

Kildare Public Participation Network Annual Report 2025



Líonra Rannpháirtíochta Pobail Cill Dara
Public Participation Network Kildare



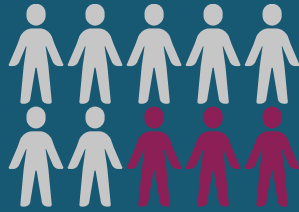
An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht



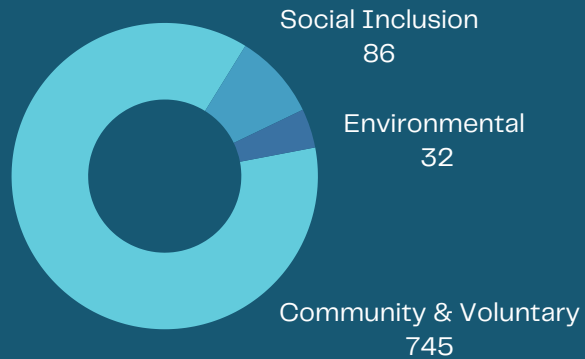
Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

Snapshot of 2025

Membership

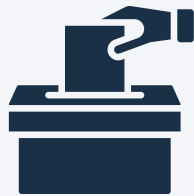


77 new member groups in 2025



Representatives & Advisory Groups

27 Representatives that sit across **9** Committees in Kildare County Council



8 sets of elections ran

9 Advisory Group Meetings held



6 Policy submissions made

Events

12 training modules ran for member groups



23 events held during Social Inclusion Week



9 Climate Action themed workshops held during Climate Action Weekend



3rd Working Together for Public Participation Event held



Communications



11% Increase in followers



15% Increase in followers



25 eBulletins sent



4,500 Website Visits

Contents

Foreward	1
Aims and Objectives	5
Our Network	6
Events	11
Building Capacity	14
Participation in Decision Making	18
Governance	22
Communications	24
Finance	25

Foreword

2025 was a year of steady progress, connection and continued commitment across Kildare Public Participation Network. Throughout the year, member groups, Representatives, Secretariat members and staff worked together to strengthen community participation in local decision-making and to ensure that the voices of the Community & Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental pillars were heard across a wide range of structures and policy processes.

Membership continued to grow, with new organisations joining in every quarter and contributing to an increasingly diverse and engaged network. Representatives played an active role on local authority committees, while the establishment of the Local Community Safety Partnership marked an important expansion of community involvement in local community safety and oversight.

The introduction of the new Advisory Groups also represented a significant development, creating more consistent and meaningful spaces for members to shape priorities and support their Representatives.

Across the year, the PPN delivered a wide programme of events, training and collaborative initiatives. From Social Inclusion Week and the Climate Action Series to plenary meetings, workshops and capacity-building supports, these activities reflected the breadth of interests and needs within the network. They also demonstrated the ongoing commitment of member groups to learning, partnership and collective action.

This Annual Report provides an overview of the work carried out during 2025, highlighting developments in membership, representation, governance, events, training and policy engagement. It aims to offer a clear and accessible picture of the PPN's role during the year, the contributions of its members, and the issues that shaped our collective work. Most importantly, it reflects the ongoing dedication of community organisations across Kildare who continue to give their time, expertise and energy to strengthening local democracy and community wellbeing.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Egan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Anthony Egan
Kildare PPN Facilitator



Aims and Objectives

AIMS

Kildare Public Participation Network exists to support meaningful community involvement in local decision-making. The core aims of the PPN are to:

- Facilitate and encourage public participation in local decision making
- Facilitate the representation of the Community and Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental groups onto decision making bodies
- Strengthen the capacity of organisations to contribute positively to the community

OBJECTIVES

To achieve these aims, the PPN works throughout the year to:

- Encourage greater participation in public decision making which leads to more effective and better targeted policies and programmes at local level and where necessary at a regional and national level
- Develop alternative methods and models of working which seek to directly involve and empower groups and individuals within the community
- Support Kildare PPN representatives to achieve the policy objective of Kildare PPN

Our Network

Membership

Kildare PPN’s membership continued to grow steadily throughout 2025. Across all four quarters, new groups joined from the Community & Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental pillars, reflecting ongoing interest in engaging with local decision-making and accessing the supports offered through the network.

