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Football

Hurling

Club

General

WHERE WE ALL BELONG MANIFESTO

**WE ALL BELONG HERE
IN THIS PLACE. AT THIS TIME**

WE BELONG NOT BECAUSE OF WHO WE ARE OR WHERE WE COME FROM

BEING HERE MEANS BELONGING

BELONGING MEANS KNOWING YOU'RE PART OF A COMMUNITY

A COMMUNITY THAT HAS A PLACE FOR ALL

WHERE POTENTIAL IS NURTURED

WHERE INDIVIDUALS BECOME TEAMS

WHO HONOUR THE LEGACY OF THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE

AND STRIVE TO BUILD A LEGACY OF THEIR OWN

SOME OF US PLAY

SOME OF US USED TO PLAY. SOME OF US NEVER PLAYED

WE ALL BELONG

BELONGING MEANS HAVING A VOICE

MEANS BEING ABLE TO SAY WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT

BEING LISTENED TO

BELONGING MEANS RESPECTING EACH OTHER

MEANS BEING THERE FOR EACH OTHER

ON THE PITCH. OFF THE PITCH

BELONGING MEANS ROLLING OUR SLEEVES UP AND DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

WE ALL BELONG WHETHER IT'S OUR FIRST DAY OR OUR HUNDREDDTH YEAR

WE ALL BELONG HERE BECAUSE THIS PLACE BELONGS TO US ALL

OUR GAA

WHERE WE ALL BELONG



hope it resonates and is proudly displayed by clubs just like theirs right across the island and indeed around the world.”

GAA Director General Tom Ryan added: “Today serves of a reminder that we all come from clubs and that there is a place for us all in the GAA.

“Next week, you’ll also see this brought to life in a campaign that celebrates belonging. It features GAA people and the cut and thrust of GAA life across our GAA digital and social networks, as well as on TV, radio and in print.

“I look forward to the roll-out of this initiative in the weeks, months and years ahead and I would encourage anyone connected to GAA to get behind the manifesto and give it as much support as possible.”

The GAA is encouraging every club to get behind this manifesto and to where possible have it displayed on your club premises.

Our GAA Manifesto - A2 Print Guidelines

We hope our GAA Manifesto is displayed everywhere Gaelic games are played and A2 print ready files in English and as Gaeilge have been sent to every club.

These can be supplied directly to your local printer but please note that A2 is the minimum size the Manifesto should be printed.

Printed A2 posters will be sent to every County Board from w/c 15th April and can be collected from there alternatively.

Creating a Permanent Sign

If you would like to display the Manifesto as a permanent sign at your club (similar to that unveiled at the manifesto launch), arrangements can be made with your local printer to survey and measure an appropriate space.

The GAA Marketing Team will supply the artwork to the given specifications for your own printing. Contact the Marketing Team at marketing@gaa.ie with the measurements.

Our GAA Blue pantone colour is GAA BLUE (PMS 308).

The wording, design and colour of the manifesto should not be altered in any way.

Print Material Recommendations

We recommend the following:

- 3mm dibond or cbond (aluminium composite) for long term external signs - this should be fitted with a protective frame to cover the sharp edges of the board.
- 3 or 5mm foamex would be suitable for long term internal signs.
- Corriboard is an alternative for both internal and external use.

Once your printed Manifesto is proudly displayed at the heart of your club, we’d love if you shared a picture on social media using the #GAABelong and tag @officialgaa.

The GAA is encouraging every club to get behind this manifesto and to where possible have it displayed on your club premises.



WHERE WE ALL BELONG

LÁ NA gCLUBANNA 2019 – GET ACTIVE, GET INVOLVED



A booklet advising clubs on communicating the day, budget and fundraising, volunteer recruitment and activities, can be downloaded from

www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/getting-involved/la-na-gclubanna

“The vision of the GAA is that everybody has the opportunity to be welcomed to take part in our games and culture, to participate fully, to grow and develop and to be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement with our Association.”

Lá na gClubanna is a day when clubs will have the opportunity to showcase all that is

positive about Cumann Lúthchleas Gael in communities the length and breadth of the country and of course internationally too.

This activity has been a feature of our club network for many years and in many instances our club units organise these events on an annual basis. Last August we also had the Gaelic Sunday Centenary celebration which

was another chance for Club's to show their pride in their place and role in their community.

This is an opportunity for the GAA to highlight the important role of members, players, sup-porters' and families in our Association and for the local community to have fun. It will also provide clubs with

an opportunity to engage with potential new members.

Bainigí sult as an ócáid agus go néirí go geall leis cibe áit in a bhfuil sibh ag caomhnú agus ag spreagadh ár gcluichí agus ár gcultúr.

Le gach dea ghuí,
**Micheál Mac Concharraige, Cathaoirleach
Coiste Náisiúnta na gClubanna**

ARE YOUR GOALPOSTS SAFE AND SECURE?



The GAA has signed up to a multi-sport campaign seeking to highlight the importance of goalpost safety in our clubs.

Tragic accidents which happened in the past can be avoided and clubs are urged to follow the below checklist whenever they are using goalposts – particularly portable goalposts used at juvenile level.

Check It–

Check all club Goalposts including equipment for securing posts when in use to ensure they

are in good condition. Goalposts should be certified to NSAI standard IS 356 & IS 358. All nets must be secured behind the goal post and behind the goal to minimise trip hazards and the risk of fingers or hands being caught in the net.

Homemade goals should not be used as they do not contain the built-in safety features of certified goals and may be particularly hazardous when used at underage activities.

Damaged goals should immediately be removed from the club property to prevent further use.

Secure It –

Goalposts must be anchored securely as per manufacturers guidelines. Portable goals for indoor use should only be used indoors. Portable goals for outdoor use should only be used outdoors. All portable goals must be secured when in use. Portable goals when not in use should be removed and safely stored.

Test It –

Test all goals to ensure they are secure before all training or matches. All coaches must be able to safely assemble, and secure temporary goals used in underage training.

Respect It –

Goals are not toys and should only be used for training or fixtures. No person should be allowed to climb or swing on goals.

AHEAD OF LOCAL AND EURO ELECTIONS – A REMINDER OF GAA NON-POLITICAL GUIDELINES

In advance of the upcoming elections, all clubs are reminded that the GAA does not permit use of its grounds or ancillary facilities for party political purposes or for other purposes that are clearly politically motivated or linked to a politically motivated group.



1 IN 5 PARENTS CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE THEIR KIDS INVOLVED IN SPORT

- **Nearly 60 per cent of Irish parents don't know the recommended amount of daily exercise for their children.**
- **86 per cent claim excessive use of technology is to blame for holding back their children from being sporty.**
- **Kellogg's teamed up with Dr Malie Coyne, Clinical Child Psychologist, to discuss the benefits of getting children mentally and physically active this summer.**
- **Kelloggs GAA Cúl Camps 2019 launch in a blaze of glory at Croke Park**

New research reveals a fifth of Irish parents can't afford to get their children involved in sport with almost a third, (31 per cent) of parents saying that they just don't have the time to bring to take them to training or games.

As a consequence, worryingly, 66 per cent revealed that their children rely too heavily on technology, with YouTube and TV being the biggest culprits even though nearly all parents surveyed (86 per cent) agree that excessive use of technology has a negative effect on their children.

According to Irish guidelines, all children should be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day to include muscle-strengthening, flexibility

and bone-strengthening.

However, the survey of 1,000 parents, carried out to mark the launch of Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps, also exposed the fact that nearly 60 per cent of Irish parents do not know the recommended daily amount of physical activity their children should have, with a third believing 30 minutes is adequate.

Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps are a cost-effective way for parents to give the gift of sport and the outdoors to their children this summer.

Of the Irish mams and dads surveyed, 67 per cent said they had signed their children up for summer camp this year. 74 per cent want to increase their children's exercise intake, 56 per cent want them to spend more time outdoors and more than half recognise that playing sport on a regular basis will help with their mental health and wellbeing.

But the struggle to keep kids active in the school break remains on the top of parent's minds with 65 per cent confessing they feel relieved when their children return to school in September. More than half claiming it is difficult to keep their children busy during the summer holidays with activities other than technology.

Dr Malie Coyne, Clinical Child Psychologist,



states that: "Engaging in Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps is a win-win for both children and their parents. Apart from the significant benefits for children's physical health, taking part is hugely beneficial for their social and emotional health as it provides them with crucial opportunities to manage their feelings, to release tension, to feel a sense of belonging with their peers, and most importantly to HAVE FUN!"

"For parents, it is wonderful to know that so many of their children's needs are being met by partaking. My girls loved it last year and they will definitely be joining their pals for another adventure this summer!"

Nearly all of the parents surveyed can see the benefits of playing sport in their children. The impact on children can be seen in their social skills (83 per cent) and their confidence (81 per cent).

Michael Murphy, one of this year's Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps ambassadors, said: "I know first-hand the benefits of taking part in sport from a young age. Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps is all about nurturing the next generation, getting children active and powering play."

Adding, Ruth Hughes, Head of Kellogg's Ireland, said: 'Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps is

Ireland's biggest children's summer camp, and this year, we once again look forward to welcoming over 150,000 children from across Ireland for a week of fun, friendship and sport.

"Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps has a reputation as one of the best camps to keep children entertained and active during the summer holidays, and we know the value that this has for parents."

"Kellogg's is committed to supporting families to make healthier choices at breakfast."

Fueling play for children across Ireland this summer, Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps registration is open at [gaa.ie/kelloggsculcamps](https://www.gaa.ie/kelloggsculcamps) now.

Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael John Horan said: "The growth of the Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps has been one of our great success stories with an 8 per cent increase in attendance year on year in 2018 alone.

"That boys and girls continue to flock to the camps in such number is testament to our clubs and coaches and the fun environment they help to create. My thanks to Kellogg's whose ongoing support of the Cúl Camps helps bring us into homes everywhere and I would especially like to acknowledge the hosting of camps by our international units."

GAA stars Sinead Aherne, Sarah Dervan, Declan Hannon and Micheal Murphy, have been announced as this year's ambassadors for Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps 2019.

A place on a Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps costs €60 for the first child; €55 for the second child; €45 for the third and subsequent children. In the North, the cost is £50 for the first child, £45 for the second child, £40 for the third and subsequent children.



GAA ANNOUNCES LIST OF OFFICIAL CHARITIES

The GAA has announced its list of official charities for the year ahead.

Five charities from around the country and representing a range of different causes were selected by the Association to be charity partners for this year.

