

Cavan Public Participation Network

Summer 2023-2025 Roadshows

2023

Templeport

Arva

Shercock

2024

Dowra

Mountnugent

Kingscourt

2025

Ballyconnell

Mullagh

Cootehill

Three Years of Community Consultation Workshops On The
Needs & Solutions of Local Community Issues & Interests

Report On The Findings From Community Discussions At These.



Comhairle Contae
an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council



Líonra Rannpháirtíochta Pobail An Chabháin
Public Participation Network Cavan



Cavan
Volunteer Centre
Ionad d'Obair Dheonach an Cabhán



CAVAN
Sports Partnership
Comhpháirtíocht Spóirt an Chabháin



Introduction (Written September 2023)

Public Participation Networks were established under The Local Government Act 2014 as a means whereby non-political, non-business and non-religious community entities can have a voice at decision making tables. It is thereby a requirement that Local Authorities engage their community representation through their local PPNs, which are wholly driven by the community membership.

CavanPPN has provided a total of 37 representatives, elected from among their 350 registered community groups onto 38 representative posts on 18 separate boards, committees and organisations (see www.cavanppn.ie for more). This is the process of **ONE WAY representation**.

To facilitate these reps reporting back to you, the groups who elected them, PPNs are tasked with setting up 'Linkage Groups' to link back in to the membership. However, this has been attempted by CavanPPN in 2016 and 2021 without much engagement, mainly due to the onerousness on asking volunteers to add another requirement to their representation. We also asked reps to fill in short one page reports, but this has also not been successful.

Instead, some PPNs, such as County Clare, host Roadshows to facilitate **TWO WAY representation** where the local communities in each area are asked to come along to highlight their worries, issues and solutions to the PPN so we can report this onto your reps on the various bodies they represent you upon (see last page for a full list of these). These items discussed are collated into a report and sent onto the reps who are asked to report back to us on any progress made in highlighting your case.

In this way, we hope to create a dynamic way of '**working smarter, not harder**' to enable our reps to truly represent the community who elected them and not simply to speak with their own views and opinions on these influential boards and committees. All this is what we hope to achieve, without adding to their already generous volunteer time on top of the volunteering they do for their own community groups.

Participative democracy is a model whereby we can strengthen the democratic and social fabric of our communities, adding to representative democracy in partnership with Councilors to develop as fair and representative a locality as possible. The Local Government Act 2014 stresses this mission to uphold community voices and PPNs are the method through which we can achieve this. We just need the investment of interest and energy to make this a success.

You can find out more about PPNs at <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/b59ee9-community-network-groups/>

And about CavanPPN at www.cavanppn.ie

D. Downey The Cavan PPN Coordinator.



Cavan Public Participation Network

Summer 2023 Roadshows

Templeport **Arva** **Shercock**

Report On The Findings From Community Discussions At These.



Templeport Roadshow

8.6.23

The Templeport Roadshow was hosted in the beautiful corner of West Cavan to support the voice of The Cavan-Belturbet Municipal District. The guest speakers for the Roadshow were Jane Crudden from Peace Plus and Sandy Holland from Cavan County Local Development who gave presentations to the attending community volunteers on how their agencies can support their community work.

Items Raised By Community:

- There are iconic buildings, such as the Old Rath and an iconic hardware store, in Killeshandra, these could be the hub for a heritage village for the county, along with the beautiful lake surrounds it would boost tourism to the area.
- Sustain and develop the transport of West Cavan, particularly to support pre-school children and their parents to connect between their homes and local creches.
- Initiate means to support biodiversity and self sufficiency practices and support existing initiatives, such as those being rolled out by GIY West Cavan and Ballyconnel volunteers.
- Support Tidy Towns in the area to work on not only alternative attractions to their areas, but better ways to locally brand their areas. Training on signage and village marketing for groups would be beneficial to increase footfall.
- Take a look at the Municipal District itself, with Cavan Town's population creating an inequity of supports to the MD due to its size and importance, compared to West Cavan.
- Support a better Geopark advertising in Cavan Town to create a push for tourists and locals alike to see and be curious to visit West Cavan.
- Clarity on roles and responsibilities of those employed to support community. An easy guide on what agencies do what for the community sector. It's hard to understand what roles different partners play.
- Support networking events the PPN could host, like First Responders in Corlough setting up to meet and learn from First Responders in Kilcogy which have been there for years.
- Community Recognition Awards would be a great idea. Some PPNs do them, like in Leitrim. Could this be done to thank community volunteers for their work?
- Ancient heritage: this area of Ireland is hugely rich in ancient heritage, e.g. Crom Cruagh, yet not much done to actively promote it like tours and guides etc. e.g. Ballyheady Cairn.