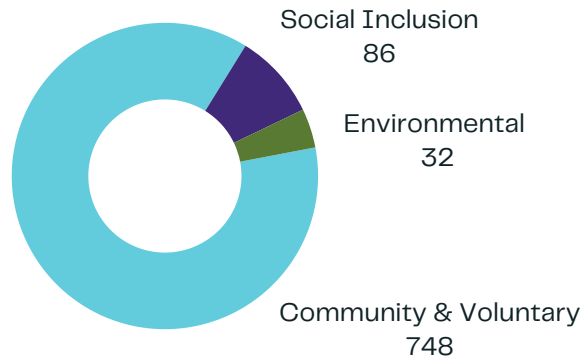


866

Total Members in 2025



87 new member groups in 2025



This represents consistent growth across the year, with new members joining in every quarter.

A few patterns emerged over the course of 2025:

- Growth remained steady rather than dramatic, with new groups joining in each quarter.
- The Community & Voluntary pillar continues to make up the majority of the network.
- The Environmental pillar did not see new members this year, though engagement remained strong through representation and advisory group activity.
- The Social Inclusion pillar saw small but consistent growth, supported by events such as Social Inclusion Week and ongoing outreach.

Overall, the membership base remains broad and diverse, representing a wide range of interests, needs and community perspectives across the county.



Representation

Throughout 2025, Kildare PPN continued to support community participation across a wide range of local authority committees, forums and decision-making structures. Representatives played an important role in bringing forward the priorities, concerns and perspectives of their pillars, ensuring that community voices were included in policy discussions and planning processes.

Across the year, the PPN maintained 19 representative seats on committees including Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the County Kildare Heritage Forum, and the Drehid Liaison Committee. In Q4, representation expanded further with the addition of six seats on the newly established Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP).

Committee Representation in 2025

Representation remained consistent across the year, with PPN members contributing to:

- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)
- County Kildare Heritage Forum
- Drehid Liaison Committee

Changes in Representation During the Year

A number of changes took place across 2025:

- New representatives joined SPCs and forums following nomination processes in Q1 and Q2.
- In Q3, Kildare PPN presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development, highlighting the pressures facing PPNs nationally and the need for sustainable funding.
- In Q4, the PPN was allocated six seats on the new Local Community Safety Partnership, marking a significant development in community involvement in local safety planning.

Support for Representatives

Throughout the year, representatives were supported through:

- Induction and information sessions
- Dedicated Representative Network Meetings
- Advisory Group meetings to help shape pillar priorities
- Ongoing communication and staff support
- Opportunities to contribute to submissions and consultations

These supports aimed to ensure that representatives had the information, context and connections needed to participate effectively in their roles.

Our Representatives

Kildare County Council Strategic Policy Committee's

Committee	Representative	Pillar
Planning, Enterprise & Economic Development	Colm Kenny	Environmental
Planning, Enterprise & Economic Development	P.J Fagan	Social Inclusion
Environmental Services & Water	Patricia Foley	Environmental
Environmental Services & Water	Denis Logan	Community & Voluntary
Housing and Regeneration	Mary Gill	Community & Voluntary
Housing and Regeneration	Pending Approval	Social Inclusion
Local Community, Cultural & Integration	Caroline McDonald	Environmental
Local Community, Cultural & Integration	Majella O'Keefe	Community & Voluntary
Local Community, Cultural & Integration	Deepak Kumar	Social Inclusion
Transportation, Mobility and Open Spaces	Eamon Mahoney	Community & Voluntary
Climate Action	Nathan Flaherty	Environmental
Climate Action	Louise Rawlins Traynor	Community & Voluntary

Local Community Development Committee

Representative	Pillar
Evonne Boland	Community & Voluntary
Michael Kenny	Community & Voluntary
Liz Denieffe	Environment
Jide Sadiq	Social Inclusion
Alan Kerry	Social Inclusion

Our Representatives

Local Community Safety Partnership

Representative	Pillar
Bernie Horgan	Athy MD
Dermot O'Donnell	Celbridge Leixlip MD
Amanda Reeves	Clane Maynooth MD
Niamh Pender	Kildare Newbridge MD
Tom Keightley	Naas MD
Mario Chukwudi	Youth Representative

County Kildare Heritage Forum

Representative	Pillar
Denis Dennehy	Community & Voluntary
Brian McCabe	Community & Voluntary

Staff



Grainne Fleming
Coordinator



Grace Clarke
Administration and
Communications Officer

Secretariat

Kildare PPN is overseen by a Secretariat of 11 members. Two members are elected from each of the three Electoral Pillars and the remaining five members, one each from the five Municipal Districts (MD). The Secretariat operates a flat structure.)