The charities were unveiled at a special photo call at Croke Park earlier today. The charities are;

- Western Alzheimers
- Down Syndrome Ireland
- Marie Keating Foundation
- Enable Ireland
- Focus Ireland

Each of the designated charities will receive a €20,000 donation from the GAA.

This is part of an on-going GAA initiative stretching back to 2008 that has seen the GAA select a number of specific charitable organisations and foundations each year in a bid to assist them in raising awareness around their work and also championing their fund-raising efforts throughout the coming year.

Seán Ó hÓráin, Uachtarán CLG, said: “We are delighted to be here to support five very diverse but all equally noble and significant organisations and declare them to be official GAA charities for 2019.

“This year we will have reached the €1.2m mark for official charity donations since 2008 through this Croke Park initiative and have now helped 45 different charities. We are delighted to have been able to provide some assistance to so many worthy causes in that time.

“In addition to this donation, the official charities will be the beneficiaries of the money raised by charity events undertaken by the staff at Croke Park this year such as the annual staff charity cycle which heads from Croke Park to Carrick-on-Shannon on April 26.

“The GAA is about communities and people working for them. Our network of clubs is also responsible for raising huge sums of invaluable support for a whole host of charities at home and abroad through their own local initiatives - and I pay tribute to their generosity.

“I look forward to working with and assisting the five official GAA charities for 2019.”

John O'Sullivan, CEO of Enable Ireland, and Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael John Horan pictured at Croke Park.



JOHN WEST RENEWS NATIONAL FÉILE SPONSORSHIP UNTIL 2022

Mayo footballer Lee Keegan joined Limerick hurler Aaron Gillane, Mayo ladies footballer Niamh Kelly and Kilkenny camogie player Anna Farrell in Croke Park to launch the 2019 John West National Féile and to announce that John West will renew its sponsorship of the National Féile for a further four years until 2022.

The John West Féile competitions are national festivals for Gaelic Football, Ladies Gaelic Football, Handball, Hurling, Camogie and Rounders played at Under 14 level. This is the fourth year that John West will sponsor the underage tournament, which is the biggest competition of its kind. Throughout its sponsorship of the Féile, John West has focused on encouraging children to participate in Gaelic Games while emphasising the importance natural protein plays in fuelling a young athlete.

Speaking at the announcement, John West Country Manager Peter Rooney said: “We are delighted to extend our partnership with Féile until 2022. The Féile is a unique series of events which hold a special place in our hearts. The competitions highlight the importance of sport in children’s lives, which is something John West is truly passionate

about, and it also allows us to educate on the importance of protein in children’s diets.”

Uachtarán CLG John Horan said: “Féile is one of the most significant and successful initiatives in the history of the GAA. It plays a hugely important role in the massive work which takes place within underage coaching and development every year.

“Last year there were 696 teams playing 1,507 games at the various John West Féile finals events in football, hurling, Ladies football and camogie. In addition, more than 80 teams contested Féile finals across Handball and Rounders.

“The ethos and tradition around Féile where teams travel to take part and stay with host clubs is unique to this competition. It adds to the sense of occasion and many great friendships and club links for life get made this way as young people celebrate our games and showcase their skills.

“I am delighted that a partner of the calibre of John West recognises the value of this work in developing young people. I thank them and all involved in preparing and hosting and organising and look forward to another great Féile summer.”



John West Ambassadors Anna Farrell, Lee Keegan, Niamh Kelly, and Aaron Gillane. John West has been a sponsor of the Féile since 2016 and announced it will continue its support until 2022.

Féile na nGael will take place on Friday, June 7th – Sunday, June 9th in Cork
Féile Peil na nÓg will take place on Friday, June 28th – Sunday June 30th across Connacht

BANK OF IRELAND CELTIC CHALLENGE GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

In this, the fourth year of the competition, the Bank of Ireland Celtic Challenge continues to go from strength to strength by providing 1,300 players with a programme of 138 matches, which will commence in May and conclude in June 2019.

For 2019, a total of 44 teams from all 32 counties will take part across eight groups. The teams include a mixture of County teams as well as sides that represent regions from within counties, e.g. Galway McDonagh and East Cork.

Details of the competition, which is sponsored by Bank of Ireland were unveiled at Croke Park earlier today by Uachtarán CLG John Horan.

John Horan said: “The Bank of Ireland Celtic Challenge is a key avenue for the growth and promotion of Hurling nationwide. The competition has been hugely successful in providing players with a meaningful programme of games that helps them to develop their skills within a structure that encourages respect and learning. The success of the competition is evidenced by the fact that this year Wicklow will be entering two teams – Wicklow Blue and Wicklow Gold – to compete in the competition.”

Liam Sheedy, Munster Provincial Director,



Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael John Horan with Bank of Ireland Ambassadors, from left, Clare hurler Podge Collins, Ballyhale Shamrocks manager Henry Shefflin, Tipperary hurler Séamus Callanan, and Tipperary manager Liam Sheedy at the launch of the Bank of Ireland Celtic Challenge 2019 at Croke Park in Dublin.

Bank of Ireland added: “At Bank of Ireland we are very committed to supporting today’s youth to be inspired to reach their full potential. This is our third year of sponsoring this really unique competition and I thrilled to see it grow once again this year. 2019 has been a superb year to date for hurling across all competitions and it certainly warrants the title of The Jewel in the Crown in GAA circles. I am very passionate about the growth of hurling in this country – if we want to deliver increased participation then it’s not just the

traditional hurling strongholds we need to focus on but equally those counties who are working so hard to grow the wonderful game of Hurling. The Bank of Ireland Celtic Challenge is certainly playing its part in this regard which I am absolutely delighted with.”

All players will be provided with a bespoke Celtic Challenge jersey as a memento of the competition. The jerseys have been designed exclusively for each of the 44 teams and are sponsored by O’Neill’s House

of Sport. Cormac Farrell from O’Neill’s House of Sport said: “O’Neill’s are delighted to be official kit partner to this year’s 2019 BOI Celtic Challenge. Our experience of this event is hugely positive in the manner hurling is promoted to the youth of Ireland. Playing in a National Hurling competition whets the appetite of the players and sets the standards for their future hurling careers. We look forward to a feast of quality hurling”

After an initial round robin group phase

of matches, teams will be graded on their performance and will then be assigned to one of six Divisions for the Quarter-Finals and Semi-Finals where again they will compete against teams of a similar level of ability.

The six Divisional Finals will be played on Saturday, June 29th at Bord na Móna O'Connor Park in Tullamore. The cups have been dedicated to the memory of Michael Hogan (age 24), John William Scott (age 14), William Robinson (age 11), Jerome O'Leary (age 10), Michael Feery (aged 40) and Tom Hogan (aged 21) - six of the victims from among the 14 people shot and killed on Bloody Sunday at Croke Park on November 21st, 1920. The trophies and medals have been kindly sponsored by the Past Hurlers' Association.

The Bank of Ireland Celtic Challenge represents a new departure in Hurling with the inclusion of teams from all 32 Counties as well as unique respect initiatives including a 'Pre-Match Talk' by the Referee and the Best and Fairest Award' that will see referees after every match choose one player from each team selected on the basis of their skill level as well as the respect they showed to the playing rules, match officials and their fellow players.

Players' Feedback from 2018:

The development of the players – not just as players but as people – is central to this competition and a review of the 2018 Bank of Ireland Celtic Challenge was conducted with 295 Players. Players were asked to give their views on the benefits of the competition and the top five reasons provided were:

- Playing competitive games of hurling on a regular basis = 21%
- Playing against different teams than they would normally play against = 13%
- The friendships they made and fun they had as part of a team (less pressure) = 13%
- The O'Neill's jerseys and getting to keep these = 10%
- The higher quality of hurling and Coaching than they might have at Club/School level = 9%



Adam O'Connor of Dublin Plunkett during a coaching session at the launch of the Bank of Ireland Celtic Challenge 2019 at Croke Park in Dublin.

The full list of the 44 teams taking part in the Celtic Challenge 2019 is:

Galway Maroon
Galway McDonagh
Galway Tribesmen

Leitrim
Mayo
Roscommon
Sligo
Carlow
Dublin Clarke
Dublin Plunkett

Kildare Lily Whites
Kildare Cadets
Kilkenny Amber
Kilkenny Black
Laois
Longford
Louth

Meath
Wexford
Offaly
Westmeath
Wicklow Blue
Wicklow Gold
Cork City

East Cork
North Cork
West Cork
Kerry
Limerick Treaty
Limerick Sarsfields
Clare Blues

Clare Saffrons
Tipperary Blue
Tipperary Gold
Waterford
Antrim
Armagh
Cavan

Derry
Down
Fermanagh
Donegal
Monaghan
Tyrone

IMPORTANT STINT FOR GO GAMES



National Go Games Week will see 60,000 children getting an opportunity to play in blitzes in each of the 32 counties during the school Easter holidays to mark the start of the 2019 Go Games playing season. Also, 8,000 children will play in Croke Park over an action-packed eight days.

Uachtarán CLG, John Horan, is delighted that the GAA, LGFA, and Camogie Associations are working closely together to promote Go Games throughout Ireland.

“The aim of Go Games is that every girl and boy between the ages of 6 and 11 will have positive introduction to Gaelic games. It is vital that three Associations are working closely together to make this a reality and,

thankfully, this is the case. The magnitude of National Go Games Week is testament to this.”

Ladies Gaelic Football Association President Marie Hickey commented: “We were delighted to welcome 62 clubs, representing 31 counties, to Croke Park on Monday, April 15.

“Each year, the LGFA is assigned one day at Croke Park and in 2019, we ran an Under-10 Go Games Blitz. Go Games blitzes were held across the country in March, with all participating teams entered into a draw to make it to Croke Park.

“The players and mentors from each of the lucky clubs will now have the experience of a lifetime when they line out at Croke Park.”

Uachtarán an Cumann Camógaíochta Kathleen Woods said: “These eight days of Go Games are a fantastic occasion for boys and girls from across the country to experience playing on the hallowed turf of Croke Park and also to take part in blitzes throughout the country. These are the future stars of our games and this experience can inspire lifelong journeys in our games.”

Pat Culhane, GAA National Games Development Officer, noted that “57,000 children participated in National Go Games Week last year and we are hoping for even bigger numbers this year.”

Encouraged by the response of clubs and primary schools in Ireland, Culhane is adamant about the relevance of the Go Games initiative.

