



Galway City Community Network
Líonra Pobail Chathair Na Gaillimhe

Galway City Community Network
The Public Participation Network in Galway City

Autumn Plenary

Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024

Attendance

Please see below.

Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was held in the Menlo Park Hotel. Tommy Flaherty chaired and opened the Plenary meeting by welcoming all. He invited those in attendance to share their names and organisations.

Minutes of Previous Plenary and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last Plenary were circulated to all members ahead of the meeting. There were no changes to the minutes and no matters arising.

New SPC Scheme

Brian presented details of the new Galway City Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) scheme, introducing six new SPCs and giving a brief overview of their scope. Brian highlighted two submissions made on the scheme—one directly by GCCN and another collaboratively with the Trade Union.

Concerns were expressed over the new SPC structure, for example the separation of roads and transport from planning, suggesting this division might dilute resources.

Further discussion focused on the operational development SPC, with questions raised about its policy focus and whether the green strategy would fall under its remit or another SPC. The interconnectedness of tourism and environmental issues was emphasized.

Attendees noted the lack of clarity in the new scheme but expressed hope that the standing orders would provide further detail.

Concerns were raised about the vague SPC titles, which might complicate representatives' roles, though it was suggested the new structure might also present opportunities.

It was acknowledged that the changes were introduced without prior consultation with GCCN, and adjustments to how GCCN holds its linkage groups may be necessary to improve engagement.

National Care Experience Programme Presentation

David Healy from the University of Galway gave a presentation on the National Care Experience Programme, which seeks to improve inpatient experiences, particularly for marginalized groups. He invited community representatives to participate, with one representative needed from each group.

GCCN Update

Brian provided a detailed GCCN Update, including information on GCCN's submissions on the new SPCs, the Traveller Accommodation Programme submission, and updates on recent and upcoming events such as PPN inductions in Ballybane and Westside, representatives' training, media training, LGBTQ+ training, and creative climate training. Brian also attended a budget meeting at Leinster House and noted that the Irish Tribune featured an article on GCCN's SPC submission.

The mediation report, developed a few years ago to address dissatisfaction with the SPC process, included recommendations for improvements but lacked resources for implementation. It was referenced in GCCN submissions and presented to the new CEO, with plans for a meeting yet to be scheduled. A senior council officer confirmed that the report would be incorporated into standing orders.

Concerns were raised about past inefficiencies in SPC operations, with hopes for the new SPCs to be better. Attendees also highlighted issues with a recent survey on PPN representatives' satisfaction, noting that the questions should have referred to the reps' experience with the Council, not the PPN.

Members stressed the need to address resource allocation and the absence of SPC meeting webcasting. In the event of no webcasting implementation by the City Council, it was suggested to reach to the Minister who ought to issue instructions to implement webcasting of all meetings.

Elections

The meeting proceeded to the GCCN elections, with Oana explaining the voting process using color-coded ballots. Members cast their votes, Brian collected the completed ballot papers and staff counted the votes one by one in front of all attendees.

For **SPC 1 Social Development**, two seats were available: one for election and one for ratification. For the **Social Inclusion seat**, *Karen Golden* from Galway Simon Community introduced herself and was elected. *Olena Bratchenko* from Ukrainians Helping Ukrainians Galway (UHUG) was the second candidate, and she was not

present. For the **Community/Voluntary seat**, *Blessing Oguekwe* from Make a Difference Youth Club introduced herself and was ratified*.

(***Note for future reference:** *After the elections held at the Plenary, the membership of Make a Difference Youth Club was suspended due to non-compliance with the eligibility criteria. As a result of this suspension, the Community/Voluntary seat on SPC 1 Social Development has been vacated once more.*)

In **SPC 2 Operational Development**, two seats were available for ratification. For the **Community/Voluntary seat**, *Kevin Jennings* from Galway Cycling Campaign introduced himself and was ratified. For the **Environment seat**, *Caroline Stanley* from Friends of Merlin Woods introduced herself and was also ratified.

