



# Galway County **Public Participation Network**

Líonra Rannpháirtíochta Phoiblí  
Chontae na Gaillimhe



## **A QUICK GUIDE TO YOUR LOCAL PPN**

## Contents:

What is the PPN and what does it do? .....	3
What are the aims of Galway County PPN? .....	4
Who can become a member of Galway County PPN .....	6
How is Galway County PPN relevant to my area of interest? .....	7
Why should my organisation get involved in Galway County PPN .....	11
How do members take part in Galway County PPN? .....	13
How do I influence change through Galway County PPN? .....	16
We need you .....	17
Get involved in Galway County PPN .....	18
Galway County PPN Frequently Asked Questions .....	19
Contact details for Galway County PPN .....	22

## This booklet tells you more about the Galway County PPN and how we benefit our members

### What is the PPN and what does it do?

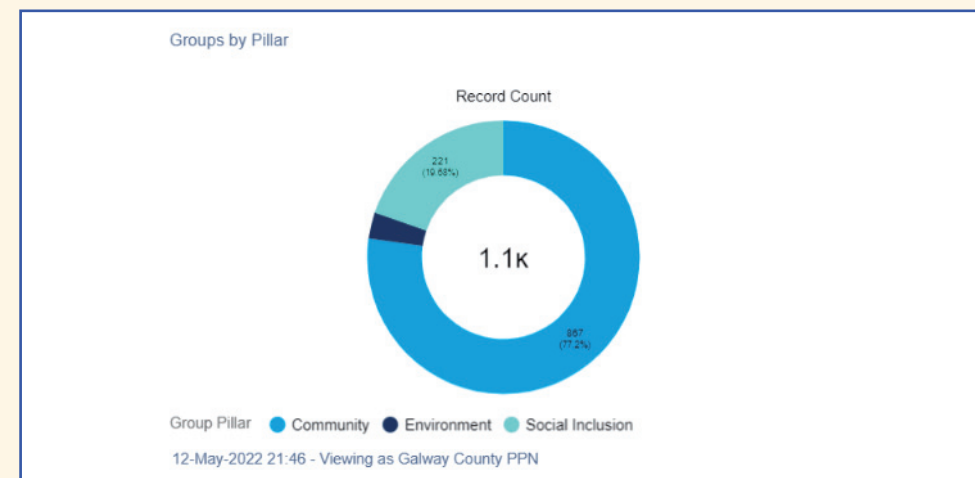
Public Participation Networks (PPN) were set up in 2014 as a result of local government reform. There is a PPN in every Local Authority, 31 in total. Galway City has its own PPN. The PPNs were set up to give a voice to groups involved in their local communities into decision-making on policies that affect them.

### Galway County Public Participation Network

Galway County Public Participation Network is a network of community & voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations, which are active in the County.

Our members are people like you who work and live in the community. Our members involvement in our activities makes us strong and effective.

The PPN has over 1000 member groups and includes community-based Groups, Clubs, Societies, Associations, Organisations and Charities



## What are the aims of Galway County PPN?

### Galway County PPN has 3 main aims:

- **REPRESENTATION:** to co-ordinate how the community in Galway is represented and make sure the voice of the community is heard
- **EDUCATION:** make our members stronger; and provide training and capacity building
- **INFORMATION:** keep our members informed about local developments and share information with the network

### **REPRESENTATION:** We help the community be represented in local decision-making.

We work with the community so its elected representatives can take part in a fair and collaborative way on a wide range of decision-making bodies. This includes:

- Galway County Council
- Local development companies
- Other local bodies

We empower community groups to influence policy makers, like those mentioned above.

PPN Representatives are elected from the PPN membership to sit on committees or boards and the representatives feedback information to the community via the PPN.

### **EDUCATION:** We make our members stronger.

We help our members build their operational capacity offering training, seminars and workshops. We support groups in having their voices heard, be able to contribute positively to the community and engage with the County Council and other local bodies. We provide a space for policy development on issues of community concern by facilitating consultations.

