**Secretariat update May 2024 (delivered by Rachel Rooney)**

My name is Rachel Rooney, and I am on the Secretariat of Dublin City PPN, and I’m very happy to be giving the Secretariat update at tonight’s Plenary.

Thank you all for coming here tonight either in person or online. We know how busy you are with your voluntary, community, social inclusion and environmental groups and how busy life can be in general. Thank you for making time for our PPN.

The PPN has three main objectives: we share information with the member groups in our network and we offer capacity building training to these member groups. We share information and offer training, so that member groups can participate more in local authority decision making. We have almost a thousand member groups and it’s from them, that we nominate and elect about 20 people to sit on various committees within Dublin City Council. There are a further 9 of us, who make up the Secretariat.

PPN representatives sit on seven Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs). We have representatives on the Housing, Planning, Traffic and Transport, Culture, Climate, Economic Development and Finance SPCs, the Joint Policing Committee and the Local Economic Development Committee (LCDC). And nearly all of these representatives step down from their roles and responsibilities tonight. The Secretariat and the Plenary wish to thank all of the representatives for their service. They have given an enormous amount of time, diligence, commitment, and energy to this participative democracy, and without them, the PPN cannot continue. So we thank those who are stepping down, and we welcome those who will take their places.

After the local elections in June, we will send out nomination forms to all member groups and we encourage you to nominate the people you think will be successful in representing the PPN at local authority level.

We hope that those stepping down, will stay involved with the work of the PPN as mentors and buddies to the newer representatives, and we invite those interested to join the advisory committee which was set up before Christmas last year. We also hope those who are finishing with their official roles, will stay involved unofficially and still be involved in our training events, meetings and information sharing sessions.

We hope that our next cohort of Representatives will be more supported via linkage groups or working groups, or perhaps another way which is more authentic and useful. We hope that we will be able to fully accommodate all our new representatives post June.

I just want to take a moment to tell you about what the PPN has been up to in 2024.

You probably follow the PPN on social media, through the weekly bulletin or on our website. So perhaps you already know that in January, the host of the PPN, Dublin City Volunteer Centre, renewed its Service Level Agreement with Dublin City Council and so they will continue to host the PPN for another two years. This arrangement has been very successful for both the PPN and the Volunteer Centre, and we would encourage all member groups to follow the work of the Centre, attend its training and use its wonderful resources. Mike Randell (who is here tonight on the zoom link), took over as Manager of the Centre just before Christmas last year, and we hope that Mike is finding his new work fulfilling and rewarding. We thank him for his support of the PPN.

Tonight we officially ratify one amendment to our constitution, which is to increase the number of years on committee from 3 – 5 years.

You will know from the weekly Bulletins and social media updates from the PPN that both our Disability Thematic Group and our Migrant Thematic Group are doing well. These are groups within the PPN, who are made up of member groups interested in either of the themes of disability or migrant issues. The Disability Thematic Group held a very interesting and engaging event at the Mansion House recently, where they showed photographs of accessibility issues within the Dublin City area. Meanwhile the Migrant Thematic Group had an information stand at Africa Day recently, where they promoted their group, and the work of the PPN in general.

We are so very happy to see Neo-Archaic at the Plenary tonight. Neo-Archaic are the website management team for the PPN and they are the ones who will tell you about the new resources on the website for member groups tonight. We welcome them here and we thank them for keeping our website so clean, up-to-date, and safe for all our users.

We also thank Dr Ebun Joseph, for her speech this evening. It was encouraging to hear her talk about her own experiences within the PPN, as a volunteer and a community activist. And of course we heard her to tell us all to mind ourselves and look after ourselves after the last few years.

Dr Ebun Joseph will be giving some training sessions to the PPN in the autumn, alongside Martin Saunders who you remember from our last plenary. Martin will do some work with PPN member groups on caring for the carer, and we look forward to that. We will also be offering some online supports from the Carmichael centre again in our autumn series of training sessions.

But most of all, I thank all our member groups for giving of their time and experience to this PPN. In October 2024, we will officially celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the PPNs, which in many ways shows us how young and new these networks are. Like all 10-year-olds, we’re on the brink of our teenage years which hopefully will bring even more passion, intuition, and enjoyment. Perhaps, we leave behind us the toddler years and the very young years, and instead, take on a more serious flare, without loosing our childhood and sense of fun.

As always, we thank everyone, and then ask for more.

So please thank you for your time, your effort, your energy, and your commitment to improving the quality of life for the people who live, work, study and visit Dublin City.

And please then, can we have some more…