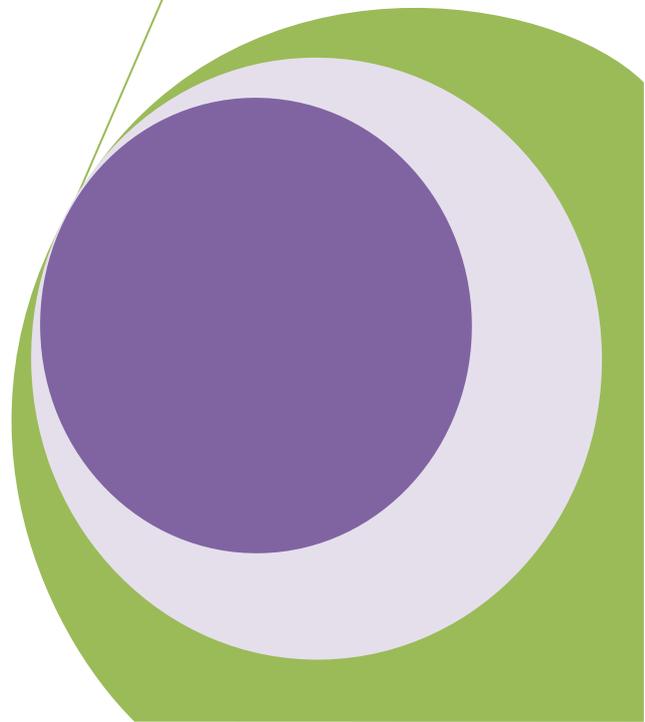
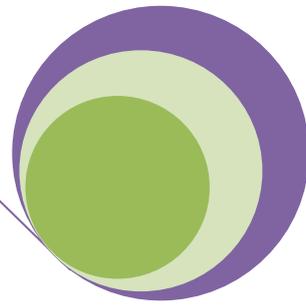
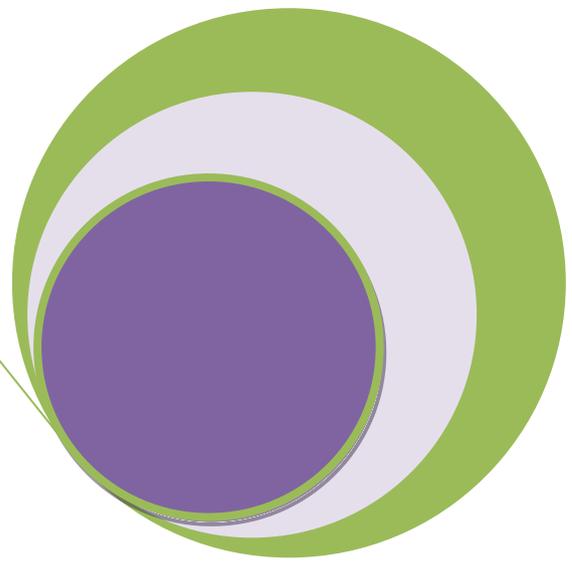


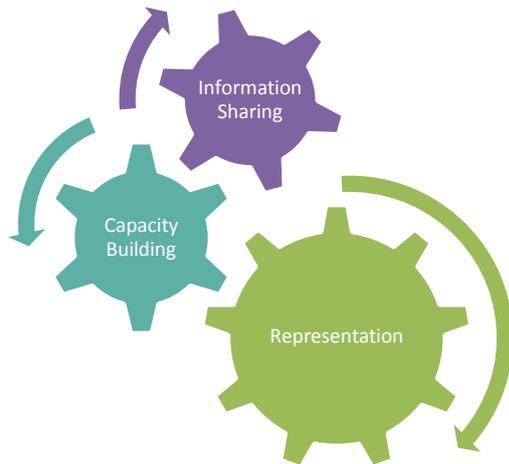
Representative Charter

January 2017



1. Introduction

Public Participation Networks (PPNs) were introduced following the enactment of the Local Government Act 2014. PPNs are collectives of environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary organisations in a County / city which have a three pronged function;



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.

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.

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

Wexford Public Participation Network was formed in 2014 & since this time has been working on putting in place the structures and representations to ensure the community voice is represented and heard.

This Representative Charter is provided to outline the role, rights & responsibilities of the PPN Representatives serving on behalf of Wexford PPN.

2. What is a PPN Representative?

A representative is elected for a fixed term to represent the issues of PPN members on a particular Board or Committee. Their election takes place according to procedures established by the PPN. A PPN Representative does not represent the group they are a member of, they represent the entire PPN and are guided by the Linkage Group.

Having PPN representation on a Board or Committee is a huge advantage. It enables the concerns and experiences of the community to be incorporated at an early stage of policy development, leading to more positive outcomes. It also supports the monitoring and evaluation of existing policies

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of PPN Representatives are volunteers and by virtue, this can limit their participation. However, it is also important to acknowledge that being a PPN Representative is a privilege and with such requires commitment.