Arva Roadshow

15.6.23

The Arva Roadshow was hosted, unfortunately, the same evening of a major local football match (we weren't to know until just beforehand) but a few local people bravely arrived and helped us understand the issues and solutions for the area. The guest speakers were James Masterson from LEADER and Vanda Brady of The Cavan Volunteer Centre. Both presented very engaging and interesting information sessions to the attendees and the discussions afterwards were very lively and insightful.



Items Raised By Community:

- Some local towns and villages are seen as being 'eaten up' by local property developers who are purchasing property cheaply and developing cost effective housing. Though members recognized the need for housing, they also warned of 'oversaturating localities with nothing but housing' at the cost of services and local businesses.
- Community members tasked the PPN with developing a village survey of what local people would like to see developed to make their villages more vibrant.
- On foot of this, the development of a 'village network' so fellow villages, towns, Tidy Towns etc. can meet once per year to share and display their projects and ideas.
- There was felt to be a disjointedness between the County Museum and the local town of Ballyjamesduff where a more integrated local plan to direct people going to the museum into the town could be developed.
- The scourge of drugs, both among young people and as a driver of petty crime, was raised by attendees.
- It was felt that community gardens should be invested in as local hubs to teach wellbeing and sustainability, growing courses and mental health tips.
- Public transport was seen as still lacking in some rural areas, particularly in the stretch of roads around Ballyjamesduff, more frequency between the town and Cavan was needed.
- Support Men's Sheds in smaller towns.
- Rural isolation was a major discussion point, highlighting the fears single older men and women feel in rural areas. The lack of night transport in some rural areas and inability to travel to meet one another or events to bring people together was highlighted in local villages and towns. A centralization of entertainment to larger population centres has led to a decrease in village life and rural vibrancy.
- It was recognized that councils and development agencies and the ppp have worked to highlight and mitigate these issues but funding to support these projects have been lacking at times.



Shercock Roadshow

19.6.23

The Shercock Roadshow was held on a very warm and sunny afternoon in which many community volunteers sacrificed a gorgeous summer's weather to discuss their views. The guest speakers were from Cavan County Council's Community & Enterprise Section and national community support agency, The Wheel. Presentations were very active and engaged and enthused members to open discussion and conversation about their communities.

Items Raised By Community:

- Village vibrancy, vitality and viability discussed in depth. Ireland is a nation of villages, the disintegration of village life is losing us a core culture of Ireland. Members asked if we can learn how other nations met this challenge to sustain their rural life.
- Policies are hard to understand, better plain speaking and easier access and better roadmaps of how policies get to practice are needed locally and nationally.
- Local transport in rural areas needs invested in nationally. In other nations it's easy to reach hard to reach rural areas on public transport, not so in Ireland.
- Supporting youth initiatives to take pride in their locality. Better inclusion and a sense of ownership will not only lead to young people caring for their rural areas but staying or returning to them.
- Nothing about us without us: several members asked is community and local development could be made to be more inclusive of local views. They recognized the idea of PPNs but having never heard of them before questioned the support of awareness for them locally.
- Combat dereliction and bring better awareness to communities of how to do this.
- Better walking/cycle paths in key towns to local amenities such as connecting Shercock to the local lake as a means to benefit the locality.
- Develop the local heritage elements of the area such as the linen culture that thrived here.
- Onsite compactors at recycling sites for helping people recycle more.
- Better training in what can/cannot be recycled and how to deal with unrecyclables.
- Focusing on strategies of reduction and re-use for common materials.
- Develop a handbook/guidelines on how to welcome new communities into our areas.



