

# M A Y 2 0 2 1 NUACHTLITIR BEALTAINÉ 2021



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# GAA COMMENCE WORK ON NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

## **THE GAA HAS COMMENCED WORK ON A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN WHICH IS DUE TO BE FINALISED AND PUBLISHED THIS AUTUMN.**

A steering group led by Uachtarán Larry McCarthy has begun an extensive programme of research that will engage with every level of the Association.

An opportunity for public consultation and for club members to have an input into shaping the GAA's focus from 2021 until late 2026 will happen during the summer.

Uachtarán CLG Larry McCarthy said: "Upon taking office I spoke of the opportunity for recalibration and rebuilding that is taking place as a result of our gradual emergence from the harrowing Pandemic.

"The GAA has already been in a period of intense reflection on matters as diverse as the shape of our season, the formation of competitions and playing rules and the development of young players.

"We want to ensure that the GAA is perfectly placed in the post-Pandemic world to be the sort of vibrant, supportive and relevant Association that we all want it to be.

"The proposed strategic plan covering up to 2026 will enable us to put the GAA on that road and every unit of the Association will have an opportunity to have their voice heard. I'd encourage all of our volunteers, members and players to take this opportunity to play a part in shaping our future together."

Phase One of the plan has commenced and seeks to establish the key issues that face

the Association. Phase Two will involve a public survey, tailored for club members, but which will be made available to everyone to contribute.

Ard Stiúrthóir Tom Ryan added: "The purpose of the plan is to allow us to answer some fundamental questions about ourselves. Answering these questions will involve us looking at our core purpose, our goals and objectives, our structures, our collective roles and responsibilities, and how we get things done."

As part of the initial phase, feedback is being sought through:

- Surveys and focus groups with a sample of individuals representing Players,

- Coaches, Officers, and other Volunteers at Club and County levels
- Workshops with An Coiste Bainistíochta and the GAA's Staff Executive
- Surveys with GAA staff
- Written submissions from key groups, such as: Central sub-committees, County Committees, our sister organisations, schools' bodies, government bodies, the GPA, sponsors and media
- Interviews with experts

The members of the GAA Strategic Plan 2021-2026 Steering Group are:

- Conor McCarthy (O'Donovan Rossa, Cork)
- Dr. Elish Kelly (Padraig Pearses, Roscommon)

- Pat Gilroy (St. Vincents, Dublin)
- Paul Foley (Patrickswell, Limerick)
- Prof. David Hassan (St. Mary's GAC, Banagher, Derry)
- Shane Flanagan (Johnstownbridge, Kildare)
- Tim Murphy (Brosna, Kerry)
- Larry McCarthy (Uachtarán CLG)
- Tom Ryan (Ard-Stiúrthóir CLG)
- Ruairí Harvey (Planning Coordinator CLG)

While this group will guide the process, extensive efforts will be made to ensure that everyone who wants a say in the Association's future has ample opportunities to do so.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES UNABLE TO USE GAA DEFIBRILLATOR BECAUSE UNIT WAS NOT WORKING

**REPORTS THAT A MEMBER OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES WAS UNABLE TO USE A GAA-BASED DEFIBRILLATOR ON A SICK PERSON BECAUSE THE UNIT WAS NOT WORKING PROPERLY BRINGS HOME TO ALL OF US THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING SURE THAT WE CHECK THESE UNITS REGULARLY – AND ALSO REPLACE THEM WHEN NECESSARY.**

Thankfully, this incident in the midlands did not compromise the health of the person in question who was looked after with alternative arrangements.

But it is a reminder that although the majority of GAA clubs have done the right thing and have invested in these units – that there will come a time when they will all need to be replaced as a matter of best practice, and in the meantime, they must be checked regularly.

The new GAA Community Hearts Programme provides for clubs to secure a new state of the art defibrillator unit via a bespoke fundraising platform.

The target audience is not just the clubs who do not have a unit – but is also for clubs who have previously invested in a defibrillator but who need to check whether that unit should ideally be replaced.

Automated External Defibrillators or AED's are sophisticated pieces of equipment and as such they have a lifespan.

According to David Greville of Heart Safety Solutions, the advice is that any unit more than 10 years old is a unit that should be considered as being in need of an upgrade.



