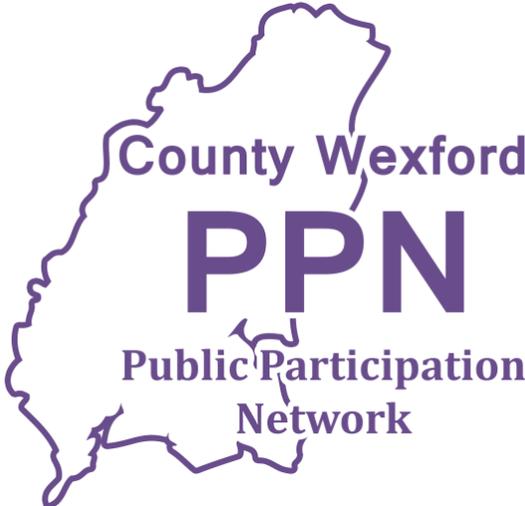


PPN Newsletter

Spring 2017

Welcome to the first edition of Wexford PPN's Newsletter. This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date with what's happening in the PPN. We hope you enjoy it.



The PPN Team

Wexford PPN has had a dedicated full time Support Officer in place since 29th August 2016.



Annette Dupuy supports the Secretariat in their work and manages the information flow to members.

Annette is the only full time member of staff, with the PPN relying heavily on the time and commitment of volunteer members in order to develop and represent the members.

The Secretariat is the elected administrative body of the PPN, the purpose of which is to monitor and co-ordinate PPN activities between County Membership (Plenary) meetings.

This group meets once or twice a month to manage, plan and review activities.

Wexford PPN Secretariat are:

Name	Representing
John Carr	Wexford District
Paddy Redmond	Enniscorthy District
Frances Ryan	New Ross District
Kevin Molloy	Gorey District
Sean Quirke	Community & Voluntary
Pat Rath	Community & Voluntary
Susan Murphy	Social Inclusion
Thomas Cullen	Social Inclusion
Sara Kelly	Environment

Outside of this administrative body the PPN are represented on Boards or Committees by elected representatives. Currently Wexford PPN has 25 Representative positions available – 21 on Council Committees, and a further four on other Decision Making bodies. Currently we have a number of vacancies which we will aim to fill in quarter one 2017.

Developing the Brand

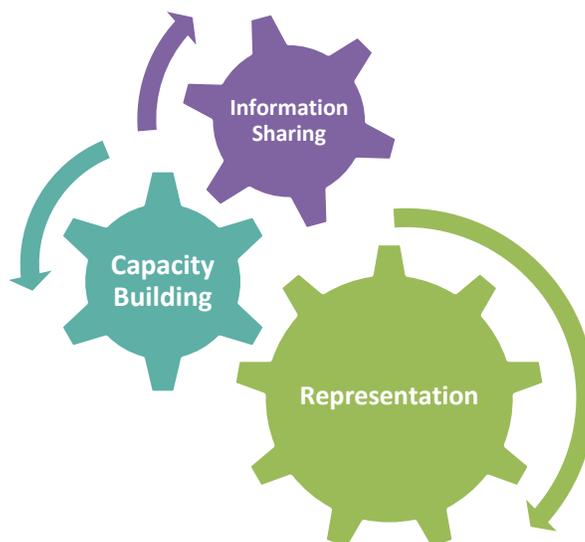
The last quarter of 2016 saw strong development on the identity and branding of Wexford PPN. With the volunteer assistance of John Carr the Wexford PPN logo was developed and adopted by the Secretariat. This was a key step in developing the independent identification of Wexford PPN. This was followed up with production of PPN pull up banners and the development of our own stationary. Wexford PPN would aim to extend this further in 2017 with the development of our own website under the domain of www.wexfordppn.ie

Increasing Awareness & Understanding

Wexford PPN Secretariat has identified a broad lack of understanding of PPNs in general and so they have undertaken, in the Workplan for 2017, to conduct Pop-Up Development sessions across the districts in 2017 to increase awareness and understanding of Wexford PPN. These outreach sessions will be held in locations across the county in 2017, with an aim of our volunteers conducting at least 16 of these across the year.

