



Carlow PPN Annual Report 2019

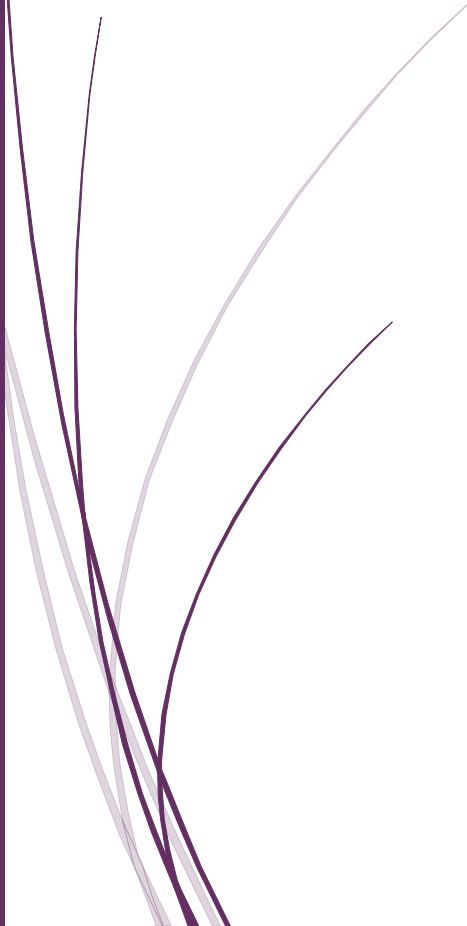


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Foreword from the Secretariat

It is with great pleasure that we present to you our 2018 Annual Report. We hope that you will find this report very informative and interesting and that it will give you a good understanding of the range of work undertaken by Carlow PPN in 2018.

For PPN's to work effectively; Government Guidelines outline three main objectives for PPN's: -

1. Facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sectors on decision making bodies
2. Strengthen the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate
3. Provide information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sector and act as a hub around which information is distributed and received

These Guidelines also specify several principles and values that PPN's are expected to operate by; they should be inclusive, participatory, independent, valuing of diversity, transparent and accountable.

To keep these objectives to the forefront of Carlow PPN while also understanding these cannot be achieved overnight, in 2018 Carlow PPN launched their Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 to ensure these objectives were written in to all the work of the PPN. Work also continued on creating a Community Consultation Toolkit to try and ensure as much participation and engagement of members of Carlow PPN in all plans for the County of Carlow.

Thomas Kelly
Current Facilitator

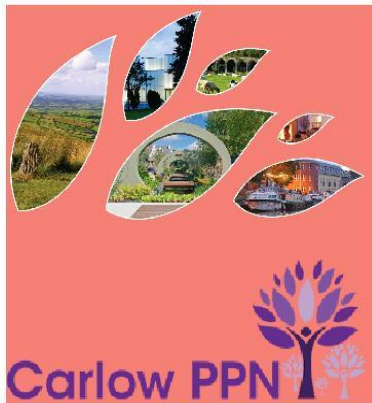
Foreword from Carlow County Council Chief Executive

Active citizenship involves people, communities and voluntary organisations having a key role in decision making which directly affects them and that the Council has a vital role to ensure that this happens effectively.

Carlow County Council's experience of working with Carlow PPN is a positive one. Carlow County Council appreciates the role and work of the PPN as the PPN structure enhances the ability of the Council to reach out to communities to hear their issues and to provide a platform for meaningful participation and engagement with organisations and service providers such as ourselves.

Carlow County Council is working and will continue to work with the PPN to establish and maintain this meaningful connection and to change how Carlow County Council consults with the public and communities.

