

Constitution of County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum

1. Title

The Forum shall be called the County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum (here after CLCVF)

2. Mission Statement

“To promote inclusive community participation in the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of County Longford.”

3. Objectives

3.1 To provide a Forum for Community and Voluntary Groups to network, build linkages, consult and be consulted on a wide variety of topics relating to the Social, Economic, and Cultural Development of County Longford.

3.2 To facilitate people to empower themselves through collective participation in Local, Voluntary and Community Development.

3.3 To foster in particular, the inclusion of Groups and Organisations with a focus on tackling disadvantage and social exclusion.

3.4 To act as a nomination body for the Community and Voluntary sector in County Longford.

3.5 To support new and existing groups, to secure resources in order to meet the needs identified in local communities.

3.6 To act as a Forum for the sharing of common issues, ideas and interests.

3.7 To provide a bridge for the exchange of information between local communities, statutory agencies and non-governmental bodies, National and International.

3.8 To facilitate the involvement of local communities in policy development and participation in community development at local level.

3.9 To become a strong and effective pillar in all policy areas with appropriate representation on all relevant bodies.

4. Overall Structure

- 4.1 The CLCVF shall be composed of its affiliated member groups in the County. It will have an overall Steering Group.
- 4.2 There will be a single County Forum to represent the interests of the community and voluntary groups within the County. In addition to the existing criteria for sectoral/issue-based representation, membership of the Steering Group will incorporate a balanced spread of geographical representation. Responsibility for maintaining this balance (in so far as possible) will rest with the CLCVF.

5. Criteria for Membership

- 5.1 Groups/Organisations must be active within County Longford and have relevance in the locality.
- 5.2 Groups/Organisations must be open to new members, hold A.G.M.'s and regular meetings and must be broadly representative and accountable.
- 5.3 Groups/Organisations must be in existence for a minimum of twelve months prior to affiliation. The steering group by consensus may waive this condition.
- 5.4 The Group/Organisation must have an adopted set of rules or constitution.
- 5.5 The Group/Organisation must have a registered membership of at least 10 persons.
- 5.6 The Groups/Organisations must be voluntary and community based.
- 5.7 State or Semi-State Agencies will not be eligible to be represented on the CLCVF.
- 5.8 Where a conflict of interest is seen to exist between the aims of the CLCVF and any individual member, it is incumbent on the Chairperson to request that individual to absent themselves from the decision-making process regarding the conflicting issue.
- 5.9 The decision to affiliate a Group/Organisation for participation in the CLCVF will rest with the Steering Group, with a facility to appeal to the next General Meeting of the CLCVF following the decision of the Steering Group.
- 5.10 A member must step down if he/she no longer represents the organisation from which they were selected. This vacancy will normally be filled by another representative from the same organisation unless otherwise decided by the Forum.

6. Steering Group

- 6.1 There will be a Steering Group of the CLCVF comprising 30 members.
- 6.2 The Steering Group will regulate the affairs of the CLCVF between General meetings.
- 6.3 The Steering Group has the power to make nominations on behalf of the CLCVF to other bodies.
- 6.4 The Steering Group and the CLCVF as far as possible act by consensus, however, where a vote is required it shall be by secret ballot and a simple majority will suffice.
- 6.5 The CLCVF at its Annual General Meeting shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, PRO, together with any other Officers as may be deemed necessary and appropriate. These officers will be members of the Steering Group. The CLCVF will also elect the members of the Steering Group at this meeting.
- 6.6 A person can only act as a chairperson of the CLCVF for two consecutive years. The Steering Group may appoint sub committees for any purpose it deems fit from time to time to be chaired by a member of the Steering Group.
- 6.7 Secretarial and Administrative support for the Steering Group may be provided by the Director of Community and Enterprise; alternatively, adequate funding shall be provided to a third party for this purpose.
- 6.8 The Steering Group shall hold a minimum of six meetings a year. Attendance records shall be kept at meetings and reported to the AGM of the CLCVF.
- 6.9 The Director of Community & Enterprise and his/her nominees shall support the operation of the CLCVF and the Steering Group. They shall be eligible to attend and contribute to all meetings. They shall have no voting rights.
- 6.10 Failure to attend three consecutive meetings of the steering group and of various outside without an acceptable reason will disqualify the individual from membership. The Steering group will request a nomination for a replacement from the forum affiliates.
- 6.10 (a) Only members of the steering group may represent the CLCVF on outside bodies. In the interest of ensuring rotation the steering group shall determine the period of office on outside bodies.
- 6.11 Confidentiality must be observed at all times particularly in relation to nominees representing the Forum on other structures. However this does not preclude the dissemination of information of a general nature to the wider community.

7. General Meetings

7.1 The inaugural meeting of the CLCFV shall be held not later than three months after the adoption of this constitution.

7.2 The Annual General Meeting of the CLCFV must take place within 14 months of the previous Annual General Meeting or an Inaugural Meeting and not before 11 months has passed from the date of such previous meeting.

7.3 The term of nomination to the various outside bodies shall be for a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years.

7.4 Only affiliated groups can attend the Annual General Meeting of CLCFV. They must notify their two representatives in writing to the Director of Community & Enterprise fourteen days prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting.

7.5 In exceptional circumstances the Steering Group may by agreement accept nominations from affiliated groups to attend at AGM's where notice of representatives is given less than the required fourteen day period.

7.6 At least two meetings a year of the CLCFV shall take place.

8. Term of Service

8.1 Members of the Steering Group and any other nominees to other Bodies shall not serve more than three consecutive terms.

9. Notice of Meetings

9.1 Notice of all meetings will be issued at least ten days prior to the date of the meeting.

10. Quorum

10.1 The Quorum for all meetings of the CLCFV will be twenty.

The Quorum for meetings of the Steering Group will be ten.

Where a Quorum is not present the meeting can proceed, however decisions will not be taken and will be deferred to a further meeting.

10.2 Each Group/Organisation affiliated to the CLCVF will be entitled to send two delegates to meetings; however, each Group/Organisation will have one vote only where it arises.

10.3 Substitutes or representatives at meetings is not acceptable unless cleared by the chairperson.

11. Special General Meetings

11.1 Special General Meetings of the CLCVF may be called in one of the following ways:-

- The Steering Group may summon a Special General Meeting
- On the signature of 25 registered Groups/Organisations stating the purpose of such a meeting and on giving seven days notice to the Office of the Director of Community & Enterprise.
- The Director of Community & Enterprise may summon a Special General Meeting in consultation with the Steering Group.

12. Length of Meetings

12.1 Meetings of the Steering Group and CLCVF shall not last longer than 2 hours. If a meeting decides, it can continue for a further half hour.

13. Amendments to the Constitution

13.1 This Constitution may be amended at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting called for that purpose by a two-thirds majority of the eligible members present and entitled to vote at the meeting. Draft amendments must be submitted to the Director of Community & Enterprise at least fourteen days prior to the date of the meeting. The draft amendment must be circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.