



Longford PPN County Plenary Meeting 17th November 2021 via MS Teams

A County Plenary meeting of Longford PPN was held on the on 17th November 2021. The meeting was chaired by Tess Murphy, Secretariat member who opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Siobhán Cronogue, Development Officer, Longford PPN presented an update on the highlights of the PPN Workplan for 2021 as follows:

In Quarter 1 :

- The PPN has continued its response to Covid 19 through representation on the Community Response Forum.
- The PPN joined forces with Longford ICA Guild in a campaign to stay connected with those living alone during the Covid19 restrictions and this campaign continued until the end of February 2021.
- In February the PPN, in collaboration with Longford Women's Link, Bridgeways Family Resource Centre and Lus na Greine established a Minority Women's Group for the purposes of integrating and establishing social connections among migrant women from various communities. The women undertook a course. Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the course have now been completed by the 26 migrant women who took part in the programme. The group aims to connect with other groups in Longford via the PPN and Longford Women's Link.
- The PPN made a submission for funding to Longford County Council under the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- Siobhán reported that she was invited to make a video presentation on behalf of the PPN at the National Macra na Feirme online meeting with the aim of encouraging Macra na Feirme members to join the PPN.
- The PPN delivered three workshops online on Sustainable Development Goals, the topics covered were tied in with the PPN Community Wellbeing Statements.
- PPN Reps participated with the Dept. of Environment & Climate Change on the Climate Action Plan 2021.
- The Community Development Section of Longford County Council was successful in securing funding to support activities to encourage participation of women and people of diverse communities in the local community. Barbara Heslin, DoS, Longford County Council invited the PPN, Longford Women's Link and the SHE Campaign to collaborate on an initiative to encourage participation from women from diverse communities in the local community. A booklet was produced giving information about the various strands of local government, various decision-making committees, how to vote and how to get involved in the PPN. A short video has also been produced for the initiative. The booklet has been translated into Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese. Siobhán thanked Laura McPhillips, LCC, Michelle Maher, SHE Campaign and Tara Farrell CEO, LWL for their work on the booklet.

In Quarter 2:

- The PPN Municipal District Plenary meetings were held.
- PPN elections were held for vacancies on the PPN Secretariat, the new Pilot Local Community Safety Partnership, LCDC and the Climate Action & Planning SPC.

In Quarter 3:

- The PPN partnered with Longford FAI to pilot a soccer camp for children with autism.
- The PPN partnered with the Graduate Programme from AIT in September the aim of which was to inspire young people in second level education to learn about local and European government.
- The PPN ran Freedom of information training for members which was delivered by Ken Foxe.
- Secretariat members and Reps took part in the Dept. of Rural & Community Development Blended Learning Training with Social Justice Ireland and Waterford IT.

In Quarter 4:

- The PPN supported the launch of Longford Local Environmental Network during Climate Action week.
- The PPN supported an initiative with the community guards of An Garda Síochána titled 'Operation Blue Santa' to raise funds for local agencies providing support for children in need at Christmas. A concert was held in St. Mel's Cathedral and €6,000 was raised for the cause. A Blue Santa booklet was produced.
- The PPN ran Confidence Building Training for Reps with Confident Speak which was very successful. It is planned to run this training again in early 2022.
- The PPN hosted the Local Authority Waters Programme webinar on the Draft Water Basin Management Plan 2022-27.
- Siobhán spoke about the Secretariat and all that they do behind the scenes and named the members of the Secretariat from each pillar and MD area.
- Siobhán asked for a proposer and seconder for the newly elected Reps and Secretariat member from the recent PPN elections: Proposed Pozy Green Seconded Francesca Pawelczyk.

Tess Murphy commended the PPN for the huge amount of work undertaken in 2021. Tess introduced the next speaker, Mr. Paddy Mahon, CEO Longford LCC. Tess spoke about the extent to which LCC plays a part in our lives. She stated that the PPN Reps now have the opportunity to represent groups on various committees with LCC.

Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive Officer, Longford County Council

Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive Officer, Longford County Council spoke about the unique relationship between the PPN and Longford County Council (i.e. on the Community Forum). He stated that one of the key roles of Longford County Council is to serve, lead and represent the people of Longford and the PPN is integral to this.

He stated that the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 is a significant document in the development of Longford. He stated that it took over 2 years since the public consultation took place in Autumn 2019 to bring the County Development Plan to completion and he outlined the various stages involved in the Plan. The CDP was adopted by elected members on the 19th October 2021.

He outlined that the CDP, which is a framework for how the county will develop over the next 6 years, comprises a number of sections covering various aspects of development policy for example: -

1. Governance: The Plan takes account of Government, regional and local frameworks.
2. Make up the County i.e. population, demographics, ethnicities etc.
3. Climate Change and the impacts of climate change.
4. Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy.
5. Transport infrastructure, active travel, rail, local link etc.
6. Infrastructure, water, energy, communications (digital) etc.
7. Regeneration.
8. Placemaking – the connection between the people and the place they live in.
9. Economic Development
10. Rural economy Tourism
11. Built and cultural heritage
12. Natural environment
13. Green infrastructure.
14. Landscape character.
15. How the plan is going to be monitored. Longford County Council is required to review the CDP in 2 years' time. Organisations such as the Planning Regulator, the National Oversight and Audit Commission and the Eastern Midlands and Regional Assembly will all have a part in overseeing the progress of the Plan.
16. Development and Management Standards - 206 Development Management Standards, each of the chapters has objective policies for the county – overall there is approximately 840 objectives and 206 development management standards.

Paddy answered some questions submitted by members.

Tess thanked Paddy Mahon for his overview of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. Tess introduced Dr. Seán Healy.

Dr. Seán Healy, Chief Executive Officer, Social Justice Ireland

Dr. Seán Healy, CEO, SJI Ireland spoke about the development and where the PPNs nationally. He stated that he chaired the working group for the establishment of the PPNs in 2013. He stated that there are now 16, 000 member groups nationally. He stated that the central area of focus is in policy development within the Local Authorities and that PPNs are represented on approximately 500 boards and committees countrywide.

He stated that PPNs have done a great job in establishing networks especially during the challenging times of Covid19 when meetings had to be held remotely. He stated that this success has been recognised at a government level.

As for future proposals/suggestions he suggested the following:

- that the critical issue is that the PPN's primary focus should be on policy as it is the only group nationally to represent policy. The focus needs to be there and maintained.
- That there needs to be more resources made available to the PPN network. He is making a call in this regard to national government.
- The importance of communication going forward. He stated that there needs to be a Communication Strategy developed at national level and one at local level.
- A deepening of existing relationships with Local Authorities, organisations and agencies.

He concluded his presentation by speaking about the tremendous success of the PPNs nationally since 2014 and congratulated Longford PPN on good work done and wished the PPN good luck for the future.

Dr. Healy answered some questions submitted by members.

Tess Murphy thanked all those who attended the meeting and the meeting concluded.

A raffle was held and the winners were:

1st Prize: Bridgeways Family Resource Centre

2nd Prize: Ballymahon Tidy Towns

3rd Prize: Longford Green Earth