Kathleen Holohan



CARLOW PPN YEAR IN REVIEW 2019

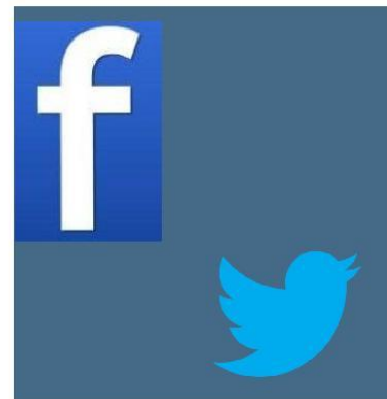
E-Bulletins in 2019

12 E-Bulletins
published on
our website
and shared on
our social
media & 336
posted out to
our non-email
Members

Facebook

898

Followers/
1082 Likes



Number of Members in 2019 413

Community & Voluntary: 357
Social Inclusion: 45
Environment: 11

Twitter

514

Followers/
457
Tweets

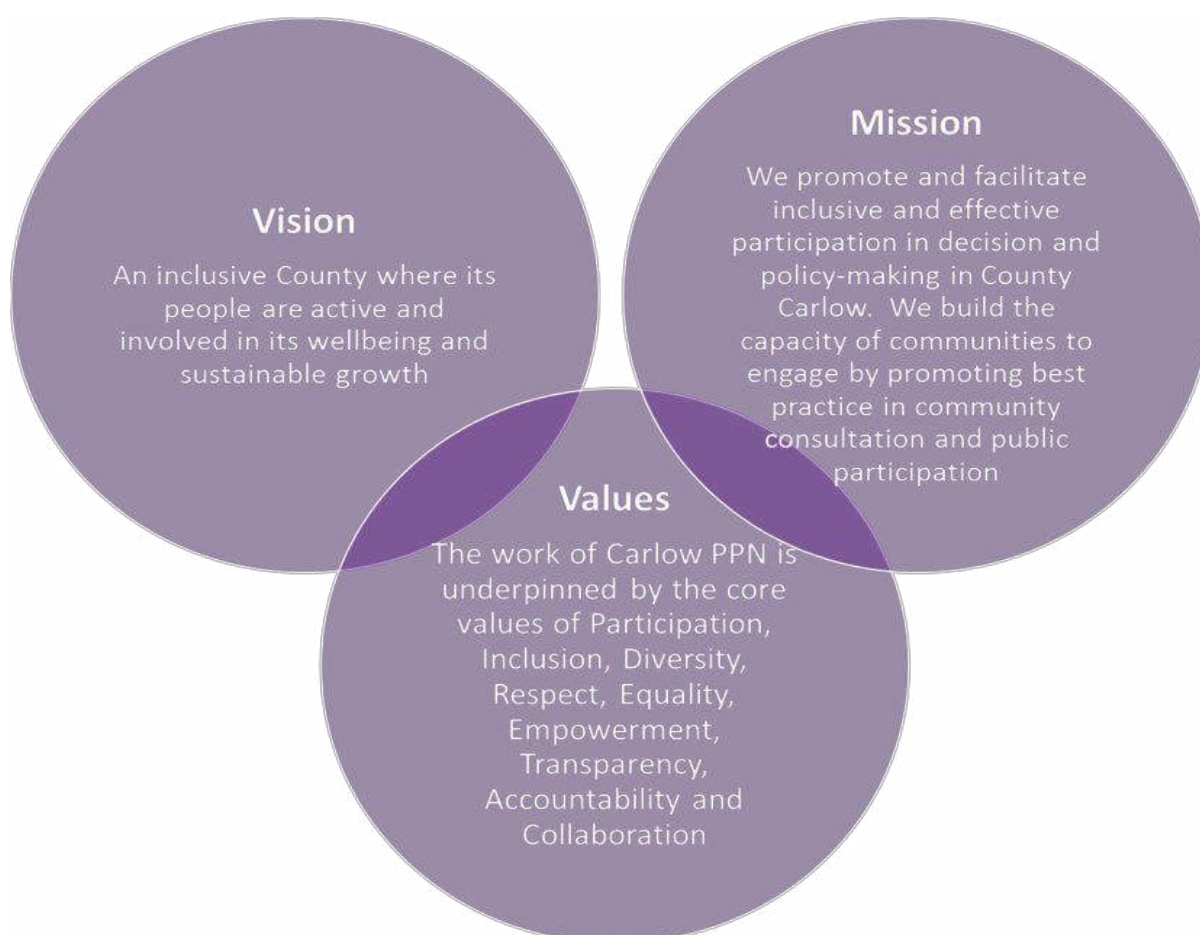
Introduction

Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN) is an independent umbrella organisation of environmental, social inclusion and community and voluntary groups/organisations within County Carlow. As a framework for public engagement and participation, the PPN highlights and encourages participation in public life and people's right to influence decisions that affect their lives and communities.

PPN's were established under the Local Government (Reform) Act 2014 and are the main link through which the County Council connects with local groups/organisations.