“The GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association are making a massive effort to re-energise the whole Go Games initiative this year. Go Games are hurling/camogie and Gaelic football for children up to 11 years of age – there are no other types. It is national policy of each Association.

“The “Go” means that every boy and girl should get an opportunity to play in every game, for the whole game. The emphasis is on participation, taking precedence over performance and winning. One in three children aged 6 to 11 play Go Games every year in Ireland. It is a gigantic social movement, which aims to maximise participation, fun, friendship, fair play and sense of achievement for all. This cannot be achieved by children sitting on sidelines.”

RENAULT GAA WORLD GAMES 2019

The countdown is on to the Renault GAA World Games 2019, and the drive to the Déise has started with the launch of the programme of events in the host county of Waterford.

The Renault GAA World Games take place from July 28 - August 1 in WIT and in Croke Park on August 2,

This is the third-ever staging of what is a major international festival and celebration of Gaelic Games participation all over the globe, and this summer features a record breaking 97 teams totaling 1,300 players coming to the South-East to take part.

The unique feature of the Renault GAA World Games is that there is competition for Irish-born and also native-born (non Irish born) teams representing more than 10 regions round the world.

More than 60 international teams will be twinned with local clubs from across Waterford GAA with the emphasis on a social and cultural exchange, and the competing teams and Waterford GAA clubs will take part in a major parade that marks the start of the World Games in Waterford City on Sunday, July 28.

Waterford City is being primed with flags

and banners of welcome for the visit of a festival expected to bring up to 5,000 additional people into the city and county for the week.

Uachtarán CLG John Horan said: “The Renault GAA World Games is a testament to the phenomenal amount of growth which is taking place in World GAA.

“All over the world there are new clubs, new record numbers of participation and new people being introduced to Gaelic Games for the first time, and these Games will be a celebration of that.

“I am delighted that the people of Waterford have got behind this event so publicly and enthusiastically. We know what passionate GAA supporters they are and I’ve no doubt they will extend a cead míle fáilte to the visiting teams who descend on the Deise this summer.”

There are eight world titles on offer for Irish born and then native-born teams in men’s football, ladies football, hurling and camogie. The prize in Waterford is the right to get to make the trip to play at Croke Park.

Uachtarán an Cumann Camógaíochta Kathleen Woods said: “I am greatly looking forward to the Renault GAA World Games 2019 and to experiencing the



Waterford hurler Noel Connors, Dublin footballer Lyndsey Davey, Waterford camogie player Niamh Murphy and Westmeath footballer Boidu Sayeh pictured at the Waterford launch of the Renault GAA World Games 2019 at the WIT Arena.

warm welcome which awaits all teams in Waterford this summer. It promises to be a great occasion and provide an opportunity for players from all walks of life to create new bonds and friendships through our wonderful games.”

Ladies Gaelic Football Association President, Marie Hickey commented: “We are looking forward to a festival of Gaelic

Games in Waterford later this year, and it is great to see such strong representation once again from Ladies Gaelic Football. The Renault GAA World Games continue to go from strength to strength and the LGFA is delighted to play its part in such a prestigious event.

“This 3rd GAA World Games, sponsored by Renault, promises to be the biggest yet, with so much action to savour over

the course of five days. Our Ladies Gaelic Football representation will be made up of players born in Ireland and abroad, which is a clear indication that our sport continues to thrive on a national and international basis. We look forward to welcoming thousands of people to our shores – players, mentors, family members, backroom staff and supporters. The GAA World Games are celebration of our wonderful sports and we wish all of the competing teams and players the very best of luck.”

Participating teams in the Renault GAA World Games 2019 will be certain to look the part courtesy of the backing of O’Néills, who are again the official kit suppliers to the festival.

The eye-catching designs for each of the competing nations have been finalised and are sure to be a hit with locals as they support the nations they have been twinned with for the week.

Cormac Farrell, Business and Marketing Manager for O’Néills said: “O’Néills are delighted to supply playing kit to all the teams at this year’s World GAA Games 2019. While it brings its challenges in designing different styles for all teams, the end result is always hugely satisfying when the teams take to the field in an eye-catching array of colourful jerseys!

“These team jerseys prove to be a hit with both players and supporters and can be purchased as a souvenir of this fine event

The Renault GAA World Games take place in July.

from our ONÉILLS.COM webstore.

“This year’s event has the added attraction of the fabulous facilities of Waterford IT and the beautiful backdrop of the Deise county and all it has to offer. We look forward to a feast of GAA games and fun and are proud to be a part of it.”

Lynne Boucher, Sales & Network Business Manager, Renault Ireland: “Renault is very proud to be the title sponsor of the 2019 Renault GAA World Games and delighted that our local dealer in Waterford, H&H Motors, will be involved at a grassroots

level which is the foundation of the GAA in Ireland. Renault has a long-standing relationship with the GAA and counts many former GAA heroes as its Brand Ambassadors including Dessie Dolan and Anthony Daly who are showing their support for the Renault World Games here in Waterford today. This is a fantastic event demonstrating the global reach of the GAA and we are looking forward to six unforgettable days of sport and celebrating our heritage over the course of the World Games. In addition to the World Games, Renault is the official car partner to the GAA and GPA and this further cements Renault’s

ongoing support for GAA heroes on and off the field.”

There are now more than 400 GAA Clubs in existence outside of Ireland and this is reflected in the presence of 97 teams that are confirmed for the Renault GAA World Games and representing clubs from across Europe, New York, USGAA, South Africa, Argentina, Canada, Britain, Australasia, India, Asia and the Middle East.



GAA PLANS TO TACKLE RURAL-URBAN DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

By John Harrington

The biggest challenge facing the GAA currently and for the foreseeable future is the population shift from rural to urban areas in Ireland.

Rural GAA clubs are struggling to field teams because they just don't have the numbers, while urban GAA clubs are struggling to cater for the surging populations in their catchment areas.

Over the years a number of GAA committees have researched these shifting demographics and all have concluded that there is no one size fits all solution.

Instead, there are most likely a multitude of solutions for a multitude of problems, and identifying them is a challenge that the current Chairman of the GAA's Community Development, Urban and Rural committee, Colm Cummins, is very determined to tackle head on.

Appointed by GAA President John Horan, Offaly native Cummins has made it his first priority to gather together all the information that can identify the specific problems faced by every single club in the country.

To this end he has developed a web-based tool that will parse all demographic data relevant to GAA clubs from the Central

Statistics Office, the Department of Education and equivalent bodies in the six counties.

A club will be able to identify their catchment area on a map which will generate the information they require in an easy to use graphic format.

"A certain element of it looking forward with building in projections so that clubs and counties can plan for the future," Cummins told GAA.ie

"One of the key bits of it is that it will show how many boys and girls there are within each catchment area and at each age. So, from ages four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, the whole way up.

"Particularly in a rural area, they'll be able to look at this and see that while at the moment they may be capable of fielding underage teams, if they look at the number of zero to five-year-olds in their catchment area they may see there's a huge drop-off in numbers and that they will face difficulties down the line.

"When do clubs decide to come together? What we've found is that they don't realise it's necessary until they suddenly can't field a team in Go-Games, for example, and they say, 'We don't have the numbers, where are they, what's the problem?'

"It's too late then. You're scrambling to try to find a solution whereas if you can spot a problem coming down the road in two years you can plan for it and be ready for it and look at maybe temporarily forming independent teams or combined teams for that period.

"Then continue to monitor it and then maybe be able to revert back to the parent clubs in time. That's one aspect of it.

"It would also be a useful tool for clubs in urban areas who might be successful on the field and winning titles, but could discover the participation rates in their area are not what they should be.

"The core data from the CSO might tell you that you've 250 ten year old boys in your catchment area. But you only have 15 playing. So there might be issues there that need to be looked at on the urban side and see if we're penetrating enough into the community.

"We need to make this information accessible and I think once counties begin to see it, they will realise how valuable it is and begin to incorporate it into their county management.

"I would envisage someone sitting on a county committee to keep an eye on it and make sure it's reviewed annually so the county is ahead of the game rather than reacting to problems."



This web-based tool is currently being piloted in four counties – Kerry, Westmeath, Roscommon, and Tyrone – and the intention is that when lessons are learned from the data and the system is fine-tuned, it will be rolled out to all 32 counties.

Identifying the unique challenges faced by each individual club and county is just the first step and, arguably, the easiest one.

Implementing solutions is generally a tougher task than identifying problems, and the harsh truth is that many rural clubs will have little option but to combine their resources at underage level to ensure their survival as separate units at senior level

Local rivalries might make that unpalatable for some, but reigning Leinster Senior Football Champions, Mullinalaghta of Longford, are a good example of just how beneficial an arrangement like this can be.

They have combined with neighbours Abbeylara at underage level to form Northern Gaels, and the fact that the two clubs have contested the last three Longford senior football finals is a testament to just how well that arrangement has worked in terms of bringing through talented young players for both.

Replicating that arrangement looks like the way forward for many rural clubs with declining numbers, but the challenge facing Cummins and his committee is that by-laws relating to clubs combining their resources in varying ways differ from county to county.

Going forward, he hopes these rules and regulations can be simplified and made more



An online tool will soon be able to help GAA clubs plan for the future by letting them know how many potential young players will be available to their club a number of years into the future.

uniform.

More and more rural clubs are struggling to survive, but Ireland's urbanisation poses its own problems in areas where the population is quickly rising.

Existing clubs in growing urban areas are simply incapable of serving everyone in their catchment area and so instead of being at the heart of their communities are drifting to the periphery of them.

From 1971 to 2016 the population of the

eleven Leinster counties outside of Dublin has more than doubled from 619, 428 to 1,285,318.

Yet, in that time, over 20 clubs have gone out of existence in those counties and an estimated 30 more will either disband or amalgamate in the next 15 years.

There were 144 less teams registered in Leinster in 2016 than there were in 2010, and up to 40% of teams in secondary competitions either failed to play in them or complete their fixtures programmes in 2016.

In an ideal world you'd simply establish more GAA clubs to cater for growing populations of urban areas, but that's a lot easier said than done.

Setting up a GAA club from scratch is a massive endeavour and there are a couple of obvious obstacles.

GAA people from that area with an affinity to an existing club are not going to be motivated to set up a rival one. And those who come into the area with a strong interest in the GAA will



Castleknock GAA club are a rare example of a 'young' club thriving in an urban area. Founded in 1998, they contested the Dublin SFC Final in 2016.

also gravitate towards the existing club.

