

Meath Public Participation Network
Code of Conduct for PPN
Representatives in County Meath and for
Meath PPN Secretariat Members

Approved at meeting of Meath PPN Plenary held on



**Public Participation
Network Meath**

Code of Conduct for PPN Secretariat and PPN Representatives

1. General

This Code of Conduct shall apply to every member of the PPN elected to a representative position on the various Committees or Boards where the PPN has such representation and by the members of the PPN Secretariat.

This Code of Conduct details what each member shall commit to in their role as a representative of the PPN and in all areas relating to their interaction with, and on behalf of, the PPN.

All members and members with a representative role have a duty of care and responsibility to act in the best interests of the PPN complying with this Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Constitution. Integrity and honesty shall be the hallmarks of all conduct within and on behalf of the PPN particularly when dealing with fellow members and colleagues and external individuals and agencies.

2. Organisational Values

All members commit to and promise to comply with the fundamental values that underpin all the activities of PPNs.

Inclusive

All members will seek to actively include volunteer-led groups in the PPN geographical area that might not otherwise be included or who might not often have their voice heard.

Participatory

All members will encourage participation of Member Groups in all areas of PPN work, ensuring there are a range of methods used for clear communication with Member Groups. It is important that members are welcoming, respectful and willing to work together and support one another, and particularly Member Groups that may be new or have limited experience.

Valuing of Diversity

Members must take account of the whole range of views from across the many PPN Member Groups and Colleges with different experiences and opinions.

Independent

Members are required to support the independent representation of the views of Member Groups and Colleges. It is important that any member representing the PPN in whatever capacity must represent the views of the PPN and not their own or those of their own member group.

Transparency

Members shall promote an atmosphere of openness throughout the PPN in order to promote confidence to members of the public, Meath County Council Elected Members and staff, and to promote strategic and operational effectiveness.

Accountability

As a member everything you do and every interaction you are involved in shall be able to stand the test of scrutiny by members of the public, the media, beneficiaries, other stakeholders and regulatory authorities.

Accountability will be delivered through having good governance policies and procedures in place. Members shall always support the ethos and values of PPN and ensure compliance with good governance and shall:

- Commit to supporting and advocating compliance with good governance for the Community and Voluntary Sector and the myriad of groups and organisations within the sector;
- Participate in appropriate induction, training and development programmes;
- Support the Resource Worker and Support Worker in their work and the Rotating Chair/Facilitator of the Secretariat in his/her role.

3. Commitment to PPN

All Representatives shall commit to consistently:

- Support the PPN's vision, values, principles and aims and actively promote these;
- Always comply with PPN's policies and procedures;
- Seek to maintain and promote integrity, good governance, effectiveness and efficiency for the delivery of the aims of PPN;
- Not break the law or act against any regulation in force that would bring the PPN into disrepute.

4. Conflicts of Interest for PPN Representatives and PPN Secretariat members

A conflict of interest can be described as any form of personal interest which may affect, or might reasonably be thought to affect, on an individual's impartiality in decision-making. Personal interest includes an interest of a relative or connected person or organisation.

In accordance with the Ethics Act 2005, a member must disclose any pecuniary or other beneficial interest in, or material to, any matter which is to be considered by the PPN Secretariat, PPN Plenary or a Committee or Board on which they sit as a PPN Representative.

All members shall:

- Act in the best interests of the PPN;
- Declare any potential conflict of interest or any such circumstance as may be viewed by others as conflicting as soon as it arises;
- Abide by decisions of the Secretariat, Plenary or Committee or Board on which they sit and comply with any requirements it makes regarding potential conflicts of interest.

If a disclosure of a conflict of interest is made at a meeting of the Secretariat, particulars of the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned. If considered necessary, a discussion may take place on this conflict of interest declaration and the person involved shall be asked to absent him/herself from the meeting whilst this discussion takes place.

In addition, in such cases the Secretary to the Secretariat shall maintain a separate record of the discussion (to which the member shall not have access).

Where a question arises as to whether or not a matter for consideration by the Secretariat relates to the interests of a member or a person or body connected with that Secretariat member, the matter will be decided by a vote of all Secretariat members excluding the member(s) to whom the matter relates. The question will be put in writing and the person involved will be given an opportunity to provide a written response.

5. Personal Gain

Members shall:

- Not personally gain from their role as a PPN member nor permit others to do so as a result of actions or negligence.
- Document expenses and seek reimbursement according to agreed procedure.
- Notify the PPN Secretariat about gifts or hospitality which they receive in their role as PPN members.
- Use PPN resources responsibly, when authorised in accordance with procedure.

6. Leaving the Secretariat or Representative Role

Members shall:

- Understand that any breach of this code relating to work and activities being undertaken on behalf of Meath PPN may result in that person's removal from the PPN or any of its constituent levels - Linkage Groups, Secretariat or any

representative role.

- Inform the Rotating Chair/ Facilitator of the Secretariat in writing, stating reasons for resigning from the Secretariat or representative role.
- Participate in an exit interview if requested.

7. Plenary and other Meetings of PPN Members

Representatives of member groups attending Plenary and other meetings internal to or external to the PPN shall at all times conduct and behave in a professional manner keeping in mind at all times their conduct reflects on the integrity of the PPN and the sector and shall observe accepted practice while participating as a Representative or member and shall:

- Be courteous and respectful to everyone present throughout;
- Speak by addressing the Rotating Chair/ Facilitator;
- Only address the meeting in order and as directed by Rotating Chair/ Facilitator;
- Comply immediately with directions of Rotating Chair/ Facilitator;
- Not cross talk or interrupt any speaker addressing the meeting;
- Follow the agenda and strive to reach effective decisions;
- Stay within time limits and guidelines set out for various agenda items;
- Keep contributions at meetings to a reasonable length of time (so as to enable other members to contribute and get meetings finished within the time allocated for meetings);
- Represent the views of your member organisation;
- Put your mobile phones on silent (where you have an emergency call please leave the room);
- Be prepared for all meetings by reading relevant documents that are received in reasonable time before the meeting.