The role of the Secretariat is to:

- Ensure the aims and objectives of the Kildare PPN Network are met
- Ensure that member groups are informed of developments relevant to their groups Represent member group' interests
- Ensure the proper functioning of the PPN between plenary meetings
- Facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the plenary
- Support the staff to achieve the PPN's objectives through the implementation of the annual workplan
- Develop Kildare PPN into an effective collective voice for community groups in Kildare
- Engage with and support the PPN Representatives

2025 Secretariat Members



Anne Crowe

Social Inclusion



Anthony Egan

Community and
Voluntary



Imelda Chawke

Community
and Voluntary



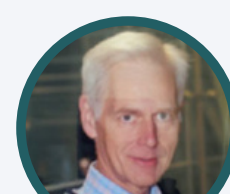
Martin Kelly

Social Inclusion



Stephine Obijas

Clane - Maynooth MD



Dermot O'Donnell

Celbridge - Leixlip MD

SECRETARIAT MEMBERS THAT STEPPED DOWN IN 2025

- P.J Fagan - Social Inclusion Seat
- Linda Walsh - Community and Voluntary Seat



Events

Throughout 2025, Kildare PPN delivered a varied programme of events designed to support member engagement, share information, and create opportunities for learning and connection. Events ranged from large county-wide initiatives to smaller, topic-specific sessions, reflecting the diverse needs and interests of member groups.

Plenary Meetings

Spring Plenary

The first Plenary of the year took place on March 1st at the Irish National Stud & Gardens. Members reviewed the 2025 Workplan and Budget, ratified minutes from the previous meeting, and received updates on representation and Secretariat vacancies. A workshop on representative support helped identify priorities for the year. Members were also offered a guided tour of the venue as part of the day.



Winter Plenary

Our Winter Plenary of 2025 took place in November and focused on governance updates, Secretariat changes, and the status of the CLG transition.

Members discussed policy ratifications, reviewed progress on the workplan, and considered a motion relating to the future of the CLG. Following discussion, the motion was withdrawn pending further information.



KCC Grants Information Evening

Kildare PPN in collaboration with Kildare County Council hosted an annual Grants information evening on January 22nd. This information evening saw one hundred and thirty-nine members join us online and fifty in-person members in the council chamber. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the grants team in the community section for working with us each year to deliver this essential session which is of huge benefit to our members. As a follow on from the grant's information evening, throughout February and March a number of venues were selected to hold a community grants roadshow. This roadshow was to assist member groups who needed additional support in completing grant applications, and the community grants team were on hand to offer one to one advise. The roadshows were supported by the library's in Leixlip, Athy, Naas, Newbridge and Maynooth.

Climate Action Series

From the 22nd - 24th of May, across three days, Kildare PPN delivered a series of nine workshops and events focused on sustainability, biodiversity, and practical climate action. Sessions covered topics such as sustainable living, energy efficiency, digital pollution, biodiversity, and community-led climate initiatives. Attendance varied, but engagement was strong among those who participated.





County Kildare Social Inclusion Week

The ninth annual Social Inclusion Week took place from September 25th - September 29th, featuring 23 events across Naas, Newbridge, Celbridge, Kildare, Athy, Leixlip and Maynooth.

Activities included cultural showcases, arts and crafts exhibitions, community celebrations, and awareness-raising events. The week highlighted the work of local organisations supporting people experiencing barriers such as poverty, disability, homelessness and resettlement.

The programme was delivered in partnership with County Kildare LEADER Partnership along with over 17 organisations and community groups within Kildare.



End of Year Representative Event

An end-of-year gathering was held for PPN Representatives and Secretariat members at Naas Racecourse. The event provided space for informal networking and reflection on the year's work.



