



LAOIS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

REPRESENTATIVE'S CHARTER

(A guide to being a PPN Representative)

Role, Rights & Responsibilities of a PPN Representative

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BACKGROUND

The aim of this Representatives Charter is to provide guidelines on how to fulfil the PPN Representative role effectively. It should be used in conjunction with the PPN Members Handbook and the PPN Policies Document.

Role of the PPN

Laois PPN ensures that local communities have a say in how Laois County Council works. It is the recognised link through which the Laois County Council connects with the *Community/Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental* sectors in Laois. A primary function of Laois PPN is to make possible the representation of these sectors on the decision-making committees of Laois County Council and on other agency committees across the County. In order to accomplish this objective, the PPN elects representatives from its membership to sit on these committees and to represent the views of Laois PPN in a unified and responsible manner.

Linkage Groups

PPN representatives are accountable to the wider membership via sub-groups of the PPN called “Linkage Groups”. These are sub-groups of the PPN which correspond to the services and programmes delivered by Laois County Council and other agencies in the County. Linkage Groups bring together PPN members that have either a responsibility or an interest in these services/programmes.

Linkage Groups elect representatives from amongst their membership to sit on Council committees and other fora on behalf of the PPN. Through these representatives, the PPN participates in shaping policies that affect Laois communities, and is kept informed of developments within Laois County Council.

PPN REPRESENTATIVES

Election

Representatives are elected for a fixed term to represent the issues of PPN members on a particular Committee or Board. Their election takes place according to procedures established by the Secretariat and approved by the Plenary. Representatives take their direction from Linkage Groups and feed back to Linkage Groups in a manner which ensures openness and accountability.

Role of Representatives

Linkage Group representatives play a pivotal role in ensuring that the PPN achieves its overall purpose. The role of a PPN representative is to:

- Represent the PPN at Committee/Board meetings and bring issues of relevance from PPN Linkage Groups to these meetings.
- Work collaboratively with Linkage Group members to identify issues, undertake research, and develop policy proposals.
- Work strategically with all members of Committees/Board to further the objectives of the PPN.
- Communicate regularly with the Linkage Group on matters of relevance to it.

- Report back to Laois PPN on template provided on matters arising from meetings.
Note: Reps payment of expenses will be linked to the return of report.

Responsibilities of Linkage Group Representatives

Council committees are an integral part of Local Government and are established as part of the local democratic process. Those who undertake to represent the PPN on these important structures have responsibilities in relation to the fulfilment of their roles. These responsibilities include:

- Represent the consensus view of all members of the Linkage Group, rather than those of their organisation, nominating body, municipal district, or sector, setting aside personal, business or political interests.
- Prepare thoroughly for, attend regularly and participate fully in meetings of the Linkage Group, Board, Committee or Sub-Group, as appropriate.
- Take direction from the Linkage Group on policy issues and use the Linkage Group as the reference group on the issues arising at Committee / Board meetings.
- Communicate regularly, and as agreed, with the Linkage Group on matters of interest relating to the work of the relevant Committee or Board. In particular, provide feedback to Linkage Group members after Committee / Board meetings using the attached Representative Reporting Template.
- Assume the role of Linkage Group Facilitator, when appropriate. This role rotates on a quarterly basis between Linkage Group Representatives and involves organising meetings, acting as a contact point and dealing with issues as they arise.
- Be able to use basic electronic communications effectively (i.e. email, social media and internet browsing) in order to facilitate regular interaction with the Linkage Group.
- Work in an open, honest and collaborative manner with all Linkage Group members and other stakeholders to identify issues, undertake research, develop policy proposals and so on, while building positive relationships and respecting the diversity of views expressed.
- Attend relevant training or networking events organised by PPN, Council or other relevant fora.
- Portray the PPN and the Linkage Group in a positive and constructive way

Rights of the Representative

All Representatives of the PPN have rights in relation to how they are supported in the fulfilment of their role, as follows:

- Receive active engagement from all Linkage Group members, including timely responses to issues.
- Be heard and respected at both the Linkage Group and Board or Committee, with an appreciation that Representatives act in a voluntary capacity.
- Be supported by both Linkage Group and Committee / Board members, understanding that PPN is a new and evolving process.
- Have access to an agreed outcome statement from Committee / Board meetings, in order to circulate it to Linkage Group members promptly.
- Receive relevant induction and training to enable them to participate effectively on Committees / Boards (see also Laois PPN Induction Policy)

- Receive expenses for attending Committee / Board meetings including any subgroups and relevant training (see also Laois PPN Expenses Policy).
- Where possible, have meetings held at a time and location which facilitates them
- Receive an induction pack for the Committee / Board on taking up their appointment, to include:
 - Terms of reference
 - Standing orders /procedures
 - Meeting schedules, locations and times
 - Contact details for all Committees / Board members
 - Access to technical support where required

- Receive timely notice of Committee / Board meetings (at least two weeks in advance, and more if possible) including:
 - Dates and venues
 - Agenda
 - Documents to be read

- Have meetings conducted in a way that facilitates participation, open discussion and transparent decision making

CODE OF CONDUCT

Representatives are required to comply with the PPN Code of Conduct. All Representatives are expected to act in accordance with the tenets of the PPN. Any failure to do so may result in the member being asked to step down from their role, under the terms of the PPN Exit Policy

AGREEMENT SHEET

I, _____ as a representative of Laois Public Participation Network agree to abide by the terms of the Public Participation Network Representative Charter at all times in my role/s.

Signed :- _____ Dated :- _____

Agreement received and verified by Laois PPN Secretariat

Signed:- _____ Dated :- _____

Members of Laois PPN Secretariat on behalf of Laois Public Participation Network

Borris in Ossary / Mountmellick

- Mick Dowling (Area Secretariat)
- PJ Campbell (Community/Voluntary)
- Vacant (Environment)
- Paddy Buggy (Social Inclusion)

Graigegullen / Portlaoise

- Michael J Cobbe (Area Secretariat)
- Judy Ryan (Community/Voluntary)
- Aidan Mulally (Environment)
- Donal O'Shea (Social Inclusion)

Portlaoise

- Brian Maher (Area Secretariat)
- Robbie Quinn (Community/Voluntary)
- Eugene O'Brien (Environment)
- Bolaji Adeyanju (Social Inclusion)

Public Participation Coordinator

Suzanne O'Connor