Cummins believes some original thinking is now required in order to give the GAA a more vibrant presence in urban areas.

“There’s a myriad of problems and also a myriad of solutions,” he said. “Take towns like Naas, Portlaoise, and Navan, you have traditional town clubs in there who are obviously working very hard but are limited in space now themselves because trying to purchase additional land is difficult.

“Due to the geography of the areas, there tends to be smaller, one-time rural clubs that were once on the outskirts of these towns which are now nearly sucked into the suburban area of the larger town.

“Now, maybe they can act as the counter-balance if, in a very sensitive way, the local

by-laws can be examined. Is there some flexibility there that would allow people from a town like Naas to go out and play with these rural clubs so we can help these smaller rural clubs sustain themselves?

“But, obviously, not undermine or harm the town club itself either. That’s sort of what we’re moving towards, we’re going to have to begin looking at that.

“Or, possibly, if you’re now living in a town but your father or mother were previously involved in a club outside of the town, perhaps that would give you the right to go out and play for them if local by-laws were changed.

“Things like that maybe need to be explored. A bit more flexibility without diluting the sense of space or creating a free for all where players go everywhere.

“Another interesting one that came up that possibly needs to be explored - it’s a Dublin issue mainly but will become more and more of one in other urban areas - is where players come from rural Ireland come to work in an urban area like Dublin.

“So, rather than transferring into some of the larger clubs, that there would be a draft-like system whereby you could be transferred into a club that needs additional players, maybe clubs in a lower division or whatever, that there would be a bit of flexibility there.

“The attraction would be that if you partook in a draft like that then you could still go home and also play with your home club in their club championship. We need to look at different ways of thinking like that when we’re trying to find solutions to these problems.

“I’m sure there are plenty of guys coming to Dublin who want to keep fit and play a bit of football and hurling up there but also still be eligible to go back home and play in the Championship with his own club.

“These are the sort of ideas we want to explore over the next two years of our terms.”

It’s tempting to say that there are greater forces at work here and that the GAA ultimately has little option other than to ride the winds of change in a country where successive Governments have sacrificed rural Ireland on the altar of centralisation.

Perhaps, though, that attitude underestimates the GAA’s potential ability to influence policy.

When GAA President John Horan addressed the Seanad earlier this year and made the point that “grey never goes back to green” and urged the Senators to “promise, protect and provide green space to let people breathe and let communities play”, he struck a chord.

Cummins certainly believes that from now on the GAA needs to be more proactive in terms of engaging with Government on a local and national level to ensure the needs of its members in both rural and urban areas are better catered for.

“One thing that keeps coming up is that the last thing that’s really keeping a lot of rural areas alive is the GAA club,” said Cummins.

“Communities are losing post offices, shops, Garda stations, et cetera, but the GAA club is the one constant.

“What we feel is an area we could get better organised in through the provinces and counties is the way we engage in the planning process in terms of county or regional development plans.

“That the GAA would have a voice in there and be making submissions and trying to influence policy to sustain the rural areas.

“We’re all very busy in all kinds of areas but maybe that’s an area we need to take a strategic view on when it comes to protecting rural areas and that would be driven by people living in those rural areas.

“We could be a bit more vocal when it comes to pushing on various issues and developing policy so we could keep the viability of these communities going which in turn would help

the GAA clubs.

“A lot of time we often take for granted that everyone else realises how important the GAA is to local communities.

“It was interesting, one of the things we spotted was that the Department of Community and Rural affairs issued an action plan for rural Ireland.

“There were 270 actions in the document and not one of them referenced the GAA. Now, they didn’t reference any sport, but as GAA people we would feel we are the heartbeat of rural Ireland.

“And, yet, when the department sat down to set out policy there wasn’t one mention of us. So we actually went in and met the Secretary General and some of the officials and outlined that.

“They were a bit taken aback as well, and the problem is that we don’t really engage with each other.

“And because of Ireland being so small, probably a lot of the influencing happens at an informal level. Someone at an All-Ireland Final gets chatting to a Minister, or whatever.

“But we need to be more formal about it in the future to ensure we are being heard, because our story will be very consistent throughout the country.

“Maybe it’s just a matter of sitting down at national level and drawing up a few key points that we need to influence that can amended based on provincial or county variations and just continually push and promote them.”



GAA President John Horan pictured with Senator Denis O'Donovan before his address to Seanad Éireann last January.

Cummins believes a similarly proactive approach is just as vital to securing the future health of the GAA in urban areas as is it is rural Ireland.

It might be notoriously difficult to establish new GAA clubs in ‘mature’ urban areas for the previously outlined reasons, but ensuring that newly built suburban communities have a natural home for the GAA should be more doable.

“These plans that are being prepared now for new urban areas won’t come to fruition for the next 10 or 15 years so it’s important that we get engaged now,” he said.

“If you take new urban areas like Cherrywood or Clonburris that are being planned out now and will be developed soon, we should really be getting in there and making the case for the green space.

“Because, currently, its developers who are driving this and they’re going to squeeze the green space as much as they can and have it as a bare minimum.

“We need to be getting in and making our argument for more green space because in a few years as the communities are developed then the demand for the GAA will arise. But if the recreational land isn’t available then it will be very difficult to provide facilities, and that’s just for the new communities.



Construction is underway in Cherrywood in South Dublin of a new ‘town’ that will accommodate an estimated 25,000 people.

“It’s probably difficult for Dublin GAA to sell this as a problem because people will say ‘Sure Dublin have everything and get all the funding and are so successful’, but so many Dublin clubs are reliant on corporation pitches and don’t have the facilities within their own clubs that clubs all around the country would have.

“It’s a huge challenge and an expensive one as well in terms of fees that are paid to the local authorities.

“So we need to be more vocal within Dublin and the other city areas about keeping green areas zoned recreationally so the values of them are low enough that clubs could invest and purchase them themselves.

“It’s important that the GAA is more proactive in that respect.

“Ultimately, what we need to do is provide solutions to keep children playing Gaelic Games both in areas where the population isn’t there and in the areas where it is.”

GAA DEVELOPMENT FUND

LOANS

- A club may make an application for a loan from the Development Fund for purchasing property or development of club property.
- Bar Facilities or renting out facilities are not covered by the fund.
- The interest rate applicable is a variable interest rate, currently 1.9%.
- Funding is only applicable to vested GAA properties.
- Loan term is a maximum of 10 years.
- The maximum amount available to one club is €100,000 or £100,000.
- All loans must be guaranteed by the County Board and a recommendation received from the Provincial Council.

DEPOSITS

- Clubs are encouraged to deposit money into the Development Fund as they get priority when making an application for a loan.
- The variable interest rate is also currently at 1.9%
- Forms for Depositing money into the Fund can be obtained from a member of the National Finance Department in Croke Park.

The application form and criteria for obtaining a loan from the GAA Development Fund can be found at: <https://www.gaa.ie/api/pdfs/image/upload/bwjfsepsr2aqaezumguk.pdf>

All Loan Applications and supporting documentation should be returned to the Head of National Finance in Croke Park by the 31st May 2019. Any applications after this date will not be considered until the 30th of September pending funding availability.

GAA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

In accordance with Rule 2.2 of the Official Guide, each club must submit, through its County Secretary, an annual fee of €2 for every registered Full and Honorary Member who has paid his/her Club Membership Fee for the year.

To generate the Annual €2 Fees Invoice;

- Log into the GAA Management System using your own Unique ID and password ([Note that login details should not be shared within your club](#))
- Select the Club Admin tab from the left of your screen.
- Select Annual €2 Fees tab from the top of your screen.
- Select Generate Invoice.
- Select 2019.
- Select Print.

Please note that Clubs can now generate their invoice to calculate how much is owed for every Full and Honorary Member. Only when an invoice has been generated, please make a cheque payable to the GAA and forward the cheque to your County Board. The County Board will collect cheques from all Clubs and forward to Central Council.

Step-by-step guidance on generating an invoice can be found here:

[Servasport Helpdesk - Annual €2 Fees](#)



GAA OVERSEAS PLAYING SANCTIONS FOR USGAA / NEW YORK / CANADA

For the 2019 season, all sanction applications must be made online via the Player Transfer System (PTS). This will see clubs in North America initiate the sanction process in a similar process as to how online transfers operate.

This process must be initiated by the club in USGAA/Canada/New York that the player wishes to play with.

Players who are intending to play in these jurisdictions in Summer 2019 should:

1. Contact the club secretary of the club they intend to play with in USGAA/Canada/New York.
2. If the club in USGAA/Canada/New York would like to initiate a sanction application for the player, the player should purchase suitable travel insurance. The only currently acceptable insurances are those provided by Chubb (available via the link below on gaa.ie) and USIT (MAPFRE - which must include confirmation of an upgrade from the standard cover of "Hazardous Activities Grade 1": to include "Hazardous Activities: Grade 5"). Please note Travel insurance must be purchased before the player leaves Ireland - Further details below.
3. The player should supply their e-mail address to the club secretary of the club

they wish to play in USGAA/Canada/ New York.

4. Complete the application form online via a link which will be received by the player via e-mail from the PTS once an application has been initiated by the club secretary in USGAA/Canada/New York via the Sanctions tab. Players must upload proof of their travel insurance information when completing the application form or the application will not be processed. In addition, players applying for a J1 Sanction must also provide proof of their J1 Visa (a copy of the J1 Visa will suffice)
5. Once the form has been completed, the club secretary of the club they wish to play in USGAA/Canada/New York will review the details and if appropriate submit the application to Croke Park for processing.
5. Croke Park will then process the application if all information has been provided. The club and county in Ireland will then receive an e-mail notification that the application requires their approval and will be invited to approve or reject the application.
6. Once all parties have approved the application, the sanction will be granted by Croke Park. An e-mail notification will advise all parties, including the player, that the sanction has now been granted. The USGAA/Canada/New York

may have additional requirements with regard to registration in advance of a player being eligible to play in a fixture. Players are advised to confirm they have been registered with the club secretary in USGAA/Canada/New York prior to participating in a fixture.

Mandatory Travel Insurance

All players that will be seeking an Official GAA Sanction from Central Council to play in North America (USGAA), New York or Canada for the summer are reminded that travel insurance must be arranged in Ireland before they commence their journeys. Proof of this insurance is required as part of the application process.