Capacity Building

Supporting the capacity of community groups remained a core part of Kildare PPN's work throughout 2025. Training sessions were shaped by member feedback, emerging needs, and ongoing conversations at Plenaries, Advisory Groups and network meetings. Across the year, the PPN delivered a mix of practical skills-based workshops, governance-focused sessions, and information supports designed to strengthen confidence and participation.

Members Training Programme

One hundred and twenty-nine (129) member organisations attended training in 2025



Sources of Funding

This session provided a comprehensive overview of funding opportunities available to community and voluntary organisations. It covered national and local funding streams, typical application requirements, timelines, and common challenges. Participants received a practical funding manual outlining key grants, deadlines and links to further information. The session aimed to help groups plan ahead and feel more confident navigating the funding landscape.



Let's Talk... Conflict Resolution

Recognising that conflict can arise in any volunteer-led organisation, this session focused on understanding the sources of conflict and developing constructive approaches to resolving issues. Participants explored communication techniques, early intervention strategies and ways to maintain positive working relationships within committees.



Let's Talk... Governance

Members explored the core principles of good governance, including roles and responsibilities, compliance requirements and best practice for community organisations. The workshop emphasised peer-to-peer learning, allowing groups to share real-life experiences and challenges. The session aimed to demystify governance and help committees strengthen their internal structures.



Let's Talk AGMs & Committee Meetings

This workshop linked constitutions, AGMs and committee meetings, explaining how each element fits into the governance cycle. Participants reviewed sample agendas, discussed common issues that arise at meetings, and explored ways to make AGMs more effective and inclusive. The session also provided space for groups to raise practical questions about their own processes.



Canva for Beginners

This hands-on workshop introduced members to Canva as a simple, accessible design tool for creating posters, flyers and social media graphics. Participants learned how to use templates, add images and text, and apply basic design principles to support their group's communication needs.



Data Protection

Delivered in plain English, this workshop explained the fundamentals of GDPR, including data handling, storage, breaches and the responsibilities of committee members. Real-world examples helped groups understand how data breaches occur and what practical steps they can take to protect personal information.



Navigating the Bank and Financial Institutions for Community Organisations

This online workshop focused on the practical and legal aspects of managing a group's finances. Topics included opening and maintaining bank or credit union accounts, the responsibilities of trustees, Anti-Money Laundering requirements, and identifying beneficial owners. The session aimed to simplify financial processes and support good governance.



Canva Essentials

A follow-on session for those with some Canva experience, this workshop explored more advanced features such as image editing, text effects, animation and AI-assisted tools. The session aimed to help groups produce more polished and engaging materials for events, outreach and online communication.



Your Community, Your Council: Demystifying Local Government

Hosted by Social Justice Ireland, this session broke down how local government works, the role of Strategic Policy Committees, and where the PPN fits within these structures. The training aimed to help members understand how decisions are made and how they can influence local policy.



AI Awareness Training for Non-Profits

This introductory workshop provided an accessible overview of artificial intelligence and its growing relevance to community organisations. Participants learned about emerging tools, potential benefits, risks and ethical considerations. The session aimed to help groups understand how AI may influence communication, administration and service delivery in the future.

Other Training

Information & Secretariat Training

These sessions combined induction training for new Secretariat members with an information session for potential future members. The approach helped address recruitment challenges by giving interested individuals a clear understanding of the Secretariat's responsibilities, time commitments and role within the PPN structure.

Facilitation Skills Training

This session supported Advisory Group facilitators and other members interested in developing facilitation skills. Participants explored how to design and run effective meetings, manage group dynamics, encourage participation and use online tools. The training aimed to strengthen the functioning of Advisory Groups and support wider member engagement.





Working Together for Public Participation

In October, Kildare PPN and Kildare County Council jointly hosted Working Together for Public Participation, the latest in a series of collaborative events held in 2022 and 2023. The initiative aims to strengthen the relationship between KCC and the PPN, enhance mutual understanding, and support more effective engagement with communities across the county.