The purpose of Carlow PPN is to: -

- ✓ Bring together community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups across the County and enable these groups to express a diverse range of views and interests
- ✓ Facilitate community participation in local decision making by providing representation on local decision-making boards and committees
- ✓ Provide the opportunity for networking, information sharing and communication
- ✓ Identify and support training in relevant areas for groups and representatives



Operation of Carlow PPN

Secretariat

The Secretariat is the administrative body of the PPN, elected from the membership to manage the PPN between Plenary meetings and to manage the work. Secretariat membership is balanced on a geographical and college basis and includes one representative from each of the Municipal District areas and two representatives from each of the colleges – Community & Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental. Carlow PPN Secretariat operates to an annual Workplan and meets on a monthly basis.

Flat Structure

The PPN operates as a flat structure, where the Plenary is the decision-making body and there are no permanent officers i.e. Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary. Decisions are made on a consensual basis. To implement the flat structure, Carlow PPN Secretariat has a rotating Facilitator. The meeting Facilitator rotates on a quarterly basis to ensure consistency in work. Working Groups were also established to allow for the progression of work between Secretariat meetings and are as follows: -

- Support & Strategy Sub-Committee
- Finance Sub-Committee
- Council Liaison Sub-Committee

PPN Team

The PPN Co-ordinator reports to the Secretariat and supports the Secretariat and the Plenary in their work. In July 2019, Carlow PPN employed a full time Administrator who is directly managed by the Co-ordinator and the Secretariat.

Formal Agreements with Local Authority

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Carlow County Council and an annual Programme of Work along with a projected Cashflow Statement is agreed yearly with the Chief Executive of Carlow County Council. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is also signed with the Community Department of Carlow County Council.

Budget

Carlow PPN is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development & by Carlow County Council. The yearly budget is €80,000 - €50,000 provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development which was matched by €30,000 from Carlow County Council. In 2019, extra funding to employ an Administrator was granted by the Department to provide support in carrying out the Community Wellbeing Vision. €25,700 was provided by the Department and matched by €5,000 from Carlow County Council.

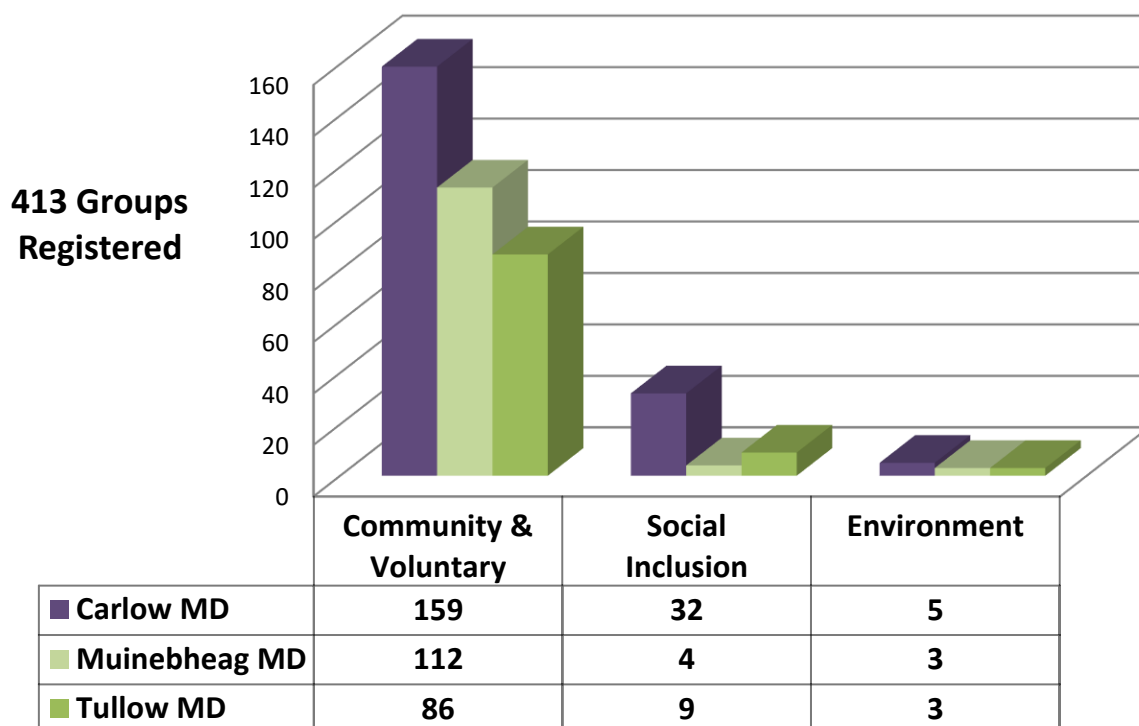
Total expenditure in 2019 was €96,081.93 and is broken down as follows: -

