

How does it work?

The Community and Voluntary Forum is comprised of four area fora, a county remit area forum and the Community and Voluntary County Forum.

Each Area Forum elects representatives to the Community and Voluntary County Forum. This election is undertaken following the Local Elections every 5 years. There are 21 representatives on the **County Forum**.



Meetings

Meetings are held on a quarterly basis.

Community and Enterprise Section, Westmeath County Council, convene and facilitate the meetings of each forum and keep records of meetings. Each Forum appoints its chairperson. Decisions are by **consensus** as far as possible, and meetings are arranged at convenient times and locations, which are easily accessible.

How to become involved?

Community and Voluntary groups/organisations can become involved by completing an application form, and fulfilling the following criteria:

The following criteria apply:

- Be able to demonstrate that the organisation/group has been in existence for twelve months prior to completing the application form.
- Have a listed membership of at least six people.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting at which Officers are elected.
- Be an independent body, with decision-making powers, and not a sub committee of any other group/organisation.
- Have a written statement of aims and objectives.

Want to know more?

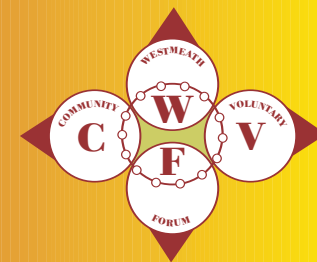
Further information about the Community and Voluntary Forum is available on the following website: www.westmeathcoco.ie/countydevelopmentboard/communityforum

Contact:

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Westmeath Community & Voluntary Forum

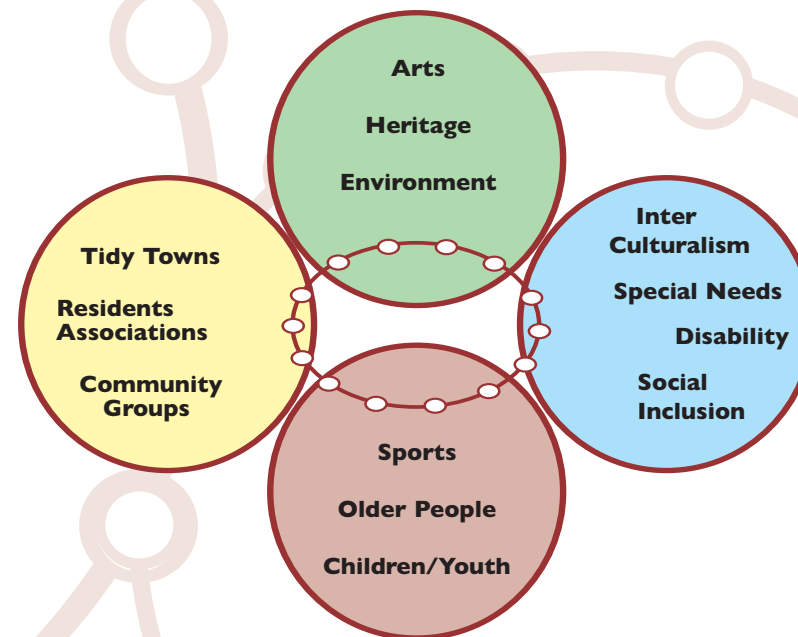


What is it?

The Community and Voluntary Forum was established through Local Government for the collective **voice** of the Community and Voluntary sector. It is a social partner in matters relating to local and county development in Westmeath.

Who is it for?

All active Community and Voluntary organisations in County Westmeath.



What does it do?

The Community and Voluntary Forum facilitates the **representation** and **participation** of the community and voluntary sector in matters relating to Westmeath County Development Board and Westmeath County Council.

The Community and Voluntary Forum is a mechanism for **active citizenship**.

“Active citizenship is the active role of people, communities and voluntary organisations in decision making which directly affects them.”

Government White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity (2000).

Why be involved?

The benefits of being involved in the Community and Voluntary Forum:

Social Partner	The Community and Voluntary Forum facilitates the Community and Voluntary sector to fulfil its role as a recognised social partner.	Best Practice	The Community and Voluntary Forum is a mechanism through which learning and best practice is promoted.
Representation	<p>The Community and Voluntary Forum nominates representatives on to various organisations and bodies to be the voice of the sector for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midland Regional Drugs Taskforce • Westmeath Sports Partnership • Social Inclusion Measures Working Group • Westmeath County Childcare Committee • Athlone Regional Sports Centre • Water Monitoring Committee, W.C.C. • Disability Monitoring Committee, W.C.C. • Westmeath Volunteer Centre 	Consultation	<p>The Community and Voluntary Forum is a mechanism for consultation with the sector by agencies at national, regional and local level for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Citizenship Taskforce Report • Midlands Waste Management Plan • County Development Plan • Local Sports Strategy • Disability • Recreation and Playground schemes • Development of infrastructure and social plans • Citizens Information
County Development Bd.	The Community and Voluntary Forum nominates two representatives on to Westmeath County Development Board.	Information exchange	<p>The Community and Voluntary Forum facilitates the sharing of information throughout the sector for example, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking • Meetings • Seminars • Newsletters
Westmeath County Council	<p>The Community and Voluntary Forum nominates representatives on the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) of Westmeath County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment, SPC • Planning & Economic Development, SPC • Housing, Social & Cultural, SPC • Transportation & Infrastructure, SPC 	Insurance Scheme	The Community and Voluntary Forum facilitates access to the National Community and Voluntary Forum Affordable Insurance Scheme
Volunteerism	The Community and Voluntary Forum actively promotes volunteering.	Networking	The Community and Voluntary Forum is a mechanism for networking within the Community and Voluntary sector.
Funding	The Community and Voluntary Forum facilitates groups/organisations to access funding sources and methods.	Newsletter	The Community and Voluntary Forum publishes a newsletter at least annually.
Mailing list	The Community and Voluntary Forum operates a mailing list through which information of interest to the Community and Voluntary sector is circulated.	Active Citizenship	Westmeath Community and Voluntary Forum strengthens groups/organisation's Active Citizenship role and gives the citizen a voice in local and county matters.
Training	<p>The Community and Voluntary Forum facilitates training, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community leadership • Group development 		