The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders and featured contributions from several speakers, including Marian Higgins, Director of Service with Kildare County Council, and Deputy Mark Wall. Participants also heard reflections from Michael Kenny, PPN Representative, who spoke about the experience of serving as a PPN Rep, and from Majella O’Keeffe of Naas Women’s Shed, who shared insights into her group’s involvement with the PPN.

The second half of the event centred on facilitated workshops, each exploring a key theme:

- How KCC and the PPN can work together more effectively
- Barriers to engagement with the PPN
- Opportunities for collaboration

A consistent message throughout the day was the importance of strong, collaborative relationships between all parties. Participants emphasised that meaningful engagement and open communication are essential to ensuring that the voices of community organisations are heard and that local policy reflects the needs and aspirations of people across Kildare.

We extend our sincere thanks to all speakers and participants for their valuable contributions to this ongoing work.



Participation in Decision Making

Supporting meaningful participation in local decision-making remained a central part of Kildare PPN's work throughout 2025. Across the year, representatives, Advisory Groups, staff and member organisations contributed to policy discussions, consultations and committee work at local, regional and national levels. While some representative seats remained vacant, engagement across the network remained active, with members contributing through workshops, submissions, elections and structured meetings.

Representative Elections and Appointments

Representative Elections

Calls for nominations were issued several times during the year to fill vacant seats on SPCs and other committees. Seats filled in 2025 included:

- Heritage Forum (Community and voluntary seat)
- Environmental Services & Water SPC (Environmental seat):
- Environmental Services & Water SPC (Community and voluntary)
- Housing & Regeneration SPC (Social Inclusion seat):
 - Seat filled in Q4 (awaiting confirmation from Kildare County Council).

Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP)

A significant development in Q4 was the establishment of the Kildare Local Community Safety Partnership, replacing the former Joint Policing Committees. Kildare PPN was allocated six seats, with the following appointments confirmed:

- Naas MD – Tom Knightly
- Celbridge/Leixlip MD – Dermot O'Donnell
- Athy MD – Bernie Horgan
- Clane/Maynooth MD – Amanda Reeves
- Kildare/Newbridge MD – Niamh Pender
- Youth Seat – Nominations received - Mario Chukwudi

This marks an important expansion of community involvement in local safety and wellbeing planning. We are also proud to welcome the first Kildare PPN youth Representative to Kildare PPN, a long term ambition for the Network.

Secretariat Elections

Throughout the year, several Secretariat seats became vacant, prompting multiple calls for nominations. Secretariat members appointed in 2025 include:

- Stephanie Obijias (Clane–Maynooth MD seat)
- Imelda Chalke (Naas MD seat).
- Martin Kelly (Social Inclusion seat)
- Michael Kenny (Environmental seat)
- Emer Conway (Environmental seat)
- Evonne Boland (Kildare–Newbridge MD seat)

Submissions and Policy Contributions

Across 2025, Kildare PPN contributed to a range of local and county-wide policy processes. Submissions and contributions included:

- Strategy to Support the Community & Voluntary Sector
- Review of the Kildare Integration Strategy 2020–2026
- Pre-Budget Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee
- County Kildare Heritage Plan 2025–2031
- Litter Management Plan 2025–2027
- Biodiversity Action Plan 2026–2031
- Draft Litter Management Plan
- Pre-Draft County Kildare Heritage Plan
- Local Democracy Taskforce

These submissions were informed by the Kildare PPN Wellbeing Statement, Advisory Group discussions, representative feedback and member feedback.

Oireachtas Committee Presentation

Kildare PPN was invited to address the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development, following our pre-budget submission. The presentation highlighted:

- Growth in PPN membership
- Increasing demands on PPN structures
- The need for sustainable funding and staff supports

This was an important opportunity to communicate the realities facing PPNs and the communities they represent.





Advisory Groups

A significant development in 2025 was the establishment of three Advisory Groups, one for each PPN pillar, Community & Voluntary, Social Inclusion, and Environmental. This was a key initiative for the year and emerged directly from member feedback gathered at the Plenary in 2024. It marked an important shift in how Kildare PPN supports participation and how members connect with their Representatives.

The decision to create Advisory Groups came after a period of reflection on the effectiveness of the previous Linkage Group model. Throughout 2024, it became increasingly clear that Linkage Groups were not providing the level of engagement or support that members or Representatives needed. Attendance was consistently low, and many volunteers told us that the terminology itself felt unclear and uninviting. Even when groups were convened, they often struggled to build momentum, and it was difficult to maintain ongoing engagement outside of specific consultations.