2019	Actual Expenditure
Staff Salary (incl. PRSI)	€71,195.36
Expenses	€2,140.49
Rent / Hosting	€4,000.00
Postage / Telephone / Bank Charges	€689.08
Office Supplies / Stationary	€4,261.87
Insurance	€577.50
IT Support / Maintenance / Hosting	€2,195.55
Marketing and Promotion	€3,196.28
Projects / Activities / Events	€1,357.49
Room Hire / Refreshments	€4,496.70
Plenary Costs	€300.00
Training / Development	€6,396.07
Reimbursement from Matrix Recruitment	€4,724.46
Total Expenditure	€96,081.93

Membership

Membership of Carlow PPN is open to all volunteer led / not for profit organisations within the county. Groups are divided into three colleges based on their area of interest: Environment, Social Inclusion and Community and Voluntary¹.

At the end of 2019, 413 organisations/groups were members of Carlow PPN.



SalesForce

The Department, in conjunction with the South Dublin Volunteer Centre have developed a Salesforce based software package to manage PPN databases all over the country and facilitate targeted communications. This has been rolled out to PPN's via group training sessions and support.

The database provides a means for each PPN Resource Worker to gather and manage a database of member organisations, contacts within the PPN area. It also provides a facility for the Resource Worker to manage a variety of communication processes and events such as email campaigns, newsletters, workshops and training events and to log and track meetings and attendances at meetings. The information gathered also provides data for reporting.

¹ Organisations self-select the 'College' they wish to be part of. Groups wishing to be part of the Environmental College must have their application approval by the National Environmental Pillar. Further details are available on <http://environmentalpillar.ie>

Representation and Decision Making

One of the core objectives of Carlow PPN is to facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion and community & voluntary colleges on decision making bodies. A variety of methodologies are used to ensure this.

Representation on Boards/Committees

Where a Local Authority or any other Board/Committee within the county requires community & voluntary, social inclusion or environmental representation on a Board/Committee, they must source this person via the PPN. Thus, PPN members can play a part in policy development and decision making within their county.

According to the guidelines, an individual should represent the PPN on only one Board/Committee to which Carlow PPN is compliant which ensures fairness.

In 2019, Carlow PPN had 22 seats on 9 committees across the County. 21 seats were filled with 1 vacancy on the Joint Policing Committee.



Support for PPN Representatives

It is imperative that PPN representatives bring forward the views of the PPN and not their own personal views. To facilitate this, the Linkage Group structure comes in whereby the PPN stakeholders on a particular issue come together to elect and advise their representative(s) on each board/committee. PPN representatives consult with their Linkage Group and each other before each meeting to discuss the agenda items and inputs. After each meeting, a summary template of the outcomes of the meeting is completed and disseminated to the relevant Linkage Group. This builds capacity and understanding of the policy process within the community.

Carlow PPN provides training/capacity building to its representatives every year which has always been well attended and were involved in the development of a Representatives Charter. All policies and procedures can be viewed on our website – www.carlowppn.ie

Linkage Groups

Carlow PPN operates a thematic Linkage Group structure and have 6 Linkage Groups: -

- Community
- Health & Wellbeing
- Culture & Amenity
- Social Inclusion
- Environment & Infrastructure
- Economy & Industry

Linkage Groups are thematic sub-groups of the PPN which correspond directly to Council services. They bring together PPN members that have either a remit or an interest in these services. Linkage Groups provide a mechanism through which the PPN influences policies and decisions made by the Council. Linkage Groups elect representatives from amongst their membership to sit on Council committees and other fora on behalf of the PPN. Through these representatives, the PPN participates in shaping policies that affect Carlow communities, and is kept informed of developments within the Council.

Communications

Communicating the existence and activity of Carlow PPN is essential in its functioning and one of the main aims of Carlow PPN is to provide the opportunity for networking, information sharing and communication. The 2016 Annual Report on PPN's, commissioned by the National PPN Advisory Group and published in 2017, recognised the lack of awareness and understanding of PPN's across the country.

