PPN to provide some detail on the impacts of the work of their PPN.

### Carlow

Carlow PPN played a pivotal role in supporting the establishment of Carlow Women's Shed, responding to local interest in creating a welcoming, inclusive space for women to connect, share skills, and build community. The PPN facilitated the group's early development by giving a platform to the concept at Plenary sessions, followed by hosting planning meetings, facilitating governance training sessions, and supporting communications and promotional efforts. PPN staff provided practical resources such as a 'coffee box' for refreshments for the group, stationery, and admin support, including help with accessing insurance. The PPN also promoted the initiative across its member network and social media. This direct support enabled the group to host well-attended open meetings and begin the process of securing a long-term premises. The initiative has already fostered strong community interest, offering a vital social outlet for women across Carlow. The PPN's involvement demonstrates its commitment to community-led development, equality, and empowering local voices in a practical and meaningful way.

### Clare

With financial and staff support from Clare County Council, Clare PPN led several community group initiatives aimed at voter registration in the county. We collaborated with eleven other community organisations to deliver these initiatives, but the project was instigated by Clare PPN. The first initiative was aimed at the local elections, and targeted the general public, those who might be excluded from voting and migrant groups.

It included workshops on the local elections with translators for Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection, and a workshop for International Protection applicants and migrants. This was followed up by voter registration drives in the congregated settings where both communities live in Clare. As well as this, volunteers and community workers visited accommodation for people who are experiencing homelessness in Clare and held a drop-in day aimed at the Traveller community in our premises for registration. We held on-street voter registration reminder days where we handed out leaflets in Kilrush, Ennis and Shannon Town Centres and we did radio interviews and press releases regarding same. We produced an information leaflet also for online circulation detailing who was eligible to vote in EU Parliament Elections and a separate one for the general public for the general election. The impact of this work was that between us we helped hundreds of people to register to vote, and we reminded thousands more to check their details on the register. We made certain that communities who are often under-represented in our democracy had timely and clear information on whether they could vote or not and how to go about it. This project also served to up-skill community groups and staff on elections and voter registration.

### Cork County

Managing PPN elections in such a big county is a huge task. We have over 60 seats to fill across just the initial County Council SPC and Boards. The election process was the biggest body of work carried out in 2024 and one with the biggest impact across a huge variety of different areas. Also, it being the 10-year anniversary, Cork County PPN is losing half of our 22 strong Secretariat this year as the ten-year mark is the maximum time anyone can sit on the Secretariat according to our constitution.



## Donegal

Donegal PPN organised Public Sector Duty training to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect human rights in their functions which was very beneficial to our groups.

## Dublin City

One of Dublin City PPN's proudest achievements in 2024 was the work of its Disability Thematic Group, which launched the brochure "Access to the Public Realm" at an event in the Mansion House in February 2024. The launch was hosted by then Lord Mayor, Cllr. Daithí de Róiste and marked a significant moment of visibility and impact for the group. The brochure, which was developed entirely by members of the Disability Thematic Group, offers practical recommendations to Dublin City Council on how to make public spaces more inclusive and accessible. It is available online here: <https://dublincityppn.ie/wp-content/uploads/brochure-final.pdf> The event highlighted the group's leadership in planning, budgeting, and content creation, and it successfully engaged councillors and key decision makers. Most importantly, it provided Dublin City's PPN disabled community with a valuable resource and a voice in shaping the city's public realm. This work demonstrates the PPN's commitment to inclusion, collaboration, and meaningful participation in local policy.

## Dún Laoghaire Rathdown

The Building Connections Community Networking Event, part of the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Festival of Inclusion 2024, successfully brought together over 120 participants to celebrate the theme 'Building Connections in the Community'. The event fostered strong community connections by showcasing a wide range of groups, including those focused on youth, older people, disability, environment, and migrant communities. Attendees engaged through networking tools like contact cards, shared posters, and direct outreach from DLR PPN.

The launch of the Five-Year Strategic Plan (2024–2028) marked a key moment, setting the direction for future initiatives. Participants also benefited from informative stands covering education, health, volunteering, childcare, community funding, and climate action. Overall, the event enhanced awareness, promoted collaboration, and strengthened the social fabric of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown.

## Galway City

Galway City Community Network (GCCN) held three "Meet the candidates" events in each electoral ward ahead of the local elections. This included asking each prospective candidate to sign three manifestos. A community manifesto, agreeing to promoting GCCN policies and positions if elected, an anti-racism protocol and a disability access manifesto. All members of GCCN were invited to attend and listen to each candidate. A question focusing on different themes such as housing and environment was asked of each candidate by a GCCN member. These events were well attended and proved beneficial to our members in clarifying which candidates were community driven and supportive of the PPN.

