

Meath Public Participation Network

Membership Criteria

Approved at meeting of Meath PPN Plenary held on



**Public Participation
Network Meath**

1. Brief

The Public Participation Network (PPN) for Meath is an independent umbrella organization and network that provides a voice for all environment, social inclusion and community voluntary groups throughout the county and was established in 2014 under The Local Government Act 2014.

2. Membership

The PPN aims to:

- *Act as the representative, collective voice of environment, social inclusion and community voluntary groups in County Meath.*
- *Engage as an equal and independent partner and asserts the rights of the sector to organize and structure its own participation in relevant arenas.*
- *Co-ordinate, enable and support the representation of environment, social inclusion and community/voluntary groups in County Meath on various public and private structures.*

For the PPN to fulfil these aims, its membership base needs to be focused on groups who do not already have a participatory structure of their own (i.e. participatory structures such as trade unions, business associations, farmers organisations).

2.1. Associate Membership

Groups who have representational rights through the national pillars, local authorities or other mechanisms are not eligible for full membership to the PPN and in this context may become associate members.

This includes groups that have representation on the LCDC, JPC and/or SPCs.

Likewise, where groups do not meet the criteria set out in this document, they may be eligible for associate membership if they are working toward these criteria.

Associate members of the PPN do not have the power to make nominations or have voting rights. However, they can put forward motions not relating to PPN membership.

3. Criteria

Membership is open to groups which:

- Are active and with a postal address in the county.
- Operate on a non-profit basis.
- Are volunteer led (organisations may have paid staff, but must be under volunteer control).
- Are independent i.e. not a sub-committee or sub-group of another organization.
- Have at least 6 members.
- Have an appropriate governance structure e.g. a constitution / set of rules / financial procedures.
- Meet regularly.
- Are in existence for at least 12 months.
- Are a non-political, non-sectarian group and non-discriminatory.
- Do not already have representational rights through other pillars of social partnership e.g. trade unions, business organisations etc.

4. Pillars

When registering with the PPN groups are required to select one of three pillars; Environment, Social Inclusion or Community Voluntary, whichever most closely reflects their activities.

4.1. Environment

The aim/activity of an environment pillar member organization is environmental (i.e. ecological) protection and/or environmental sustainability. The focus on work which may include:

- Protection of wildlife
- Organic horticulture
- Environmental protection, education and sustainability

- Resource efficiency and recycling
- Invasive alien species prevention and removal
- Awareness raising and capacity building around environmental themes

4.2. Social Inclusion

The main aim/activity of a social inclusion pillar member organization centres on working to improve the life chances, wellbeing and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment. Social Inclusion organisations use community development approaches to build sustainable and included communities, where the values of equality and empowerment are promoted and human rights respected. They focus on social justice and on working with the most marginalized, including:

- Families on low income
- People with inadequate education/training qualifications
- Ethnic minorities
- Travellers
- People with disabilities
- Disadvantaged women
- Substance abuse or dependency
- Homelessness
- Members of the LGBT+ community

4.3. Community

The main aim / activity of a community pillar member organization is to improve the quality of life and community wellbeing. Groups who do not fit under the environment or social inclusion pillars should fit with the Community Voluntary Pillar. Volunteers are essential to these groups. Examples of these groups may include:

- Sports
- Arts

- Leisure
- Community Development
- Cultural activities
- Festivals

5. Membership Application Process

5.1. Method

Applications for membership to the PPN can be made by post, email and online.

A useful link to register your groups is: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4686193>

5.2. Application Assessment

Applications for membership of the PPN is considered on a case by case basis. Membership applications are received by the staff of the PPN and assessed per the criteria set out in this document. New members are assessed by the Secretariat and mandated by the Plenary of Meath PPN each year.

5.3. Application Status

Applicants are notified of the status of their application at each stage.

5.4. Membership Renewal

Membership of the PPN is renewed every three years through a re-registration process administered by the staff of the PPN.

5.5. Appeals

Applicants can appeal a decision on their membership to the Secretariat of the PPN. A further and final appeal can be heard at a Plenary meeting.

6. Amendments

A proposal to amend this Membership Criteria may be made by:

- The Secretariat
- The Representatives Network
- A PPN Linkage Group

The proposal will be discussed by the Secretariat and placed on the agenda for the next Plenary Meeting.

The amendment will be effective if passed by a majority of the members present at the Plenary meeting.