

Sligo Public Participation Network

Secretariat Meeting

19 May 2020, SCC Virtual Meeting Room at 10am



Present:

Mr Michael Kirby (Chair)	Environment College
Mr Gerry O'Connor	Community & Voluntary College
Mr Patrick Benson	Social Inclusion College
Ms Ann Donegan	Social Inclusion College

Absent:

Mr Michael Bell	Environment College
Ms Lisa Moore	Borough District of Sligo MD
Mr Paul Tolan	Sligo Drumcliff MD
Ms Ann Marie Snee	Community & Voluntary College
Mr David Tuffy	Ballymote - Tubbercurry MD

In Attendance:

Ms Sarah Wetherald	Sligo PPN
Ms Emer McGrath	Sligo County Council

1. Welcome

All members of the Secretariat welcomed by the Chair Michael Kirby.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Gerry O'Connor proposed the minutes, seconded by Pat Benson.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes

No matters arising.

4. Correspondence (Dept Circulars)- Annual Report

- Secretariat advised that the National PPN Conference which was due to take place in October 2020 is now cancelled and is likely to be rescheduled to 2021.
- The 2019 PPN Annual Report was submitted Wednesday 20/05/2020 and requires a name of one member of the Secretariat in order to submit. Ann Donegan confirmed she was happy for her name to be used.

5. Covid 19- Update on PPN Activities

- Sarah advised that the PPN Team have been very busy in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This includes the mapping project on PPN website and working as part of Sligo County Council Community Response Forum. PPN are also working with IT Sligo on a National Research Piece looking at the cost to the state if the community sector had not stepped up in response to the current pandemic. IT Sligo launched this survey on 18/05/2020. PPN will also be speaking with community groups to see the levels of support they need for starting up. Ideally a programme will be put in place to make starting up safe and this will be done alongside ETB, Sligo County Council, Sligo Leader

& Sligo Volunteer Centre. PPN also arranged an insurance policy which will provide cover for all registered community response groups until the end of the year.

- GOC provided an update on the Community Response Forum and that Sligo County Council now have a page dedicated to Wellness on the council website and this page will continue to be updated on a regular basis. He also advised SCC are providing food parcels but are running out of food due to demand. Grants are also available through the Department & SICAP.
- MK suggested we should be feeding back to government what communities want post covid and looking at what we do next. It is important that lessons learned are captured. This needs to be linked in with Health & Wellbeing. Submission put in to SCC by MK on behalf of the PPN reps for request for action with regard to the concept of Shared Spaces and Safer Streets.
- PB raised the point that Ireland would not have got through this time without the network of volunteers in the country and recognition needs to be given.
- Text Alert costs and the gaps in communication were discussed, especially in relation to the recent exercise leaflets that were distributed by SSRP. We need to figure out the best way to communicate these supports.

6. Update on Outstanding Actions

- Key activities such as AGM, Awards Event, Environment Seminar, Communications Conference and Inclusion Training are now likely not to happen next year and a request for carryover of budget may be required. To date the Department has not given any alternative direction with regard to budget spends so we are working on the presumption now that all budget must be spent within this year.
- Sligo Covid-19 Positivity Campaign Proposal put to Secretariat and it was agreed that Sarah would forward on more details of this proposal from One Step Closer and then the decision will be made if we can proceed with the project.
- Suggestions from Secretariat on how to use unallocated budget include, online seminars, online tutorials, publication piece on the contribution from PPN in response to Covid-19 on a national level, promotion from politicians, publicity campaign by print media thanking individual group for standing up and try and build up as strong as possible a picture of what our local community response groups have done. Possibly could do needs analysis for grants and co-ordinating of groups needs to be looked at.

7. Ideas for Discussion & Input from Secretariat

- GOC asked if some of the PPN budget could be used to provide food parcels that are going out every day, especially for families who may not be able to afford food or old people that are cocooning. Deas Schools who would have received food to the school are now delivering hot meals to houses instead. It was agreed that that this would be very difficult to manage.
- MK suggested we put a map in the local paper as a thank you and list all the groups who volunteered and a radio feature. Agreement that this would be done.

8. Resource & Support Worker Role

- Resource Worker Contract- Since Covid 19 Sarah has been working 5 days a week and SCC agreed payment for the extra 2 days. This has now been reduced back to 3 days a week. The understanding is that HR are refusing to change the terms of the contract, despite approaches regarding same. If a change in contract was agreed, Sarah would have to step down from the role, the job must be publicly advertised and Sarah would have to take her chance in applying.

- Support Worker Contract- Emer contract was due to expire in May but was extended until 15th July 2020. There is a permanent clerical officer currently on a career break and she is due back in July and that will dictate whether Emer's contract will be extended or not. This member of staff must let HR know by the 15 June if they intend on returning or not. There are also two other member of staff due to return in September from career breaks. The Secretariat letter was sent in to Dorothy Clarke and they have reviewed same but feedback is that HR have their internal process which must be followed.
- Members asked for clarification on where the Support Worker Salary comes from. Outlined €25k from DRCD (ie the PPN's funds) and €5k from SCC. Serious concern that a continued rollover of staff undermines the PPNs ability to develop and grow and is totally contradictory to the User Guide and what the PPNs were set out to achieve. Secretariat asked for 2 key details;
 - **The number of staff who have gone through the PPN team since it began**
 - **Salary breakdown and proportion paid by PPN**
- It was agreed that a one on one meeting needs to happen with HR to discuss this current position.

9. Budget- Update & Carryover Request

- First tranche payment received from the Department in the amount of €55700. 60k has been allocated to programme budget. If the Department decide that they are not giving us the full remainder of the funding due to the fact that Sarah works 3 days, the worst case scenario of an unallocated budget is €15000 and the best case is €35000 if full funding is received.
- It was agreed that there will be a special Covid Award at the awards event and the intention is a celebration of the community and IT Sligo have agreed to let us use Knocknarea Arena to hold the event. This will use a bulk of the budget but it all depends on how we can pay for it if it can't take place in 2020.
- Text Alert issues raised and Monaghan County Council are currently paying for all text alerts in the county for the next three years until they have the app up and working. Countywide text alert along with the community response helpline could be beneficial. Would SCC consider looking at this? Sarah advised that it was to be brought to JPC by PPN rep Michael Collins.

10. AOB

- Clarified that Sarah is on the Community Response Forum to represent PPN and not as SCC Staff and will forward a copy of the minutes of each meeting to the Secretariat Members. This will be done on a weekly basis as there is no public update from meetings.
- GOC to make a national approach for rollover of budget.
- Submission for Safer Spaces and Safer Streets is to be submitted directly to Dorothy Clarke and not via Sarah Wetherald. Joan Swift raised issues of road safety and issues surrounding queuing outside of shops, social distancing and the increase of people now cycling.
Michael Kirby to ask for this to be an agenda item at the next forum meeting and sign it as chairman of the Secretariat.

11. Next Meeting

The next secretariat meeting will take place in Mid June. Date to be confirmed.

Meeting Concluded: 12:24