Accepted Insurances

- Chubb - worldwide cover, minimum 3 months
- USIT via Mapfre – Grade 5
- Blue Insurance – Grade 3

Players should note the following:

Like the vast majority of travel insurance policies, the option offered by the GAA can only be purchased by individuals before they leave Ireland. Important points for players to note include:

- The only currently acceptable insurances are those provided by Chubb (available via the link below) and USIT (which must include Grade 5 hazardous activities cover).
- The cost of insurance will depend on the duration of a player's stay in a particular country.
- Players wishing to play in North America must purchase cover for a minimum of 90 days. It is the player's own responsibility to ensure they are covered for all dates of potential fixtures.
- Travel insurance is not a private health insurance. It only covers players if there is a sudden and unexpected accident or if a player becomes ill during his trip.
- Generally, where doctors appointed by Insurers deem treatment in Ireland// Britain more appropriate, players will be repatriated home for treatment.
- Players playing overseas are not covered under the GAA Injury Benefit Fund.

The following are the steps which player's need to take to purchase the required insurance:

1. Go to the following link - <http://www.chubbinsure.ie/travel/?afi=5781>
2. Choose Backpacker cover for a minimum of 90 days. It is the player's own responsibility to ensure they are covered for all dates of potential fixtures. If you do not have cover for a fixture you will not be eligible to play or covered in the event of a sudden or unexpected accident.
3. Please Note: ensure you select 'Worldwide Cover inc. US/Canada/ Caribbean'
4. Choose the most accurate number of days that you will be staying in North America / New York / Canada - Minimum for North America is 90 days
5. Please read and accept the terms and conditions of the policy and apply for the cover
6. Fill in all the required fields in order to obtain your documentation
7. Once purchased, the confirmation letter should be submitted when applying via the GAA Player Transfer System.
8. Once approved, all Sanctions will appear on the relevant lists on the Official GAA website

Note - A player who has been included on an Inter-County Senior Championship list submitted to the Referee, in accordance with Rules of Specification 2.5 (ii)(a) for a game in the current year's Championship shall not be eligible to be accepted for Registration as a member of any Club in the North American County Board Jurisdiction.

Exception - A player who has been included on an Inter-County Senior Championship list submitted to the Referee, in accordance with Rules of Specification; 2.5 (ii)(a), for a game in the current year's Championship, who holds a valid current J1 Visa or who is eligible for a J1 Visa and who obtains an Official J1 Sanction may be accepted for registration. Such a player may only have his J1 Sanction approved once his team has been eliminated from the Senior Inter-County Championship (including All-Ireland qualifier games). The J1 Visa concerned with this Exception is the J1 Work and Travel Programme Visa only – i.e. the four-month Visa for 3rd Level Students.

General Rules

- A Sanction entitles a player to play with a Club from March 1 until the end of October
- Sanctions to USGAA (North America), New York or Canada, will not be granted after July 1st
- A player who has received a Sanction will not be able to play again with his Club in Ireland for 30 days after the date of approval of his Sanction in Croke Park
- Sanctions are only available to current members of Clubs in Ireland or members of clubs in Britain, whose First Club is their current club.
- For more information, go to Rule 6.12 of the Official Guide.

For further information see - <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/rules-regulations/overseas-sanctions>

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & GUIDELINES

This is a guide to some of the most frequently asked questions to how GAA Units should behave online.

Please refer to the full version of GAA's Social Media Policy & Guidelines for further information.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Direct Messaging

The use of social media platforms and stand-alone apps such as Whatsapp and Messenger should not be used for official GAA Unit related communications (training, events, etc). These channels are not GDPR compliant when used for such communications. Text and email are still perfectly safe to use for updates (for adult members).

The GAA App includes a messaging functionality enabling Units to communicate with their members through the App which is a GDPR compliant messaging service. This messaging functionality allows Clubs to have auditing ability over the information processed within it.

Communicating with underage players and teams

Coaches, mentors and other officials should never place themselves in a compromising position by texting or communicating via social media sites with underage players. All such communications regarding GAA activities should be sent via the parents or guardians of the underage player,

unless otherwise agreed with the parents/guardians.

In general, the following should apply when communicating with underage players:

- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via an email system or the GAA app for communicating with the parents/guardians of players. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be preceded with following express permission from parents/guardians.
- Do not communicate individually by text/email sites with underage players.
- Do not communicate with underage players via social network sites.

POSTING CONTENT ONLINE

Remember this!

Top tips for web and social posts

- Keep the info on your team sheets to a minimum – just a name will do! Never include membership numbers or date of birth. In addition, for underage players, never use a photo or indicate a child's school (unless it's a school fixture).
- Keep the details of your Executive to a minimum; Name, GAA email address

Social Media Policy & Guidelines

GO TO GUIDE

GAA

This is a guide to some of the most frequently asked questions to how GAA Units should behave online.



- (when possible) and photo number will suffice. Don't include postal address or other personal details.
- Don't tag individuals in posts on any channel.
 - Don't share any posts that are not GAA-related.
 - Only post photos you own/have permission to use that relate to GAA activity; never copy or share images from personal pages.
 - Ensure comments on your posts are frequently moderated. If in doubt, remove any content you deem inappropriate.

THINK BEFORE YOU POST

Before you post images (still or video) or personal information relating to underage members, ensure you are taking the GAA's guidelines into consideration. GAA Units should determine which, if any, social media accounts will be used to communicate personal information relating to underage members.

- Ask for the player's parent's permission to use their image. This consent could be included in the annual registration

form or the GAA App.

- All children/young people featured in recordings posted online must be appropriately dressed.
- The photograph or recording posted online should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person.
- In general, no personal details relating to the young person should be revealed as accompanying materials to the photograph or recorded image, with the exception being where they are being publicly acknowledged (e.g. an award or personal achievement), for which consent has been given.
- Group and team photographs may be taken but it is not necessary to match a player's name with the position in which they may be standing or seated in the team photograph.
- Any instances of the use of inappropriate images should be reported to the GAA Unit's Children's Officer and/or appropriate person within the GAA Unit and also to the relevant statutory authorities if deemed necessary.
- Where underage members are invited to

engage with a GAA Unit's social media accounts, parental knowledge and permission prior to the young person engaging in such communication must be sought.

- Ask parents not to post pictures of other children on their own social media accounts.
- Such interaction with GAA Unit websites or accounts should also be carefully monitored to ensure underage members are not abused or trolled on line and that they themselves do not intentionally or otherwise post inappropriate comments or materials. The GAA has an Anti-Bullying Policy which should be adhered to at all times.
- The GAA has set out in detail its policies and standards for officials engaging with underage members in the "Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport when working with underage players" and the "Guide to Maintaining appropriate levels of behaviour in our work with children and young people". Please refer to them for further detail on any of the above.

PLAYING BY THE RULES

All GAA members are subject to the GAA Code of Conduct when online, even when they are not acting on behalf of the GAA.

You are responsible for your actions but remember that those actions may have consequences for the GAA.

The GAA expects the following standards to be adhered to by its members when posting material online:

- Do not post or share material which is violent, sexually explicit, obscene, hateful, or defamatory.
- Do not post or share inappropriate behaviour relating to underage players.
- Do not suggest or encourage illegal activity.
- Do not engage in trolling, bullying, or abusive activity.
- Do not falsely claim the GAA endorses or is associated with any product or promotion.
- Do not disclose confidential information in respect of the GAA.
- Do not engage in the disparagement of any race, ethnicity or religion.
- Always respect the GAA's values.
- Always use your common sense.

HOW TO REPORT INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITY

If you become aware of any member or official breaching any of the above social media guidelines, please contact your Club or County PRO. Alternatively concerns can be reported to communications@gaa.ie.

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- Keep the details of your Executive to a minimum; Name, GAA email address (when possible) and photo number will suffice. Don't include postal address or other personal details.

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Name: Richie Hogan

Job title: Commercial Manager GAA/GPA

GAA Club: Danesfort GAA Club, Co Kilkenny

No of Years working for the GAA: 2 months

Favourite Club Memory:

Winning the 2006 Junior County Championship and subsequent 2007 All Ireland Club Final in Croke Park was a great season for our club and is still my favourite memory.

Favourite Inter-County GAA Memory:

My favourite memory as a player was beating Tipperary in the 2011 All Ireland Final having been defeated the previous year. As a supporter I will always remember Kilkenny's win against Offaly in the 2000 All Ireland Final. Kilkenny had been beaten in the previous 2 finals and it was the 1st All Ireland Final that I was old enough to appreciate.

What does your club mean to you?

Danesfort is a small rural club outside Kilkenny city. The club and the community in Danesfort are the same thing really. We have a small population of really passionate individuals who all contribute to the GAA club in so many different ways and it really is just a part of our life.

What do you like most about working in Croke Park?

I am very much eager to learn and improve at what I do all the time. I like listening to, collaborating with and working alongside like-minded people who have their own individual strengths. In my role I get to collaborate with many different departments in Croke Park and the wider GAA and this makes every working day different.



Name: Niamh Boyle

Job title: Social Media Coordinator

GAA Club: Castleblayney Faughs/ Castleblayney Hurling and Camogie

Honours won: Does a certificate for the 'most improved' Camogie player at U14 count?... My playing career was short lived - supporting and analysing matches, and rolling up my sleeves to give a hand is where I'm happiest!

Favourite Club Memory:

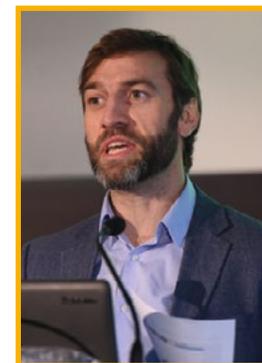
When the Castleblayney Hurlers made it to the 2018 AIB GAA Junior Club Hurling Final at Croke Park! From the excitement it brought to the club and community back home, to then being part of the build up and preparations in the week ahead of the game at Croke Park was an indescribable feeling. Croke Park is a place like no other, and when working here you just dream of your local clubs getting to play on the pitch. Unfortunately on the day no silverware went home but getting to a final, seeing the crowds of local support, familiar faces both on the sidelines and on the pitch all made it a special day.

No of Years working for the GAA: 1

Favourite Inter-County GAA Memory: 2013 Ulster Football Final - the cup lift photo is framed and on the wall beside my desk! Where do I start? A great win for the Monaghan minors over Tyrone and then Monaghan's first win in 25 years. Four scores in the first seven minutes as they stunned reigning All-Ireland champs Donegal to take home the Anglo Celt. The sun was beaming down that day too, I'll never forget it.