## What are the aims of Galway County PPN?

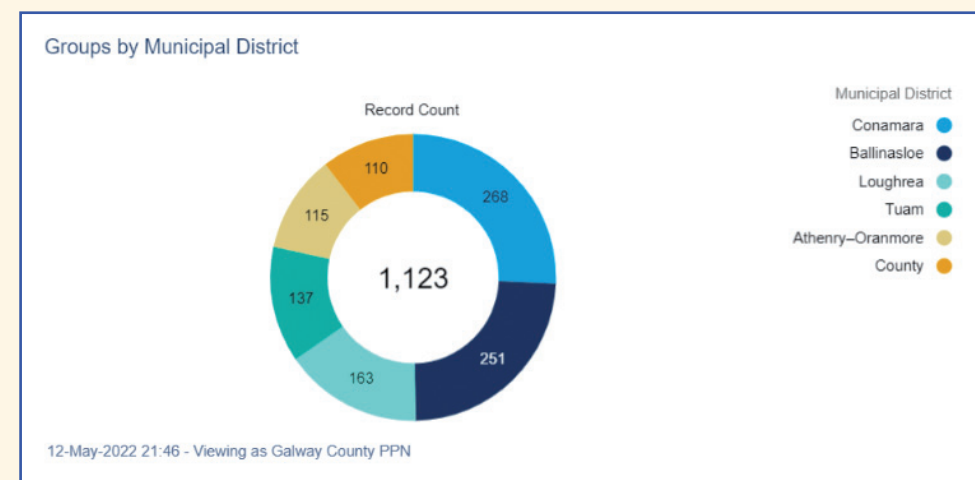
### **INFORMATION:** We keep our members informed.

We provide information to our members and we receive information on events, activities and funding schemes. We host Webinars on local funding opportunities working closely with Galway County Council.

County Galway has a vibrant community ethos and the work of the PPN's members contributes to the wellbeing of Galway County area. Our aim is to disseminate information about the good work and efforts of local groups.

### **Who are the PPN Members?**

All of our member groups (over 1060) are based in, or have a base in, the Galway County Council administrative area. This comprises the 5 Municipal Districts of Athenry, Ballinasloe, Connemara, Loughrea and Tuam.



## Who can become a member of Galway County PPN?

Any group can become a member of Galway County PPN if it satisfies the following criteria. It must:

- Be active and with a postal address in Galway County
- Be in existence for at least six months
- Be non-party political and non-sectarian
- Be volunteer led (groups can have paid staff, but they must be under voluntary control)
- Operate on a not-for profit basis
- Have at least three members
- Have a governance structure in place, like a constitution or set of rules
- Meet regularly and communicate with their members

## Your group cannot become a PPN member if it is already represented on the County Council or other decision-making bodies.

If your group is not eligible to become a full PPN member, you can apply to be an **associate member**.

Associate members of the PPN enjoy some of the same rights as regular members. However, they cannot make nominations or cast votes. Associate membership is open to groups who:

1. Do not yet meet the criteria for membership, but they are working towards them; or
2. Have representational rights on the County Council and/or other decision-making bodies through other social partnerships like trade unions and business organisations.

## How is Galway County PPN relevant to my area of interest?

Upon registering (which is free and easy) PPN Members are asked to categorise themselves into one of three pillars. They then select the pillar that most closely resembles the activity of their organisation:

**Pillar 1:** Community and Voluntary

**Pillar 2:** Social Inclusion

**Pillar 3:** Environment

Every PPN member organisation can only belong to one of these three pillars.

### Pillar 1: Community and Voluntary.

The main aim or activity of community and voluntary members is to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of their community. The community and voluntary pillar is the largest and most diverse of the three PPN pillars.

Volunteers are essential to the sustainability of community and voluntary member groups. The types of groups in this pillar may include:

- Active Citizenship
- Arts
- Community Safety
- Drama
- Emergency Services
- Festivals
- Leisure
- Residents' Associations
- Sports
- Youth

### Did you know?

We organise information events and consultations. For example, we actively consult with members on local plans such as the County Development Plan. This is a plan for how the County should grow and it is important that the community has a say in shaping the future.

