

**Meeting of Secretariat - Mayo Public Participation Network (Mayo PPN)**  
**Mayo House**  
**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 at 7pm**

**Minutes**

Secretariat Convener – Maureen Timlin

**1. Welcome & apologies.**

Present: Maureen Timlin, Graham Cawdell, Annette Maughan, Kieran Joyce, Daragh Owens, Austin Francis O'Malley, R/W Mary Costello, S/W Sarah Rawlings

Apologies: Sheila Hunt, Gemma Hensey.

Others not in attendance: Bernie Finan

Convenor Maureen Timlin opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

**2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest (as per PPN constitution):** No declarations.

**3. Financial Report:**

Review and discussion of financial report. Balance of €9,277 to year end. €3.5k to be paid to consultant prior to the commencement of the development of Linkage Groups (as per tender, half of the fee) the remainder of that cost will be due in 2025. Balance less the Linkage Group tender fee is €5,777. Additional expenses expected to be incurred in 2024 include travel expenses re Secretariat member to travel to Italy for Ballina European Volunteer Capital awards. And other travel/reimbursement expenses.

The PPN National Conference took place in the Strand Hotel, Limerick on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The two-day conference, whose theme was "Collaboration for Resilient Communities", brought PPN representatives together to discuss citizen engagement. Minister Joe O'Brien announced Budget increase for Public Participation Networks at 10-year anniversary gathering. Public Participation Networks (PPNs) are celebrating 10 years of giving local communities a voice in local government policy. Almost 21,000 community groups nationwide are members of the 31 PPNs across Ireland. Over 1200 community groups are registered with Mayo PPN.

Secretariat members welcome this increase and note how it will be of benefit to PPN community groups in rolling out extra PPN training events and workshops.

**4. Minutes from Secretariat meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024:**

Austin Francis proposed, and Kieran Joyce seconded. Minutes accepted.

**5. Mayo PPN County Plenary and Information Event (3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2024):**

A discussion took place about the upcoming PPN Co Plenary and Information Event. It was noted that we have good line of speakers for the event. A minimum of 4 Secretariat members needs to be in attendance for the County Plenary. It was noted that PPN member group like to hear about funding opportunities/grants available to them and Mayo PPN endeavour to fulfil this. The PPN draft 2025 budget and workplan was circulated to the full PPN membership and included a note stating: *'if the PPN do not hear from you, Mayo PPN take it as a given that you approve the budget and workplan for 2025'*.

The PPN draft 2025 workplan and budget will seek approval at the Co Plenary meeting. Mary will do an opening welcome and give a brief PPN update. Maureen will convene the meeting and introduce the speakers.

**6. Update on Strategic Policy Committee nomination & elections.**

***\*Result of Community Futures and Mayo Sports Partnership elections***

SPC elections are completed. Reps and committees have been updated on the PPN website and included in the PPN Winter Newsletter and communicated to membership via email. It

was brought to attention of the committee that the same information has not been updated on the Mayo.ie site. Correspondence will be made with Martina Hughes in Corporate re same. Mayo Community Futures nomination process concluded with one member from each of the 4 Municipal Districts nominated. Nominees and the group seeking the reps were notified as per the PPN constitution. The respective committees were then notified.

Regarding Community Futures Committee seeking representatives. Prior to the commencement of the nomination process, a PPN rep request form is emailed to the committee seeking representatives, the rep request form seeks details and requirements as requested by the respective committee.

Following the nomination process, the representatives and the group seeking the reps were notified of the results. The PPN staff were made aware that the Community Futures management committee are unhappy with nominations received and the reps may not be accepted because nominated parties were required to already be involved in Community Futures programmes. This information was not made available on the PPN rep request form received from the Community Futures Committee.