Potential Representatives should be fully briefed on this prior to their candidacy for election



3. Available Representations for Wexford PPN

PPNs have representatives sitting on a wide range of communities across multiple thematic areas. Many of these are Local Authority based, but as the PPN develops this will widen to local agencies, forums and boards also. Representation structures include;

- PPN Secretariat
- Strategic Policy Committees (SPC)
- Joint Policing Committees (JPC)
- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Other Forums, Boards and Committees

The term of office held by a PPN Representative varies according to the structure.

4. Role, Responsibilities & Rights of PPN Representatives

4.1 Key Principles

The job of a PPN Representative can be summarised in four key action areas: Listen, Discuss, Represent, & Feedback. These four key action areas are the foundation of what a PPN Representative is all about.



4.1.1 Listen

It is important the PPN Representatives go into committee meetings with a willingness to listen to;

- the business being discussed,
- to points being made by all parties at the table.

It is especially important to do this at the first few meetings, acknowledging that it will take a while for Representatives to get to know the business of the Committee and the contribution being made by other members. Listening will provide Representatives with a balanced insight into what's important and what isn't important when filling out the meeting report, feeding back to the Linkage Group and the wider PPN.

4.1.2 Discuss

Having listened to everyone's opinion, the Representative should give the PPN opinion. Representatives have been selected to be a member of this committee because of their interest in the subject matter and because they are a member of the community in which we all live. The policies and plans being made and discussed affect the community. Representatives should not be afraid to enter discussions - the PPN seat is equal to all other seats on a committee and may provide a different perspective.



4.1.3 Represent

Representatives should remember that they are elected by fellow PPN Members to represent them in every way possible. Representatives should not just voice their own views, the views of a particular group they are part of, or the local area in which you live. Representatives are there to represent the views of the PPN Pillar or Linkage Group. This is one of the most important parts of the PPN Framework – that the community sector raises the vital issues at county level with one collective voice.

Representation does not just apply to the time at which the committee meetings take place. It is important that Representatives use their own network to progress PPN issues, as well as using the PPN to widen their network in progressing PPN issues.

4.1.4 Feedback

It is a PPN Representatives responsibility to feed back to their peers within Wexford PPN. Feedback is a two-way street;

- Issues to be raised by the Representative at a committee on behalf of PPN Members
- Feedback from the business of the meeting to the PPN Pillar or Linkage Group, whichever is appropriate.

Without this two-way feedback process the PPN will not function properly and the community will lose out on having their voice heard.

4.2 Role of PPN Representatives

PPN Representatives should attend and fully participate in the following;

- Meetings of the Board or Committee and any subgroups to which they may be appointed.
- Meetings of the Linkage Group associated with their Board or Committee
- Meetings of the PPN Plenary, PPN Rep Forum & relevant PPN Pillar.

The Linkage Group & relevant PPN Pillar are essential to the role of the PPN Representative. PPN Representatives should;

- Bring forward the issues of the Linkage Group and/or Pillar to the Board or Committee for their consideration, including putting items on the agenda. Representatives are not there just to represent their own group or agenda.
- Work collaboratively with the Linkage Group and/or Pillar to identify issues, research policy proposals, etc
- Communicate regularly (at least as frequently as the Board or Committee meets) with the Linkage Group and/or Pillar on matters such as;
 - Dates of Board or Committee meetings
 - Agendas for Board or Committee meetings
 - Reports & Feedback from Boards & Committee meetings
 - Items which require their input or are of interest



- Network and work strategically with other Board or Committee members for the benefit of the Linkage Group and of PPN, including being able to compromise while retaining the core objective.

4.3 Responsibilities of the PPN Representatives

The key responsibilities are summarised below. The PPN Representative should;

- Organise Linkage Group Meetings and effective two way communications with Linkage Group members with the support of the PPN Support Officer
- Be able to use basic electronic communications effectively (i.e. email and internet browsing). Should IT upskilling be required Wexford PPN will work to assist Representatives in this manner.
- Prepare thoroughly for, attend and participate actively in Linkage Group and Board or Committee meetings solely on behalf of PPN, leaving any personal, business or political interests outside.
- Work openly and collaboratively with all Linkage Group members to identify issues, research, policy proposals etc., respecting the diversity of views expressed.
- Put forward opinions / views of Linkage Group to The Board or Committee and feedback clearly (non-jargon) to the Linkage Group
- Complete a short meeting report after each Committee meeting using the Template provided. Ideally this should be typed but if written should be clearly legible. This should be made available to the PPN, at most, two week after the meeting takes place.
- Attend relevant training or networking events organised by PPN or the Committee.
- Be open and honest in dealings with all stakeholders.
- Build positive relationships with other committee members for the benefit of the PPN.
- Portray the PPN and the Linkage Group in a positive and constructive way.