## Galway County

Galway County PPN plenary event was attended by over 80 people with a broad spectrum of participants and quality information tables from local services and organisations facilitating valuable networking between PPN members. There were four excellent speakers who presented at the event. Three long serving PPN Secretariat with ten years' service were presented with awards by a Director of Services. All recipients were surprised and thrilled with awards.

## Kerry

Kerry PPN provided support to the Kerry Community Awards planning committee to organise an annual awards programme acknowledging the community groups that work tirelessly to improve the social, economic, cultural and environmental quality of life in the local communities of Kerry. Kerry PPN Secretariat members sit on the committee. Administration and event planning support is provided by Kerry PPN staff. In 2024 the work of 20 community groups were celebrated with the overall prize awarded to Cúnamh Iveragh, who support children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The Chairperson of the group described how winning enhanced the capacity of the group, “Winning this award drove on the committee to pick out what else these families need in south Kerry and the next big issue they face. As a committee, we’re now focused on what’s needed. We think our families in south Kerry deserve the same as families anywhere else.”

## Kildare

In 2024, Kildare PPN launched its Policy Resource Library in direct response to feedback from member groups who expressed difficulty in developing essential organisational policies. This online library provides a suite of adaptable, ready-to-use templates, including a constitution, code of conduct, communication policy, data protection, and grievance policy, all designed to strengthen governance and compliance. By addressing a clear need, the resource has empowered groups to formalise their structures, improve transparency, and build capacity with confidence. It has been especially valuable for newer or smaller groups with limited administrative support. This initiative showcases Kildare PPN’s commitment to listening to its members and delivering practical, high impact supports that help community organisations thrive and participate more effectively in local decision making.

## Kilkenny

The PPN social inclusion Representatives engaged fully with the LCDC on the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan. The LCDC Representatives negotiated the preparation and implementation of a disability plan, under Goals 8 and 9 of the LECP. Furthermore, the LCDC Representatives ensured that the disability plan be incorporated into the Kilkenny County Council Corporate Plan. A key component of the plan included the appointment of an access officer, required under Section 26 of the Disability Act (2005). The Kilkenny Access Group, the advocacy group for people with disabilities in County and City Kilkenny, is endeavouring to work with the new access officer to engage with the community at large on issues of importance to the estimated 22,000 persons in the county, living with a disability or a significant medical condition affecting their lives.

## Laois

Laois PPN in collaboration with the sports section of Laois County Council achieved a key impact in 2024 by supporting a record number of community groups to successfully secure a record funding amount in Laois. Laois PPN provided training through a Sports Capital Grant funding workshop which 70+ community groups attended. Laois PPN provided 1 on 1 support to community groups across Laois with their applications and drawdown. The successful projects will foster an integrated and planned approach to developing facilities, increase participation in sports, and improve facilities’ quality, accessibility, and safety. Between 2020 and 2024, training and capacity building workshops provided by the PPN have played a significant part in the success of community groups in Laois, securing an increase in Sports Capital funding from €1 million to €6 million, representing a 6-fold increase. The successful projects will benefit local communities for years to come.

## Leitrim

Leitrim PPN sponsor two sections of the 'Love Where you Live' Awards with Leitrim County Council. 35 entries were made under the PPN sponsored sections. Short-listing and judging took place over three days. The PPN coordinator visited all 23 groups along with an external judge across the county (three MD areas). This was a fantastic opportunity for Leitrim PPN to engage with 23 community groups, meet the volunteers, explain what was coming up in the PPN, such as free training, plenary meetings and events. The awards night was hugely successful with three members from each group invited, great community spirit and collaboration with the council on this event.

## Limerick

Public Participation Network Limerick and Limerick City and County Council hosted the National Public Participation Networks Conference at the Strand Hotel Limerick on October 17th and 18th, 2024. Integrated in this event was the celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of PPNs across Ireland. The conference brought together 160 delegates representing community and voluntary groups, social inclusion and environmental organisations from across the country, alongside local authority officials, elected Representatives, and other supporters of the PPNs' work.

## Longford

Longford PPN members reviewed and updated their Community Well-being Vision Statements for each MD, with strong participation from member groups. These revised visions became the foundation for each MD's local election mandates. Supported by a facilitator alongside the Secretariat and staff, members developed clear, community-driven mandates which were circulated to all election candidates. Many candidates, including several who were later elected, signed up to these commitments. This process ensured that newly elected Representatives entered office with a clear mandate from their communities, strengthening accountability and paving the way for collaborative work with Longford PPN to deliver on shared priorities.

