

National PPN 2018 Conference

11th and 12th Oct 2018,

Sheraton Hotel, Athlone



Attendees: From Wexford PPN, Ms. Annette Dupuy, Mr. Noel Stacey and David Doyle

Introduction: Presented by Bairbre Nic Aongusa, assistant secretary Dept of Rural and community development.

Welcoming address: presented by Pat Gallagher C.E. Westmeath Co. Co.

Opening address: presented by Cllr. John Dolan Cathaoirleach Westmeath Co. Co.

Examples of good practise in PPNs

A range of different PPN practises were presented in summary as follows:

Westmeath PPN Municipal interaction: Presentation by Ms. Annette Barr Jordan Admin officer and PPN resource worker. They operate a somewhat different model mainly because of differing scale and approach. They have but two MDs Athlone and Mullingar.

Carlow PPN Consultation toolkit: Presentation by Grainne O Neill, Carlow PPN resource worker. They utilise WHEEL to engage in analysis and devise a toolkit. They seek engagement and empowerment with LA and registered members. Their developed form templates may be useful (possible adaptation) in many ways e.g. to help in evaluations it is beneficial to be able to compare formats, ours compared to theirs. **I recommend to Wexford PPN** their inclusion in any future review on this topic.

Fingal PPN – Community/mayors awards: Again a different context and focus on awards as a means of engagement and motivation, i.e. by giving recognition to community achievements at groups and individuals levels.

Wicklow PPN – Well being, local statement: presentation by Helen Howes, One of Wicklow PPNs resource workers. The well being statement is emerging as a result of a methodical process. Their stated VISION for each MD is well rooted in local context even though at first glance seeming to be too aspirational/prayerful, weak in grounded specifics such as by when? And by whom? And some indicators of attainment? . Nonetheless it gives food for thought and **I recommend to Wexford PPN** their inclusion in any future review by a possible dedicated work group or consultations on this topic. This also can be taken as relevant to local member groups of Wexford PPN.

Breakout sessions;

A range of choices were made available as follows:

- **Communications for PPN at local level** Aileen Eglinton, Marketing consultant. David Doyle attended this event. Creating a strong communications link between the PPN and its members, the Local Authority and other stakeholders is a critical role. Much good work has already been done by Wexford PPN and continues in this regard . e.g. Salesforce usage will into the future increasingly become a primary mechanism to manage the membership database and communications. One noted Need which repeats quite often is the communication and general awareness training for LA staff and elected members on the roles of the PPN. A number of main lessons evolved at this event e.g. 2 main modes of communication 1) Reactive – responding to change and needs, 2) Strategic – which initiate and drive an agenda. A main emphasis was in developing a **Strategic plan of communications.** In any future review of this topic **I recommend to Wexford PPN** full applications of strategic communications to 1) influence behaviours 2) effective and efficiency goals 3) making best uses of time and resources 4) Connecting goals with strategy and 5) prioritising resources and cultural shift. **I recommend** a dedicated work group be formed at Wexford PPN secretariat to review and procure a Strategic Plan for communications. Terms of reference should guided the work of the work group.
- **User guide consultation** facilitated by Grainne O Neill , Carlow PPN resource worker
- **Education/capable communities:** Collette Bennett, research and Policy analyst, SJI.
- **Developing a well being statement** facilitated by Dr. Sean Healy Director SJI. As mentioned previously in this report, **I recommend that** Wexford PPN should consider formation of a review group to produce a well being statement. It should also look at any future SJI presentations on this subject area with a view to representatives attending.
- **LCDC/SICAP – Local authority structure/supporting PPNs** Paul Geraghty, Dept. of Rural and community development was presenter. Firstly, ref. LA supporting PPNs. Variations exist as to what emerges in practise. The support mechanisms manifest themselves as e.g. 1) Active Memo of understanding in place or reviewed by most PPNs; 2) LA assisting where appropriate the PPN in achieving its work plan; 3) Supporting the PPN to be active in LECP; 4) Cross departmental participation in PPN events; 5) Involvement of LA PPN contact person 6) providing additional core funding to support its work; 7) Making LA grants conditional on PPN membership. This is a bit contentious and probably not quite in the ethos or remit of Wexford PPN , or any PPN. A second approach in this topic focuses on LCDC and SICAP. i.e. Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme aims to reduce poverty and provide funding for actions at local levels to promote social inclusion. LCDC awards funding in Community Enhancement Programme, currently in train the CEP replaces two existing schemes, (Communities Facilities scheme and Revitalised Areas by Planning

Investment and Development, RAPID). Another funding programme, Community Services Programme (CSP) supports social enterprise in general terms for disadvantaged peoples. It has three types of target group, the third of which needs further exploring, i.e. community enterprises which tend to have an emphasis on employing people with little access to the labour market. Again Dr. Senan Cooke's book on ***The Enterprising Community*** which was made available at the annual conference is essential reading and guidance in this respect. Connected to that end purpose I recommend to Wexford PPN that for those interested in the subject to undertake a field trip to Dunhill Co. Waterford to see it in practise. A third aspect concerned the clarification given regarding **The Community Policy Unit at Dept level** and the LCDCs at LA level. While the Community Policy Unit has general policy responsibility for cross government coordination of local community development, the Community Policy Unit supports by providing guidance and support to Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs). E.g. in provision of training days, workshops and seminars. The Unit also provides funding to LAs for staff resources¹ to support the Authorities increasing responsibilities with regard to community and local development. The unit's functions also include support to the LA for the design and implementation of Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) which facilitates greater local community participation in planning, managing and delivering funding in each LA area. Additionally the Community Development Policy Unit developed and implements the "Framework Policy for Local and Community Development"

- **PPN, LA and the future** ; Senan Turnbull, Carmichael Ireland . PPNs are now established in all Local Authority areas. Membership of SPCs are sourced through the PPN. The PPN National Advisory Group has a role to assess whether the PPNs are working satisfactorily in their structures, systems and processes.

