

Cork County Public Participation Network

Secretariat Standing Orders (P2)

1.0 What this document is for

This document sets out the rules governing how the Secretariat operates.

The Secretariat is the elected administrative arm of the PPN and takes direction from the Plenary (made up of all of the Member Groups). There are 22 seats on the Cork County PPN Secretariat including :

- **6 countywide representatives, 2 from each of the 3 Electoral Colleges** comprised of:
 - Community & Voluntary College - 2 representatives
 - Social Inclusion College – 2 representatives
 - Environmental College – 2 representatives
- **16 representatives from Municipal Districts, 2 from each of the 8 Municipal District**
 - Bandon/Kinsale – 2 representatives
 - Carrigaline – 2 representatives
 - Cobh – 2 representatives
 - East Cork – 2 representatives
 - Fermoy – 2 representatives
 - Kanturk/Mallow – 2 representatives
 - Macroom – 2 representatives
 - West Cork – 2 representatives

(see 5.3 of the Constitution, p.?? for further details about how Secretariat members are)

2.0 Rights of Secretariat Members

Secretariat members are entitled to the following:

- 1.1. to receive correct information – agendas, minutes etc.
- 1.2. to be heard
- 1.3. to be consulted and included in decision making
- 1.4. to respect from colleagues
- 1.5. to confidentiality around sensitive issues
- 1.6. not to participate in any discussion or vote on grounds of conflict of interest
- 1.7. to make a valid claim for reimbursement for expenses incurred in the work of the Secretariat

3.0 Responsibilities of Secretariat Members

Secretariat members agree to the following responsibilities:

- 1.1. to attend all meetings or to send an apology to the Secretariat
- 1.2. to elect a Rotating Chair/ Facilitator for a period of up to 1 year
- 1.3. to participate in at least one sub group of the Secretariat
- 1.4. to adhere to the standing orders and abide by the constitution
- 1.5. to participate actively in decision making
- 1.6. to carry out any tasks agreed
- 1.7. to contribute their skills to the projects of the Secretariat
- 1.8. to be loyal to the Secretariat and its members
- 1.9. to comply with the PPN Code of Conduct and respect the Secretariat and its work at all times
- 1.10. to respect the confidentiality of the business of the Secretariat
- 1.11. to be accountable to other members of the Secretariat and to the PPN membership as a whole
- 1.12. to ensure that all expense claims are correct and relate to the work of the Secretariat.

More details on the responsibilities of the Secretariat can be found in Section 5 of the Constitution.)

4.0 Attendance at meetings

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

- 4.1 the Secretariat shall produce a schedule of meetings once per year of all secretariat meetings. Additional meetings may be called (see 5.3.vi of the PPN Constitution for more details).
- 4.2 any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Secretariat, without good reason in the opinion of the rest of the Secretariat, shall automatically be considered to have removed themselves from their position on the Secretariat. Such a decision may be appealed through the PPN [Grievance Procedure](#) (P8, p.50) If no appeal is made, or an appeal is unsuccessful, a vacancy arising between PPN annual general meetings shall be filled as soon as possible by the next available member on the panel as set out above.

In the event that there is no panel from which to invite a new member to join the Secretariat when a vacancy occurs, the Secretariat may agree to co-opt an individual from a full Member Group that meets the criteria for the position.

The Secretariat shall have authority to fill any temporary vacancy being 3 months or more arising from a member being absent on Leave of Absence, Study Leave, Maternity Leave, etc. for the duration of that leave period.

5.0 Quorum

The quorum for Secretariat meetings shall be one third of the present membership plus one.

6.0 Conflicts of Interest

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 organisation and in such case he or she shall;

- disclose to the Secretariat the nature of the interest in advance of any consideration of the matter
- neither influence nor seek to influence a decision relating to the matter
- take no part in any consideration of the matter
- take no part in any vote on the matter to influence the decision of the Secretariat or be considered part of the quorum for that matter

If a disclosure is made at a meeting of the Secretariat, particulars of the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned, and for so long as the matter to which the disclosure relates is being dealt with by the meeting, the person by whom the disclosure is made shall not be counted in the quorum for the meeting.

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 Facilitator / Chairperson of the meeting should determine the question.

7.0 Breaches of the PPN Code of Conduct

The Secretariat reserves the right to uphold the conditions of the PPN [Code of Conduct](#) (P5, p.36).

All matters relating to the Code of Conduct that arise during meetings, are matters of order and are the responsibility of the Chairperson. In such cases the 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 about their conduct and can be asked to leave the meeting either temporarily or permanently
- suspend or adjourn a meeting or part of a meeting

In other instances where a breach of the Code of Conduct is suspected or asserted, the matter will be handled as set out in the PPN [Grievance Procedure](#) (P8, p.50). The Secretariat will be kept informed at the appropriate stages in the Grievance Procedure and notified of any action recommended for them to take. The Secretariat will provide a summary statement to the Plenary regarding any action taken arising from the Grievance Procedure.

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026