LISA JACKSON, KAREN RICHARDSON AND MICHELLE RICHARDSON, MEMBERS OF THE HEALTHY CLUB TEAM IN BLESSINGTON GAA CLUB IN WICKLOW WHO ARE REPLACING AN OLD UNIT WITH A NEW DEFIBRILLATOR SOURCED THROUGH THE GAA COMMUNITY HEART PROGRAMME. THE CLUB HELD A FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE FOR MEMBERS TO WALK, RUN, JOG OR CYCLE AND DONATE VIA THE PLATFORM TO PAY FOR THE UNIT.



He says: "Our advice is that units need to be checked regularly to ensure that they are at all times Accessible, are fully Charged and also that there are sufficient numbers who are Trained in how to use them.

"As well as following that process, the batteries and pads are items that need to be monitored and checked and the recommendation is that a unit that is 10 years or older should ideally be replaced. We have been working with the GAA helping clubs access defibrillators since 2007 and have seen hundreds of clubs get involved. It is important that clubs are aware that these pieces of equipment need to be checked

regularly and that getting and installing a unit doesn't mean the work stops there." A recent survey by the GAA's Community and Health department shows that 42 lives have been saved in the last few years by defibrillators located in GAA clubs.

Club secretaries can register their club on the GAA Community Heart Programme which allows members and supporters to make donations towards the cost of a new unit. Under this scheme a new unit which is linked to the mobile phone network and can inform club members when the unit needs to be checked and serviced is available at a discounted price of €2,150.



**For full details on the  
Save a Life programme,  
visit**

<https://savealife.communityheartprogram.com/gaa>

By John Harrington

## DON JACKMAN THANKFUL FOR LIFE-SAVING DEFIBRILLATOR

**FORMER WICKLOW COUNTY FOOTBALLER, DON JACKMAN, IS ONLY ALIVE TODAY BECAUSE HIS CLUB, COOLKENNO, HAVE A FULLY OPERATIONAL AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) ON THEIR CLUB GROUNDS.**

He is one of 42 people in Ireland who had their lives saved by AEDs located in GAA grounds and knows he was very lucky that action could be taken very quickly when he collapsed at a club training session in March last year.

Five of his club-mates - Steven Cushe, Jim Cushe, Colin Murphy, Shaun Smith and Cathal Rossiter - all thankfully responded promptly to use the defibrillator to resuscitate Jackman.

"That's it, I was very fortunate not only that the club had a defibrillator, but that it had been serviced and so was working as it should be," Jackman told GAA.ie

"The lads who used it had a bit of cop on too. They acted very quickly which is the most important thing in a situation like that."

Jackman has no recollection of the moment he collapsed at training.

His memory of that day, the week leading up to it, and the four or five days subsequently have all been wiped, so his team-mates had to tell him exactly what happened.

"It was a club training session and our goalkeeper wasn't there that night and apparently I said to the lads that I'd go in goal because I'm getting auld now so I



FORMER WICKLOW FOOTBALLER, DON JACKMAN, SURVIVED A CARDIAC ARREST BECAUSE HIS CLUB, COOLKENNO, HAD A FULLY OPERATIONAL AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) ON THEIR CLUB GROUNDS.

said I'd take it handy and go in goal," says Jackman.

"The boys were saying I was pulling off all sorts of saves from shots as we were warming up and then we went to play a

game and I walked out with a couple of the lads and just fell to the ground.

"Some of the boys thought I was acting the maggot at first but then they saw that I wasn't messing.

"So they very quickly ran to get the defibrillator and the good thing about the defibrillator is that it tells you exactly how to use it.



DON JACKMAN IN COOLKENNO COLOURS.

“It took nine shocks from the defibrillator before they were able to get me back, so I was very lucky really.”

You can't keep a good man down, and Jackman quickly made a full recovery from his cardiac arrest.

“Basically they found that I had an irregular heartbeat, so they inserted one of those small defibrillators on my heart,” he says.

“Within a month I was back moving around and feeding a few cattle and things like that.

“I didn't play last year but I think I'm going to go back to play this year. I was quite lucky last year because when I came out of hospital it was the week that everything closed up for the first lockdown.

