

Cavan PPN Representatives Charter

Preamble: A Representatives Charter is a document outlining the rights and responsibilities of representatives of the Public Participation Network in the developed structures of said organization in line with supporting documents such as The Local Government Act 2014 and the most recent PPN User Guide. The Representatives Charter was developed by the Secretariat of CavanPPN in 2015 and adopted at Plenary. It may be necessary to review and edit this document as the need arises in accordance with the User Guide.

Introduction: The model for participative democracy is a much needed one in Irish society. The motivations and goals in establishing Public Participation Networks are extremely valid in complimenting the representative democracy role of politics with the community based participation model for a fuller and more informed society in development of its policies and plans. As such, representatives of the PPNs are essential to this process and this charter a keystone in understanding the role of these representatives. Here you will find a clear roadmap to achieving the required participative democracy we need in Irish society in the 21st century, a democracy which opens up the shaping of policy and plans to the people of our communities and with it, the formation of true community led local development and a partnership approach to growing our local societies.

Jerry Fitzpatrick, Chairman. 2015.

Definitions:

Committee – All committees, boards, steering groups or other structures of representation.

Linkage Group – The 'clinic' whereby representatives may engage directly with the public in an informed and structured manner and feedback material for discussion and decision by them.

Thematic Network – Network of representatives from the Linkage Groups who meet to discuss and liaise with one another and the Secretariat for easy flow of communication and consultation.

Secretariat – Elected community representatives to support the PPN, 2 from each Municipal District and 2 from each Sector (Environment, Social Inclusion & Community/Voluntary)

Plenary – The gathering of all community groups registered with their PPN and the ultimate mandating body of any PPN.

Target Representative Body: Any agency/body which has requested and is fulfilling its community representation via CavanPPN.

SPC – Strategic Policy Committee, Local Authority structures to develop and implement policy under particular headings.

Linkage Groups

A Linkage Group is an open committee created from among the member organisations of CavanPPN on a topic of relevance to the community, anchored to a particular representative role within the PPNs remit. This is open to ALL members of CavanPPN. It is the aim of CavanPPN to have a Linkage Group for each representation fulfilled, initially established by the Resource Worker and Representative and then managed by the Representative with logistical support from the Resource Worker thereafter.

Role of the Linkage Group:

- Elect representatives for their target representative body.

- Act as a 'clinic' to discuss, debate and support the representative with material going forward.
- To support the representative in their work on the target representative body.
- Agree a method of communication between the Linkage Group members.
- In collaboration with the Secretariat to replace representatives not fulfilling the charter.
- To liaise with CavanPPN to ensure full report backs to Linkage, Secretariat and Plenary bodies on their meetings with target representative body.
- Choose one member to report to the Thematic Network on a regular basis.
- Work together in a sense of partnership to reach realistic goals and put forward sensible policy to target representative body while respecting the support and abilities of their representative to field these points.

Rights of the Linkage Group:

- To receive regular information from their representative, after each meeting.
- To meet at least twice per year once established, preferably meeting each time a representation is made to discuss and decide on matters for the following representative meeting.
- Have issues brought forward by the representative.
- Be open to ALL members of CavanPPN in an inclusive and open manner.
- Be engaged in a manner of communication mutually agreed by members of that Linkage Group (e.g. face to face, skype, whatsapp, facebook messenger, email, conference calls etc.) once the Linkage Group is established by meetings.

Representatives

A representative is a person elected for a fixed term to represent CavanPPN on a particular committee. Representatives are elected in accordance with CavanPPNs electoral policy once the representative body requests that representative, citing target representation if required (e.g. Environment & Planning SPC seeks representative from Environment Linkage Group). It is the duty of the target representative body to manage and outline representation within their own body. CavanPPN merely fulfills the requested representation.

Role of the Representative:

- Attend meetings they are allocated to on the target representative body.
- Feed back to their Linkage Group and take feedback from their Linkage Group for a 2-way process of communication.
- Work collaboratively with the Linkage Group to ensure fuller representation and not simply their own group's interests/agenda.
- Manage the communication of the Linkage Groups once established in a proactive manner and respectful of data protection and management of the members of the Linkage Group.
- Report to/Attend Thematic Network Meetings to liaise with other representatives and the PPN Secretariat in a short, clear and concise manner.
- Participate in relevant training/workshops organized by CavanPPN and to feedback at Plenary events.
- Be honest and open in dealings with all stakeholders and build positive relations with other committee and Linkage Group members for the benefit of County Cavan as a whole.

Rights of the Representative:

- Have active engagement from their Linkage Group.
- Be heard and respected at Linkage Group, target representative body and thematic network.
- Be supported by CavanPPN in the completion of their responsibilities, including logistical and upskilling support in the form of resources and training made available.
- Receive expenses for attending meetings, if not from the target representative body then from CavanPPN.
- To be supported in the establishment of their Linkage Group by hosted meetings by CavanPPN to initialize the process communication prior to empowering organizational ownership of the Linkage Group to better facilitate representative communications and development.

Secretariat

The Secretariat is an essential element of the PPN process and is made up of 2 representatives per geographic area of the county and 2 representatives per sectoral interest of the county:

- 2x Cavan/Belturbet Municipal District
- 2x Ballyjamesduff Municipal District
- 2x Bailieborough/Cootehill Municipal District
- 2x Environment Sector
- 2x Social Inclusion Sector
- 2x Community/Voluntary Sector

Role of the Secretariat:

- Uphold the User Guide and work toward making CavanPPN a model of participative democracy as per the most recent draft of the User Guide.
- Develop an annual Workplan and work to fulfill that Workplan as per key actors linked to items of the plan.
- Support the work of the Resource Worker in developing and providing support to CavanPPN.
- Liaise with the Thematic Network to enable a partnered and more informed PPN.
- Host 2 Plenaries per year and meet as a Secretariat at least 4 times per year.

Rights of the Secretariat:

- Right to be heard and develop the process of public participation in their county.
- To lead their particular Municipal District/Sector in training and development to enhance it as a community enabling body, particularly through Linkage Groups and the Plenaries.
- To have access to all necessary material and information required to undertake their work.
- To be supported by training and development to better them as community leaders.
- Be respected and respectful in their engagement with one another and others.

Thematic Network

The Thematic Network is established from among the representatives of CavanPPN to support them with peer-group meetings, training and development and to enable them to liaise with the Secretariat to increasingly empower community leadership at a local level. The Linkage Group shall be enabled to choose one representative to attend per representation made to speak on their behalf.

Role of the Thematic Network:

- liaise with the Secretariat at Secretariat meetings and co-host Plenary events.
- Identify training required to support their hosted Linkage Groups.
- Feed information to/from the Secretariat and Plenary to the Linkage Groups.
- Contribute in the development of the annual workplan and, where offered, support workplan points.

Rights of the Thematic Network

- To be fairly heard and have their views taken on board for the development of CavanPPN.
- To have access to training to fulfill their representative role.
- Be respected and respectful in their engagement with one another and others.