## Louth

With local and national elections held in 2024, Louth PPN provided Active Citizenship workshops in both Drogheda and Dundalk, covering the following topics: local government functions; voting rights; the importance of voting and using your voice; what the electoral register is and how to register and active community participation, including the PPN (the purpose, how to get involved, how to influence local policy and decisions through involvement with the PPN). These workshops were particularly popular amongst Louth's new communities, resulting in participants registering and voting for the first time.

## Mayo

Ballina in County Mayo was a candidate for the title of European Volunteering Capital 2026 by the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV) based in Brussels. It was one of just three European municipalities shortlisted for the prestigious title. Ballina Municipal District, together with Mayo PPN, Volunteer Ireland, Mayo Volunteer Centre and Ballina 2023 worked together to secure the nomination. Speaking about the announcement, Cathaoirleach of Ballina Municipal District said, "We are delighted to be a candidate for European Volunteering Capital 2026. This is a wonderful opportunity for Ballina and the surrounding region to acknowledge and celebrate the Meitheal<sup>4</sup> ethos and the strength of community volunteering that exists here." Head of Ballina Municipal District added "We have over 130 community and voluntary groups and organisations as Mayo PPN members in the Ballina Municipal District alone". PPN Coordinator stated that "We look forward to working with our local, regional and national partners to continue to develop volunteering programmes in this district through the implementation of the recommendations of the Blueprint for European Volunteering 2030 (BEV2030) and the European Solidarity Corps programme in Ballina."

4 <https://www.maryrobinsoncentre.ie/meitheal.html>



CEO of Volunteer Ireland was delighted to see Ballina's candidacy commenting, "Ballina Municipal District has an active and vibrant volunteering community. Through building connections across other parts of Europe, there is the opportunity for sharing approaches and knowledge and creating links with other volunteering communities across Europe to deliver programmes, which would be of great benefit to the region, and nationally." The eventual winner was Maia in Portugal.

### Meath

The development of linkage groups was a key requirement identified at the 2022 plenary, where member groups gave significant feedback into the structures of Meath PPN. An independent facilitator was appointed to develop linkage groups, mapped to the current SPC scheme and other committees. Following local elections, new PPN Representatives were sourced from within the linkage group structure and every vacant position has been filled. An important structure that enables the community voice to be brought to decision making tables.

### Monaghan

In November 2024, the PPN and community section in the Council hosted a "Be Funding Smart for 2025" information event for all our community groups. Over 120 groups took part and information was provided on funding schemes, the grant application process, the importance of being registered with the PPN to ensure up to date contact details, how to get ready to submit a funding application and lots more! A presentation was also delivered on "How to Build a Successful Community" and we invited a well-established community group to give a presentation on their experience of funding and pass on their knowledge to other groups. This was followed by a Q&A session and networking session for community groups to talk to council staff regarding funding opportunities and also allowed the groups the opportunity to arrange appointments to meet with the council staff for more information. An online session was also delivered later in the year for those who were unable to attend the in-person session.

### Offaly

Offaly PPN groups and organisations came together in conjunction with Offaly County Council Climate Action Team, Offaly Local Development Company, the LCDC and other key people from across the country with expertise and experience in this area to develop Ireland's first Community Energy Charter. This Charter outlines the behaviour and engagement process expected from developers and government. Key to the Community Energy Charter is best use and fair share of Community Gains Funds and issues around land use and the environment. It has also facilitated a deeper process whereby communities have thought about what it is that they want/need in order to arrive at a clearly articulated position. It is noted by experts in the field that developers haven't agreed as an industry what community engagement needs beyond the tick box. This Charter addressed that deficit by letting developers know what communities in Offaly expect and what is 'Just' to those who live in proximity to large energy developments. The Charter will stimulate local debate on what a fair win-win community-development partnership looks like and has produced a set of collectively agreed guidelines for our affected communities. This illustrates the work and commitment in Offaly communities, in terms of future proofing the county and beyond for generations to come, all in a voluntary capacity via Offaly PPN. Offaly PPN sourced Leader funding to bring the Charter to fruition. Green Offaly won the Tender to carry out the work. The work included carrying out two county-wide online surveys, desk research and three in person full day workshops with follow up work to bring the Community Energy Charter to fruition. Offaly PPN are delighted to be a part of the process.

## Roscommon

Roscommon PPN focused on improving communication structures to strengthen community engagement and create more opportunities for individuals to connect with both the PPN and Roscommon County Council. As part of this effort, the PPN hosted a range of online funding webinars and tailored in-person community workshops. A key milestone during the year was the launch of their new website, designed to serve as a central hub for Roscommon communities. This user-friendly platform offers access to valuable resources, training materials, guidance, and up-to-date information on the latest PPN activities and initiatives across the county.

