

Meath Public Participation Network Terms of Reference for PPN Secretariat

Approved at meeting of Meath PPN Plenary held on



**Public Participation
Network Meath**

Meath Public Participation Network

Meath Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in 2014 as the representative voice for Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion groups in County Meath.

The Public Participation Network will identify the issues that matter and try to influence policy in a way that improves the quality of life and opportunities for people within County Meath.

Membership of Meath PPN is open to all community and voluntary groups, clubs, and organisations, working on a voluntary, co-operative, or not-for-profit basis for the benefit of the community. Meath PPN is overseen by a Secretariat, elected by member groups of the PPN. The PPN elects Representatives to committees and organisations to speak on behalf of member groups. Meath PPN is the main link through which the Local Authority and other decision-making bodies connect with the Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion sectors in County Meath.

Meath PPN is committed to working in an open, inclusive, and transparent manner on behalf of all member groups.

Structure of Secretariat

The Secretariat is made up of 12 members. Two members are elected from each of the three Electoral Pillars and one member from each of the six Municipal Districts. Consideration is given towards achieving gender balance. The Secretariat is a flat structure (i.e. no single individual, group or sector controls the PPN). Meetings will be chaired on a rotational basis, as agreed by the Secretariat.

Role of the Secretariat

- To ensure the aims and objectives of Meath PPN are met.
- To ensure that member groups are informed of developments relevant to their groups.
- To represent member groups interests.
- To ensure the proper functioning of the PPN between Plenary meetings.
- To facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the Plenary.
- To support the PPN Resource Worker and Support Worker to achieve the PPN's objectives through the implementation of the annual Workplan.

- To review and sign off on documentation in a timely fashion (by email if required to facilitate tight timeframes).
- To develop Meath PPN into an effective collective voice for community groups in Meath.
- To engage with and support the PPN Representatives.
- To operate as defined under Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.
- The Secretariat may establish working groups, sub-committees, or task groups as necessary.
- To attend Secretariat induction training. The PPN will endeavour to provide this induction training as soon as possible after the appointment of new Secretariat members.

Role of the Chairperson

- The Secretariat has a Chairperson who is appointed to conduct meetings on a six-monthly rotating basis. The role of the Chairperson is to:
 - Actively chair or facilitate meetings.
 - Sign relevant documentation on behalf of Secretariat.
 - Support the PPN workers in fulfilling their role and support the implementation of the Workplan.
 - Ensure that agreed actions from meetings held during their term are put into practice on behalf of the PPN.
- The Chairperson is not the sole or main representative of the Secretariat, as all Secretariat members have equal representative status.
- In urgent situations, the Chairperson assumes the role of Secretariat spokesperson.
- To undertake any other duties, as necessary.

Meetings of the Secretariat

- Members are required to attend Secretariat meetings as deemed necessary.
- The quorum for Secretariat meetings is half plus one of the current members.

- If after 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time, a quorum is not present the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the Secretariat.
- If at a subsequent meeting (following the adjourned meeting) a quorum is not present within 30 minutes from the appointed start time, the members present shall be a quorum.
- The Secretariat will strive to make decisions by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, those present will make decisions by way of a simple majority vote.
- All reports to be considered at Secretariat meetings and general meetings should be written and circulated in advance.
- The appropriate method of reporting for some meetings may be verbal.

Elections to the Secretariat

There are 12 seats on the Secretariat, which must be filled as follows:

- Member organisations from each of the Municipal Districts of the Local Authority area elect one representative from their area (the Municipal Districts in Meath are: Ashbourne, Kells, Laytown-Bettystown, Navan, Ratoath, Trim).
- Member Organisations from each of three Electoral Colleges (Community and Voluntary; Environmental and Social Inclusion) elect two representatives.
- Election is for a maximum term of six years (the Plenary may decide on a shorter term).
- Meath PPN will strive to achieve a gender balance on the Secretariat.
- To help prevent loss of experience from the Secretariat at any one time, elections to the Secretariat should be incremental and there should be a gradual and regular process for new members to join.
- Members of the Secretariat who are standing down are eligible for re-election - however no person is eligible to serve more than two consecutive three-year terms on the Secretariat.
- Should a member of the Secretariat be required to resign, or otherwise be unable to continue in their role, member groups of the relevant Municipal District or College will be contacted seeking nominations for a new representative.

- When the Secretariat is being refreshed, the longest-serving members should step down first to allow new voices to join.

Circumstances where a Secretariat Member would be required to resign their position

Secretariat Members would be required to resign their position if they:

- Are no longer a member of the Meath PPN member organisation that nominated them.
- No longer have the formal support of their nominating member organisation.
- Fail to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation.
- Declare as a candidate for Local, General, or European elections.
- Are in breach of the Meath PPN Code of Conduct.