4.4 Rights of PPN Representatives

The rights of the Representative are to;

- Have active engagement from the Linkage Group, including timely responses to issues.
- Be heard and respected at both the Linkage Group and Board or Committee, with an appreciation that they are a volunteer.
- Be supported by both Linkage Group and Board or Committee members, understanding that PPN is a new and evolving process.
- Be supported by Wexford PPN to allow them to be an effective Representative.
- Receive an induction pack for the Board or Committee on taking up appointment to include:
 - Terms of reference



- Standing orders /procedures
- Meeting schedules, locations and times
- Contact details for all Board or Committee members
- Access to technical support where required
- Receive relevant training to enable them to participate effectively on the Board or Committee.
- Receive timely notice of meetings, ideally at least two weeks in advance, including;
 - Dates & venues
 - Agenda
 - Documents to be read
- Have meetings conducted in a way that facilitates participation, open discussion and transparent decision making.
- Have access to an agreed outcome statement from meetings which can be circulated immediately afterwards.
- Receive expenses for attending Board or Committee meetings including any subgroups and relevant training.

5. Non-attendance & Non-Participation

The PPN Representative is a key link for the PPN and so the issue of non-attendance or non-participation is a serious one. Each external Committee or Board will have their own terms of Reference and so non-attendance implications will be governed by these Boards or Committees.

For PPN convened meetings absences of three consecutive meetings may require the PPN to ask a Representative to step down from a committee. A PPN Rep who does not participate in Linkage Groups, Plenaries, & PPN Reps forums will progress through the conflict resolution procedure.

6. Conflict Resolution Procedure

Wexford PPN endeavours to protect its integrity. Should a PPN Representative act in a manner that is contrary to the values, aims or objectives of the PPN or fails to comply with the Representative Charter, a procedure may be followed to remedy the situation or remove the PPN Representative from office.

This procedure aims to balance justice for the PPN Representative with the need for the integrity of the Organisation.

The PPN should always try to informally resolve any issues, disputes, complaints etc that arise involving a PPN Representative before proceeding with the conflict resolution procedure.



6.1 Reasons for Initiating a Conflict Resolution Procedure

- Lack of fulfilment of the role and responsibilities as laid out in the Representatives Charter
- Acting in a manner that is contrary to the values, aims and objectives of the PPN, including publicly criticising the PPN.
- The PPN receives a complaint about a PPN Representative.

6.2 General Principles applying to Conflict Resolution Procedure

- The PPN Representative will first be contacted informally by the PPN Support Officer, under the direction of the Secretariat, to discuss the situation and attempt to reach an agreement about how it can be addressed.
- The PPN Representative, at all stages in this procedure, can be advised or accompanied by a representative of their choice.
- A sub-committee of the Secretariat will be involved in any conflict resolution procedures and will keep the Secretariat updated throughout the process.
- The Secretariat will ensure that a proper investigation of the facts is carried out and that the whole process is kept confidential.
- At all stages, disciplinary proceedings will be completed as quickly as is possible with the need to ensure that justice is done and seen to be done.
- Any resolutions will be appropriate to the issue established.

6.3 Stages of Conflict Resolution Procedure

For any conflict resolution procedure to be initiated, an issue has to have been brought to the attention of the Secretariat. If the Secretariat are satisfied that the issue raised warrants further investigation, the Secretariat will appoint two Secretariat member to work with the PPN Support Officer and the following procedure will take place:

6.3.1 Formally meet the PPN Representative

The PPN Representative will be invited to meet the appointed Secretariat Members and the PPN Support Officer to discuss the fulfilment of their role. At this meeting:

- The PPN Representative will be informed of the issue and any complaint made against her/him and the PPN Representative will be given the opportunity to make their own input on the issue.
- It will be agreed what action or improvement is to be taken to remedy the issue raised.
- The time limit by which action should be taken or improvement made.
- A plan for assistance and review.



6.3.2 Review meeting

If the Secretariat considers after the review that the progress is unsatisfactory then they will conduct a disciplinary meeting and may issue a formal written warning of breach of Representation. Details of how the member has breached the Representation requirements will be clearly outlined.

6.3.3 Removal as PPN Representative

If the issue has not been resolved after the review meeting, a notice to formally remove the PPN Representative will be issued and the relevant Linkage Group (or in the case of a Secretariat member, the Plenary) is notified and the process of seeking an alternative Representative is initiated.

6.4 Appeal of Decision

Appeals will be heard by the Secretariat. The PPN Representative will be informed of their right to appeal, and how to exercise that appeal. An appeal should be initiated in writing by the appellant and done so within 10 working days of the decision. The appeal will be heard as soon as possible but not later than 20 working days from the receipt of notification from the appellant.

7 Amendments to this Terms of Reference

A proposal to amend this Representatives Charter may be made by:

- a) The Secretariat;
- b) The Representatives Forum;
- c) A PPN Linkage Group;
- d) A PPN Pillar;

The proposal will be placed on the agenda for the next plenary meeting. The amendment will be effective if passed by the majority of the members present at the Plenary meeting.