## Sligo

A key challenge identified to us from community organisations was finding community space to undertake community activities and to deliver important local services. Sligo PPN undertook a piece of research with existing and potential community spaces including an audit of services and accessibility and local transport access. We have now created a database of available community space which can be accessed either online or in hard copy in public buildings. The database details all available community space, allows filters via criteria such as catering facilities, capacity, disability access, public transport access etc and can be used by all community organisations or private groups looking to avail of local public space. <https://www.sligoppn.com/community-spaces/>

## South Dublin

While the PPN was not fully resourced and was navigating through a period of transition in 2024, PPN membership continued to very proactively support the PPN with attendance at PPN Plenary relatively high, averaging 80 members across each of the three plenary meetings held. This is a very good achievement and demonstrates the support and ownership by which members in South Dublin have in their PPN.

## Tipperary

Through the process of being involved in the development of the new LECP 2024-2029, stronger awareness has arisen, within the PPN staff and Secretariat, of the importance of the impact of the named actions on the ground within the plan. Along with the appreciation of the need for true collaboration, not piecemeal, between the lead partner (convenor) and other organisations delivering work directly linked to a particular action, the delivery of named actions in the LECP is key to building true community resilience throughout the county. This has led to Tipperary PPN proposing regular quarterly meetings with the local volunteer centre and the two county development companies to discuss the implementation of all actions where these agencies are either the convenors or named partners. This successful initiative has ensured that all relevant actions remain live and proactive with such actions as, community mentoring events, volunteer training and capacity-building as well as, developing a county community mapping with Tipperary County Council, moving forward to delivery and, potentially, on time. The impact and benefit to the communities involved in the PPN is that already identified community needs of all the development organisations involved, can be worked on with partners to deliver aspects of a named action, more effectively than a lone agency's abilities. Such relationship-building is also powerful for other future work, including the ongoing LECP annual reviews and monitoring processes. This means that there is a long-term approach to county collective action. This continuation, and the goodwill already present, ensures that the PPN will continue to impact on the community work progressing in the county, as well as local making, through cooperative partnerships.

## Waterford

Waterford PPN spearheaded, along with Healthy Waterford and Waterford City and County Council, a pilot of Connecting Community Roadshows. These brought over 25 stakeholders on the road with seven Community Roadshows held in towns and villages right across the county. Each event was attended by departments of Waterford City and County Council, local development companies, partnerships, climate action groups and numerous volunteer organisations. Each roadshow gave stakeholders and local groups a chance to showcase their work, get one to one advice on funding, governance, supports, insurance, project ideas and meet other groups they might not otherwise connect with. Hundreds of people came along, including many who were new to the PPN leading to fresh partnerships, stronger links and more groups joining the PPN. By going out to meet communities where they live, the roadshows broke down barriers, got conversations flowing, and showed the real value of working together to strengthen communities. These partnerships enabled the roadshows to offer diverse resources, advice and networking opportunities to communities across Waterford.

## Westmeath

Westmeath PPN, in conjunction with the Community Development Department in Westmeath County Council, held funding and resource workshops and one to one support clinics for its groups in both Mullingar and Athlone. The funding workshops included presentations on available or upcoming grants and resources from a number of departments of Westmeath County Council (for example Community Development, Heritage, Environment and Sports Partnership) and other bodies including the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Waterways Ireland and Longford and Westmeath Education Training Board. The one-to-one support clinics were held to help community groups complete grant applications or give them support with their queries including setting up a community group and registering with Westmeath PPN.

It is a requirement that a community group must be registered with the PPN to apply for grants. These supports strengthen the relationship between the PPN and the groups and not only helps groups to avail of appropriate funding and resources but helps to ensure good governance and effective, strong community groups. This leads to a strong and relevant Westmeath PPN whilst also increasing the PPN membership.

## Wicklow

Wicklow PPN in collaboration with the Older People's Council, provided member groups with the opportunity to meet the candidates for the 2024 Local Elections in June and the General Elections in November. These facilitated events were run online and recorded. Individual sessions were run for each of our five municipal districts in the local elections. An attendance of 41 out of 62 candidates was logged for the local elections and 1,021 people engaged with the sessions by attending online or viewing the recordings on our YouTube Channel. Sessions were also run for the North Wicklow constituency and the South Wicklow North Wexford constituency for the general elections. Ten out of 25 candidates attended the sessions and 243 engaged through attendance or online viewing. Feedback included: "It was really useful and has definitely made me more aware of the interests, attitudes and abilities of the candidates", "Great opportunity to hear from the candidates in my area".

