

Cork County PPN, Secretariat meeting ADOPTED

Tuesday 23rd February 2021, by Zoom

Present: Brid Coakley, Tommy Collins, Colum Cronin, Pat Dooley, Michael Doyle, Peter Dineen, Pauline Dwyer, Gavin Falk, Anne Finch, John Fuller, Carol Harpur, Tom Howard, Sean Kelly, Liam McCarthy, José Ospina.

Apologies: - Jude Gilbert, Ronan Kenneally

Facilitation: Harriet Emerson

* * * * *

1. Welcome & Agenda: Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from Jude Gilbert and Ronan Kenneally who were unable to attend. All present were reminded of the agreed ground rules for conduct during the meeting and to raise their hands or say their name to indicate that they wished to contribute to discussions. The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising: The Draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th January. 2020 (pre-circulated) were adopted. The following matters were noted –

- i. Pat Dooley reported a discussion from the National PPN Secretariat Network where a proposal had been put that people with disabilities be recognised as a separate college within PPNs. This motion had been defeated and agreement that continue to be represented within the Social Inclusion college. (A scan of Cork County PPN membership list would be needed to identify member organisations that specifically support people with disabilities.)
- ii. Harriet reported that she had not yet had time to draw up her report to the Department on PPN progress from November (part of her contractual obligations) but that she will share a draft of this for feedback within the coming week to ten days.

3. Staff Recruitment: The advertisement for the Resource Worker had been widely shared and Carol Harpur reported her understanding that two excellent candidates had indicated their intention to apply. John Fuller expressed thanks on behalf of the whole Secretariat to Carol, Liam McCarthy and Jose Ospina for all their work in getting the recruitment process so far, for which there was unanimous support.

The date for interviews is not yet known but the Secretariat needs to nominate two representatives to participate in the interview panel. For GDPR and privacy reasons only these individuals will see applications. Depending on the overall number of applicants, there may or may not be a shortlist drawn up. If desirable, a second day of interviewing might take place. Following discussion about what criteria would be preferable and who would be comfortable in the role, it was AGREED that the Secretariat interviewers should include one man and one woman. Those present selected Pat Dooley and Jude Gilbert for these roles. Recognising that Jude was not present and may not be able to participate, Brid Coakley agreed to be the reserve interviewer.

There was discussion about the need to select the 3 person Staff Liaison Sub-Committee, in order to have this in place for when the new staff take up position. While it was felt desirable to attempt to reflect the different areas of the County (N, S & W) and the three colleges wherever possible in the PPN's operation, there was general agreement that at this point the priority for this Sub-Committee is to provide the best possible support to staff and incorporate gender balance. For this reason, involving Secretariat members with related experience is seen to be most important. It was AGREED that Secretariat members who wish to be considered for a place on this Sub-Committee should indicate this to Harriet. She will circulate a list of names of those interested with the Agenda ahead of the next Secretariat meeting, where a decision will be made.

4. Memorandum of Understanding & Service Level Agreement: Liam reported that Kay Keegan and the Corporate Affairs section of the Council are still to revert on two matters relating to the claiming of

expenses, in order for these agreements to be finally signed off. He will prompt Kay on this. It was recognised that agreement is needed that the Council will reimburse expenses of representatives on their Committees and that this will then enable completion of the PPN's Travel and Subsistence policy. In principle, the PPN handbook sets out that the body to which a committee belongs, whether it is the Local Authority or other agency, should pay the expenses of voluntary PPN representatives.

5. Budget: The Draft Budget for the 2021 PPN Workplan had been circulated and Harriet thanked Peter Dineen, Jose Ospina and Liam McCarthy for their work in developing this. It was circulated to the Secretariat for comment before being submitted to the Department. No response has yet been received.

In discussion, it was felt that maintaining the same level of activity in future years as set out in the proposed budget for 2021 would necessitate access to additional funding. Pat Dooley indicated that he has reportedly pushed for additional funds for Cork County PPN at the National Secretariat Representative Network. This is seen as an equity issue on which some research and factual information would be useful, for example comparing smaller counties with lower populations (such as Leitrim) with Cork where there is the unique situation of three LCDCs. Such information would strengthen the case to be made for additional funding. Ways to secure additional resources this will need to be considered in due course.