After a discussion the Secretariat Committee decided the PPN will notify the reps via email, stating the reasons why Mayo Community Futures is rejecting the nominees. It will be on that Committee to provide us with those reasons, so they can be communicated to nominees. Nominees need to know that this was not the decision of the PPN. These notices will be sent to 3 parties: the individual deemed elected, the person who nominated them, and Mayo Community Futures Committee. There was much frustration in the group, as it was noted that it can be so difficult to get people to put themselves up for these positions, and we have one rep. deemed elected from each of the 4 MDs, as requested by Mayo Community Futures. Rejecting these nominees will likely have a negative impact on the recruitment of committee representatives in future and discouraging people from getting involved. It seems quite counter-productive to reject these nominees when the result may be no PPN reps on the Committee. It was questioned how people are supposed to get experience if they are not given the opportunity to participate in these committees.

Mayo Sports Partnership elections have concluded, and results were reviewed and signed off on by Maureen and Kieran. Denise Swanick from the Ballina Dragon Boat Club was elected by a clear margin. Winner and group who nominated her were notified and results were included in newsletter.

### **Setting up and development of PPN Linkage Groups**

#### *Tenders and finance*

As per the Secretariat Committee, Carmichael was awarded the tender for the setting up of PPN Linkage Groups. They will receive half of their fee up front and half next year.

A Secretariat sub-committee was set-up to oversee the tenders for the PPN training programmes. Maureen and Annette agreed to sit on the sub-committee and report back on the winning tenders.

### **NAG Report / Copy of Minutes to Secretariat – Daragh Owens**

Meeting is this Thursday – nothing to report.

### **AOB.**

A discussion took place around the SPC seats not filled by PPN reps, and trade union reps taking their place. Secretariat committee feel we have very low numbers already on SPCs and this further reduces PPN community reps. It was also noted that before the next SPCs is due for election (in 4 ½ years) the PPN would make a case that it vital important that all PPN seats remain and are filled.

The setting up of the new Community Safety Partnerships was discussed. It was noted that it is apparently the remit of the appointed chair to select representatives. A question arose if PPN reps would be sought to sit on the committee. No further details were available at the moment.

It was suggested to facilitate training in 2025 for social enterprise groups.

Trip to Trento Italy for European Volunteer Capital Awards – Maureen unable to travel. Daragh may attend.

Mary recently attended Mayo Says No to Racism event in Ballinrobe. Mary noted that she sits on the following Committees: Comhairle na nOg, Education Skills Working Group, LCDG Working Group, Ukrainian Response Forum, Connect Cafés, Communications & Advocacy Working group, Ballina EVC 2026, Mayo Mens Health Week.

Cathaoirleach Awards – now accepting applications. PPN was not consulted and have not been asked to be involved. We couldn't nominate a group/individual as it would be a conflict of interest. Kieran asked if the PPN could sponsor one of the award categories. Like a PPN Community Endeavour Award or a Social Enterprise Award. The group agreed the PPN should have some involvement and there should be some recognition on the role of the PPN. Kieran noted that this is a conversation that needs to be had now for next year's awards. Award ceremony will likely be in February as nominations close January 24<sup>th</sup>.

Search Engine Optimisation – Sarah has been discussing this with our website administrator at Avenir. Improving SEO is a multi-faceted process that involves key words being embedded on the website, so that our website comes up in search results. Right now, a Google search of "Mayo PPN" or "Mayo Public Participation Network" does not bring you to our site; it brings you to Mayo.ie. According to Avenir, this process used to work much better and they're not sure what's going on but will investigate further. There will be no additional charges incurred for this work.

In January, we will likely need to start recruiting for Secretariat members. It was agreed by the group that the current makeup (2 reps from each MD and 2 reps from each Pillar totalling 14 members) should remain. Kathy Rowland and Joe O'Grady have resigned their seats. Clara Caulfield was effectively deemed to have resigned her seat as she has not attended any meetings this year, has not offered apologies, and has not responded to attempts at contact. It was noted that Bernie Finan has not attended the last few Secretariat meetings.

It was agreed to hold the Secretariat Christmas Party and networking event on Tuesday December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## **7. Next meeting: Date TBD**