

Sligo Public Participation Network : A 2019 Summary

Sligo had a busy finish to 2019 with our AGM on 27th November and Meet and Greet Event on 12th December. The AGM saw 130 people come together to vote in our elections, hear about our work across 2019 and tell us what they wanted us to focus on in 2020. Attendees also heard from PPN member group Sligo Global Kitchen about their experience of the community sector in Sligo and Sligo County Council who outlined their grants programme for 2020.

Our Meet and Greet Event in City Hall was hosted as a thank you to all the PPN representatives who give up their time and put in huge effort to ensure that the voice of the Sligo community sector is represented at the decision making table. The event gave our representatives the chance to network and share ideas as well as to meet committee members from other sectors who they will be working alongside.

PPN highlights for 2019 include;

Activities

- Developing partnerships with organisations such as Sligo Intercultural Project and Comhairle ná nOg to try and ensure more diversity across the PPN
- Facilitating Hands For Life training to over 100 of our members
- Publishing a 'Guide to Plain English' for the public sector to ensure that the information reaching the community is easier to understand
- The PPN Heritage Linkage Group held a seminar early in the year outlining the key achievement of the group and exploring local archaeology and biodiversity programmes
- Supporting Sligo Steetfeast and the National Community Weekend
- Collaborating with Inclusion Ireland and the Irish Wheelchair Association to host a Disability Hustings to inform potential elected members of the key issues facing the disability sector
- Supporting our member group Tonaphubble Residents Association, in partnership with Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, to conduct a Walkability Audit of the local area to identify those aspects of the physical environment that were negatively impacting local residents and service users.

Influencing Policy

This year Sligo PPN has fed into and influenced a number of policy areas including; Sligo Disability Implementation Plan, Sligo Strategic Policy Committee Scheme (resulting in the opportunity for environment representatives to sit on all committees with a recognition that the environment crosses all areas of Local Authority work), Sligo Climate Adaptation Plan and the National Volunteering Strategy.

Community Issues

A key objective of Sligo PPN is to use the network to raise issues affecting the community sector in the County. Sligo was the first PPN in the country to join the Alliance for Insurance Reform and undertook a national survey to assess the impact of rising insurance premiums on the community and voluntary sector. This research received national media coverage and has been used by the Alliance to lobby for reform.

Something the PPN consistently hears about from our members are the issues of funding applications and the new Charities Governance Code. Our members identify that the requirements and demands in making applications and in complying to governance regulation are taking up all the time of committee volunteers and are impacting on the time that can actually be spent on programme and service delivery. Early this year, Sligo PPN, in partnership with Sligo County Council, Sligo Volunteer Centre, Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB and Sligo Leader partnership hosted the county's first Get Funding Ready event, bringing together all key funders in the county in one room and providing community groups with a timetable of funding rounds to help them plan for making applications. Sligo PPN also pay for the national Funding Digest on behalf of the community sector and are currently near production of a funding best practise guide to support groups in their applications. From a governance perspective we have supported Sligo Volunteer Centre in a webinar series based on the 6 principles of the Governance Code.

Environmental Planning

Climate Change is a key issue for the Environment College of the PPN and in 2019 they undertook a series of initiatives to both raise the profile and affect change. Some of their activities include;

- The Creation of a Green Festivals Checklist to support festival and event planners to be more environmentally friendly and to be used by Sligo County Council to inform the assessment of funding applications in this category.
- Undertaking a Sligo Climate Survey
- Working with Sligo Chamber of Commerce and SCC Environment Section to create a Green Business Award to be part of the official Sligo Chamber Business Awards
- Supporting the working group of GLAN Sligo
- Hosting the successful Climate Change Seminar in October featuring Professor John Sweeney

Priorities for 2020

The Sligo PPN workplan is strongly based on directives from the local community and we want to try and ensure that we are addressing the issues of key concern to the sector. Some of the priorities the PPN has been asked to look at include;

- training and support for community groups applying for funding,
- help with the translation and implementation of the New Charity Governance Code
- Supporting networking and skill sharing across our member organisations

We will also be undertaking an extensive Health and Wellbeing consultation as part of a national initiative by the Department of Rural and Community Development. The intention is to check back in with the community with regard to the key things impacting their health, to find out what are the positives aspects of life in Sligo and what are the aspects causing stress or concern. The information from these consultations will help to inform the PPN workplan, will support us in the development of a Wellbeing vision for the PPN which will help guide your community representatives as they work on your behalf and will also be written up and distributed back to all member groups so that they can use this local evidence of need to help with writing up funding applications. We will also make all the data sets available to key organisations in the county, including Sligo County Council to help inform future policy, planning and strategy development.

Meet your new representatives

One of the key processes to happen in 2019 was the election of new representatives to key committees in the county. The role of these representatives is to work on behalf of their local community, ensuring community input is heard at the decision making table and being able to report back to the community with key areas of information on programme and policy development.

All these new representatives will be given a full training and induction early next year to ensure they can act to the best of their ability on behalf of the people they represent. More details on the Representatives can be found at

<http://www.sligoppn.com/2019-elections/>

- **Sligo Sport & Recreation Partnership Board** : Joe McDonagh, Mairead Connolly and Geraldine Delorey
- **Sligo Independent Evaluation Committee** : Sharon Boles
- **Sligo Public Arts Steering Committee** : Orna McSweeney
- **Sligo Joint Policing Committee**: Gail McGibbon, Vanessa Clarke, Eugene McCaffrey, David Tuffy, Sheila Leydon, Michael Collins
- **Sligo Strategic Policy Committees** : SPC1 Housing and Corporate: Alan McMenamin, Pippa Black / SPC2 Environment and Infrastructure: Joan Swift, Sharon Eastwood / SPC3 Planning, Community & Economic

Development, Arts & Culture: Corena Ward, Sanja Ivandic, Suzanne Tynan / SPC4 Climate Change: Yvonne Lang, Lisa Moore