Field trips

A choice of six field trips were made available as follows:

- Westmeath; Moate Amenity and heritage park. Included also were Tuar Ard Arts and enterprise centre, a Genealogy centre and a Greenway. Facilitators and guides were from Westmeath PPN secretariat., Kevin Brady and Anne Drury. David Doyle attended this field trip and observed on stage of development and level of development so far attained in Moate. The National Heritage Park in Ferrycarrig compares very well indeed, but local level comparative developments are lagging behind often for want of raw materials such as suitable for adaptation land banks at local levels. The proposed Greenways developments e.g. Rosslare to Waterford former railway line has potential although decades behind in terms of stage of

¹ The Unit should therefore be approached and consulted with when staffing levels are being attempted.

development. Also it appears that, the town renewal at Templeshannon, Enniscorthy is more driven by local councillors and Chamber of commerce, with voluntary community groups seen as interested onlookers more than active stakeholders.

- Offaly, Ferbane Food campus facilitated by Offaly resource worker. Bridie Costello.
- Roscomon, Four mile house/Kilbride with community centre sports hall, crèche/shop. Winner of 2009 “All – Ireland Pride of Place” facilitated by Roscommon resource worker Brenda McNicholas
- Westmeath Rural projects SWEETS South Westmeath Employment Education Training Services is a main driver
- Westmeath RAPID projects in Athlone looked at local areas Battery Heights and Willow Park.
- Tour of community projects in Enfield. The canal, leisure park, famine plot and 1916 monument facilitated by PPN resource worker Catherine O Rourke.

Innaugural National Secretariats Network meeting

This was facilitated by Ms. Tricia McKenna of Westmeath Community development. Its main function was to create:

- A National PPN secretariat network

Day 2 FRIDAY 12TH Oct 2018

As an Ice breaker, a quiz competition was held.

To mark the auspicious occasion, David Doyle was a principal and richly deserved prize winner. For the record the tie breaking question was: Who in history was known as the face that launched a thousand ships?

Answer: Helen of Troy

Feedback from facilitators The workshops feedback was discussed. The composition for NAG (National Advisory Group) was to be assisted by the inclusion (and later possible election or placement) of one person to be nominated from each secretariat PPN. It is being established to aid in the further development of PPNs. **NAG’s role** is to assess whether or not PPNs are achieving their overall purpose of facilitating engagement with the local authority. And whether the structures, systems and processes are supporting the achievement of that purpose.

NAG’s composition at present is as follows: One representative each from the Community and Voluntary, Environment and Social Inclusion sectors; Three PPN volunteers, one each

representing the three different sectors, three PPN resource workers, two LA staff (one a director of Service level and one directly supporting PPN) The group is chaired by a Principal Officer of the Dept. of Rural and Community Development and the secretariat is also provided by the dept.

National grant information session delivered by Eddie Forsyth, Dept. of Rural and community development. As mentioned previously in this report, from a perspective of member local groups of Wexford PPN a useful approach in this topic focuses on LCDC and SICAP. i.e. Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme which aims to reduce poverty and provide funding for actions at local levels to promote social inclusion. LCDC awards funding in Community Enhancement Programme, currently in train the CEP replaces two existing schemes, (Communities Facilities scheme and Revitalised Areas by Planning Investment and Development, RAPID). Another funding programme, Community Services Programme (CSP) supports social enterprise in general terms for disadvantaged peoples. It has three types of target group, the third of which needs further exploring, i.e. community enterprises which tend to have an emphasis on employing people with little access to the labour market.

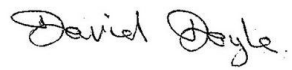
Charities regulator The regulator outlined how he/it is the national statutory regulator for charitable organisations. It is an independent authority which was established on 16 October 2014 under the Charities act 2009 and now comes under the aegis of Department of Rural and Community development. The key functions of the regulator are to establish and maintain a public register of charitable organisations operating in Ireland and ensure their compliance with the Charities act. The regulator has the power to conduct statutory investigations into any organisation believed to be non compliant with the Charities act. He can be contacted at concerns@charitiesregulator.ie and at Dept of Rural and Community Development, Trinity point, 10 11 Leinster street south, Dublin 2. Tel: 076 1064900

Q&A session was detailed and vociferous with some contributors practising the darker arts of advocacy. It is an aspect that needs to be more curtailed.

The five main set of recommendations jointly made by PPNs and LAs are as follows in summary:

- Promotion. Increased visibility of PPN on a National level. Joined local and national awareness raising campaign.
- Extra resources for the PPN with emphasis on additional staff in both admin and developmental roles.
- Improved support from LA to PPN.
- Review of PPN guidelines and structures.
- A national resource point is needed to guide PPNs

It is the latter underlined two that this report is aligned with and often refers to in recommendations made in the body of this report by the author. i.e. Reviews and Policy issues to be examined by dedicated work groups working in accordance with specific Terms of Reference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end of the last word.

David Doyle EMD rep on Secretariat PPN

31/10/2018