What does your club mean to you? A sense of community, it's a piece of home and being a part of it means that wherever you are in the world you can still feel and be part of your community. I live and work in Dublin so I don't get home as often as I would like so the county and club websites and social media channels are a god send for keeping me up-to-date with the latest action!

What do you like most about working in Croke Park? I consider myself extremely fortunate to have a role I really enjoy in an organisation that I am so passionate about. Getting to interact with clubs across not only Ireland but all over the world whilst having the opportunity to make a difference is great. From the big match days to the busy office days at Croke Park there are so many like-minded enthusiastic people working towards a shared goal. You quickly learn which county and club everyone is from too, so the craic is always GAA centred and good fun too.



Name: COLIN REGAN

Job title: Community & Health Manager

GAA Club: Melvin Gaels

No of Years working for the GAA: 8 years

Favourite Club Memory: Has to be winning the Leitrim senior title in 1998. The club hadn't won it since 1965 so it was a special occasion for the whole community. Bonfires on the mountains of Glenade valley welcomed us back into Kinlough and someone had written the names of the squad on the road outside the village. Epic stuff.

Favourite Inter-County GAA Memory: Leitrim winning the 1994 title will live long in the memory. As a player our first game in New York in 2003 was pretty special - it meant so much to Leitrim people living in the States and half the county had travelled over for the occasion.

What does your club mean to you?

I had to travel to Donegal to receive a Church of Ireland primary and secondary level school education and Melvin Gaels offered me a tangible way to connect with and represent my local community. I'll always be thankful for that. I think I repaid the favour with 25 years of service at senior level and more trips from Dublin than I care to remember!

What do you like most about working in Croke Park?

I cycle into work and never tire of the vista of Croke Park appearing in my vision followed by the realisation 'I work there'. It's such a privilege. The nature of my work exposes me daily to the incredible work GAA volunteers are doing on behalf of the health and wellbeing of their members and their communities. It goes above and beyond the traditional duties of a sporting organisation and every day renews my enthusiasm for my job and the Association.

OUR TEAM – YOUR TEAM

Meet some of the Croke Park staff putting their GAA passion and knowledge to good use

KERRY GAA SETTING STANDARDS FOR CLUB LEADERSHIP

Kerry GAA has always been committed to providing the best service we can to our clubs whether that is through providing an appropriate games programme for all our age grades or through supporting our club administrators. Both the player and administrator are equally valued, a message that is at the heart of the newly launched GAA manifesto, we all belong!

Kerry GAA's Development Committee is chaired by County Development Officer Eamon Whelan and the committee includes Michael Murphy (Secretary), Tony O'Keeffe, John Joe O'Carroll, Michael O'Brien, Eamon Sullivan and Aileen Foley. This committee is tasked with overseeing Club Leadership Development and facilitating Club Planning.

We strongly support club planning which empowers clubs to develop their 'roadmap' for the future. A club plan must be individual to the club, a generic plan will not be successful. The facilitator encourages the club members to consider the following questions –

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How are we going to get there?
- Who is responsible for getting us there?

These questions encourage reflection and conversation which ultimately results in the development of strategies to enhance the club in all areas such as coaching, finance, PR,

facilities etc. This three-year plan is a 'working document' which is referred to regularly and not filed away in the cabinet! Club members are encouraged to review the plan annually to ensure they remain on their 'roadmap'. Each facilitator works closely with their assigned clubs and is always readily available to provide support.

Kerry's County Development Committee are particularly delighted with the support received from the Club Officers. Each year, large numbers attend our training nights at the various locations around the county. These nights provide support for newly appointed officers but equally provide a 'refresher course' for more experienced officers. What makes the training nights a success? The feedback from attendees highlights the following –

1. The location must be inviting and fit for purpose. – We use lecture halls in Tralee IT and purpose-built conference rooms which are appropriately resourced for training nights.
2. County Executive - Officers from the Senior Executive make themselves available to attend on the various nights. They are available to answer any questions or offer advice to Club Officers.
3. Refreshments - We appreciate that officers are volunteers and after a busy day they are willing to attend a training



night to upskill as GAA Officers. At our seminars light refreshments are always available.

4. Time keeping - We try to adhere to the agreed timetable. We have found this encourages more to attend the following year as they respect that we will not keep them longer than necessary. The material is delivered in a clear and concise manner.
5. Advertising - Clubs need to be informed. The County PR & Marketing committee advertise the training nights on all platforms available to them.

We are delighted with the success of Club Leadership Development and Club Planning in Kerry, We are thankful that the Kerry Clubs are willing to engage with these initiatives and we are fortunate to have competent facilitators available to support the clubs.

Ultimately, we promote the mantra that a successful club is a club with a plan!

Why are Kerry Clubs engaging in the process?

CASE STUDY



The hard-working team driving club leadership in Kerry GAA

Templenoe Club

We started our Development Plan process with the aim of focusing on where we stood as a club. We analyzed what Templenoe GAA Club was doing right, what we could do better and what we wanted to do. The process worked well, resulting in good discussion, new viewpoints and more interaction with a wider range of club members.

Noel O'Sullivan (Templenoe GAA Club Plan Coordinator)

Annascaul Club

In 2017 the Annascaul Executive applied to participate in the club planning process as a way to work towards increasing participation, formalising structures, improving facilities and planning goals for the future. With the help of the Kerry County Board facilitators we held our focus group in early 2018 which was open to the community, from here initiatives and ideas were taken away and discussed and then prioritised into long term and short term goals by the sub groups formed on the night. The process took longer than anticipated but in December 2018 we launched our plan. We feel by focusing on a plan it has generated new volunteers and members as well as welcoming back those who were involved in the past. It has created a guide for acknowledging what we have achieved and what we aim to achieve while promoting our club in the process. As a rural community we strive to maintain a sense of belonging and pride which in turn we hope will retain members in the future and for the future of our club.

Mairead Clifford, Runai

St Senans Club

Both I and my club feel that the club officer training is an essential function in the development of our Club. Every year we learn something new and the interaction between the County officers, facilitators and the club officers is extremely beneficial. The County Officers in attendance are freely available to help with any questions or queries we have. We feel it should be mandatory for all new club officers taking up a role in their clubs to attend. They are well organised and run in a comfortable environment. The training and interaction with other club officers gives you the confidence to perform our role in the best way possible.

Tomas Ó Duilleain, Runai

Spa, Killarney Club

We have attended the Club Officer training for the past few years and we feel the event is always beneficial for our club officers. It is well advertised and well organised, and the facilitators present in an interactive way where participants in each group can get involved and ask questions. Every year we find there is something new to be learned about our roles as club officers. We always make sure to attend as it is a great way to meet with the County Board officers and representatives from other clubs.

Deirdre O'Sullivan Darcy, Rúnaí

FÉASTA MÓR SIAMSAÍOCHTA AG CRAOBH SCÓR SINSIR NA HÉIREANN

Bhí féasta mór siamsaíochta ag an 1,400 duine a bhí i láthair ag Craobh Scór Sinsir na hÉireann Dé Sathairn, 13 Aibreán, 2019, in Amharclann an TF i gCaisleán an Bharraigh.

Thosaigh an lá le Tráth na gCeist Boird. 28 contae a chuaigh a fhaid le Craobh na hÉireann ach ba ag muintir C.L.G. Chnoc na hEaglaise, Ciarraí, a bhí an bua agus teideal 'Seaimpíní na hÉireann' do 2019. C.L.G. Chorr na Féinne, an Cabhán, a tháinig sa dara háit agus C.L.G. Mhóin an Lín a tháinig sa tríú háit. Donncha de Flóid a bhí ann mar 'Mháistir na gCeisteanna'.

Bhí an lucht féachana faoi dhraíocht leis an tallann iontach a chonaic siad ar stáitse ina dhiaidh sin idir damhsa, ceol, amhránaíocht, aisteoireacht agus aithriseoireacht. Bhí sárchaighdeán le feiceáil ó na grúpaí uilig agus gan ach oiread na fríde idir na hiomaitheoirí iontacha uilig.

Ag moltóireacht ar an lá bhí Norrie Sheehan (Rince Foirne), Alastair Beegan (Amhránaíocht Aonair), Mary Hughes (Aithriseoireacht), Joe McDonald (Bailéad-Ghrúpa), Séamus Ó Lionáin (Léiriú Stáitse), Seán Ó Coinn (Ceol Uirlise) agus Máire Ní Ghráinne Uí Mhórain (Rince Seit). Ba é Diarmuid Ó Súilleabháin a bhí ann mar fhear an tí.

Bronnadh gradaim fhadseirbhíse ar Phóilín Uí Ruanaidh, Muineachán, ar Sheán Ormonde, Loch Garman, ar Kathleen Moffatt, Liatroim, agus ar Shéamus Mac Craith, Tiobraid Árann, mar aitheantas ar an obair mhór atá déanta acu le Scór a chur chun cinn le blianta fada anuas. Bronnadh gradam, freisin, ar Tony Williamson, duine de bhunaitheoirí Scór 50 bliain ó shin.

Na Buaiteoirí

Tráth na gCeisteanna Boird: C.L.G. Chnoc na hEaglaise, Co. Chiarraí

Rince Foirne: C.L.G., An Caisleán Nua, Co. Thiobraid Árann

Amhránaíocht Aonair: Michael Burke, C.L.G., Baile an Doirín, Co. na Gaillimhe

Aithriseoireacht/Scéalaíocht: Micheál Mac Gibne, C.L.G., Corr na Féinne, Co an Chabháin

Bailéad-Ghrúpa: C.L.G., An Féar Bán, Co. Uíbh Fhailí

Léiriú Stáitse: C.L.G., Tullach Sheasta, An Port Nua, Co. Thiobraid Árann

Ceol Uirlise: C.L.G., Cill Seanaigh, Co. Chorcaí

Rince Seit: C.L.G., Achadh Mór, Co. Mhaigh Eo



Rinceoirí Foirne C.L.G. an Chaisleáin Nua ag ceiliúradh a mbua

AIB CLUB PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

Corofin's Kieran Molloy and Ballyhale Shamrock's Adrian Mullen have been named as the overall Footballer and Hurler of the Year at the AIB GAA Club Players' Awards held at Croke Park.

Molloy was a thorn in the side of every opponent as his marauding runs were a feature of the Galway clubs march to what was impressive back to back AIB All-Ireland club football titles.

The flying wing back was earlier unveiled as one of seven Corofin players on the overall best 15 of the provincial and All-Ireland stage of the club championship.