6. Climate Action Plan consultation process: Jose Ospina reported that an expression of interest had been submitted but that Cork County PPN had not been selected to participate in the pilot for the Climate Action Plan consultation process. There will be consultation with youth organisations in the County and other smaller meetings and consultations. It was considered unfortunate that the PPN had not been selected but on a positive note, the PPN had "raised the flag" in seeking to engage with the process.

7. Nomination of 3 Judges for 2021 Mayor's Award: Harriet apologised for her omission in addressing the request from the Council for three judges on the 2021 Mayor's Award at the last Secretariat meeting. The Council has agreed that a decision taken at this meeting would be satisfactory. To reflect the arrangement of the Awards into North, South and West areas of the County, a Secretariat member from each area was needed. After deliberations, the following were chosen to represent the Secretariat:

- Pauline Dwyer (North Cork)
- Gavin Falk (West Cork)
- Tom Howard (South Cork)

Harriet will notify these names to Kay Keegan immediately following the meeting.

Notwithstanding involvement in this year's awards, Pauline Dwyer, Peter Dineen and John Fuller will be exploring proposals for a future PPN Award scheme.

8. PPN Documentation, Policies and Procedures: Considerable work is ongoing on the required PPN governance documents in order to have these all completed before the new staff are in place and thanks was expressed to those who have taken this on. It was AGREED that these documents will be made available when initial drafts are completed to the Secretariat both on email and via Google Docs (which allows multiple people to put comments into the document itself that can be seen by everyone. She will circulate a copy that includes the comments from both Google Docs and emails into a version to be sent out with the next Agenda and those points that need to be agreed can then be discussed at the next meeting.

Tommy Collins pointed to a number of issues in the Draft Constitution and Appendices 1-4 that he has been working on, specifically sections 6.2 (requiring correct numbers of Secretariat numbers), 6.3.4 (requiring a list of other agencies which he proposed might be better located in a further appendix), and section 7 (where updated page references will be needed in due course). He also highlighted the need to develop a template for signatures and clarify PPN communication details in Appendix 2. Peter Dineen has been working on drafts of the Email & Internet Usage Policy and the Re-registration Protocol. Jude is

working on the Complaints and Grievances policies and Liam on the Secretariat Code of Conduct. Areas where they identify need for discussion and agreement will be highlighted in red in the documents send out/ put online. Harriet undertook to circulate the list of documentation and policies that the PPN needs with the record of this meeting so that Secretariat members could volunteer to take on the outstanding documents.

9. Any Other Business:

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – Jose Ospina pointed to the notification that there is to be consultation in relation to MPAs and the particular significance of these environmental protection measures for coastal communities, in relation to offshore windfarms and other developments and activities. He noted that while there is reference to the importance of consultation with local communities, there is no reference to PPNs. Michael Doyle and Tom Howard both supported the need for local communities to engage and be consulted. Jose will forward the link to the government’s MPA report. It was AGREED that Harriet should write to the Department of Housing requesting that they engage with the PPNs and Cork County PPN in particular in this consultation.

Drug & Alcohol Task Force update - Gavin Falk drew Secretariat members’ attention to the spread of a new form of substance abuse, whereby nitrous oxide (laughing gas) is inhaled from small canisters (“bullets” or “nags”) that are used as gas for expansion and propulsion in food products (such as whipped cream ‘spray’ containers). This practice of “nagging” poses very dangerous health risks and the practice is now growing in Ireland. Carol Harpur confirmed that she had seen discarded “bullets” in a park on a trip to the UK a few years ago and suggested that Tidy Towns groups would be amongst those most aware of the signs of this practice in their areas.

10. Next meeting: It was AGREED that the next meeting will take place

via Zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday 23rd March

Attached:

- List of documents, policies and procedures that PPN needs to put in place, including names of Secretariat volunteers that have taken on the task of amending sample documents to create draft versions for the Cork County PPN.
- Copies of
- Draft Constitution
- Constitution Appendices 1-4
- Email & Internet Usage Policy
- Re-registration Protocol

(other policies will follow as they are completed & all will also be made available via Google Docs)