



**Westmeath PPN Plenary  
6-9pm, 16th April 2025  
Bloomfield House Hotel**

	<p><b>Present</b> Each person who attended the Plenary meeting signed the attendance sheet. Total attendance was 64 persons plus staff.</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Larry Quain; Anne Drury; Dave Raftis</p> <p><b>In attendance</b> WPPN Secretariat: Hugh Farrell (HF), Cathy Whelehan (CW), Vinny Bagnall (VB), Mick Kenny (MK), Merin Rebecca Thomas (MRT) Others: See attendance sheet WCC Staff: Lourdes Neary, Jenny McKeon, Thelma Garvey, Margaret Egan WPPN Staff: Mark Ahern (MA) and Martin Fagan (MF)</p>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Housekeeping and Welcome</b> Martin Fagan went through the housekeeping arrangements and explained the voting system at Plenary meetings. Merin Rebecca Thomas (VB) welcomed the gathering and thanked everyone for attending.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Agenda</b> MF introduced the agenda. A hard copy was given to each attendee at registration</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of previous Plenary 6 Nov 2024 and matters arising</b> Minutes of Nov Plenary were circulated to WPPN members in advance and hard copies were distributed to the tables. Minutes proposed by Alison Hough and seconded by Mick Kenny. There were no matters arising.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Review of Budget</b> Mark Ahern gave a presentation on the 2025 WPPN Budget. He drew attention to the once off cost this year of getting a new website and the efforts to reduce expenses by hosting hybrid linkage group meetings in council buildings. No questions were raised from the floor.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Presentation on new WPPN Website</b> MF gave a presentation on the features of the new website and noted that as the site was close to completion, it was hoped that it would be live by the end of April.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Presentation on the WPPN Workplan to date.</b> Cathy Whelehan gave a presentation on the Workplan noting the progress under the five performance indicators – ‘Improving our Network’, ‘Improving Communications’, ‘Improve Membership Supports’, ‘Improve Representation’, ‘Improving environment and sustainability’.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Presentation from Paula O’Connor of Women’s Community Projects (Mullingar) Association</b> Paula detailed the origins, aims and work of the WCP Mullingar Association, a charitable, not-for-profit body which operates out of the Parish Community Centre, Mullingar. Noted that WCP has assisted women and their families for over 40 years and outlined the many training and support services that they provide. These include childcare facilities, adult education, counselling, community employment, workshops events. Paula fielded questions from the floor and undertook to provide the WPPN staff with copies of here presentation to the distributed to the Plenary attendees.</p>



<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Presentation: Alison Hough, Westmeath Environmental and Climate Action Network (WECAN)</b></p> <p>Alison outlined the work of WECAN including raising awareness on environmental issues, involvement in public consultations and influencing the direction of environmental policy at county level through WPPN participation on WCC Strategic Policy Committees.</p> <p>Alison presented the text of a draft letter and asked that the Plenary agree that it be sent to Minister Darragh O’Brien, Minister for Transport and Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications. The letter called on government to engage in early and meaningful public consultations when creating a Social Climate Plan. The letter noted the upcoming deadline of 30 June 2025 to submit this plan and suggested a range of public consultation measures which could be undertaken.</p> <p>Hard copies of the letter had been circulated to the attendees. Having fielded a number of queries from the floor, the motion to adopt and send this letter was put to the Plenary. This was overwhelmingly carried by a majority show of hands.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Ratification of Nominations</b></p> <p>MF stated that four nominations were received for four vacant positions. There were three vacancies on the WPPN Secretariat owing to the stepping down of Hugh Farrell, Anne Drury and Dave Raftis. On behalf of the staff of the WPPN and Community Section MF thanked Hugh, Anne and Dave for their 10 years/two terms of dedication to the WPPN. There was also one vacancy for a WPPN member on the Board of Westmeath Community Development. MF invited each of the nominees to the Secretariat in turn to speak – after which all of the nominees were individually approved by shows of hands from the Plenary. The following individuals were therefore approved –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nick Linnane of Moate Town Team, appointed to the Secretariat as the Representative of Athlone Moate Municipal District.</li><li>• Joe McEvoy of Athlone Canal Heritage Committee, appointed to the Secretariat as Environment Pillar Representative.</li><li>• Angela Locke-Reilly of AIRC Midlands appointed to the Secretariat as the Social Inclusion Pillar Representative.</li><li>• Dave Raftis, was nominated by Kinnegad Combined Community Employment Scheme, and was approved as the WPPN Rep on the Board of WCD.</li></ul>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>General Questions and Answer Session</b></p> <p>MF invited questions from the floor, to be put to Mark Ahern (WPPN staff) and Margaret Egan (Community Section and Liaison Officer between WCC and WPPN.) Linda Jo Quinn of WCD spoke on the importance of community support and the work of the WPPN.</p>
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Close</b></p> <p>MA thanked the attendees and contributors, and the Plenary meeting ended at 9pm</p>