# Appendix 4

## Examples of Successful Consultations in 2024

### Carlow

Carlow PPN made a formal submission to Carlow County Council's Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 - 2029. Drawing from the 2019 Vision for Community Wellbeing, the PPN focused on the themes of participation, democracy, and good governance. The consultation process included circulating the draft scheme to all 380 member groups, reviewing feedback with the PPN Secretariat, and submitting a response by the October 2024 deadline. The submission highlighted the need for more inclusive governance structures that reflect the lived realities of volunteers and community groups. Key recommendations included: SPC agendas to be issued four weeks in advance, with post-meeting summaries provided promptly; some SPC meetings to be held outside normal working hours; equal training access and a travel/ expenses fund for voluntary Representatives; environmental representation to be included across all SPCs, either through a dedicated seat or standing agenda item and greater transparency, including public workplans and clearer communication channels. The submission reinforced Carlow PPN's role as a bridge between communities and decision makers, advocating for stronger community engagement, better supports for volunteers, and a more responsive local government.

### Cavan

Cavan PPN facilitated in-house consultations with the SPC Representatives around the future of the SPCs through the 'Local Authority SPC Draft Scheme' in September of 2024. In this way, the outgoing SPC members gave their in-depth feedback so the PPN submission could be better informed by their lived experience on the SPCs.

### Clare

Clare PPN supported member groups, Clare Leader Forum and the Dulick Centre service users (both are groups led by or supporting disabled people) with their responses to the Green Paper on Disability Reform. In one case (Clare Leader Forum), the PPN assisted with a public information meeting and in the second case, held a consultation with the group and composed a draft submission based on their responses. Both groups had grave concerns about the proposals in the Green Paper on Disability Reform and as a result of their efforts and the efforts of groups like them all around the country the Green Paper was eventually withdrawn. The groups we worked with felt vindicated and empowered by this outcome as they had feared a continuation of a medical model of disability. In particular the proposals for ongoing and continuous assessments of disabled people and the categorisation of levels of disability as being likely to impact on their well-being, their time, and the security of their income and related benefits. As with all such collaborations, Clare PPN's work on this strengthened our own knowledge of the concerns and issues faced by people with disabilities and has since helped to inform our Representatives on committees and the overall objectives of the PPN in this regard. Clare PPN also continued to feed into the LECP process, which we had been fully engaged in during the course of 2023. This work in 2024 included a written submission in response to the draft implementation plan and attendance by Representatives and staff at the LECP steering group meetings.



### Cork City

Cork City PPN held consultations with members to develop the Strategic Plan.

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### Cork County

Cork County PPN took part in the EAPN (European Anti-Poverty) forum and represented the issues facing people in Cork County.

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### Donegal

Donegal PPN made a submission to the Draft Scheme for the establishment and operation of the Strategic Policy Committees in Donegal in 2024- 2029. As a result, Donegal PPN received confirmation that documents would be circulated two to three weeks prior to meetings, and they would consider flexibility in holding some meetings outside working hours for PPN Representatives.

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### Dublin City

Continuing on from work started in late 2023, Dublin City PPN began developing a written submission to the open consultation on the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). This marked the first time member groups collaborated on a single network-wide submission, which participants found both challenging and rewarding. The final LECP was launched in late 2024, with many contributors attending the launch at St Patrick's Cathedral. While some groups opted to submit independently for greater autonomy, the collective process highlighted the strength and reach of the PPN and proved a valuable and engaging experience for many member organisations. The Dublin City PPN LECP submission can be read in full here: <https://dublincityppn.ie/resources/ppn-submission-to-the-lecp/> The final Dublin City LECP can be read here: <https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2024-11/dublin-city-lecp-2024-2029.pdf>

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### Dún Laoghaire Rathdown

The Strategic Plan 2024-2028 consultation resulted in awareness of how the PPN is seen by the community, we realised that we excel as a trusted provider of information and communications, and that we also provide excellent training thus building capacity. Awareness of the PPN and its mission and an understanding of its complexity, needs to be addressed in the wider context. The findings of this consultation have led to a change in the format of the PPN workplan and we have increased our outreach activities within the community. The Pre-Budget submission to DRCD resulted in an increase in funding thus enabling the Secretariat to improve employee terms and conditions. The submission to the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council SPC Scheme 2024-2029 resulted in changes to the draft scheme and the number of Representatives from PPN. The Vision for Wellbeing Statement Data provided Representatives with a clear mandate. Finally, the Corporate Plan 2024 -2029 consultation with members and Representatives helped determine areas of policy that they wish the Representatives to concentrate on for the next 5 year term of local government.

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### Fingal

Fingal PPN took part in a consultation into the Corporate Plan of Fingal County Council.