## Pillar 2: Social Inclusion.

The main aim or activity of our social inclusion members is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are:

- Marginalised in society
- Living in poverty
- Living with unemployment

Social inclusion members work to develop and build sustainable communities. They aim to build communities that promote the values of equality and inclusion and that have respect for human rights.

They focus on working with marginalised voices, including but not limited to:

- Disadvantages Young People
- Ethnic Minorities
- Homeless People
- Older Adults
- Members of the Traveller Community
- People with Disabilities
- Substance Misusers
- Women

## Pillar 3: Environment.

The main aim of environment members is to protect or sustain the environment. A national environmental pillar exists (the Irish Environmental Network, IEN). This IEN works with the PPNS to decide what type of groups can be members of the environmental pillar.

Environment members work on building sustainable communities and achieving a sustainable future. Their work can include:

- Developing Organic Horticulture
- Environmental Education
- Preventing the Spread of invasive Species
- Resource Efficiency
- Protecting Wildlife
- Recycling
- Sustainable Planning

## Linkage Groups.

A Linkage Group is a collection of PPN member groups/organisations who have an interest in the work of a given external committee. Galway County PPN also refers to such groups as 'Working Groups' and 'Forums' This means linkage groups have a direct link with policy and decision makers. Galway County PPN has six linkage groups on the following topics:

Strategic Policy Committee	Typical Policy Issues
<b>1. Housing</b>	Traveller Accommodation Programme Scheme of Letting Priorities /Allocations / Accessibility / Priority Housing Construction Programme Homeless Strategy Housing Strategy
<b>2. Economic Development and Enterprise</b>	Economic Development Enterprise Support Economic elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) Revitalisation of Towns Tourism Strategy
<b>3. Planning, Environment, Agricultural &amp; Emergency Services</b>	Development Plans Local Area Plans Development Control Waste Management Litter Management Plan Burial Grounds Fire & Emergency Planning
<b>4. Transportation &amp; Infrastructure</b>	Transportation Policy Waste Management Road Safety Traffic Management Public Lighting Policy Local Improvement Schemes Water Quality Management Plan Rural Water Services

Strategic Policy Committee	Typical Policy Issues
<b>5. Community &amp; Cultural Development</b>	Library Development Policies Cultural Policy & European Capital of Culture Legacy Arts Plan An Scéim Teanga Community elements of LECP Community Grants Schemes
<b>6. Climate Change &amp; Biodiversity</b>	Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Energy & Buildings Flood Resilience Nature Based Solutions Public Awareness and Education Coastal Erosion

Other Committees Galway County PPN is represented on:

- **Local Community & Development Committee (LCDC)**
- **Joint Policing Committee (JPC)**
- **Galway Sports Partnership (GSP)**
- **Galway Rural Development**
- **Older Persons Committee**
- **Childcare Committee**
- **Healthy Ireland**
- **Western Region Drugs & Alcohol Task Force (WRDATF)**
- **Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG)**

## Why should my organisation be involved in Galway County PPN?

### Networking:

When you are a member of Galway County PPN, you can:

- Engage with similar groups from across the county
- Collaborate on projects
- Exchange skills and knowledge
- Learn from each another
- Share your experiences

### Information:

We are informed about community supports, including national funding, and we act as an information hub for our members. We:

- Publish a monthly newsletter and weekly digest
- Run a website with news, resources, funding and events sections
- Have active social media channels

### Representation:

We have more than 30 representatives on various County Council and other committees, with this number rising all the time. We also have representation on other local agency boards, committees and funding organisations. This gives members eyes, ears and a voice in local decision making.

### Training:

We organise free training, workshops and information evenings on issues that our members select. These run all year round and members are welcome to suggest ideas for training according to their needs. Previous training was run on topics such as:

- Committee and group facilitation
- County Development Plan
- Social and Digital media
- Lobbying
- Communications
- Governance
- Bookkeeping
- Fundraising



**Funding:**

We keep members up to date with the latest funding supports available to your organisation. We also run funding webinars jointly with the grant administrators in the Galway County Council.

Galway County PPN is jointly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and Galway County Council.