All materials produced will also aim to simplify the understanding of PPN structures and to highlight the three key functions of Wexford PPN.

Wexford PPN three key functions;



Provide information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sector and acts as a hub around which information is distributed and received.

Strengthen the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate.

Facilitate the **participation and representation of communities** in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sectors on key decision making bodies.

Annual Re-Registration

PPNs are required to conduct annual re-registration. Wexford PPN conduct this in October each year, with those groups who re-register by 31st October being entitled to vote in elections during the year.

Wexford PPN conducted an extensive communication campaign to encourage re-registration and attraction of new members. This activity included radio advertising and interview, pop up information stands in each of the five libraries, newspaper adverts, local notes/newsletter slots and extensive poster activity across the county in key public locations.



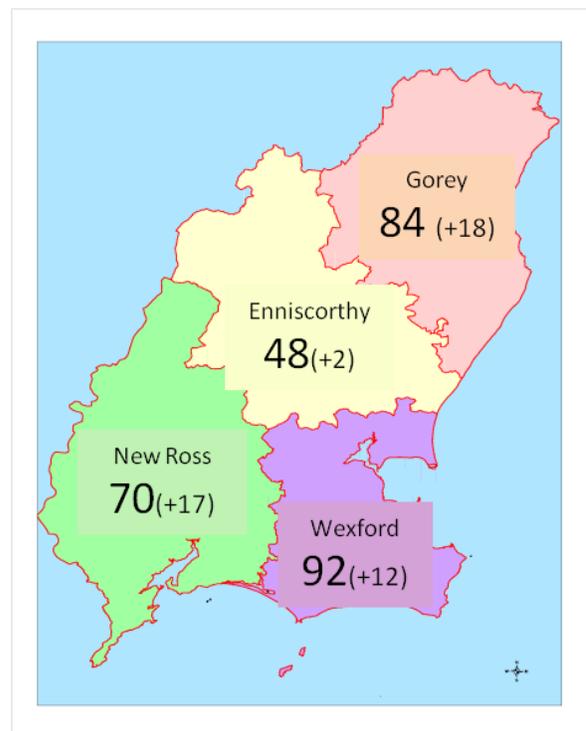
Pop Up Stand at Wexford library

In addition to this activity the volunteers on the Secretariat also took the task of ringing all members who had not re-registered to encourage them, and to follow up on previously lapsed members.



Re-registration was very positive with current membership at 294 members – up 49 on 2015/16 levels.

Membership is spread as follows;



Numbers in each Electoral College are;

- Community & Voluntary 220
- Social Inclusion 65
- Environmental 9

PPN Events

Each District had a membership meeting in November under the theme of 'Doing it for Ourselves' These sessions included informative presentations from An Garda Síochána on Text Alert and from Ray Murphy of Wexford Fire Service on Community Resilience.

Each session was followed by member discussions where members could raise topics of interest within each district.

Topics raised across each of the districts included unemployment and suitable course availability, level of Garda presence in communities, lack of young people volunteering, insurance issues, and assistance with developing a tidy towns group.

Since these events a number of follow ups have taken place and the seedlings of pilot community resilience projects are underway in conjunction with Ray Murphy. A number of members have also utilized the text alert information provided by An Garda Síochána and progressed with initial stages of text alert development.

Wexford PPN welcomes suggestion of further topics of interest from members for both district and county meetings



Sergeant Brian Cooper at Enniscorthy District



Ray Murphy at Gorey District



Sergeant Eddie Wilde at New Ross District

Developing Representation

While the PPN Reps have all been working hard up to now, there is a realization that the lack of supports and structure has limited the co-ordination of their efforts and left them working in somewhat of a vacuum.

In an effort to begin somewhat of a support system for PPN Reps a Reps Roundtable session was organized in Enniscorthy in January. At this event the Reps shared their own experience and the group worked together to develop solutions to overcome current issues and to ensure a better experience in 2017, both for the Representative and for the PPN members they represent.

The first action was the preparation and delivery of a Reps Report for 2016 – a document to allow members to see the activity of the boards and committees where we have representation and to give a flavor of the type of content being discussed. This document will be issued to all member by end February.

The Reps also worked together to develop a reporting template, to allow for easier reporting from Committee and Boards to the respective Linkage Groups. This template will be trialed in 2017.