“It gave me more of a chance to recover and get back right. We were back then training in May and I was in better form by then and I went up training for a while.

“I didn't do anything at first, but as the Championship wore on I got back in to doing the warm-up and a few ball drills and just back in tipping around without doing anything too serious.

“We actually got to the county final last year, which was great. I didn't play myself, but I'm thinking that I'll go back this year.

“It would be great if we could go on now and win the Intermediate Championship this year.”

Jackman's near-death experience has made him a powerful advocate for the GAA's Community Heart Programme which encourages every club in the country to A.C.T. now and ensure they can avail of a defibrillator that is ACCESSIBLE, CHARGED and that there are enough TRAINED rescuers within the Club to operate it.

The programme allows clubs to fundraise for new AEDs, which are connected to the internet via the mobile phone network. This

means the AED will check itself and notify designated club members via email if there is an issue that needs to be addressed, such as the battery or pads needing to be changed.

The programme isn't just for clubs who don't have a defibrillator, it's for clubs who may have one that's past its life expectancy of eight to ten years.

Can you imagine how Don Jackman's friends and team-mates would have felt if they discovered in the worst way possible that the Coolkenno defibrillator was no longer operational?

If you think your club would be interested in taking part in the Community Hearts Programme, Jackman has a simple message for you.

“I wouldn't even be thinking about it, I'd be going ahead and getting it,” he says.

“I wouldn't be here today if we didn't have one in the club that had been checked regularly to make sure it was in good working order.

“In situations like mine, your only chance of survival is if you have people there at the time who can do the CPR and have a defibrillator close to hand.

“I'm one of the very, very lucky ones, and my story is proof that having a working defibrillator in your GAA club can save a life.”

Where can a Club find out more about the Community Heart Programme?

Watch on YouTube

**GAA LAUNCH COMMUNITY HEART PROGRAMME. WATCH THE VIDEO HERE**

Communication and a registration link to the Community Heart Programme has already been sent to all GAA Club secretaries. Club members can find out more information and look up their club to place a donation at:

<https://savealife.communityheartprogram.com/gaa>

What happens during and after registration? The Club will set their fundraising target during the registration process based on the number of AED units that they wish to purchase.

Once this target is hit, the AED unit(s) will be delivered and installed within approximately 6 weeks. Heart Safety Solutions (the supplier) will make direct contact with the Club to arrange.

**ANTRIM HURLER NEIL MCMANUS AND HIS FATHER HUGH AT CUSHENDALL GAA CLUB IN ANTRIM. NEIL IS AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE GAA COMMUNITY HEART PROGRAMME WHICH SEEKS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE BENEFITS OF DEFIBRILLATORS TO CLUBS AND MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO FUNDRAISE TO ACQUIRE THEM. NEIL'S WORK IS INSPIRED BY HIS FAMILY EXPERIENCE FIVE YEARS AGO WHEN HIS FATHER WAS SAVED BY THE PRESENCE OF A DEFIBRILLATOR IN THE COMMUNITY DURING AN EMERGENCY. GAA CLUB-BASED DEFIBRILLATORS HAVE BEEN USED TO SAVE 42 LIVES.**



## KELLOGG'S GAA CÚL CAMPS RETURN FOR SUMMER 2021

**THE GAA, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KELLOGG, HAS LAUNCHED THE 2021 KELLOGG'S GAA CÚL CAMPS, OFFERING CHILDREN A HEALTHY, FUN AND SAFE SUMMER OUTDOOR ACTIVITY. STARTING ON 28TH JUNE AND RUNNING UP TO 27TH AUGUST, THE 2021 KELLOGG'S GAA CÚL CAMPS WILL RUN IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES AND SUBJECT TO THE ADVICE OF THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES. THE SUCCESSFUL HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES FROM LAST YEAR WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AGAIN AND BUILT ON FOR THE 2021 CAMPS.**

Despite challenges encountered last year, the 2020 Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps proved a great success and provided a welcome diversion for over 70,000 children across the country from the Covid-19 restrictions. It also marked an important milestone by welcoming the 1 millionth participant to the Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps. The number of camps and capacity at this year's camps will increase as we get closer to the summer months with some already on sale, but parents are reminded to book early to avoid disappointment as demand is expected to be higher than ever.