The Facilitator/Rotating Chairperson will introduce these rules of conduct at the beginning of Plenary meetings (and other PPN meetings) and seek agreement from those present that they be adopted as ground rules for all participants for the duration of the meeting. The Facilitator/Rotating Chairperson should establish at the meeting if there is any other rules of conduct that those present wish to add to assist the running of the event e.g. no realtime attributing contributions in social media posts about issues discussed at Plenary meetings. All meetings of the PPN will be run according to these rules which will be made available on the PPN website and in the notification of meetings.

8. Secretariat Members Specifically

Rights of Secretariat Members

- The right to receive correct information - agendas, minutes etc.
- The right to be heard.
- The right to be consulted and included in decision making.
- The right to respect from colleagues.
- The right to confidentiality around sensitive issues.
- The right not to participate in any discussion or vote
- The right to make a valid claim for reimbursement for expenses incurred in the work of the Secretariat. Please check the details of the PPN Travel & Expenses Policy and note the deadlines for submission of claims.
- The right to be informed about all correspondences received by Meath PPN on matters specific to the PPN Secretariat

Responsibilities of Secretariat Members

Members of the Secretariat shall:

- Embody the principles of good governance and proper procedure in all actions and live up to the trust placed on them by their election to the Secretariat.

- Comply and abide by the PPN governance procedures and practice.
- Maintain a respectful attitude to all others and their opinions at all times.
- Participate in at least one sub-group of the Secretariat, as appropriate.
- Adhere to the standing orders and abide by the Constitution.
- Commit to attend all Secretariat meetings and, in the event of unavoidable inability to attend, shall send an apology to the Secretariat.
- Strive to be familiar with all agenda items received by them and be prepared to contribute to discussion and decision making at meetings.
- Respect the authority of the Rotating Chair/Facilitator and comply with the directions of the Rotating Chair/Facilitator.
- Respect the roles of fellow Secretariat members and respect PPN staff members.
- Keep to the agenda and stay within time allocations for various agenda items.
- Make succinct and measured contributions to Secretariat meetings (so as to ensure that other Secretariat members are given opportunity to contribute and that meetings are finished within the scheduled time).
- For those members joining meetings online they must have dialed in with their cameras on and must be visible so that everyone can be equally seen and heard.
- Participate in decision making.
- Abide by collective decisions made by the Secretariat
- Understand that decisions will ideally be made by consensus but may be by vote and shall consider any majority vote as a composite Secretariat decision and will accept and support it.
- Carry out any tasks agreed in a timely manner.
- Contribute your skills to the implementation of the Workplan for Meath PPN.
- Respect the Secretariat, its members and its work.

- Be accountable to other members of the Secretariat and to the PPN membership as a whole.
- Ensure that all expense claims are correct and relate to the work of the Secretariat.

Responsibilities of Facilitator/ Rotating Chair

In respect of this Code of Conduct, any member acting as Facilitator/ Rotating Chair shall exercise the same rights and responsibilities as other Secretariat members and also shall:

- Ensure they are familiar with the Code of Conduct and have access to a copy of this;
- Be watchful to ensure that all members are abiding by the Code of Conduct during the meeting;
- Politely and respectfully remind members of their agreement to abide by the Code, as necessary;
- Conduct the meeting in such a manner as to support constructive discussion and consensus building e.g. ensuring all participants are encouraged to contribute and can do so when they wish;
- Foster collaborative working and development of a "team" within the Secretariat.
- Be the designated person to make any public statements or pronouncements on behalf of Meath PPN, where considered appropriate and/or necessary.

9. Attendance at Secretariat meetings

Members should make every effort to attend all meetings and to that end:

- The Secretariat shall produce a schedule of meetings once per year of all Secretariat meetings.
- Where a member has missed three consecutive meetings without giving

apologies or without giving reasons for non-attendance, the member will be contacted by the Resource Worker, who will report on the matter at the next Secretariat meeting.

- If a member who misses three consecutive meetings without apologies or without reasons for non-attendance and is non-contactable, he/she shall be deemed to have resigned.
- A Secretariat member that is deemed to have resigned will be replaced by convening a meeting of the body from which the representative was appointed at its earliest convenience. *{Secretariat members are elected either from Colleges or from the relevant Municipal District so, for example, if a Secretariat member elected by the Social Inclusion College were to have resigned then the Social Inclusion members of the PPN would be requested to elect a replacement.}*

10. Breaches of This Code of Conduct Policy

Meath PPN Secretariat reserves the right to uphold the conditions of the Code of Conduct Policy.

In matters relating to Code of Conduct at meetings, all matters of order are the responsibility of the Facilitator/Rotating Chairperson. In such cases the Facilitator/Rotating Chairperson has the right to the following courses of action:

- Deem a matter or proposal "Out of Order".
- Deem the behaviour or conduct of a member to be in breach of the Code of Conduct. In this circumstance the member can be warned of their conduct and can be asked to leave the meeting either temporarily or permanently.
- Suspend or adjourn a meeting or part of a meeting and refer the particular dispute to a special meeting of the Secretariat.
- If a Secretariat member or PPN staff member raises a concern over a breach of the Code of Conduct during a meeting, the Facilitator/ Rotating Chair is required to respond and address the situation.

- The members of the Secretariat will assist the rotating Facilitator/Chair in deciding upon the most appropriate course of action in relation to the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.