



## Galway City Community Network CLG

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# Winter Plenary

## January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### Minutes

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#### Attendance

Please see below.

#### Apologies

Tony Dolan, Ciara Coy, Maggie Woods, Eleanor Hough, Cameron Keighron, David Kennedy, Fiona McDonagh-Delaney, James Coyne, Joe McDonagh, Karen Golden

#### Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was held in the Menlo Park Hotel. Margaret O’Riada chaired and opened the Plenary meeting by welcoming all. She invited those in attendance to share their names and organisations.

#### Minutes of Previous Plenary and Matters Arising

The minutes were circulated to all members ahead of the meeting. There were no changes to the minutes. These were proposed by Arun Asan, seconded by Tom Kelly, and approved.

#### Elections for GCCN Representatives

Elections were held for the GCCN representative vacancy on the Comhairle na nOg and the Local Community Development Committee.

Nominations were received as follows:

- **Comhairle na nOg:** Esther Osayimwen (Africa United Galway)
- **Local Community Development Committee – Environment Seat:** Lorraine Lally (Access for All Galway)
- **Economic, Community and Cultural Development:** Megs Morley (Galway Arts Centre) – Megs could not attend this meeting and the ratification was deferred until the next Plenary.

Given that there were no multiple nominations per vacancy, the ratification for these nominees was approved. GCCN continues to have open vacancies for the Planning SPC – Environment Seat and the GCCN Secretariat.

## Community Discussions

The GCCN Representative Reports were circulated ahead of the meeting and the GCCN members were invited to read them before attending. Conversations followed on these and some of the priorities for the GCCN work in 2023.

The GCCN members in attendance were invited to raise any questions and comments regarding the GCCN Representative Reports circulated ahead of the meeting and to hold discussions around the work that GCCN should prioritise in 2023.

**Housing and Social Inclusion:** Questions about accessible housing were raised to be passed to the housing Linkage Group. Issues around land zoning in flood planes were raised for the Planning SPC with a mention to its impact on the Development Plan. Frustration was expressed due to the lack of progression on Ardaun and on social housing. The need for a specific social housing strategy was stressed once again. A strategy that is realistic and can be achieved.

It was noted that Quarterly reports from council activities are not public unless they are addressed in council meetings. The Plenary felt that participation was a sham, characterised by disgraceful, and undemocratic practice.

**Planning:** The dysfunction of the Planning SPC still needs to be addressed. Given that meetings were arranged at later dates in 2022, input into consultations was not possible while these were running. The issue of the kissing gates was brought forth, as these are a major issue going forward. If they are not affected by an active travel route, they seem to not be reviewed by the Local Authority. Members stressed that the name is not reflective of their negative impact. These are not Kissing Gates but rather “Barrier Gates” and “Exclusion Gates”. This issue needs the support of a Director of Services. Through National Scheme for cycle bus, the Local Authority should have funding streams to address barriers. The Accessibility audit for Galway City is overdue (2005).

**Economic, Community and Cultural Development:** Among the issues discussed were the lack of a dedicated Access Officer, the resistance to a Disability Inclusion Steering Committee and the “Exclusion Gates” that require a public campaign and further consideration of alternative entrances. Also, the need for a Migrant Centre was discussed, alongside with the need for employment supports so that enterprise can support diverse communities.

**Transportation:** Among the issues discussed were the Bus Connects consultation and development.

**Climate Action, Environment, Recreation and Amenity:** Among the issues discussed were the participation of youth in climate actions and consultations which is key, given their lived experience and inheritance of challenges. It was highlighted also that Sustainable Development should not leave people with disabilities behind. Also, the circular economy is crucial and needs attention going forward, while future development should not affect the environment, and priority habitats must be protected. The idea of ecological corridors was discussed.

**Local Community Development Committee:** Among the issues discussed was the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) which is in progress. There is a sense that the voice of the community is not being listened to. Further meetings need to be held to discuss this. Anti-racism and strategies on inclusion were also discussed.

**Joint Policing Committee:** Among the issues discussed was community policing which is something that needs to be worked on in Galway City. We need a responsive Garda unit that is participatory and does not limit access to public spaces. The capacity of guards is an ongoing issue but may be a national challenge. Work needs to be done to strengthen communities and that will address social issues (and this needs to be done with the support of the Gardaí).

**Galway City Sports Partnership:** The GCCN Representatives on the Local Sports Partnership shared their positive experience of representation and involvement so far, commending the work of the committee and the initiatives to date.

## Priorities for 2023

Under each section above, the Plenary discussed priorities and actions for GCCN in the coming year. The detailed input from members was noted by GCCN staff and it will be used to inform the 2023 GCCN Workplan. The main points of the open discussion relating to the priority actions that GCCN should pursue in 2023 include:

- Pursue meaningful participation in decision-making structures at both a local and national level, while actively seeking to resolve barriers and address the democratic deficit.
- Pursue and promote Public Sector Duty and work to address all forms of discrimination in public life in Galway.
- Campaigning on issues of collective concern in the public realm.
- Seeking to build communication structures and opportunities with key staff in city council.
- Build relationships with other networks seeking to influence the development of Galway City.
- Review the use of GCCN submissions in policies.

## GCCN Update

Given the time restraints for the meeting, it was agreed that the GCCN Progress Report will be circulated by email to all members and questions will be invited. This report contains updates on the core GCCN work, with mentions regarding the Linkage Group meetings, the submissions, initiatives, workshops, training, and activities GCCN has led since the previous Plenary in September 2022. You can view the presentation [here](#).

## AOB

It was agreed that the GCCN Priorities for 2023 require further discussions and GCCN will hold a focused meeting around this on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February to allow members to make further suggestions to be included in this year's GCCN Work Plan.

## Attendees

Name	Organisation
Anne Marie Stokes	Galway Traveller Movement
Arun Asan	Access for All
Brendan Smith	Terryland Forest Park Alliance
Brian Doherty	GCCN
Caroline Stanley	Friends of Merlin Woods
Chris Hickey	Galway School of Judo
Derrick Hambleton	An Taisce
Dominick Whelan	JCI
Esther Osayimwen	Galway City Partnership & Africa United
Flutura Rrebani	United Women Galway
Jamal AlHousamy	United Women Galway
Joan Kavanagh	Galway City Age Friendly Older Persons Council
John Cleary	Galway City Age Friendly Older Persons Council
Justine Delaney	GCCN
Kevin Jennings	Galway Cycling Campaign
Lisa Fenwick	DFI
Lorraine Lally	Access for All
Margaret O Riada	Galway Traveller Movement
Marian Maloney	Access for All and Galway Childcare Committee
Martin O Connor	COPE Galway
Neil O'Leary	Galway Cycling Campaign and An Taisce
Niall Murphy	Galway Cycling Campaign
Oana Nicoara	GCCN
Paula Healy	Flirt FM
Peter Butler	Conservation Volunteers
Philip Hendrick	CEO GCIL
Rebecca Jackson	GCCN
Rosleyn Carroll	Galway Cycling Campaign
Seamus Diskin	GAAW
Shane Foran	Galway Cycling Campaign
Tom Kelly	Galway Visually Impaired
Zandile	United Women Galway