**Publicity:**

Our website has a directory of all our members which is accessible by the public. Members can advertise their events for free on our website and include news in our monthly newsletter. Occasionally, we highlight the work of our members and publish a short biography of one of our member groups on our website and in our newsletter.

**Consultation:**

As a member, you can take part in and be consulted on issues, strategies and programmes that are relevant to you and your group. Past consultations and submissions we have conducted include:

- The Climate Action Plan
- The County Development Plan
- Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Local Regeneration Schemes
- National Action Plan Against Racism
- And other consultations that are advertised from time to time

**How do members take part in Galway County PPN?****The Structure of the PPN is made up of:**

- PPN Secretariat
- PPN Representatives
- PPN Linkage Groups
- PPN Plenary/Members
- PPN Workers

**Our Secretariat oversees Galway County PPN:**

The Secretariat is the steering group of the PPN and is made up of 11 members.

They are elected by the PPN members from their local regions (Municipal Districts or 'MDs') or pillar group (electoral colleges). The Secretariat is made up of the following representatives:

- 1 Rep from Ballinasloe MD
- 1 Rep from Connemara MD
- 1 Rep from Loughrea MD
- 1 Rep from Oranmore/Athenry MD
- 1 Rep from Tuam MD
- 2 x Reps from the Community & Voluntary Groups Electoral College
- 2x Reps from the Social Inclusion Electoral College
- 2 x Reps from the Environmental Electoral College

The Secretariat meets every 6 weeks and is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day running of the PPN. They manage the staff, budget and operations, and report back to the plenary meeting. Members serve a term of 5 years on the Secretariat and are nominated by a member group. We strive to operate a 'flat structure' and have a rotating chair/facilitator.

### PPN Representatives:

PPN Representatives (or PPN Reps) are PPN members who have been elected by a Linkage Group to represent the PPN on a committee, board, or advisory group.

PPN Reps can submit motions, agenda items, highlight issues and raise questions on behalf of the Linkage Group at broader meetings. The PPN Rep reports to and from the Linkage Group that elects them.

The role of the representative is to:

- Listen
- Discuss
- Represent
- Give Feedback

### Our Linkage Groups support our PPN Reps.

Linkage Groups are subgroups of the PPN. PPN members can get involved in any of our Linkage Groups. Each Linkage Group works with their elected PPN Representative to highlight community issues and influence relevant policy. For more information on Linkage Groups, see our leaflet on 'LINKAGE GROUPS explained' are available.

### We hold Plenary meetings which are open to all our members.

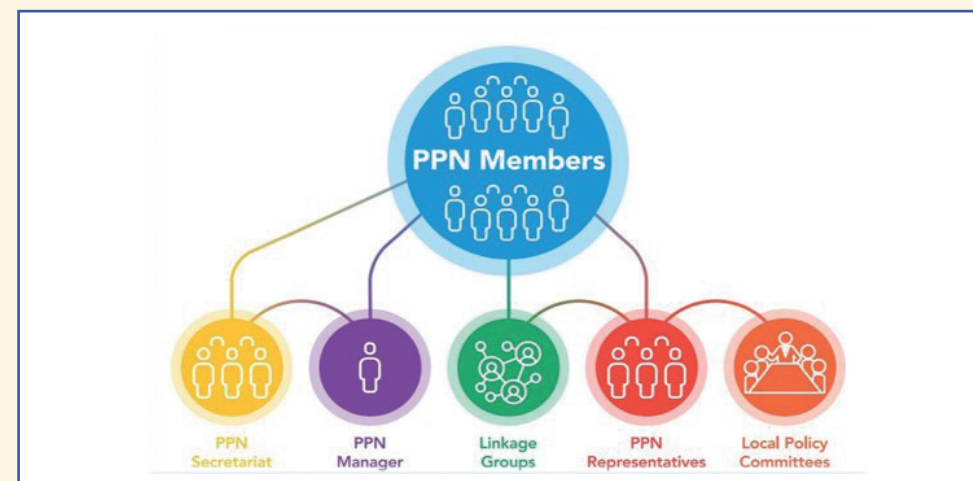
A gathering of our members is called a Plenary. We hold Plenary meetings at a County level once a year. They are open meetings for all our members. At our Plenary meetings, our members formally approve the Workplan for the year, formally appoint newly elected representatives and ratify any decisions made by the Secretariat.