The Reps also discussed the current IT Skills of the group and agreed that tailored IT Upskilling would be of benefit for some, to

allow them to better undertake the Representative task. This training is currently planned for early March.

A further undertaking agreed at the meeting was the development of a Reps Charter. This Charter has been developed by the PPN Support Officer and has been reviewed by the PPN Secretariat and Representatives for feedback. The aim of the document is to ensure all Reps are aware of the role, rights and responsibilities of the Representative task and to ensure a consistent approach from Representatives. All current and new Reps will be asked to sign up to this Charter following its ratification at the February County Membership (Plenary) meeting

A further addition to the Rep toolkit will be the development of at least two Linkage group meetings per Committee/Board per year. These meetings will be conducted in three clusters - with a couple of Board/Committee Reps meeting on one evening to reduce numbers of meetings required. Meetings will be spread across the county with the first ones scheduled to take place in March & May in Ferns, Clonroche & Castelbridge. These meetings give members the opportunity to meet with Reps face to face to discuss the work of their specific Committee/Board.

Thanks to those Reps who gave up their Saturday morning to attend the Reps Roundtable event.

Representative Expenses

Our Support Officer has worked hard since her appointment on agreeing and putting in place a policy and procedure for payment of PPN Reps expenses when they attend Wexford County Council Committee meetings.



This is now in place and payments will apply retrospectively also to ensure Reps are not out of pocket. Payments are claimed directly from Wexford County Council.

Representatives attending other committees should have their expenses covered by those committees also.

Regional & National View

You might be wondering what's going on with PPNs generally.



Paddy Redmond attended a **Regional Meeting** in Thomastown on 12th

November – a session run by Social Justice Ireland and a meeting that was to be a Regional Network for Secretariat & Reps. However, Paddy found that across many of the 11 PPNs represented many attendees were Support or Resource Workers rather than Volunteers.

Each PPN gave a report on progress and Paddy reports that 'Wexford would be in the top half as far as progress is concerned'.

Following this the group discussed issues in their communities. Topics discussed included;

- Rural transport
- Volunteerism – most counties seeing a fall off in numbers coming forward
- Wind Power – impact on communities with little benefit
- Need for restoration of Town Councils for the future of Urban communities.
- Promotion of RAPID type communities in areas to include all stakeholders.
- Rural Broadband – potential negatives for areas as well as positive with a move to online retailers.

Discussing finances, most PPNs were working to actively maximize their budget spend before the end of year deadline.

Paddy reported that the event was a worthwhile exercise and worth attending

Our PPN Support Worker also has her own '**Workers Network**' which meet 4-6 times per year. Annette attended meetings in November and January and both were very useful meetings as not only do they allow us to see what is happening around the country but also to have the opportunity to engage

with the Department contacts who attend to give an update each meeting.

Generally Support Workers around the country are under pressure with the workload and with the diverse nature of PPNs. There were calls from the Network for a National Co-Ordinator to assist in the roll out and development of PPNs but this seems unlikely. The diverse nature and differing structures of PPNs make each one very different.

The October meeting was useful to see where we are in terms of policies and procedures and we appear to be slightly behind here – something which should be rectified as much as possible in 2017.

Both meetings discussed the PPN Guidelines and at the recent meeting the Department advised that revised guidelines will distribute in 2017.



Michael Ewing of the Environmental Pillar presented at the January meeting. His organization are looking to work with PPNs over 2017 to help to fill the vacant seats and to further develop the Environmental College in each PPN.

There is also a **National Advisory Group** which meets to discuss the development of the PPN circa four times per year. The third

meeting of this group happened in February 2017. This Advisory group has a mix of stakeholders including Volunteers, Support Workers, Pillar Representatives, Local Authorities Representatives, & Department officials. Key topics of consideration to date have been the PPN User Guide, Financial Issues, Co-ordination and communication, in addition to the need for Training regarding PPN across a range of levels – including Local Authorities and staff.

Managing Membership - Salesforce

The Department has supported PPNs by providing a database tool for use by PPNs. The Salesforce Database was rolled out to all PPNs in 2016.