Kellogg ambassador and Mayo Football Star, Cillian O'Connor was on hand to launch the 2021 Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps and will front the 'Cúl Start' campaign alongside Kilkenny Camogie Star, Grace Walsh with a range of social video content to be delivered across Kellogg's social channels throughout the Summer. B\*Witched star, Sinead O'Carroll was also in attendance and is looking forward to sending her kids, Samarah and Zain to this year's camps.



**KELLOGG'S GAA CÚL CAMPS AMBASSADOR AND MAYO FOOTBALLER CILLIAN O'CONNOR, LEFT, KELLOGG'S GAA CÚL CAMPS AMBASSADOR AND SINGER SINEAD O'CARROLL, WITH BROTHERS PADDY, AGE 13, AND TOM NOLAN, AGE 10, OF ST BRIGIDS GAA CLUB IN CASTLEKNOCK, DUBLIN, AND ADRIANA FAYIAH, CENTRE, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE 2021 KELLOGG'S GAA CÚL CAMPS, IN CROKE PARK, DUBLIN, AS KELLOGG CELEBRATES THE 10TH YEAR OF THE SPONSORSHIP. STARTING ON 28TH JUNE AND RUNNING UP TO 27TH AUGUST, THE KELLOGG'S GAA CÚL CAMPS OFFER CHILDREN A HEALTHY, FUN AND SAFE SUMMER OUTDOOR ACTIVITY.**

Kellogg has also launched the nationwide on-pack promotion for all GAA clubs across the country to be in with a chance to win prizes worth a total of €40,000. With fundraising activities severely disrupted over the past year, this on-pack competition provides GAA members with an incredible opportunity to raise vital funds for their team. In order to nominate your GAA club, all that is required is to purchase a promotional box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Rice Krispies or Bran Flakes. Using a unique on pack code, log on to [kelloggsculcamps.gaa.ie/competition](http://kelloggsculcamps.gaa.ie/competition) and nominate your club of choice.

Sarah Ferguson, Kellogg Ireland General Manager said "Kellogg is very proud to be involved in a partnership which involves children the length and breadth of the country, each of whom will get the chance to meet up with their friends and enjoy themselves in a healthy and safe outdoor environment. This is the tenth year of our sponsorship and we are thrilled to watch the Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps to continue to go from strength to strength and it was particularly pleasing to see how well it worked last year during a difficult year.

Last year, we reached the significant milestone of welcoming the 1 millionth child through the GAA Cúl Camps since Kellogg partnered with the GAA. We are looking forward to welcoming more children this year and for the camps to continue to play such a key role in the summer of budding sports stars."

GAA Cúl Camps co-ordinator Charlie Harrison added: "It's time to make Summer plans! Keeping in line with Government guidelines we are thankfully in a position to deliver the camps during the months of July and August 2021 to children living in all 32 counties. Naturally, after the year we've all had to endure, the idea of finally getting out of the house, being active and

seeing other children sounds hugely appealing. We are mindful of the reality that Covid 19 will still be with us however, and we will be very much guided by the government and relevant authorities to ensure all reasonable safety measures and protocols are adhered to in the rollout of our camps.

GAA President Larry McCarthy said "The success of our Kellogg's Cúl Camps in 2020 was one of the GAA highlights in what was a difficult year for everyone. The focus and outlet that it gave to 70,000 of our young players in a safe environment provided a huge boost to them and their families and I am confident the camps can have a similarly positive impact this summer.

"The reach and success of the camps is not limited to Ireland only; their growing popularity across our international network is a great source of pride and seeing the distinctive playing gear, not just across the island but in pockets around the globe, is fantastic.

"A special word of thanks to Kellogg for a decade of supporting this vital project. It is without doubt one of the best and most successful summer initiatives for children with Gaelic games and fun at the heart of it all."