Each PPN member organisation has one vote at the Plenary meeting. At the Plenary meetings, PPN members can raise local issues at a county level for discussion.

### PPN Workers.

Galway County PPN is supported by PPN Workers. They coordinate and develop the network under the direction of the Secretariat. Along with the Plenary, the workers carry out duties and tasks on behalf of the PPN following the PPN Workplan that has been agreed upon.

The Workers are employed by Galway County Council who act as the hosting organisation i.e., they provide they structure and office space through which the PPN operates. The PPN is, however, independent of the Local Authority in the performance of its role and the County Council cannot impact on or influence the operation of the PPN. We work in tandem with the County Council in the administration of various Council programs for the benefit of our members.





## How do I influence change through Galway County PPN?

- Do you an idea to improve Galway County or a community issue you want to highlight?
- Join the Linkage Groups that you are interested in.
- Attend your Linkage Group meetings and discuss ideas, issues and opinions.
- Elect representatives from your Linkage Group (this could be you).
- Your elected Galway County PPN representatives now have a formal link with the Council and other decision-making bodies. They can raise motions and ask questions on behalf of their Linkage Group.
- Your ideas will inform local policy and influence decisions.
- The representatives fill out PPN reports after each meeting they attend. They feed back to you at your next linkage group meeting.

## We need you!

### We are at our best when you, our members:

- Attend meetings
- Raise issues
- Give feedback

Our Linkage Groups can only function if we have community issues to talk about and solutions to bring to decision makers. Our PPN Reps need your local knowledge and expertise to fully represent your concerns.

You can submit your issues on our website or contact the reps. You can also submit your news on our website too: <https://www.galwaycountyppn.ie/news/submit-news/>

Your active membership will help make the PPN for the Galway County area strong and representative!

## Get involved in Galway County PPN today.

### Principles and Values of Galway County PPN:

The ethos of the PPN is very important to how it works. In doing our work we are guided by a set of **six** principles, ensuring that we are:

- **Inclusive** of all volunteer-led groups in their area, and actively look to include groups that might not otherwise be included or who might not often have their voice heard.
- **Participatory**, open, welcoming, respectful, willing to work together and supportive of each other. We encourage participation by Member Groups in all of our work and welcome feedback. We strive to communicate clearly with Member Groups using as wide a range of communication methods. We support new Member Groups, and Member Groups who might not have a lot of experience.
- **Independent** from the Local Authority and of any special interests (the PPN must account to Galway County Council in terms of budget expenditure but are independent in our work).
- **Valuing of Diversity** and recognises that the Colleges are made up of people and Member Groups that have a wide range of different views, experiences and opinions. We represent a range of views and feed these back to local government decision-making.
- **Transparent** in everything that we do. We strive to communicate openly, regularly and clearly with all Member Groups.
- **Accountable** to our Member Groups by putting good governance policies and procedures in place.

## FAQ:

### How is Galway County PPN Funded?

Galway County PPN is primarily funded by the Department for Rural and Community Development and receives co-funding the Galway County Council.

### Where is the Galway County PPN office based?

Our main office is situated in the Economic, Rural and Community Development Unit of the Galway County Council which is based in Centrepont Office Buildings in Liosban Business Park, Tuam Road.

- **Office location:** Galway County Council, Centrepont, Liosban Business Park, Liosban, Tuam Road, Galway, H91 PY8H
- **Postal address:** PPN Unit, Economic, Rural and Community Development Unit, Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 H6KX

### Can the PPN Fund my group?

The PPN does not administer funds itself. Its role is to inform groups of funding available and support the County Council in running information events on grants and schemes available.

However, you may suggest a training programme that you think may be beneficial to your and other community groups and the PPN can fund these trainings. The PPN can also, with approval from the Secretariat, fund small projects run through its Linkage Groups, i.e., the Galway Intercultural Forum, the Galway Disability Forum, etc. The PPN is always open and willing collaborate with community groups and can help support them by co-funding an event or contributing in some other way.