Cavan Public Participation Network Summer 2024 Roadshows

Dowra

Mountnugent

Kingscourt

Report On The Findings From Community Discussions At These



Dowra Roadshow

8.5.24

The Dowra Roadshow was hosted in the very far but beautiful corner of West West Cavan, well over the Cuilcagh Mountain landscapes and on the borders of Leitrim (in fact a portion of Dowra is in Leitrim). The guest speakers were the Officers at the Geopark who took time to speak about the achieved and future developments of the Geopark for the West Cavan region and how being a Geopark Community can benefit your locality.

Items Raised By Community:

- **Isolation:** The isolation of West Cavan beyond The Bellavally Gap is palatable and felt by all who live here, both as a negative in regard to loneliness and disconnectedness from larger social fabrics and positively as a beautiful embeddedness in nature and the wide open landscapes thereabouts. It also forms a distinct part of the culture of West Cavan in that they share more with North Leitrim and West Fermanagh psychologically than with the rest of Cavan.
- **Emergency Service Reaction Times:** having the main Gardai hub in Ballyconnel means that if there is bad weather over the Cuilcagh Mountain then the route to West Cavan is via Fermanagh but state services won't travel across an international border so reaction times are vastly impacted.
- **Rural Crime:** there have been a spate of robberies in the area. Locals felt this was down to the lack of deterrence combined with isolated homes, making it an easy target. They wish this to be addressed by representatives.
- **Transport:** the most highlighted and talked about point was the lack of regular and joined-up public transport links in the area. Locals felt very undermined and devalued as a result of the lack of investment in public transport in the area. They also noted that there is only 1 taxi serving the entire West Cavan area of Glangevlin-Blacklion-Dowra. Locals felt that it was impossible to have a flourishing, working or interconnected life in the area without a car.
- **Artistic/Alternative Culture:** Much was made of the flourishing creativity, natural and touristic attractions to West Cavan but insisted more needs to be done to foster investment and visits to the area beyond Cuilcagh from the rest of Cavan. This was clearly demonstrated in the eagerness for participants to engage with the Geopark Officers.



Mountnugent Roadshow 15.5.24

The Mountnugent Roadshow was hosted in the beautiful drumlin landscape of South Cavan. The community groups in this area are particularly Meitheal-orientated and eager to participate in using funding to build on an already strong community spirit in the local area. The members met on a gorgeous summer's evening and shared much tea and conversation about the needs and solutions to their community interests. The guest speaker on the evening was Dean McElroy from Cavan Sports Partnership who spoke about the amazing programs, supports and initiatives they have for communities.

Items Raised By Community:

- **Rural Crime:** the threat to local farms and communities was discussed in detail and solutions raised such as more community alert promotion and initiatives and more Garda patrols in rural isolated areas.
- **Heritage Supports:** The Mountnugent participants raised the amazing heritage and trails potential in areas in and around Lough Sheelin which also stretch into Meath's Loughcrew and Mullaghmean Forest Park. They queried if these could be looked at in a positive way for potential development.
- **Parking for Fishing:** It was noted that parking around Lough Sheelin can sometimes be overgrown or untidy and that perhaps better access provided for valuable fishing potential and tourism attraction.
- **Water Quality:** the participants mentioned the summer quality of the water in Lough Sheelin has dipped with blue-green algae being more evident and will in future affect the lake and its activities.
- **The Hall:** The attendees raised the hall itself as in need of investment and how it is regularly used but would like to see more profiling and care for the building somehow. They thanked the PPN for profiling it and for sending grant information to the local groups to apply for something.
- **Town Themes:** Mountnugent is a beautiful village that is a main artery from South Cavan into Meath and the town locals spoke about increasing the holiday themes of the village's décor. They are keen to invest in Halloween, Christmas and Easter decorations to make the town a beautiful place to pass through, but more importantly to stop.



Kingscourt Roadshow 22.5.24



The Kingscourt Roadshow was hosted in the local community hall. The participants were from the local town and surrounding areas and members of CavanPPN from this Municipal District attended also. The guest speaker was James Masterson from Cavan LEADER who gave an engaging and interesting talk on the investment opportunities into Cavan available through LEADER grants and the process of application.