The latest find in the club that produced the iconic Fennelly family as well as Henry Shefflin and TJ Reid, Adrian Mullen's progress has already been tracked through his performances as a Kilkenny minor and his success with St Kieran's College at All-Ireland level.

He established himself as a stylish half forward on the Ballyhale Shamrocks senior team in their successful run to the AIB Leinster and All-Ireland titles.

The duo received their awards from Uachtarán CLG John Horan and AIB Head of Retail Banking Denis O'Callaghan as part of a banquet to celebrate the two teams of winners.





AIB GAA Club Players' Awards – Hurling 2019

1. Stephen O'Keeffe (Ballygunner)
2. Eoghan Campbell (Ruairí Óg)
3. Joey Holden (Ballyhale Shamrocks)
4. Ian Kenny (Ballygunner)

5. Philip Mahony (Ballygunner)
6. Michael Fennelly (Ballyhale Shamrocks)
7. Fintan Burke (St Thomas')

8. Shane O'Sullivan (Ballygunner)
9. Neil McManus (Ruairí Óg)

10. Adrian Mullen (Ballyhale Shamrocks)
11. TJ Reid (Ballyhale Shamrocks)
12. Pauric Mahony (Ballygunner)

13. Eoin Cody (Ballyhale Shamrocks)
14. Colin Fennelly (Ballyhale Shamrocks)
15. Brian Carroll (Coolderry)



AIB GAA Club Players' Awards – Football 2019

1. Bernard Power (Corofin)
2. Liam Silke (Corofin)
3. Patrick Fox (Mullinalaghta)
4. Odhrán McFadden-Ferry (Gaoth Dobhair)

5. Kieran Molloy (Corofin)
6. Gavin White (Dr. Crokes)
7. Donal McElligott (Mullinalaghta)

8. Daithí Burke (Corofin)
9. Odhrán MacNiallais (Gaoth Dobhair)

10. Gary Sice (Corofin)
11. Kieran O'Leary (Dr Crokes)
12. Jason Leonard (Corofin)

13. Tony Brosnan (Dr Crokes)
14. Kevin Cassidy (Gaoth Dobhair)
15. Martin Farragher (Corofin)

TURAS COACHING PROGRAMME WORKING WELL



It has been a hugely successful and encouraging year for the TURAS Coaching Programme rolled out by Leinster GAA.

Provincial Coaching and Games Manager James Devane is delighted with the response to the new initiative to ensure a coherent plan exists for the development of young players.

Funding from the East Leinster Project has enabled more staff to become involved ensuring clubs throughout the province are being facilitated.

“We have added to our staff numbers through the East Leinster Project, we got funding from Croke Park and the clubs have invested in it too,” Devane explains.

“So we have grown our staff in the province and with that we have tried to help clubs more. We’ve come up with this project that is a coach developer project in clubs.

“The idea is that coaches come to our workshops to engage in coach education and then our staff go out to help them in their club environments too.”

The process allows club coaches for specific age groups attend workshops before further visits from Leinster GAA staff.

“Basically it is a workshop that you attend and then our staff go out to visit you with your club team a couple of times,” Devane states. “It is age specific so we only deal with the content per age. We have got six stages from Under 4s right up to Under 17s.

“Depending on the age you are working with you go to one of those stages along the player pathway. We just try to help the coaches with age specific coaching in a workshop format followed by visits out to the club teams.

“A lot goes with that, what we look for at the end is good coaching which would be underpinned by five coaching principles. One

of them might be it resembles a game in that it would be games based coaching, not just drills.

“Five principles we see as good coaching so we get those principles across through coach education and then looking for those principles to exist when the coaches are coaching on the field.

“It is pretty complex, coaching is complex, we are trying to make it as simple as possible to help our club coaches.”

Practical and informative Devane is enthused by the manner in which coaches have found the project to be extremely useful.

“It is very practical, but very informal at the same time,” Devane admits. “You have formal coach education existing through Foundation, Award 1, Award 2, they are crucial and important. We see this as running side by side with it by being informal and practical.”

That more than 2,000 coaches have been upskilled is a source of optimism according to Devane. “It shows the power of volunteers out there and the amount of people that are working every week with our players just in our province alone,” Devane states.

“We’ve had a huge response and we had a fair idea because we engaged with the staff to ask them what is needed out there and what could



Denis Corroon, Westmeath, and Kieran Lillis, Laois, during the Allianz Football League Division Three Final at Croke Park last Saturday.



Mickey Newman signs autographs after Meath secured promotion to Division One of the Allianz Football League last month.

make the biggest impact?

“What kept coming back is coaches knowing the right thing to do at the right age. If I’m an Under 9s coach anywhere in the province I just want to know what will help Under 9 players.

“That is what we have based it on - age specific coaching. It comes from the ground, this is what people want. All we are doing is satisfying the demand that is there. We had 2,136 coaches last year which shows the demand is there.”

Following the initial workshop how do the subsequent club visits work? “On the first visit it is co-coaching - our staff and the coaches take the session together,” Devane replies.

“The second visit is more on coaching in the

club, they sit down with our staff afterwards to go over good practice and did they coach to the five principles and where can we improve coaching. It is about co-coaching on the first visit and more of a peer review then afterwards on the second visit.

“Initially there is one workshop per age group. We have six stages on the pathway so there is six workshops that happen over the next two months in particular.

“April and May is our busy time for workshops. Each of our staff will offer workshops at all age groups. They are pretty active, they are pretty much on every night of the week through May and into the start of June.”

Devane has been struck by the sharing of

information and knowledge between clubs, especially in the younger age grades.

“There is definitely an improvement,” Devane acknowledges. “Take for example one of our staff members might have six or seven clubs in his area. If he puts an invite out to the Under 9 coaches to come in together what we are finding is that the rivalry isn’t there, particularly in the younger age groups.

“They are all doing the same thing once a week and then going to games. What we are doing is creating a community of practice.

“During the workshop what we actually get is coaches from different clubs coming together to actually decide what is best at that age group. There is an activity called build the player and we ask them what they would like to see in an Under 9 player.

“Then we have a resource that backs what they come up with. It pretty much 99% backs up. Our resource which we don’t show to them until the end of the workshop they come up with that information too so there is no great secret to this.”

Ultimately it means that coaches are learning and discussing valuable experience according to Devane. “Through sharing information they get to swap ideas,” Devane adds.

“Should we be kicking at this age, should we be striking, should we have the ball in the air, what are we looking for in terms of catching, how far should we be kicking the ball.

“It is all that good discussion amongst coaches that they are sharing in a community of practice. They are all doing the same thing, the kids are exactly the same from one club to the

next.

“We have found it great that way, it has been a real eye opener to us. Coming together away from the match, the pitch, being on opposite sidelines is great because it gives them a chance to share.”

For further information on the TURAS Programme for GAA Coaches in Leinster contact by email at james.devane.leinster@gaa.ie or through Twitter [@jamesDev84](https://twitter.com/jamesDev84)



Influential Kilkenny forward Walter Walsh.

EUROPE GAA LEADING THE WAY ON PLASTIC AND RECYCLING

There was a super reaction to the feature in last month's newsletter about the great work being done by Youghal GAA in Cork in the area of reusable plastic bottles and general recycling.

It's worth highlighting the leadership being shown by Europe GAA since 2017 in this area where their match regulations have included specific guidelines in this regard.

Europe GAA Chair Tony Bass proudly states: "Europe approved a Regulation at our 2017 Convention requiring teams to use refillable water bottles at games, and more importantly in our case, during all-day tournaments. In addition, host clubs and teams at tournaments have to minimise packaging, recycle plastics and reduce food waste."

The Regulation states:

4. In the interests of reducing environmental impact and waste, host clubs should use minimal packaging, especially avoiding over use of plastic, when preparing and distributing lunch packs.
5. Each participating team shall be provided with a bag for recycling plastics and a bag/container for collecting unused/waste food. All participating teams should make a conscious effort to use these correctly to encourage recycling and reduce food waste. Host clubs should try to donate edible food to local food banks where possible.

Well done Tony and all in Europe GAA!



SINÉAD MCNULTY APPOINTED NEW ARD STIÚRTHÓIR FOR CAMOGIE

The Camogie Association is pleased to confirm the appointment of Sinéad McNulty as its new Ard Stiúrthóir who will take up the role in June. Sinéad is a Dublin native, and a graduate of the Leisure Management and MBA programmes at TU Dublin (DIT).

Over the past 11 years Sinéad has been the Head of Sport at TU Dublin, City Campus, where she has led the planning and development of new sports facilities at Grangegorman and Broombridge Campus and future planning for Sport in TU Dublin. Sinéad brings valuable experience from community sports development and leisure consultancy having worked in sport development roles in Dublin City Council and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, and as a leisure consultant with Holohan Leisure before joining TU Dublin (DIT) in 2008.

National roles have seen Sinéad as Chairperson of the Scheme Implementation Group of the Government Grant Scheme supporting intercounty Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football players, Chairperson of Student Sport Ireland's Finance and Governance Committee, and a member of the GAA's Towards 2034 Committee. Sinéad is a member of Round Towers GAA Club in Clondalkin, where she played Ladies Gaelic Football and has worked with the development committee in the club to secure new facilities and government grant aid.

Speaking about her appointment Sinéad said: "While I am sorry to be departing TU Dublin, and the wonderful colleagues that I have worked with over the past 11 years both in TU Dublin and across the Higher Education sport sector, I am excited to take on the role of Ard Stiúrthóir with the Camogie Association. I look forward to working with the volunteers, staff, players and supporters across the country, and bring my experience and energy to further develop the sport and the Association. It is an exciting time for Camogie, and the broader Gaelic Games family, with the recently launched Women in Sport Policy, augmenting the National Sports Policy and reaffirming the national commitment to the development of sport in Ireland - particularly women's sport."

Uachtarán an Cumann Camógaíochta Kathleen Woods welcomed the appointment by saying: "I am delighted to announce the appointment of Sinéad McNulty as our new Ard Stiúrthóir to lead the Association in the years to come. Sinéad has been appointed after a thorough recruitment process and is a high-calibre appointment who will bring great experience and business acumen to the role."

"I look forward to welcoming Sinéad to the Association when she begins her role in June, and in working closely with her to continue the growth of Camogie as one of Ireland's leading women's sports."



Sinéad McNulty appointed new Ard Stiúrthóir for camogie

GAELIC4MOTHERS & OTHERS ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY IN BALLYBOUGHAL

It started as an idea in Ballyboughal and the most recent adventure included a rewarding trip to Madrid. So the Ballyboughal Gaelic4Mothers&Others campaign has been a real success story.