**For more  
information on  
the Kellogg's  
GAA Cúl Camps visit  
[www.kelloggsculcamps.gaa.ie](http://www.kelloggsculcamps.gaa.ie)**



## BE READY TO PLAY



**THE 'BE READY TO PLAY' PROGRAMME IS A HOLISTIC COACHING AND PERFORMANCE PLAN THAT WILL BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO ALL CLUB COACHES AND PLAYERS, MALE, FEMALE, ADULT, AND YOUTH ALIKE AND WHICH WILL BE DELIVERED VIA WEBINARS, WEBSITE PROGRAMMES, INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS AND LIVE ONLINE SESSIONS.**

It will help them return to training post Covid in a way that will hopefully increase enjoyment, performance, and participation, while simultaneously reducing the risk of injury.

The programme will initially be tailored to help people be active in lockdown, then progress towards a development phase and a prepare to play phase before culminating in a prepare to perform phase which will help players be at their peak for important matches.

What makes the 'Be Ready to Play' programme such a great opportunity for those who participate, is that they will benefit from the advice and direction of

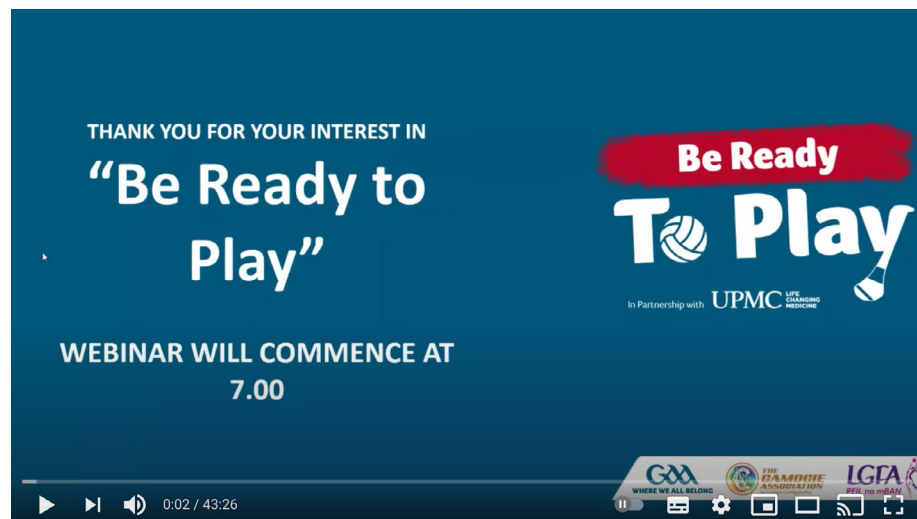
some of the most renowned leaders in the field of coaching and performance.

These include Des Ryan, Shayne Murphy, Annie McCarra, Michael Dempsey, Cathal Cregg, Aoife Lane, Niall Moyna, Bryan Cullen, Dr. Liam Hennessy, Sharon Madigan, Phil Kearney, Denis Martin, Kate Kirby, Shayne Murphy, Aidan O'Connell, Cairbre Ó Cairealláin, Martin McCarthy, David Kelly, and Louise Keane.

Areas covered will include games-based coaching, athletic development, psychology and wellbeing, nutrition, performance analysis, skill acquisition and biomechanics, physiotherapy, and injury prevention.

**Previous webinars can be viewed below**  
**Launch Webinar**

Link: [https://youtu.be/T\\_t-Mvdwan4](https://youtu.be/T_t-Mvdwan4)