Items Raised By Community:

- **Main Street Facelift:** The Kingscourt attendees raised the need for investment in the town's facades, how some buildings could do with a 'facelift' to make the town a great place to call home, to visit and to stay.
- **Trailhead Disconnect:** The participants raised the need to complete the Greenway into the town of Kingscourt itself, rather than to the bottom of the hill. They also spoke about the difficult gradient of the hill itself and how it requires a bench midway for elderly people or those in need of rest.
- **Rural Isolation:** especially of older male farmers in the countryside was raised. Solutions were to have better public transport, a wider array of local fairs/festivals or ways to encourage farmers to engage with one another through farm-related hobbies, talks or events. The Moynalty Fair was raised as one singular event where those rarely leaving their farms do so out of interest in the event.
- **Heritage:** The participants raised the wealth of heritage in East Cavan and how it's proximity to Brigid's Faughert, The Boyne Valley and local heritage sites like Loughanleagh make it an ideal centre for heritage tourism.
- **Dun na Ri:** Those in attendance wanted to praise the amazing work done over the years on the local park by volunteers, local representatives and Cavan County Council. The benefit of such an amenity has had an incredibly positive affect on all local people.
- **East Link:** Kingscourt could be made into a much better 'link' between Cavan and the east coast, promoting Irish Sea tourism with people in the West with Kingscourt as a place to stay and visit en route.

Cootehill



Ballyconnell Roadshow 22.5.25

The Ballyconnell Roadshow was held in the newly reopened Ballyconnell Community Centre and attendees were given a tour of the centre as part of their visit. The guest speaker was Tara Donoghue from The Climate Action Team in Cavan County Council who spoke on the newly established team and the investment they will be making into local communities over the coming years.



Items Raised By Community:

- **Isolation:** The isolation of West Cavan was raised and seems to be a common theme in all roadshows in the area. Members felt this was also, in a twist, part of the appeal of West Cavan for those seeking the beautiful nature and wilderness of the county.
- **Heritage:** the participants had strong feelings about the lack of heritage awareness for this area of Cavan. One cited Magh Slecht, a 3 mile radius site with over 80 pre-Christian remains and the incredible origin of the Killycluggin Stone and yet no centre, promotion or otherwise exists. In the ancient span from Dublin to Sligo of pre-Christian sites Like The Ballyheady Cairn. Cavan is a vacant gap waiting to be highlighted.
- **Town Development:** Tying in the different identities of the town has been difficult but can pay off. It was raised that the town itself needs a development officer to bring about better social cohesion and develop vehicles of engagement between different demographics to ensure smoother relations.
- **Community Resilience:** Participants from West Cavan highlighted the lack of supports during Storm Eowyn and the 23 days a local community was without electricity! They asked if the PPN might raise this at a more national level and the staff invited them to a National Action meeting on just this topic about community resilience.
- **Dereliction:** There are many old buildings dotted around the rural countryside which could be brought into use. Some participants queried if there was a method to force landowners to bring derelict sites into use.
- **Celebration:** there is a real feeling of celebrating and cherishing West Cavan and Ballyconnell itself as a gateway between Cavan Town and West Cavan and from Enniskillen and Ballinamore. By water and road, the town can be a happy centre of the west of our county.



Mullagh Roadshow 29.5.25

The Mullagh Roadshow was hosted in the brilliant Saint Killian's Heritage Centre and participants were given a brief talk on the centre and Saint Killian prior to the event. The guest speaker was Eoin McConnon from Reto-Fit Ireland as their Cavan Champion and he spoke to participants about how to get funds to better insulate their homes, community halls and other buildings for their own good and the good of the environment.

Items Raised By Community:

- **Rural Crime:** The participants highlighted that rural isolation and the potential for robberies was something of worry for the area and what strategies might work, like property marking initiatives etc.
- **The Town Speeding:** The members raised the issue of cars speeding through the village and how this might be remedied going forward. Sharper ramps might be an idea.
- **Between 2 Towns:** Some local people did mention that being close to the larger Virginia and Bailieborough can mean that Mullagh falls between them in regard to development etc.
- **Local Heritage:** Development of local heritage has been fantastic in Mullagh and members spoke about the need to continue this growth through expansion to other local sites in the area.
- **Kilconny Bog:** Using the example of Girly Bog in Meath, development of Kilconny Bog would be an excellent addition to the area. Further investment and raising awareness of this would be brilliant for the area.
- **Families:** The support of family needs and the growing populations of young families was seen as a priority for the area and would support healthier and happier families in South East Cavan.
- **Youth Activation:** Activating youth as volunteers and leaders in the local community seems to be something needed to ensure the continuation of community spirit.



