

East Meath – North Dublin Grid Upgrade

Community Forum

7.30pm, 22nd April 2024, via Zoom

Attending (members):	Philip McCormack (Batterstown Village Enhancement Assoc.), Emer Lynch (Rathregan Batterstown NS), Walter Moran (Dunboyne AFC), Sheelagh Morris (St Margarets Action Committee), Liam O Gradaigh (St. Margaret's GAA), Denis O'Leary (Kilbride Tidy Towns), Cllr. Caroline O'Reilly (Meath Co. Co.), Pearse Sutton (St. Margaret's The Ward), Aoife Walls (Scoil Bhríd NS).
Apologies:	Deirdre Arthur (Craobh Chiarain GAA), David Branagan (Fingal Chamber), Helena Merriman (St. Margaret's Parish Hall Committee), Aidan O'Toole (Craobh Chiarain GAA), (Pat Smith (Co. Meath Chamber)
Facilitation:	Harriet Emerson

Welcome & Agenda

All those attending were welcomed and Bobby McCormack of Development Perspectives was introduced. Bobby has extensive experience in all areas of development as a researcher, lecturer and practitioner, working within in Ireland and internationally in development education.

It was agreed that following Bobby's workshop on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, there would be a brief discussion on further meetings for the Forum for the year.

Minutes of meeting on 25th March 2024 & matters arising

Those who were present at the meeting approved the draft minutes of the 25th March 2024 via Zoom (previously circulated). No matters were identified for further discussion at this point.

Workshop on UN Sustainable Development Goals

Bobby proceeded to take the Forum members present through an interactive presentation on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He discussed the background to their development, their purpose and timeline; how they are broken down into targets with indicators for each, and their basis on the biosphere which supports all life and so our society and economy. He identified challenges of low public awareness of the SDGs and shortcomings, specifically around the issues of conflict and human rights, and looked at progress towards achieving the goals, particularly in Ireland.

At several points in the presentation there was discussion amongst those present touching on issues including;

- Monitoring of progress and where information can be found,
- The challenge of transitioning to sustainable agriculture and protecting biodiversity, and the potential conflict between the ambitions for forest cover and the need for land for food production,
- The potential of communities reaching out to third level colleges to work in partnership on initiatives that support delivery of the goals,
- The potential for overwhelm when considering the SDGs as a whole and the need for community groups to focus on making their own contributions, and examples of these were discussed.

Bobby will share the slides from his presentation and also a link to inspiring "Stories of Action" from around the Country that may encourage communities to consider what they can do that supports achieving the SDGs.

Any other business

No additional items of business were raised for discussion.

Next and Future meeting

It was agreed that EirGrid will identify 2-3 possible dates when representatives from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and Sustainable Energy Communities initiative (SEC) can make a presentation to the Forum on how their work and funding opportunities can dovetail with community initiatives that may be funded under the EMND Community Benefit Fund, ideally in late May/ early June. Harriet will then circulate a brief survey for all members to identify the date which suits most members for this session.

It was felt that the agreed equivalent session with LEADER representatives should be scheduled for after the summer months, ideally in September.

There was discussion about the need for the Forum members and ultimately the wide community to also receive information and support on biodiversity action at community level, as this is the area where people feel least confident to develop initiatives. It was agreed that a further meeting for the Autumn be arranged with appropriate experts to lead a workshop on this topic.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.