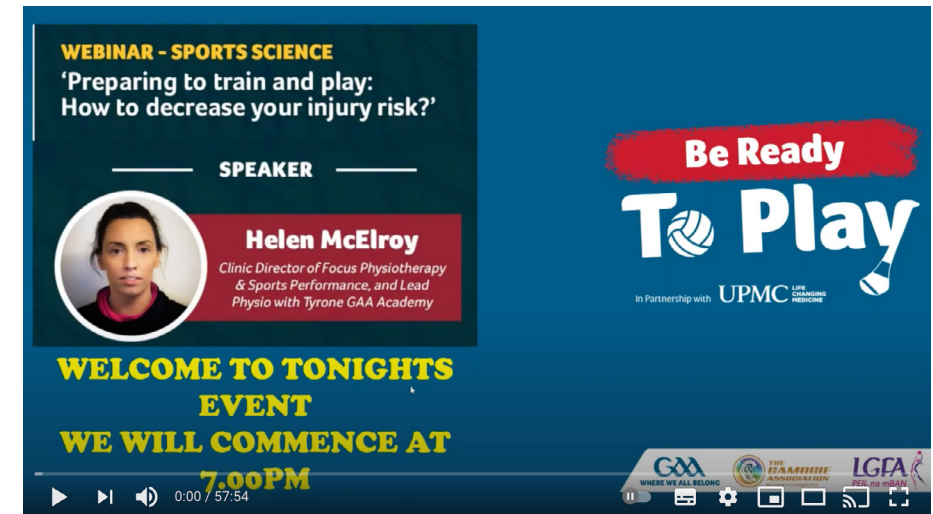


### Sports Science Webinar

Title: Preparing to train and Play How to decrease your injury risk

Presenter: Helen McElroy

Link: <https://youtu.be/Pa9wvScCLek>



### Coaching Webinar

Title: Technical Coaching for Hurling, Camogie & Football

Presenters: Fiona McHale, John Doyle, Niall Corcoran & Eileen Gleeson

Link: [https://youtu.be/7BaCA8\\_k6UU](https://youtu.be/7BaCA8_k6UU)



## ***COACHING & GAMES DEVELOPMENT RETURN TO GAELIC GAMES***

### **Updated Covid 19 Guidelines on Safe Return to Gaelic Games for Gaelic Games Coaching & Games Development Activity**

**April 2021**

Following the recent announcement by the Irish Government to allow Gaelic Games players aged 18 years and under to return to Gaelic Games training in pods of 15 & non-contact activity from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021, please see below a copy of the updated Coaching & Games Development Activities Plan. This Plan reflects what activity is permitted to take place under Coaching & Games Development during Level 5 restrictions when underage training resumes on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The Gaelic Games Covid Advisory Group has also issued updated Covid-19 Guidelines on Safe Return to Gaelic Games on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 which should be read in conjunction with the Plan.

Some of the key points for implementation from the Gaelic Games Updated Covid-19 Guidelines on Safe Return to Gaelic Games are as follows:

**Advice for Clubs/Coaches/Players/Parents/Coaching & Games  
Development Staff Preparing for a Safe Return to Gaelic Games**

## RETURN TO TRAINING

- As you are aware, non-contact training for underage teams in pods of 15 will be permitted from April 26<sup>th</sup> next in the 26 Counties. Specific information in relation to the Return to Gaelic Games for the Six Counties is included on page 7. “Underage teams” means any registered team at U-18 level or below.
- The key control measures remain completion of the [online education module](#) and completion of the [Health Questionnaire](#) before each session.  
Prior to each training session or game, and until further notice, players, parents/guardians and backroom personnel should complete the self-administered standard risk assessment health questionnaire through the Foireann Return to Play IT portal. Symptoms such as a high temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and change in taste or smell will be identified.
- **The presence of symptoms, or temperature (over 37.5°C) precludes attendance at training or games.** In such circumstances, the individual should telephone their GP for advice and management. **DO NOT ATTEND THE GP SURGERY OR GAA FACILITIES.**
- It is also important to remember that all indoor facilities must remain closed at this time in all 32 counties.

## ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING

- In general, only players and coaches of the relevant team should attend any training session.
- One Parent or Guardian per child (or per family if more than one child is attending from a particular family) is permitted to attend in a safeguarding /supervisory capacity involving any team in the U-18 or below age group, should they consider it necessary.
- Strict social distancing and public health guidelines should be adhered to at all times. In particular, it is important that parents do not congregate in groups before or after sessions, outside of what is permitted in current Government regulations.
- Any person wishing to attend our underage training or games including coaches, parents, players and spectators shall be subject to the provisions of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

## U20 / MINOR / ACADEMY SQUAD TRAINING

**GAA:** For clarity, Counties are asked to note that the current exemptions for underage club training and senior inter county teams **DO NOT** extend to U20, Minor or Academy squads; only players from a county's Senior Panel are currently covered by the player injury scheme. Return to Training dates for underage inter county panels are contingent on further relaxation of Government restrictions – the GAA will advise further once any new information is made available.