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### Galway City

Through engagement with Representatives and membership, we developed a submission to the new Galway City Council SPC scheme standing orders. Once submitted, we discussed the submission with a senior staff officer in Galway City Council who proposed a number of amendments and additions to the standing orders based on our submission.

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## Galway County

Galway County PPN was given a dedicated link for the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) survey which was distributed to all members. There was no feedback from external consultants on data. A PPN linkage group, Galway Disability forum members, were invited to engage confidentially with the LECP regarding experiences of living with disabilities. PPN members were engaged, included and enjoyed the consultative process.

## Kerry

As part of the Kerry County Council SPC scheme public consultation, Kerry PPN submitted a proposal for the establishing of an additional SPC focusing on community and equality, addressing matters such as promoting social cohesion, enhancing community engagement, ensuring equitable access to services, and advocating for marginalised groups. An alternative proposal was put forward also for additional PPN positions on the proposed Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community SPC. Kerry PPN proposed an additional social inclusion Representative and environment Representative. These proposals were not adopted in the scheme. The Kerry PPN submission also detailed operational proposals to maximise the impact of the SPCs. Work is ongoing to have these proposals adopted in each SPC.

## Kildare

Kildare PPN contributed significantly to the development of the LECP Implementation Plan (2025–2027) by feeding in data from our Community Wellbeing Consultations. These consultations gathered input from a wide range of community groups across key wellbeing themes, highlighting local priorities and needs. The insights gathered were submitted to the Local Authority and directly informed the LECP implementation plan.

As a result, six actions were assigned to the PPN, including promoting inclusive community engagement, supporting climate action, offering capacity-building opportunities, collaborating on mental health initiatives, advancing social inclusion, and fostering a strong volunteering culture. This marked a major success for the PPN, demonstrating the real impact of community voice in shaping local policy. It also solidified our role as a key implementation partner in the LECP, ensuring community priorities remain central to local development over the next three years.

## Kilkenny

Kilkenny PPN and social inclusion linkage group took part in the consultation on the new Kilkenny County Council Age Friendly strategy. The diverse member groups and PPN Representatives stressed the importance of having new communities and issues/actions in relation to access, digitalisation, isolation and safety to be included in the new Strategy and feedback was integrated in the new strategy. The PPN also made a comprehensive submission to the new LA Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024-2029. This submission resulted in the County Council adding a PPN Environmental seat to one of the SPCs. Kilkenny PPN also took part in the consultation on the new Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan and developed and launched its first 5-year strategic plan to guide priorities and increase influence in local government decisions.

## Laois

Laois PPN supported the Laois County Council public consultation on its new Local Sports Plan. The Local Sports Plan is a new plan for the development of sport, physical activity, recreation, play and leisure activities in the county. Laois PPN raised awareness of the survey and in person public consultation. There was representation from Laois PPN staff, Representatives, a large variety of sports clubs (including GAA, rugby, basketball, soccer, athletics, swimming), local activity hubs, youth and family resource groups, active retirement groups, disabled persons' organisations and migrant groups who are all registered Laois PPN member groups. The impact is that the needs and priorities of PPN Member Groups is taken into consideration in the formation of the new Local Sports Plan in Laois.

## Leitrim

30 Consultations and 53 surveys (local and national) were circulated by Leitrim PPN. In April 2024 Leitrim PPN issued an Invitation to Tender for the development of a 4-year Strategic Plan 2025 – 2028. The development of the plan consisted of five stages, all conducted between June and September 2024. Stage one was a national PPN documentation review. Stage two was a stakeholder consultation process followed by stage three, a review and brief analysis of Leitrim PPN area profile. Stage four was data collection and analysis, and the final stage five was the drafting, review and finalising the plan. We held a strategic planning workshop for member groups. A wide and varied consultation took place with members and other stakeholders for their input on how the PPN can develop over the next four years. The consultation was undertaken using a range of methodologies including an online survey and in person focus groups. The first step in the stakeholder consultation process was the design and distribution of a membership survey and stakeholder surveys. In addition to the survey distribution an initial community consultation meeting in the form of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis took place as part of the May 2024 plenary.

A consultation survey was distributed to over 400 member groups. 57 member groups responded to the members survey and both stakeholders responded. Subsequently a second workshop took place on 24th June 2024 fully dedicated to completing and finalising a SWOT analysis. The Leitrim PPN Strategic Plan was launched at the plenary in November 2024.

## Longford

Longford PPN partnered with the Longford Community Safety Partnership, Healthy Ireland, and Sláintecare to conduct public consultations on the need for a Family Resource Centre (FRC) in Longford Town. Following the consultations, a comprehensive Needs Assessment Report was produced, and a funding application was submitted to Tusla. The Longford PPN Coordinator represented the PPN on the steering group overseeing this work. To strengthen the application, 305 PPN member groups signed a joint letter of support for the establishment of an FRC in Longford Town, also serving the community of Edgeworthstown. The consultation process ensured strong community input, demonstrated significant public demand, and mobilised widespread organisational support, which greatly enhanced the credibility and strength of the funding application.