Former players have been attracted back to the fold, while women with no previous attachment or significant sporting experience have also worn the green and white jersey. Tracey Connell has served Ballyboughal in a number of roles and acknowledges that the initiative has brought joy to those involved.

“I hope it keeps on growing and keeps the ethos,” Connell says about the Gaelic4Mothers&Others drive. “Just for this group of women I’m absolutely amazed, it is the most rewarding job I do in the club, it really is.

“It is everywhere now. You have three or four clubs in Swords, the Naul, Ballyboughal, Balbriggan, it is unreal. You’d love for people to be aware that it is out there. I hope it keeps going the way it is.”

One of the most active Healthy Clubs, spearheaded by Joanne Cahill, Ballyboughal continue to provide a valuable service to the local community. “At the start of 2018 around March we got together,” Connell explains about how the Gaelic4Mothers&Others commenced in the club.

“I’m talking about literally mothers and others

and it is nearly evolving into a casual Junior B thing at the minute to be honest. We’ve middle aged women, who had never played football.

“Joanne was behind the Healthy Clubs and we would be a very fit village in general. There is always something going on even if it is just classes for the craic, you’d have village walks on a Sunday morning.

“There is just always something going on. So we just came up with the idea to start it, to see how it would go.”

Numbers were decent from the outset and Connell just found that the relaxed approach to training simply worked. “We have about 25 at the minute,” Connell says. “In the pub it was discussed, like all the great ideas. We just came up with the idea to see how it goes. I’m from the village originally, but I have met so many people I didn’t know.

“It is a mixture of people that were in the club already. We’ve a few mummies that would have started in our original team 20 years ago who hadn’t played for years.

“We set up a ladies team back maybe 15 or 20 years ago or so. We trained with 10 or 12 people for years and we were hammered for years, but we kept at it and now we have a successful ladies team. We are now still involved, a lot of people who set up the original team.”



The fun and fitness element is what attracts women according to Connell, who is delighted with the impact of the scheme in Ballyboughal. “That is the whole idea around the Gaelic4Mothers&Others, that it isn’t competitive,” Connell admits.

“You don’t keep scores, it is about the social element, going out, having fun. Every match you have your tea, coffee, and biscuits afterwards. There is a League, but there is no recording of the scores. We have a game every fortnight, you have training one week and a match the following week.

“One night a week is what we train, it is very basic training. I probably have 10 women in their 50s, we had about seven who played in the past and a few who dabbled. Overall I have 10 who had never touched a football in their life except for throwing their kids’ footballs into the car.”

The stint in Madrid also proved to be a hugely satisfying weekend for everybody involved.

“One of our ladies team is over there as part of her degrees, she just text me as a joke saying she was lost over there, any chance the mothers and others would come over,” Connell laughs.

“I put it up in the WhatsApp group saying girls we have been invited to Madrid if anybody is interested, thinking it was a joke. If they were all as quick to reply for training! They are the nicest bunch of women, they all just took a role to get it organised.

“We played a team called Madrid Harps, who basically are a team who just got involved in Gaelic Football in Spain. Some of them were Irish, it is essentially a University team. She got a game, and a weekend, she moved in with us for the weekend.

“It was great craic, it was a great team building thing. For a lot of the women it would have been their first time ever away from their partners for the weekend because they are a bit older so it was absolutely great.”

ROUNDERS SEASON IN FULL SWING

By Chris Hughes

This year's GAA Rounders season kicked off with our interprovincial competition on Sunday, March 31st at the Regional Sports Centre in Athlone, County Westmeath.

Leinster continued their domination of the tournament with their third win in a row. They defeated Connacht 33 to 11 in the semi-finals and gave notice to the other provinces that they intended holding on to their provincial title. The Connacht team was made up of Rounders players from clubs in Mayo, Roscommon, Galway and Sligo. A highlight of the semi-final was Leinster's James Kavanagh hitting 2 home runs where he literally hit the slotars out of the field.

In the other semi-final Munster faced an Ulster team backboned by Erne Eagles from Cavan. In a tight game Munster with players from Limerick and Cork came out on top by a score of 17 to 14.

The final was close until the third innings when Leinster's batters put up 10 Rounders to Munster's 1.

After that the result of the game was never in doubt and Leinster completed the three in a row with a final score of 37 to 14.

Leinster Pitcher Danielle Keane from Laois kept scores for Munster to a minimum.

Clever batting by Gillian Nolan from Carlow helped keep the scoreboard ticking over for Leinster. Outstanding catches by Karl Buckley, Munster's right fielder from Limerick, kept them in the game.

The victorious Leinster team was made up of Rounders players from Carlow, Dublin, Laois, Longford, Westmeath and Wexford.



Winning captain Danielle Keane from Leinster with Rounders President Michael Dowling



Rounders Champions from Leinster

MICHAEL DAVITTS GAC ARE HOME AT LAST

By John Harrington

For 107 years the Michael Davitts GAA club in West Belfast were nomads, but now they finally have a home to call their own.

And what a home! The recently opened Davitt Park is a state of the art development that includes a pitch with a spectator stand, a flood-lit 4g training pitch, changing rooms, hurling wall, childrens playground, outdoor gym and walking track.

The development cost around £1.65M (€1.91M) and was jointly funded by Belfast City Council, the National Lottery Community Fund, and Ulster GAA.

After years of playing on various pitches scattered around West Belfast, it means the world to everyone in the club to finally have a place they can call home.

“From when we were first formed back in 1912 we have never had our own facilities,” Davitts GAC Secretary Eugene Gallagher told GAA.ie.

“We would have used council facilities and pitches for our home venues. And even for training nights for our various teams.

“Now that there’s a meeting point for our lads and we have a home field, there’s no excuses anymore. Previously we were travelling here and there and you weren’t used to the field and had to get your bearings.



“I think giving ourselves a home instils a new pride and hopefully a wee bit more determination to say we want to be winning championship games on this pitch, we want to be playing Division 1 Football on it or all-county hurling on it.

“Hopefully having the pavilion now and the pitch, people won’t just be seeing each other from weekend to weekend. They’ll maybe go up when kids’ games or on or just go up for a walk.

“It should bring everyone together and it’s down to us now to basically just push it and promote and get the buy-in from our



Young Davitts GAC members march towards Davitt Park on the day it was opened in February.



Davitts GAC Chairman, Tommy Shaw, and Belfast Lord Mayor, Councillor Deirdre Harghey, cut the ribbon at the opening of Davitt Park.



Davitts GAC secretary, Eugene Gallagher, and Chairman, Tommy Shaw, pictured together outside Davitt Park.

members. It's been a long time coming, and now we have it we have to make the most of it.

"It's brilliant to see. Everywhere you look now someone is wearing our club top or leisure-wear. It's brilliant."

Davitts have always been a small club and currently have an adult membership of around 150, but on the back of the new development those numbers have already started to rise steadily.

The new facility couldn't come at a better time because the club have made great strides at juvenile level in recent years and having a state of the art home like Davitt Park should only accelerate their development at underage level and secure a bright future for the club.

"Our juvenile membership has grown and grown," said Gallagher.

"At our AGM last year we adopted the One Club approach, so this year we have registered with camogie and the LGFA.

"Previously while the girls would have been mixed in with the boys at U-12 and that, we're now starting to put out girls teams in both ladies football and camogie on their own at U-6, U-8s and U-10s.

"The amount of buy-in we're getting now from the parents who are freely giving up their time just to help with the coaches to ferry them to and from training and matches has been brilliant.

"There's not a day in the evening time and at then at the weekend when there's not something going on up on the training pitch.

"We had a foundation coaching course this weekend because there are so many parents now getting involved and you obviously have

to proper governance and make sure they all have the correct qualifications.

"We have a juvenile sub-committee and they're very busy. We probably would have been better known at senior level as a football club, but our hurling has now made great strides in the last few years and hurling is now probably at a level par with the football.

"In 2017 our Feile hurlers went down to Wexford and our footballers won the Feile that year as well so there's a lot of talented young players coming through the club at the moment."

Vibrant links with local schools is the secret to success for all GAA clubs, and the new facilities at Davitt Park are already proving to be a boon for Davitts in that respect.

"There's a couple of schools right in the vicinity, Corpus Christi College and St. Paul's primary school," said Gallagher.

"Any of the schools in the parish and diocese from nine to five can come up and use the 4g pitch. And then from five on and at the weekends we take ownership of it. It's a great facility for the schools to have on their doorstep."

Before the new development at Davitt Park the area was a barren site and often a magnet for anti-social behaviour, but now it is quickly becoming a cultural as well as sporting hub for the local community.

"The community have really bought into it already," said Gallagher. "Every time the gates are opened the kids are racing through.

"There's a walkway around the whole

perimeter as well as part of our health and wellbeing initiative.

"So, anybody can come in and walk about and there's a smashing view over Belfast from up behind our stand.

"We also have community allotments as well. Eight or ten allotments and some of the local community have bought into those and maintain those and use them."

A lot of people in the club have put a lot of work into making their Davitt Park dream a reality, but none more so than long serving club Chairman Tommy Shaw.

Antrim club-person of the year in 2018, Davitt Park is the ultimate legacy of the energy and drive the indefatigable Shaw has brought to the club for many decades.

"Tommy has been our Chairman for the best part of 30 years now," said Gallagher. "Many clubs have a talismanic figure, and Tommy is certainly ours.

"He went through serious surgery last year when he had a heart-valve and by-pass replaced, but he wasn't going anywhere. We officially opened our new facilities in February this year and there's no prouder man, he was never going to miss that occasion.

"It was a huge day with a great turn-out. Tommy was just as proud as punch and the new facilities are a great testament to his years of hard work."

Davitts have survived thanks to the efforts of club volunteers like Shaw. Now with a state of the art home of their own, they should thrive.

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Inspire your Juvenile Team with this special offer for GAA Clubs.

For just €6.50 per juvenile, your team can enjoy a day out at Croke Park that includes:

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- The chance to explore the spine-tingling GAA Museum
- Time to hone their skills in the Interactive Games Zone

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MÍLE BUÍOCHAS

Thank you to all of those who have contributed to this month's edition of the GAA Club Newsletter. Your feedback is welcome and any comments, suggestions or queries should be directed to clubnewsletter@gaa.ie.

Produced by the GAA Communications Department in Croke Park, Edited by Cian Ó Murchadha and designed by DBA Publications in Blackrock, Co Dublin.