During the Plenary meeting in 2024, members highlighted a strong desire for a more structured, accessible and meaningful way to contribute to PPN priorities. In response, Kildare PPN explored alternatives and ultimately developed a new model built around three standing Advisory Groups: Community & Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental.

These groups were designed to meet regularly, provide a consistent space for discussion, and strengthen the link between members and their Representatives. The aim was to create a more predictable and supportive structure that would help Representatives bring forward well-informed, pillar-specific priorities to their committees.

When the Advisory Groups first formed in March 2025, members were invited to identify the issues that mattered most within their pillar. Despite the diversity of groups involved, several shared themes emerged across the three

pillars. Concerns ranged from community funding and access to public spaces, to transport, land use, habitat protection, environmental access and integration

These broad themes reflected the lived experiences of groups across the county and the challenges they encounter in their day-to-day work. From there, the Advisory Groups worked to refine these themes into more specific, actionable concerns. This process helped clarify what members wanted Representatives to bring forward, and which committees or forums were best placed to address each issue. By the end of the year, each Advisory Group had developed a clear set of priorities.

While the model is still evolving, it has laid a strong foundation for deeper engagement and more effective representation in 2026.

3

Community & Voluntary
Advisory Group Meetings

4

Environmental Advisory
Group Meetings

2

Social Inclusion Advisory
Group Meetings



Governance

Governance remained a central area of activity throughout 2025. Work continued to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and to meet all reporting obligations during the ongoing transition toward establishing a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG). Although the transition did not conclude in 2025, the PPN maintained its core governance responsibilities and upheld transparency across its processes.



Hosting Transition

The CLG continued to progress the transition during 2025. While the transition did not reach completion within 2025. It is expected to conclude in Q1 2026



Reporting to the Department of Rural and Community Development and Gaeltacht

Kildare PPN met its annual reporting obligations, including:

- Submission of the 2024 Income and Expenditure Report
- Submission of supporting documentation for 2025 funding, including the workplan, budget, MOU and SLA
- Submission of 2024 Annual Report

These submissions ensured continued compliance with DRCD requirements and supported the release of core and support worker funding.



Kildare PPN Strategic Plan 2022–2026

Kildare PPN have completed or commenced 98% of ongoing objectives in our Strategic Plan. These objectives will continue year on year as we continue to achieve all aims and objectives by the end of 2026.



Policies and Compliance

The following policies were reviewed or updated during 2025:

- Election Policy
- Representative Charter



Transparency

To ensure full transparency, the following documents are available for public viewing on the PPN website:

- Secretariat meeting minutes
- Plenary meeting minutes
- Kildare PPN Income & Expenditure Reports
- Kildare PPN Quarterly Reports
- Kildare Annual Reports
- Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreement

SECRETARIAT MEETING ATTENDANCE

Name	J	F	P	M	A	M	J	J	S	O	P	D
Anne Crowe	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Anthony Egan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Dermot O'Donnell	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y			Y	
P.J Fagan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y							
Linda Walsh												
Imelda Chawke							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Stephanie Obijias								Y		Y	Y	Y
Martin Kelly								Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Communication

Communications continued to play an important role in supporting member engagement throughout 2025. Across the year, Kildare PPN focused on providing clear, timely information through social media, e-bulletins and the website. The aim was to ensure that member groups had access to updates on funding, consultations, training opportunities and events, as well as information relevant to their participation in local decision-making.



Mass emails

75 news items sent



e-Bulletins

25 e-Bulletins sent



2025 Website Stats

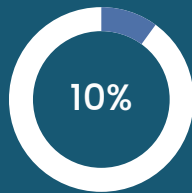
4,500 Active Users

Kildare PPN's social media channels saw steady growth across all four quarters. Engagement remained consistent, and social media continued to serve as a useful tool for sharing information quickly with members and the wider community.