Cootehill Roadshow 5.6.25

The Cootehill Roadshow was well attended by local volunteers and community group members in The Hub Muinchille on Main Street in the town. Secretariat member Sridevi Balan spoke at it and PPN staff member Finian McNamara gave an overview of the free training the PPN offers community members of the PPN. The guest speaker on the night was Brigid Boyle of Cavan Disability Network and she was interviewed about her own lived experience as a wheelchair user with an engaging Q&A session afterwards.

Items Raised By Community:

- **Isolation:** Rural isolation for older people in their homes with a lack of potential public transport and younger people in their screens with a lack of public transport was cited as an issue. The need to build initiatives to encourage youth engagement was stated as of highest priority though.
- **Community Cohesion:** The participants spoke about the need for a type of 'community council' whereby the various community groups could work together in unison and harmony for the good of the town.
- **A Town of Two Counties:** The feeling was that Cootehill is a town with both a Monaghan and Cavan identity and this should be capitalized on as a location for both counties to develop and visit.
- **Festivals:** The town has a good population and businesses and Council are very engaged in the area with a good local representative. The attendees spoke about the need for local festivals and markets to lift the town spirit and help build the Cootehill bonds and brands for all.
- **Litter:** the littering on Main Street was raised and how this might be tackled through signage etc.
- **The PPN as a Missed Opportunity:** Attendees noted that the PPN is an amazing resource of information, training and networking but also noted its only the PPN itself doing the promoting and urged other agencies, publications and organisations to help promote it as a resource for the county.
- **Local Amenity:** Bellamount Forest with the associated waterways and most especially Erica's Fairy Forest was commended and highlighted as an amazing amenity for the local area and it has certainly boosted town visitors and the feeling of local people toward pride and love of their local area.



Conclusion (Written September 2025)

CavanPPN hosts over 30 representations from its now 528 member groups on:

- *Cavan LCDC (Local Community Development Committee)*
- *Peace Plus Committee*
- *Cavan County Council SPC (Strategic Policy Cttee) for Housing, Social & Cultural matters.*
- *Cavan County Council SPC for Climate, Biodiversity & Environmental Action.*
- *Cavan County Council SPC for Transport & Infrastructure.*
- *Cavan County Council SPC for Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning.*
- *Cavan County Council SPC for Cultural Development, Irish Language & Sports.*
- *Local Link Committee.*
- *Cavan Sports Partnership.*
- *Cavan Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce.*
- *Cavan Connect For Life Committee.*
- *Cavan Heritage Forum.*
- *Healthy Cavan Initiative.*
- *National PPN Secretariat.*
- *Cavan Bridge Street Centre.*
- *Cavan Recreation Forum.*

We will be dispatching this report to all your representatives on these bodies as well as the political representatives of the county so that all democratic reps, participative and representative, can work together to help highlight and create a better and brighter County Cavan to both live in and visit. The bodies upon which these representatives sit form the heart of where the policies and strategies that drive our county are created and the place at which we can influence change.

As PPNs are the chief consultation tool for community interests laid out in The Local Government Act 2014, we hope these consultative findings can be utilized by other agencies to inform them of local community needs and to ensure that community groups are not burdened by consultation-fatigue by a 'one and done' approach as outlined by The Department of Rural and Community Development in 2025. CavanPPN is happy to provide similar such engagements in local towns and villages across our county to supplement this report going forward and has already identified the following towns for inclusion in our 2026 workplan:

Gowna, Stradone, Swanlinbar, Virginia, Redhills and Killeshadra.

A special thanks to the guest speakers from the 9 agencies who brought valuable information and engagement to local communities. To the host locations who provided wonderful service and supports. Thanks also to the local politicians who attended to hear and support the community voices at these. And finally, a heartfelt thanks to all the community volunteers who came out to speak about their work and ideas for their communities. Without you all, we would have a poorer county in Cavan and we appreciate all that you do for all our localities.

D. Downey The Cavan PPN Coordinatoor.

www.cavanppn.ie