However, there have been some issues for Wexford in using this database. The main one of these is that the database does not allow us to include all of the information we require.

As such we have not yet adopted this system until further developments are made in 2017 to tailor the system to each PPNs need.

Memorandum of Understanding

In December 2016 Wexford PPN signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Wexford County Council. This document sees Wexford PPN remaining attached to Wexford County Council on an operational basis - whereby our staff member utilizes the facilities of the Council for a fee and is line managed in personnel terms by Wexford County Council. However, this document also clearly sets out that the work management and focus for our Support Worker comes from the PPN Secretariat, maintaining our independence and development focus.

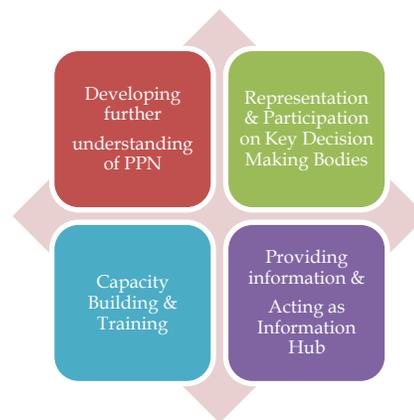
Workplan & Budget for 2017

In late 2016 the PPN Secretariat and the Support Officer worked together to plan for 2017 – both in terms of work focus and budget spending.

The work focus for 2017 took into consideration the following;

- Current gaps identified by members
- Targets for the PPN set out in the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)
- Available Budget

The wokplan has four focus areas;



Further understanding to be developed through membership & promotional materials, & small scale PPN Pop Up information sessions around the county. The aim is to ultimately increase engagement and participation with the network, while also aiding recruitment.

Capacity Building

Wexford PPN have set aside budget in 2017 to allow us to support our member groups and to strengthen their capacity to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate.

To determine the supports required for current members Wexford PPN plan to conduct a survey of members in quarter one to determine the support needs of groups.



Please take the time to complete this survey as it is key in informing us for support delivery

Focus on **Capacity Building** for members, depending on member requirements to be determined through a membership survey.

Improving the **information delivery** to members – this may include website & newsletter development.

Getting **representation structures** currently in place working better – building PPN Rep skills and feedback mechanisms, increasing Network engagement opportunities for members overall and specifically for Linkage groups.

As you will see from activity already underway we are already progressing on some of these tasks.

The total budget available to Wexford PPN is €80,000, with a max of €50,000 provided by the Department – based on 5/8 of actual spend, with a minimum contribution of €30,000 from Wexford County Council.

The PPN Secretariat & the Support Worker have prepared a detailed Budget for 2017, with the following Budget overview:

Budget Item	Allocation
Resource Costs (salary/travel/subsistence/office space)	€53,351.80
Other Operational Costs (postage, print, telephone, website)	€1,394.00
Events (Plenary & PPN Development)	€4,380.00
Secretariat Costs (Per Diem & Canteen)	€3,300.00
Wellbeing Statement Development	€1,720.00
Representation (meetings, per diems, training)	€2,350.00
Capacity Building & Member Training Budget	€10,000.00
Advertising & Promotion	€3,500.00
Total	€79,995.80

Under the MOU with Wexford County Council we need to give quarterly updates, while the Department require half yearly expenditure reports. It is expected that the Department will audit PPNs in 2017 also.

Working Collaboratively with WCC

Our PPN Support Officer has been working closely with Wexford County Council to increase the awareness and understanding of PPNs. She has presented an update on the PPN to the Senior Management Team and to the Executive Team pre-Christmas in an effort to highlight awareness and to ask for assistance in improving the Rep experience.

As a first step to this she has been accommodated to visit and observe each of the SPCs & Council Committees to gain an understanding of these committees and to see how the experience could be improved for PPN Reps.

During 2017 we aim to tighten the information channels with WCC in order that PPN members received key information and, as the PPN vision suggests, that PPNs are the **main link** through which the local authority connects with the community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups in the local authority area. This may involve further information and education regarding PPNs for Local Authority staff.

Information Sharing

One of the initial tasks for our PPN Support Officer was to adopt a more structured approach to information delivery.