### LGFA: UNDERAGE INTERCOUNTY/ PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TRAINING

For clarity, Counties are asked to note that the current exemptions for underage club training and adult inter county teams **DO NOT** extend to underage intercounty teams or player development programmes; only players from a county's Adult Panel are currently covered by the LGFA Injury Fund. Return to Training dates for underage inter county panels are contingent on further relaxation of Government restrictions – the LGFA will advise further once any new information is made available.

### Camogie Association: Minor/Academy Squad Training

For clarity, Counties are asked to note that the current exemptions for underage club training and adult/ senior inter county teams **DO NOT** extend to Minor or Academy squads; only players from a county's first and second (where relevant) panel are currently permitted to return to training. First and second 'adult' panel. This may include members who are under 18.

## PREPARATION OF FACILITIES

Dressing Rooms, Gyms and Social areas should remain closed until further notice.

### (a) Signage

Appropriate signage in line with public health guidelines should be placed at the entrance of club facilities, in car parks, at the entrances of toilets and pitch side. These signs should be clearly visible and easy to understand. Signs should emphasize the government recommended social distancing rules (2m at present), hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, avoidance of personal contact, shaking hands and spitting etc.

### (b) Hand gel dispensers

Hand dispensers should be provided in the car park, toilets, entrance to pitch and pitch side. Appropriate disposal bins for hazardous biological waste to be available and clearly marked.

### (c) Toilets

Toilets must be regarded as potentially contaminated areas. Ventilation is important, doors and windows should remain open in so far as is reasonable and appropriate. Basic hygiene etiquette adapted to the circumstances should be promoted: for example, use of elbows to open doors, and using paper towels to turn taps on and off. On exit of toilet, use hand sanitizer. There should be a regular cleaning programme with daily deep disinfection in place.

### (d) Pitch-side

Signage regarding social distancing, personal contact, coughing, sneezing, spitting, hand sanitizing to be clearly visible. Only players and essential team personnel should gain access. Medical personnel (physios, doctors) should wear masks and other appropriate PPE. Facilities for disinfecting balls, sliotars, hurleys, helmets, gloves etc to be available and to be used regularly.

### (e) Medical isolation room

In the unlikely event that a player becomes unwell during a training session, facilities will be in place for immediate isolation in a designated medical room (this could be a dressing room as they will not be in general use) containing the appropriate personal protective equipment. There will be a clearly defined protocol for linking up with the appropriate medical service - for example, local accident and emergency department (in the event of an injury), general practitioner or out of hours GP service.

## COVID SUPERVISORS FOR GAELIC GAMES

Each Club Secretary and Chairperson (or their nominees) must have completed the online module at some point in the last 12 months so that each Club understands both the Role and the purpose of Covid Supervisors.

Every team in the club must have someone nominated with responsibility for Covid Supervision present at each training session or game. These nominees must complete the online module which outlines their exact role. Covid Supervisors will be on duty and will be clearly identifiable (for example, standardized bib) at all times while facilities are open until further notice. [Click here to access the online education module.](#)

Broadly speaking the main duties of the Covid Supervisor will include:

- Ensuring players and backroom personnel complete the Health Questionnaire before each game and training session
- Ensuring sanitising of facilities is completed before and after each training session or game (e.g. Toilets, door handles, equipment etc.)
- Maintaining records of attendees (if players are completing the online Questionnaire, this will occur automatically on the system)

## EDUCATION

All players (parents or guardians in the case of underage players) should ensure they have completed the Gaelic Games online education module in the last 12 months. It can be viewed [here](#).

## THE HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Prior to commencing training all players and personnel will be required to comply with the following requirements if they are going to attend training or games **until further notice**. Players and support staff will complete a standard risk assessment health questionnaire before their initial return to training. The online version of this can be accessed [here](#). In the case of underage players, the questionnaire should be completed (or signed) by a parent or guardian. The Questionnaire can be completed on-line preferably but can also be completed in hard copy, in which case it should be presented to the Covid Supervisor on entry to the facility.

If a player/member develops symptoms of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the player should not attend a training session, skills practice session or game, and will need to self-isolate immediately and phone their GP for medical advice. The player should not attend the medical practice or surgery of their doctor, or pharmacy, healthcare clinic or hospital.

