

Minutes of Secretariat Meeting 11.07.23

Present: Seamus McGrath, Sridevi Balan, Brid Ní Dholáin, Adrian Drought (staff), Fiachra Keogh, Jet Calders, Evija Nwaneri, Rafaela Radulescu, Fintan McCabe, Daniel Downey (staff)

Apologies: Gabriella Evans & Clare Willis.

Election of Chair: Fiachra Keogh volunteered as the new chair. He was proposed by Seamus McGrath and Seconded by Jet Calders. Rafaela was thanked for her fantastic chairing and leadership over the last year.

Minutes & Matters Arising: Minutes were adopted. Proposed by Jet Calders, Seconded by Fiachra Keogh.

Staff Report: Daniel went through the staff report, as distributed. There was a worry in regard to Daniel's TOIL as a result of extra work. Seamus, as Staff Liaison is to speak with staff about this. Monthly Work Reports are to be put on the website by a member of the communications sub-committee. There was a worry that staff are being drawn into non-PPN work which is not relevant to the community engagement which PPNs do. Members are reminded that PPNs are here for community representation and engagement but not development, that's the work of CCLD or the Council. Members noted that Finian has been on compassionate leave and voiced support for anything he may need within their capacity during this tragic time for him and his family on the loss of their son. The secretariat, in support of this tragedy proposed that a Care Pack be prepared for their staff member and delivered to him as a token of their support through this time. This was proposed by Seamus McGrath and seconded by Fiachra Keogh.

Allocation of €10k: Staff were asked to leave the room and members discussed the allocation of the extra funds from the Department. It was recognized that the DRCD has identified that this can be allocated to staff costs to meet increasing costs of living or bringing staff wages up to par with national standards but that unsurety on knowing it will be continued every year makes it difficult to give a staff increase to wages from a potentially non-repetitive fund.

Roadshow Reports: Daniel went over the findings of the Roadshow Reports and identified that these will now be dispatched to all PPN reps to raise at their committees. He did voice a disappointment in the lack of rep and secretariat attendance at these, citing that only 2 attended out of 10 secretariats and 37 reps. Membership attendance and engagement was good at the Roadshows and he recommended it for 2024.

Plenary: The Plenary is on July 25th and staff have organised venue, materials and guests. Staff asked secretariat to please make an attempt to attend on the day. Packs are in all members' emails and post.

Bus Links: Jet raised the need for a Local Link bus at Tullacmongan Resource Centre. Daniel mentioned he should raise this with the Local Link PPN rep, Breffni Clarke and gave his details to Jet.

Cavan Online Radio: Jet raised the need for the PPN to support Cavan Online Radio. There was a general discussion about this and how the PPN cannot take on onerous in-house supports for any member group and how the work asked for is well beyond the PPN remit. Staff have assisted with governance documents, outline plan and registering them with the volunteer centre but more is being asked for. Staff warned that investing a day a week would be needed to meet these needs and the PPN has already sourced a Tus worker for the radio and more would set a precedent to have to provide the same level of support for the other 350 member groups, which would be impossible and outside the work of the PPN as community engagement and not community development organization. Fiachra confirmed that he would be interested to help the radio by possibly hosting an environmental show for them.

Consultations: Staff were tasked with identifying in 2023 which consultations the PPN were dealing with as part of their remit. Daniel went over what consultations the PPN has processed so far.

AOB: The next meeting was decided to be held as part of The Secretariat Retreat and Team Building Day, a first for this Secretariat. Staff are tasked with organizing this and the date decided upon was Saturday September 30th. The chair urged secretariat members to please attend this as it will require a fund to be spent on members attending.

Daniel reported that Clare Willis has stepped back from the National Secretariat role in representing County Cavan and a new Secretariat member is needed for the position. This was tasked with allocating at the next meeting.

Two Secretariat positions are out for election to replace: Aisling Blackburn from Environment Pillar and Angela Horgan of The Community/Voluntary Pillar. Staff asked members to consider persons they feel might be good to join the team and possible put them forward.

Meeting closed.