To date this has been achieved through a conscious effort to limit levels of correspondence to members – delivering a collated information email circa every 7 days rather than a more piece-meal delivery.

Our PPN Support Officer has also been actively seeking information of relevance for Wexford PPN Members. As an example during January over 32 pieces of information were issued over four information bulletins. These ranged from local events to funding opportunities to consultations.

Suggestions for further improvements are welcome – please get in touch with our PPN Support Officer.

Information sharing about PPN activity and development will primarily be delivered through Newsletters such as there. Hopefully you have already found this informative.

County Membership Meeting

The County membership meeting is taking place on Monday 27th February in Riverside Park Hotel in Enniscorthy.

In addition, to member discussions this event will have an Expo & Networking and a

keynote address by Davy Fitzgerald, Wexford Hurling Manager.

We hope to see as many members as possible at this event. It is a key meeting for you to guide to development and progression of Wexford PPN. If you haven't yet reserved your place please do so by using the booking form available on www.wexfordppn.ie or by getting in touch.

Representation Vacancies

As you know we have a number of Representation vacancies on a range of committees. We will be seeking nominations for these seats in February, with an aim of having all remaining seats filled by the end of quarter one. Please take the time to consider these representations and to nominate and elect members for these positions.

Wexford PPN on Facebook

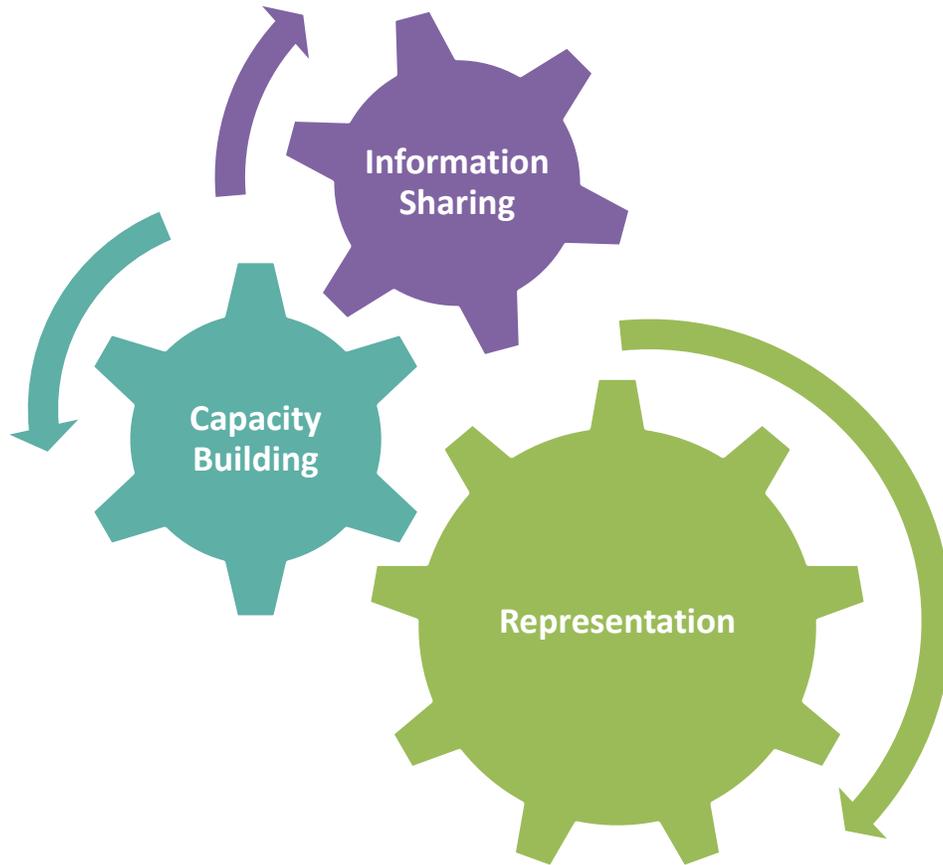


Our Environment College Rep, Sara Kelly has volunteered to set up and admin the Wexford PPN facebook page.

This is available at <https://www.facebook.com/CoWexfordPPN/>

Please like and share

*'Coming together is a beginning;
Keeping together is progress;
Working together is success'*
Henry Ford



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