



LAOIS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

A Guide to being a PPN Representative on a Board/Committee

Laois Joint Policing Committee

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Introduction

Welcome to Laois Public Participation Network!

The PPN gives us a voice!!

The aim of a PPN Structure is to facilitate and enable public organisations operating within the wider community to give voice to a diverse range of views, issues and interests within the local government system.

The PPN will:

- ***Facilitate the participation*** by the public and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion and community/voluntary sectors on decision making bodies.
- ***Strengthen the capacity*** of the environmental, social inclusion and community/voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community that they live/participate in.

Provide information to the environmental, social inclusion and community/voluntary sectors and will act as a hub around which information can be received and distributed.

As a Representative of Laois Public Participation Network (PPN), you will be part of the democratic framework which gives our local communities and its groups a voice within the decision making processes within local government.

This document will outline for you the committee on which you will represent Laois PPN, including its scope and membership. It will also outline your role as a PPN representative, and the importance of having the collective voice of the community heard through you on that committee.

Be reassured that you are supported at all times in your role as a PPN representative. If you need to, know that you can ask the silly question, and that you can talk to someone who has the information you need, e.g., your fellow representatives, a member of the Secretariat, or your PPN Resource Worker.

Don't ever feel foolish at being confused by it all! The PPN Framework is a learning adventure in which we are all taking part, and together we will make it stronger by our best efforts and learning from our mistakes! It is your commitment to the PPN that will ensure its strength positive outcomes.

Best of luck in your endeavours!

Laois Joint Policing Committee (JPC)

Role of the Committee

In co-operation with those authorities whose responsibility it is to maintain public safety and police the county, we all have a role to play in keeping our county safe and free from crime.

A Joint Policing Committee is a forum where the Council and local Gardaí responsible for the policing of the area, with the participation of Oireachtas members and community interests, can consult, discuss and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the area.

Legislation for Joint Policing Committees and their operation is set out in the An Garda Síochána Act 2005 (Revised Joint Policing Guidelines August 2014).

The committee is co-operative in nature, giving all interested parties an opportunity to contribute to the improved safety and quality of life for the county.

The Joint Policing Committee focuses its work on addressing key issues affecting the public such as crime prevention, anti-social behaviour/public order, misuse of drugs and related crime, not forgetting support for those who have been affected by crime, including victims of domestic violence. The key word in Joint Policing is “**Joint**”, i.e., local authority, local Gardaí and the local community working together to address issues of crime and public safety in the county; this is the ethos of the Joint Policing Committee.

The revised Guidelines stress that a **Strategic Approach** should be taken in collectively addressing issues, and that the traditional manner of simply having an exchange of views is no longer be accepted as a way of doing business, rather the focus will be on identifying, planning a number of strategic objectives, and achieving coordinated actions to support enhanced policing and crime prevention. The JPC must make a **5-year Strategic Plan**, which will create linkages with the Local Economic and Community Plan for Laois.

It should also be noted that the operation of a Joint Policing Committee in the county should in no way detract from the day-to-day contact or consultation between all parties in respect of the administration and policing of the county.

Laois County JPC is a forum for discussion and a means of building confidence and trust, thereby bringing communities together through a process with which all participants feel comfortable. Laois County JPC will engage with local groups to the greatest degree possible.

Each Committee will have its own set of standing orders which you will receive from the Committee Administrator. This will also set out how often the Committee meets and the time and venue of the meetings.

In the case of the Joint Policing Committee, generally:

1. Meetings take place every quarter, notice of at least one week is usually given
2. Venue is County Hall, Portlaoise (unless otherwise agreed)
3. Meetings are held during business hours
4. Meetings are chaired by an elected member; The Chairperson is chosen by the elected members when commencing their term in office and remains as is for 5-year term of the Council.
5. Agendas, minutes and any relevant documentation are issued by the Committee Administrator, in your case, Ms. Orla Barrett, Senior Executive Officer.

Terms to be Aware of

JPC – Joint Policing Committee

SPC – Strategic Policy Committee

CPG – Corporate Policy Group

(Chairs of each SPC and the Chairperson of the Council make up this committee, set the agenda for each Council Meeting and approve finally any policies/plans to be brought before the full Council)

MRDATF – Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force

LDAS – Laois Domestic Abuse Service

LCDC – Local Community Development Committee

LECP – Local Economic and Community Plan

CDP – County Development Plan

Your Role as a PPN Representative

Listen!

It is important to go into such committee meetings with a willingness to listen to (a) the business being discussed and (b) the points being made by all parties at the table. It is especially important to do this at your first few meetings, acknowledging that it will take a while for you to get to know the business of the SPC and the contributions being made by the other members. Listening will provide you with a balanced insight into what's important and what isn't important, when feeding back to the Secretariat and/or the Plenary of groups.

Discuss!

Don't be afraid to enter discussions. Having listened to everyone's opinion, give yours. You have been selected to be a member of this committee because of your interest in the subject matter and because you are a member of the community in which we all live and are affected by policies or plans being made, so be assured that you can participate fully and knowledgeably in the debate.

Represent!

In participating in this committee, remember why you were elected by your fellow PPN members - to represent them in every way possible. You are not just there to voice your own views, the views of a particular group(s) you are a part of, or the local area in which you live, you are there to represent the views of your PPN pillar grouping. This is the most important part of the PPN Framework – that the community sector raises the vital issues at county level with ***one collective voice***.

Feed back!

It is your responsibility to feed back to your peers within the PPN Framework. Feedback is a two-way street, i.e., (a) issues to be raised by you at your particular committee and (b) feedback from the business of the meeting to your pillar group or linkage group, whichever is appropriate.

The PPN Secretariat will assist and advise with the process of providing feedback to the PPN by putting a process in place in due course. In the meantime, allow yourself the time to get acquainted with your new position and its processes, and most importantly, keep in touch with members of the Secretariat in relation to any matters raised at your committee.