Carlow PPN has been making strides in this area by introducing a number of initiatives: -

E-Bulletin	In 2019 Carlow PPN issued 12 E-Bulletins by email to all members and was sent by post to those with no email address.
Website	Carlow PPN's website is constantly being updated – www.carlowppn.ie
Social Media	Our Facebook and Twitter pages can be found @CarlowPPN. At the end of 2019, Carlow PPN had 898 likes on Facebook and 514 Followers on Twitter. We also created a YouTube Animation to explain what the PPN is about and this can be found on the home page of the website – www.carlowppn.ie
Radio Interviews	Radio interviews were conducted throughout the year to publicise upcoming events and Plenary Meetings.
Local Newspapers	Posters and press releases appeared in local papers throughout the year to promote the PPN and upcoming events, in particular workshops on developing a Community Wellbeing Vision.
Branded Materials	Pens, trolley keyrings, car air fresheners and USB's were introduced in 2016 to raise awareness of Carlow PPN.



Launch of Community Consultation Toolkit

Carlow PPN launched their Community Consultation Toolkit on February 15th, 2019 in the Seven Oaks Hotel.

In 2017, Carlow PPN began working on developing a 'Community Consultation Toolkit' for County Carlow and engaged The Wheel to help carry out this piece of work. Carlow PPN wanted to identify and help bridge the gap between current practice and best practice in community consultation and engagement in County Carlow. Various Focus Group Meetings were held with PPN members, New Communities, Traveller Health Workers, members of Comhairle Na Nog, Carlow County Council Management and Elected Members. Information was also gathered through a survey. Further meetings on the draft Toolkit also took place.

Since its launch, the Toolkit has been received very positively amongst members and agencies alike.



Community Wellbeing Vision

During 2019, Carlow PPN brought community groups together to develop a shared vision for community wellbeing for the County of Carlow. Meetings took place in each Municipal District - Carlow, Muinebheag and Tullow. Material from each meeting was then shared in an online consultation. Those who could not attend then had the chance to see what was discussed and make their contribution. Through these meetings and online consultations, community groups were asked what their aspirations were for their community for generations to come. These contributions have formed the Vision for Community Wellbeing for the County. This guiding Vision will inform the work of our PPN Representatives on county policy and decision-making bodies as well as supporting the development of Carlow PPN Strategic Plan.



National PPN Conference

The National PPN Conference 2019 was hosted by Carlow PPN and Carlow County Council and was held on Thursday, 11th and Friday, 12th October 2019 in the Woodford Dolmen Hotel.

It was the third National PPN Conference hosted by a PPN in partnership with their Local Authority. The Annual Conference is a means to showcase the operation of PPNs in practice and highlight best practice experiences. It makes for an ideal setting to hear of the achievements of PPNs within their respective counties in partnership with stakeholders and an ideal occasion for local authorities to demonstrate their commitment and support of the Network and the fundamental principles behind Citizen Engagement.

The Conference provided an invaluable networking opportunity for Resource Workers, PPN Secretariats, local authority staff, elected representatives and others to share experiences and to learn from one another. It also provided an opportunity for the National PPN Advisory Group and the Department to interact with all stakeholders and advise of the latest developments in relation to PPNs.

The Conference was opened by T.D. and Minister for State Mr. Sean Canney and was attended by 188 delegates on each day and was a great success.

Best Practice presentations was delivered on the first morning by three PPNs: -

1. Kerry Universal Access - Caroline Toal, Kerry PPN Resource Worker
2. Resilient Communities, Wexford - Annette Dupuy, Wexford PPN Resource Worker
3. Creating a Local Sustainable Future, a South East PPN Event - Margaret Whelan, Kilkenny PPN Resource Worker

Field Trips took place in the afternoon where delegates were brought to a community group/project in each Municipal District to showcase the work communities are doing in the County and how they work in partnership with the PPN. They proved a resounding success.

Municipal District of Carlow

- Community Garden – An Gairdin Beo
- St. Catherine's Community Services Centre – Traveller Health Workers

Municipal District of Muinebheag

- Social Enterprise – BEAM Services Ltd.
- Community Development – Borris Our Vision

Municipal District of Tullow

- Social Farming Project – Cairdeas Centre
- Bishops House – Regional Youth Services Project

On the morning of the second day, several workshops were delivered: -

- Plain English – Sean Driver, NALA
- Wellbeing Statement – Helen Howes, Wicklow PPN
- Linkage Group and Thematic Working Groups – Fingal, Tipperary and Waterford PPN Members
- LCDC and PPN's – Deirdre Kelly, DRCD

Workshops were followed by a Panel Q&A Session on **Volunteerism – The Future** (Improving Governance – Overcoming Challenges – Promoting Best Practice)



Carlow PPN Secretariat Members and Carlow County Council Officials with T.D. and Minister of State Mr. Sean Canney



Q&A Session after Best Practice Presentations

National Ploughing Championships

The National Ploughing Championships took place in Ballintrane, Fenagh, Co. Carlow in 2019. The Championships proved a resounding success with numbers exceeding previous years while the sun shined every day.

