**Secretariat minutes March 2023**

Present: John, Catherine, Mick, Ernie, Gerry, Steven,

Apologies: Gavan, Rachel and Deirdre

Staff: Resource Worker (note taker),

**Minutes: represent, educate, network**

**Johnny Sheehan**, from The Wheel, came to talk to the Secretariat about the FREE supports and services on offer, to PPN Secretariat from the Wheel. The types of training available would be strategic planning/procurement practices/social media and comms/risk management and good governance. In addition, there is a dedicated email and phone line to receive specific support, guidance and assistance when/if dealing with complex issues, as occasionally occurs within PPN structures. The Secretariat thanked Johnny for his short presentation and time and said that they would try to attend sessions and/or watch the recordings of the sessions in their own time. Johnny left the meeting after his slot was finished.

1. The minutes from the last meeting, on 14 February were proposed by John and seconded by Catherine, and you can read those minutes online [here](https://dublincityppn.ie/secretariat/).

No matters arising from the last minutes.

1. Resource Worker updates:

* The "how to" manual training went very well, and thanks to Catherine, John, Gerry and Ernie for participating.  Ellenora's summary/report is attached. Further work on this project will continue.
* Nearly completed the Income and Expenditure report 2022 for DRCD:  this document has to be agreed by 2 members of the Secretariat, the host and DCC.  John Redmond and Ernie Beggs agreed to sign off on the Income and Expenditure Report 2022, before it is submitted to the DRCD. The Resource Worker will email the report to all members of the Secretariat asap.
* Following the success of the "how to" manual and training, DCC have invited the PPN to propose further financial assistance funding for 2023.  This proposal must follow criteria, and the draft is with DCVC to check - will share with the Secretariat when it's ready to send to DCC.  It's for an additional funding grant of 75,000 euro for 23/24  As a part of this, the council request that the PPN: assists with the LECP work in April (in the same format as the sessions on the Vision for Community Wellbeing); 25, 26 and 27 April on zoom and in person, assists with Africa Day, continues work on the “how to” manual, and works closely with a consultant facilitator, and identifies 10 member groups to offer in-depth, specific training to. The Secretariat also agreed to proposing that 15 K of the 75 K is used for extra resources for staff, to cover additional workload.
* Administration update: there have been 20 new registrations since January 2023, and the Q1 report will be shared with the Secretariat ahead of next month’s meeting. Twitter and Facebook are still the only social media channels in use, and both the Resource and Support worker reply to general PPN enquiries online, on the phone and face-to-face at personal meetings, which are prearranged.

1. Updates from the Secretariat

* **Catherine** to reach out to environmental reps before the next Secretariat meeting.
* **John’s** JPC work is confidential for the most part, but work is progressing. In particular, his concern is for a family in the neighbourhood that has been served an eviction notice.
* **Gerry** felt that the lifting of the ban on evictions is very troubling for the people of Dublin City and hopes to talk to the Housing SPC reps about how the PPN can support the reps, committee and council in reversing this lift. In addition, Gerry has been to the National Secretariat meeting, and was concerned about how much “research” the DRCD seemed to be doing. He brought the Secretariat’s attention to the new Dublin City Logo.
* **Mick** had been to the Disability Thematic Group meeting the previous night and was delighted with the new consultant facilitator, Adrienne Boyle. In particular, he liked how she gave the group a 10 minute break during their zoom/and arranged for the next meeting to take place in person, and in the afternoon – these are some improvements he would suggest for the Secretariat to consider for future meetings. He mentioned that the LCDC rep on the DTG would like more disabled people on the LCDC, and that the new banner and brochures for the group, are almost ready.
* **Gavan** was not present at the meeting, but sent his updates via email ahead of the meeting (attached on page 3\*).

1. **Any other business**

**Ernie** would like the Secretariat to consider another project with local film maker Paul Woodward. Paul sent a proposal to the Resource Worker before the meeting, which is now shared with the Secretariat to consider for the next meeting.

1. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 11 April, 6.30pm – 8.30pm on zoom.

**Gavan’s** updates from a meeting with Dermot Lacey and Kathy Quinn, on 08 March

* The discussion focused on the question of local government in general, with Dermot and Kathy outlining the shortfall in local funding and that lack of authority that local elected representatives have over spending. This shortfall was traced to the abolition of rates on housing n the '70s.

* There was a view expressed by Dermot that urban areas are overlooked in relation to the needs of their inhabitants compared to rural ones and that to attract FDI a better urban environment is required (also of benefit to the population).

Dermot stated that in his opinion rates cannot and should not be increased for businesses within the city and therefore other income streams are required, coupled with an understanding that an increase in income would not lead to an automatic drop in the annual block grant from central government.

* The view was expressed that contrary to the belief of many that urban areas are much sought after for residential purposes and can be very attractive as such provided the public spere is of adequate quality. Factors driving habitation in the city include globalisation, digitisation, immigration, hybrid working and an aging population.

* The breakdown of the funding sources of local government in the city was given roughly as 1/3 rates, 1/3 other charges and 1/3 block grant from central government.

* Dermot and Kathy explained that LPT income is difficult to assess when local government is developing budgets as the levels are set by central government post their (local government) budgeting cycle.

* Both Dermot and Kathy floated the idea of introducing a congestion charge (with exemptions for certain categories) and an accommodation tax. Dermot explained that a congestion charge was in the gift of central government and in his opinion it could by 5 or 10 years away. An accommodation charge was felt to be potentially problematic given the importance of international tourism to local city centre business and communities and the sectors rising cost base and increasing uncompetitiveness.

* The question of increasing the democratic participation and control over local spending by local government was discussed, with possibilities such as a directly elected mayor mentioned. Kathy and Dermot explained that local councillors only have discretion over a total spend of €1.5m

* All welcomed the engagement of the PPN with local government and felt strongly it presented a template for future engagement on a range of issues. The idea of establishing an assembly with clear objectives populated by representatives of the PPN membership to discuss local democracy, funding and participation was mooted.