



**Galway City Community Network**  
Líonra Pobail Chathair na Gaillimhe

# GALWAY CITY COMMUNITY NETWORK

## The Public Participation Network in Galway City

### Representative Training Notes



## Introduction

In 2019, Galway City Community Network organised a training session for GCCN representatives with Elaine Harvey. These are the notes of that session.

## GCCN Representative Role

Representing GCCN on policy and decision making structures is an important task. In order to ensure that representation is informed and based on knowledge of the policy area and on commitment to the values of the PPN, the following criteria for GCCN representatives are required to have:

- An awareness of general policy in the area you are seeking to represent on;
- A knowledge of the GCCN policies in the area and a commitment to promoting these policies and to policy development where necessary;
- A proven track record in the ability to represent.

*For more on GCCN policies and positions please refer to the **GCCN Policies and Positions**<sup>1</sup>.*

The role of a GCCN representative is to:

- Be up-to-date with relevant national and local policy as it pertains to the structure on which they sit;
- Represent the agreed policy positions, values and interests of GCCN on the structure to which they are elected, including relevant subgroups;
- Actively promote the policies, positions and values of the PPN, including by seeking the inclusion of items on the agenda and proposing motions at the meetings;
- Regularly attend meetings of the structure to which they are elected and actively participate in discussions;
- Participate actively as a member of the relevant Linkage Group, supporting engagement of GCCN members in the development of policies and positions to inform GCCN representatives.

## Representation

On the majority of structures, there are two or more GCCN representatives. In that context, GCCN representatives are encouraged to regard themselves as a team and support each other.

***Never openly disagree with a fellow representative at a meeting of the structure – discuss before and after the meeting.***

## Before the meeting

Know what your end goal(s) is/are and work backwards from there:

- Be specific – prioritise
- Are there steps to getting there?
- What are they?
- Prepare your key supporting statements/evidence for each step.
- Find your mantra – see below
- Find your allies

### **Meet your fellow reps before the meeting and decide:**

- Who is doing and saying what - Identify a lead person and supports for each agenda item?
- Identify what you are NOT saying and DON'T SAY IT!
- Who is taking notes and submitting the brief report?
- Read the minutes and supporting documentation

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<sup>1</sup> <https://galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/GCCN-Policies-Positions.pdf>

- If minutes have not been circulated by the agreed date send an email and request them to be sent within two days.

**Note – it is GCCN policy not to discuss any agenda item or report that has not been pre-circulated.**

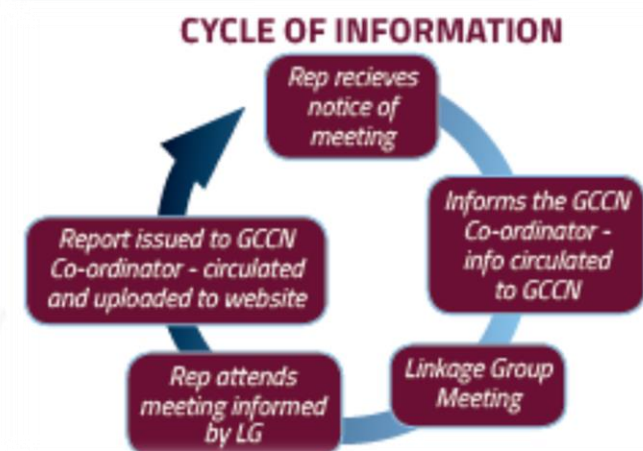
- Keep your notes and use them to check that minutes reflect your version of events
- Be prepared to challenge the minutes
- Have an alternative wording ready to give to the minute taker
- Decide where you're sitting – make sure you at least have eye contact or whisper contact

## During the meeting

- Never disagree with each other in the meeting.
- If you are confused – look for clarification.
- Slow things down
- After you have clarification, delegate someone to state or restate your position – the leads and support(s) should have been identified pre-meeting.
- When you feel you have got as much as you think you are going to get on an item – Stop.
- If the Chair doesn't end the item by stating where you are, one of you should.
- If new topics are raised – listen, note them and tell them you'll get back to them.
- Don't be pushed into agreeing there and then – if you can see the rationale for an urgent decision calls a sidebar/recess to discuss your position.
- Be prepared to send the item to a 'working group'
- If there is an important item that GCCN has requested go on the agenda request that this is reflected in the minutes
- Ensure your reps and allies are on the working group.

## After the meeting

- Check in with everyone:
  - Were they all happy with their contribution?
  - Did they achieve what they set out to do?
- What went well?
- What didn't?
- Who is doing the 2 page (max) report back?
- Do we have any items for the next agenda?
- Do we have any follow-up to do?
- Do we need to contact other people on the structure?



## General

- Be prepared to speak!!
- Be prepared to adapt!!
- You're there to contribute not be an ornament!!
- **You represent GCCN's position not your personal nor your group's position!!**

## Media

GCCN representatives are required to keep track of their public communications and inform GCCN when they speak to the media, including newspapers, radio, speak publicly or use social media in their capacity as a GCCN representative. GCCN reps will contact the office if they feel a press release is appropriate.

For social media communications, all reps are invited to:

- Use the tag **@galwaycitycommunitynetwork** on Facebook when sharing posts related to GCCN or to their role as GCCN representative;
- Use the handle **@GCCNInfo** on Tweeter for tweets related to GCCN or to their role as GCCN representative.

## Mantras

- I do not accept that;
- Can you refer me to the document that outlines that position?
- That is not my information;
- That is not my understanding;
- **Can you clarify that comment?**
- **As a community representative elected by GCCN....**
- **We have consulted with member organisations of GCCN on this issue and the feedback from our membership on this issue is....**