The National Ploughing Championships offers PPNs a chance to raise their profile and showcase the work that is carried out on a yearly basis.



Resource Workers and Secretariat Members from across the country with Minister Michael Ring



Resource Workers with T.D. and Minister of State Mr. Sean Canney

Capacity Building and Training

One of the functions of Carlow PPN is to identify and support training in relevant areas for groups and representatives. Carlow PPN offered several training and capacity building workshops for members in 2019 including the Charities Governance Code, GDPR, Fundraising and Facilitation.

WORKSHOPS 2019

CARLOW PPN

A series of practical solutions-based workshops to help organisations with compliance and regulation and to increase the effectiveness and impact of their work. All delivered by The Carmichael. The Carmichael is a leading specialist training and support body for nonprofits in Ireland.



1. GDPR
Trainer: Liam Lynch
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Centaur Street
Practical skills to follow through on obligations of accountability under GDPR. Attendees will be given the tools to create a Data Protection Policy for their organization.

2. Charities Governance Code Principles 1 - 6
Trainer: Derek O'Reilly
Cathedral Parish Centre, Carlow
A practical workshop on principles 1-6. Attendees will have an opportunity to start the compliance process.

Tues 2nd April 10 – 1 p.m.
Principle 1: Advancing your charitable purpose.
Principle 2: Behaving with integrity.

Tues 9th April 10 – 1 p.m.
Principle 3: Leading people.
Principle 4: Exercising control.

Tues 16th April 10 – 1 p.m.
Principle 5: Working effectively.
Principle 6: Being accountable and transparent.

3. Fundraising Grant Applications
Trainer: Evelyn Fitzpatrick
Ballinkillen Lorum Community Centre, Ballinkillen, Bagenalstown
Completing good funding applications. Develop knowledge and confidence in filling applications. Attendees will be given tips on successful grant applications.

4. Introduction to Facilitation Skills
Trainer: Dave Dunn
Cairdeas Centre, Tullow
This workshop provides you with a fundamental grounding as well as fresh ideas, processes, and practical tips for working with groups.



Contact Gráinne O' Neill on 059 917 2495 or carlowppn@carlowcoco.ie to book. Places are limited on some courses. Light refreshments served.

Open to all community groups. www.carlowppn.ie



Working in Collaboration

As Carlow PPN has a small resource base, collaboration with other organisations/agencies adds huge value to PPN activities. Also, by working with other organisations/agencies with common objectives, more awareness is created.

The organisations/agencies Carlow PPN worked with in collaboration throughout 2018 were: -

- South East PPNs
- County Carlow Development Partnership
- Carlow Volunteer Centre
- St. Catherine's Community Services Centre
- Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre
- Forward Steps Family Resource Centre
- BEAM Services Centre Ltd.
- Cairdeas Centre
- Carlow County Council
- County Carlow Sports Partnership
- Comhairle Na Nog
- Social Justice Ireland



Sustainable Futures Event in Kilkenny and was carried out in coloration with South East PPNs

Events / Projects

Plenary Meetings

Carlow PPN held two Plenary Meetings in 2018. The Theme for our first Plenary on Tuesday, 24th April was 'Funding and Resources'. The evening offered groups the opportunity to find out what funding and resources were available to them during an expo and a presentation from the Social Innovation Fund.

The theme for our second Plenary on Thursday, 29th November was 'Access' where Carlow PPN hosted an expo on access to services such as mental health, physical and intellectual disability, visual and hearing impairment and education. This was followed by a presentation from CCUAM – County Carlow Universal Access Movement, a new movement set up by Carlow PPN in partnership with SICAP. We also had a presentation from the South-East Suicide Resource Office on a new Wellbeing Champions Programme

Regional Meetings

South East PPN's came together in 2018 to form a South-East Network where Co-ordinators meet every quarter to discuss mutual issues.

National Meetings

National Co-ordinator meetings take place quarterly in Dublin and the Co-ordinator or PPN colleague attends all meetings. These meetings are an opportunity to network with all other PPN Co-ordinators.



Second Plenary Meeting of 2019



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Website: www.carlowppn.ie

Social Media: @CarlowPPN