Social Media



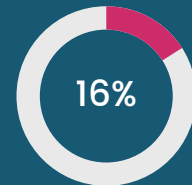
2748 Followers



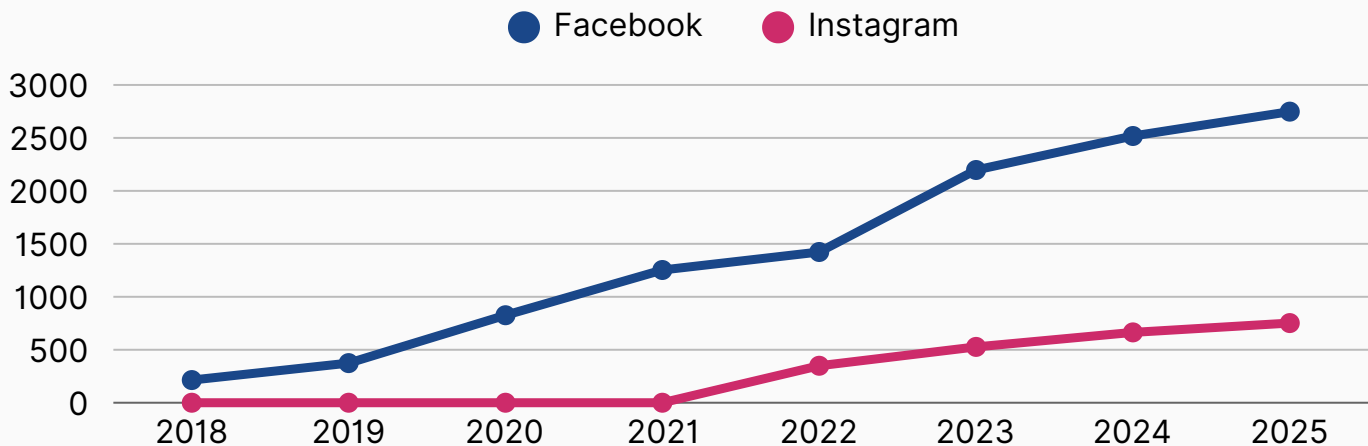
% Increase in followers in 2025



752 Followers



% Increase in followers in 2025



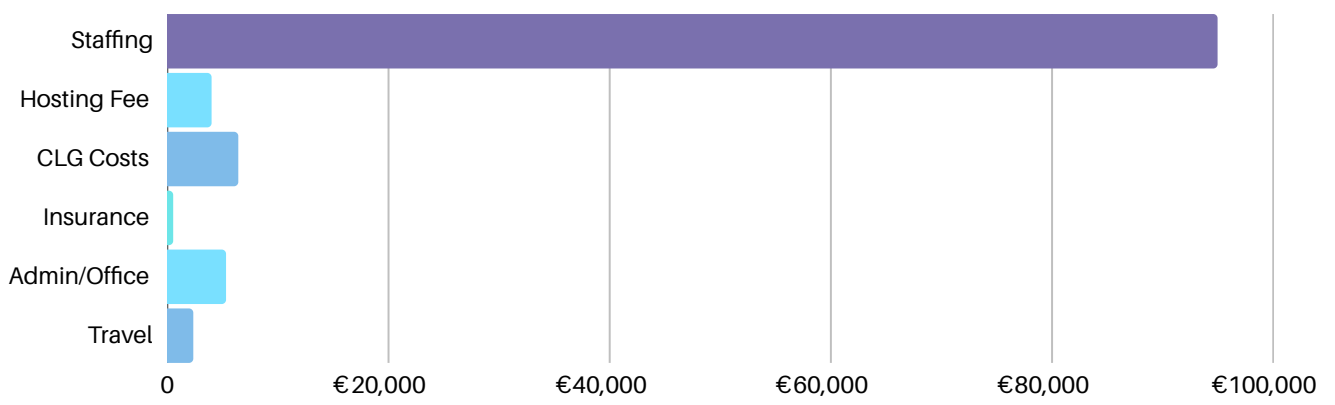


FINANCE REPORT

Kildare PPN’s finances for 2025 reflect a year of steady activity, ongoing operational costs, and continued investment in training, events and member supports. Funding was received from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCDD) and Kildare County Council through both core and support worker allocations. Expenditure remained in line with national guidelines and the approved 2025 Workplan and Budget.



Operational Costs



Programme Costs