## Louth

When local elections were held in June 2024, Louth County Council (LCC) SPCs were dissolved and the 2019-24 SPC scheme became void. LCC issued a draft SPC Scheme for 2024-29 in August 2024 and invited submissions from interested parties. Louth PPN issued a submission requesting an increase from 11 seats proposed for Representatives of Louth PPN to 17. This is in line with the national ideal of at least 1 pillar Representative sitting on each SPC, with an additional 2 seats for PPN Representatives on the Social Development SPC and the Community and Placemaking SPC (which would be particularly relevant to the community). Louth PPN also requested that SPC meetings be held at alternating times and have different modes of hosting (i.e. blended, online or in-person) to accommodate voluntary Representatives who have other commitments, such as work and family.

The submission also asked for clarification on the standing orders of each SPC at the inaugural meeting, so that all Representatives, including those nominated through Louth PPN understand how to submit agenda items and for a report to be issued on the status of submissions received. Lastly, that all meeting documentation to be issued to SPC members in a timely fashion so that all members may have sufficient time to review the documents and submit agenda items if desired and that nomination representing the Environmental pillar to be sought through Louth PPN rather than the Irish Environmental Network (the national body). Part of those recommendations were that training for all SPC members include induction to SPCs, LCDC and other committees, including terms of reference and the processes and procedures of the SPCs as well as briefings on relevant policy, including the reform of Local Government. Workshops on the policy remit of SPCs, LCDC and other committees, briefing on the requirements of the Transparency Code, how sub committees are formed and the role of the PPN are also necessary. On review of Louth PPN's submission on the draft 2024-29 SPC Scheme, LCC increased the number of Louth PPN representatives sitting on SPCs to 19. They amended their draft Scheme to identify Louth PPN as the nominating body for environmental Representatives along with social inclusion, and community and voluntary Representatives and made the following assurances: meeting times and modes of hosting meetings would be decided by SPC members at the inaugural meeting of each SPC, to ensure compliance with the wishes of the majority of SPC members; standing orders would be clarified to all members of each SPC at its inaugural meeting and every effort would be made to issue all meeting documentation to SPC members in a timely fashion. Training for all SPC members has subsequently been provided at a national level to ensure SPC members nationwide receive the same quality of training as their peers.

## Meath

Liaising with members of linkage groups whose focus is sustainable redevelopment, we made a submission to the SPC Scheme 2019-2024 consultation. We outlined the importance of PPN to public involvement in the decision-making process, the fact that Representatives would be sought from the PPN membership to take seats on each SPC. The PPN highlighted the increase from 4 to 6 SPCs and outlined the reasons why the PPN should have increased number of Representatives too. This was successful with an additional 2 seats being given to PPN members.

## Monaghan

Monaghan PPN engaged with our network of groups, members of the Monaghan Walking and Cycling Forum and members of the Irish Cycling Campaign (previously known as cyclist.ie) in relation to the public consultation for the Cycle Connects Plan for the Monaghan area. The 'CycleConnects Plan' aims to improve sustainable travel by providing the potential for more trips on a safe, accessible and convenient cycling network, connecting more people to more places. Proposals for cycling links in the Monaghan area are included in the plan, in addition to connections between towns, villages and settlements. The plan also incorporates cycle routes such as greenways. The Irish Cycling Campaign is a passionate network of cycling advocates who believe cycling is a key solution to many of society's challenges, improving public health, protecting the environment, and strengthening the economy. Their vision is an Ireland where everyone, regardless of age or ability, can safely cycle to shops, schools, and workplaces.



## Offaly

Through the Environmental Pillar, two consultations on the Community Energy Charter were undertaken. These surveys were designed by the Green Offaly Thematic group and were furnished to the full PPN membership. The first survey was to help garner the level of understanding of the Charter and the level of interest among PPN membership. This proved very successful and led to a survey that informed the workshop format and areas of work. The third and final element utilised the workshop outcomes and offered a final opportunity to feed into the Community Energy Charter. The Community Energy Charter was the outcome and it was backed by the LCDC, Offaly County Council Climate Team and the Local Development Company. It is a key document to provide the community sector with a Charter when negotiating and dealing with developers and investors in the community energy sphere. The Council recognise the Charter as a very valuable document as it illustrates how the community sector will buy into and negotiate new energy developments in the county. A key finding of the whole process was the open mindedness and willingness of PPN membership as a whole to welcome new energy developments and the understanding of the necessity to address climate change urgently.