### Does my group need a Tax Clearance cert and how do I get one?

Tax clearance Certs can be applied for through [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)

### What insurance should my group have?

All groups should have insurance for two reasons firstly, to protect their members in the activities they undertake with the group secondly, most funding organisations require the group to have public liability insurance and indemnify that organisation against claims made against them.

**What level of knowledge do I need to attend meetings or become a rep?**

Always feel free to come along and find out more about a topic you are interested in and share any opinions you may have. You do not need to be an expert in any matter to represent the voice of your community. **Local Authorities have to be accountable to the community and not the other way round.**

**I am a Galway County PPN member but have never attended a meeting; is it too late to get involved?**

**No.** It is never too late to get involved. Come along to any of our meetings, workshops or consultation sessions. View our event calendar on our website: [www.GalwayCountyppn.ie](http://www.GalwayCountyppn.ie)

**I have an issue I want to raise through the Galway County PPN, how do I do this?**

We advise you to come along to the most relevant Linkage Group meeting where we can advise you on your issue. You can also email us or call into the Galway County PPN office or 'submit an issue' via our website: <https://www.galwaycountypn.ie/submit-issues/>

**I don't get correspondence from the Galway County PPN, what should I do?**

If you are not yet a member you can register quickly, easily and for free via our website: <https://www.galwaycountypn.ie/registration-form/> We require contact details from 2 people on each group so that you are informed of what's happening with the PPN. If you are not receiving correspondence from us consider changing the names on our mailing list to keep up to date on events and funding opportunities. If your group is already a member and you would like to be added as a contact to our database or change details please email us: [administrator@galwaycountypn.ie](mailto:administrator@galwaycountypn.ie)

**Can more than one member of my group be involved in Galway County PPN activities?**

**Yes.** Anyone who is a member of an organisation registered with the PPN can come along to any of our meetings, workshops or consultation sessions.

**Our group does not have a formal structure yet, can we become a member of the PPN?**

**Yes,** as long as your group is governed by a set of rules you can become a member. The PPN Handbook also includes a sample Constitution for your group that can act as a template for you to use. We also organise trainings for your group to help establish yourselves.

**Is there an official complaints procedure?**

**Yes,** the Galway Co PPN is currently working on implementing a complaints procedure. You can download our Complaints Form via our website: <https://www.galwaycountypn.ie/about/complaints-procedure/>

**Is the Galway County PPN governed by any other policies?**

The work of the PPN is directed by the agreed Workplan and the relationships between the PPN and the GCC is regulated by a Service Level Agreement that is adopted each year. These documents are available under the resources section of the Galway County PPN website.



**Office location:** Galway County Council, Centrepoint,  
Liosban Business Park, Liosban, Tuam Road, Galway, H91 PY8H

**Postal address:** PPN Unit, Economic,  
Rural and Community Development Unit,  
Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 H6KX

**Email:** [administrator@galwaycountypn.ie](mailto:administrator@galwaycountypn.ie)

Phone: 091 509 130

**Website:** [www.galwaycountypn.ie](http://www.galwaycountypn.ie)

**Facebook:** GalwayCountyPPN

**Twitter:** GalwayCoPPN



## Galway County Public Participation Network

---

Líonra Rannpháirtíochta Phoiblí  
Chontae na Gaillimhe







Galway County  
**Public  
Participation  
Network**

Líonra Rannpháirtíochta Phoiblí  
Chontae na Gaillimhe

**Office location:** Galway County Council, Centrepont,  
Liosban Business Park, Liosban, Tuam Road, Galway, H91 PY8H

**Postal address:** PPN Unit, Economic,  
Rural and Community Development Unit,  
Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 H6KX

**Email:** [administrator@galwaycountypn.ie](mailto:administrator@galwaycountypn.ie)

Phone: 091 509 130

**Website:** [www.galwaycountypn.ie](http://www.galwaycountypn.ie)

**Facebook:** GalwayCountyPPN

**Twitter:** GalwayCoPPN