For **SPC 3 Project Development**, two seats required elections. For the **Community/Voluntary seat**, candidates were *Liam Ferrie* from Galway Cycling Campaign and *Dominick Whelan* from Junior Chamber International Galway, both of whom introduced themselves. Dominick Whelan was elected. For the **Environment seat**, candidates were *Brendan Mulligan* from An Taisce Galway and *Fionn Delahunty* from Galway Energy Co-op. After both introduced themselves, Brendan Mulligan was elected.

In **SPC 4 Urban Development**, two seats required ratification. For the **Environment seat**, *Derrick Hambleton* from An Taisce Galway introduced himself and was ratified. For the **Community/Voluntary seat**, *Reg Turner* from Galway Cycling Campaign introduced himself and was ratified.

For **SPC 5 Corporate Development**, two seats required ratification. For the **Community/Voluntary seat**, *Paul O'Donnell* from An Mheitheal Rother introduced himself and was ratified. For the **Social Inclusion seat**, *Marian Maloney* from Access for All introduced herself and was ratified.

In **SPC 6 Tourism Development**, two seats required ratification. For the **Culture seat**, *Megs Morley* from Galway Arts Centre introduced herself and was ratified. For the **Social Inclusion seat**, *Vusi Thabethe* from Shining Light Galway introduced himself and was ratified.

For the **Local Community Development Committee**, one **Social Inclusion seat** was available. *Tommy Flaherty* from Ballybane Community Resource Centre introduced himself and was ratified.

In the **Galway Sports Partnership**, two seats required ratification. *Irene Murphy* from St. James' Ladies Football Club was not present but was ratified. *Christy Hickey* from Galway City School of Judo introduced himself and was also ratified.

For **Galway City Partnership**, the vacancy remained. The candidate, *Olena Bratchenko* from Ukrainians Helping Ukrainians Galway, could not be ratified as she was not present and sufficient candidate information was unavailable.

For **Comhairle na nÓg**, *Brian Doherty*, GCCN Development Coordinator, was ratified.

Finally, ratifications for the **GCCN Secretariat** followed, with members *Aidan Harte* from University of Sanctuary and *Chirsty Hickey* from Galway School of Judo being both ratified. On this occasion it was also stated that Arun Asan from Access for All had stepped down from his role as Secretariat member.

Tommy encouraged those who were not elected to remain actively involved with GCCN by participating in linkage groups, emphasizing that future vacancies will arise, and their expertise is highly valued.

Tommy also reminded the elected candidates of the importance of attending plenaries and linkage group meetings to fulfil their roles effectively. He also noted that training and induction sessions would be provided for both new and returning representatives.

In formally closing the meeting, Tommy concluded by thanking everyone for their participation in the Plenary.

Attendance

Apologies:

Philip Hendrick, Edward McDonagh, Justine Delaney, Marie-Anne Michel.

Present:

Organisation	Member
AAC West	Dette Mc Loughlin
Access for All	Lorraine Lally
Age Action	Jipe Kelly
AMACH! LGBT+	Cameron Keighron
An Áit Eile	Thom Stewart
An Mheitheal Comhshaol	Paul O'Donnell
An Taisce Galway Association	Derrick Hambleton
An Taisce Galway Association	Brendan Mulligan
Ballybane Community Resource Centre	Tommy Flaherty
COPE Galway	Martin O'Connor
Engineers Ireland West	Tom Duggan
Friends of Merlin Woods	Caroline Stanley
Galway City Partnership	Ciara Coy
Galway City School of Judo	Christy Hickey
Galway City Women's Shed	Caroline Rowan
Galway City Women's Shed	Ngozi Nzewi
Galway City Women's Shed	Yetunde Abiola
Galway Cycling Campaign	Kevin Jennings
Galway Cycling Campaign	Liam Ferrie
Galway Energy Co-op	Fionn Delahunty
Galway Simon Community	Karen Golden
Galway Women's Shed	Ivie
Grattan Court Residents Association	Eleanor Hough
Irish Girl Guides Merlin Woods	Caroline Flanagan
Junior Chamber International Galway	Dominick Whelan
Make A Difference Youth Club Ireland	Blessing Oguekwe
Redeemed Ballybrit/Ballybane Tidy Town	Kola
UHUG	Daria

In Attendance:

Name	Organisation
Brian Doherty	GCCN
Jacinta Fay	GCCN
Oana Nicoara	GCCN
Sylvia Farkasovska	GCCN