## Roscommon

Roscommon PPN collaborated with the Local Authority on numerous local policy formulations. One such example included facilitating engagement on Roscommon County Council's new Corporate Plan for the period 2024-2029. The PPN played a central role in supporting communities to have their say on the various activities of the local authority, including activities relating to functions of municipal districts. Feedback from consultations was reviewed, and key goals were validated to formulate supporting strategies and activities. The plan was further developed to align with the legislative and organisational environment, linking policy, organisation, operational activity, governance and performance management. This plan is a central component of Roscommon County Council's business architecture and provides a framework that will guide the local authority's actions over the next five years.

## South Dublin

While South Dublin County PPN was not fully resourced in 2024, it was supported by South Dublin County Council and an independent facilitator to participate in two key consultation mechanisms, the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan (including key actions to be undertaken by the PPN) and the development of the new South Dublin County Council Corporate Plan.

## Tipperary

Tipperary PPN was very involved in the national SPC review and the county wide consultation on the SPC Scheme. One of our Secretariat members was on the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage monitoring group of the national SPC review and ensured that the changes we thought beneficial were submitted nationally at the monitoring meetings as well as through a submission. These suggestions would have included more volunteer-friendly supports, a PPN item on all agendas, and delivering consistent national training across all local authorities, as well as within each local authority. The county SPC scheme was a separate consultation but made similar requests. The corporate section of Tipperary County Council worked closely on this, including replacing one of the appendices giving information on PPNs with a document directly from Tipperary PPN. All former SPC Representatives, from the previous SPC cycle, were consulted for both submissions. The majority of Tipperary PPN's recommendations were included in both the national review and the local authority's SPC scheme document and following on, the revised SPC standing orders.

## Waterford

Waterford PPN actively support consultations led by Waterford City and County Council, with the local authority departments regularly engaging Waterford PPN to help disseminate information and reach the wider community. This includes public consultations on initiatives such as active travel, climate action, local By-Laws and other community-related matters. We promote these consultations through targeted emails to our member groups as well as across all our social media channels and we have a dedicated "Consultations" page on our website ensuring broad awareness and participation. This engagement helps to amplify community voices, increase public input into decision making and strengthen the connection between Waterford City and County Council and the communities in Waterford.

## Westmeath

Westmeath PPN Secretariat made a submission on the scheme for establishment of SPCs for Westmeath. Important issues were highlighted such as the need for induction training for all Representatives on committees and SPC meeting administrators to ensure all have the same understanding of the purpose, role and workings of the SPC, the venue and timings for the four SPCs to be varied and for there to be online access. Finally, having the relevant documentation prior to the meeting was key. It also stated the importance of PPNs for Representative democracy. Westmeath County Council increased the number of Representatives from the PPN on SPCs and put in a stipulation about having documentation issued prior to the meeting.

## Wexford

Wexford PPN in collaboration with Wexford County Council's Climate Action Team sent out a survey to member groups regarding issues that are affecting communities. The survey hoped to find where groups were on their climate action journey, so that they could be pointed towards all possible funding opportunities to help them become more vibrant and sustainable in the future. The information gathered in the survey would then be used as a starting point to help groups. As the survey was sent out in December 2024, it will be 2025 before any actions are taken from the results.

## Wicklow

Wicklow PPN made a submission to the public consultation on the Wicklow County Council Draft Strategic Policy Committee scheme 2024-2029. A copy of the submission can be found here: <https://countywicklowppn.ie/wicklow-ppn-submission-to-the-draft-wicklow-county-council-strategic-policy-committee-scheme-2024-2029/> The submission recommended a focus on climate action and biodiversity loss by ensuring that environmental issues span all SPCs. Recommendations also included the establishment of SPC subgroups to provide a focus on specific issues, a focus on better communication and reporting in a timely manner and the inclusion of all SPC members in induction and other training sessions. Developing workplans and agendas, increasing seats for the community and voluntary, social inclusion, and environmental sectors through the PPN on some SPCs were also deemed important. Wicklow PPN received a full response to its submission from Wicklow County Council. The response from Wicklow County Council can be found here: <https://countywicklowppn.ie/wicklow-county-council-strategic-policy-committee-scheme-2024-2029/> The response was detailed and acknowledged each PPN recommendation individually. Wicklow PPN has never received this level of detail in a response to any of its submissions and it was very much appreciated. Not all recommendations were approved or implemented. However, for the first time all SPC members, including PPN Representatives were invited to attend SPC induction training. The training was very beneficial to PPN Representatives from a learning and relationship building level. Additional seats were made available to the community and voluntary, social inclusion, and environmental sector on some SPCs.