## TEMPERATURE CHECKING

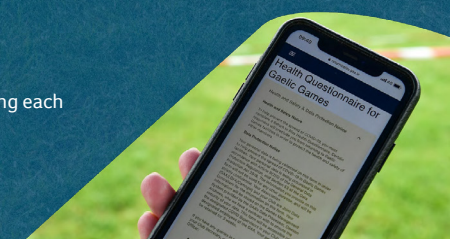
It is the responsibility of the individual to monitor their own temperature. The presence of symptoms such as a high temperature (above 37.5c), cough, sore throat, general weakness, shortness of breath and change or absence in taste or smell prevents attendance at training with a recommendation that the player contacts their general practitioner.

## SANITISING OF FACILITIES

At the end of each training session, the Covid Supervisor should ensure all door handles, playing equipment (e.g., balls, hurleys, sliotars etc.), the medical room and the Toilet(s) are sanitised before use by the next team or training group.

## ATTENDANCE RECORDS/DATA MANAGEMENT

The Covid Supervisor will ensure that the record of everybody attending each training session will be available in the event that contact tracing or other intervention is required. Data management will be consistent with GDPR guidelines.



## SCHEDULING OF ACTIVITIES

Timesheets should be used to clearly show what teams are using club facilities at what times. The principle of “get in, train and get out” will apply. There should be a time interval between teams departing having completed training and the next team arriving. Attendance will be limited to essential personnel. Compliance will be necessary to ensure efficiency and harmony.

All facilities should have appropriate dispersion measures in place at all entrances and exits and parents/guardians should be advised that there should be no congregation on or outside club grounds.

## PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPATION

Players and team personnel should be provided with this document and have completed the Gaelic Games online education module within the last 12 months prior to participation. Participants are also required to change at home, travel separately (except family members), shower at home and where possible use toilet facilities at home. Strapping should be applied at home where possible. All players should use their own individual and clearly labelled water bottles.

## ADHERE TO BEST HYGIENE PRACTICE

- Frequent hand washing, sanitising, and regular cleaning and washing of gear and equipment.
- Avoid the following: spitting, sharing water bottles, touching high contact surfaces (e.g. door handles).
- Use of face masks where applicable.



Observe Government advised social distance guidelines (currently 2m) until further notice.

## AVOID OR REDUCE BODY CONTACT TO A MINIMUM

- Shaking hands, clapping hands, ‘high fives’ and embracing should be completely avoided.
- Until measures are reduced, physical contact should be reduced where possible on field. Off field, players should observe government social distancing guidelines at all times.

## ENSURE SESSIONS TAKE PLACE OUTDOORS

- All Players and Teams must conduct their training sessions outdoors; dressing rooms, showers, clubhouses and other club buildings should remain closed until further notice.
- Toilets will be available on a controlled basis.

## TRAVEL TO AND FROM TRAINING

Follow Government social distancing advice in relation to all forms of transport to training and play.

- If possible, walk or cycle to the venue.
- If travelling by private vehicle, such as a car, only travel with members of the same household.
- Avoid the use of public transport where possible (if it is the only option, follow Government guidelines)

## REFRAIN FROM EVENTS SUCH AS TEAM MEETINGS

Eliminate all non-essential gatherings and put robust control measures in place for essential interaction.

- Team meetings can only be held outdoors or in spaces that allow for compliance with Government social distancing guidelines (currently 2 metres)
- All other meetings should be held online

## AVOID CONGREGATING BEFORE OR AFTER SESSIONS

All facilities should have appropriate dispersion measures in place at all entrances and exits and parents/guardians should be advised that there should be no congregation on or outside club grounds.

If you have any questions, ask for clarification from a Covid Supervisor.

## RESPONSIBILITY

It is essential that everyone in the club works together to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

- Each ‘Club Executive’ will be responsible for ensuring that a Covid Supervisor is assigned to each team, and will ensure the full cooperation of participating officials, coaches, mentors, players, medical and sports science and allied support personnel and parents.
- Each Covid Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring COVID-19 protocols, including completion of health questionnaires, and cleaning and sanitising of facilities are followed.
- Each Team Manager will be responsible for overseeing player and support personnel compliance.
- Each Mentor and Player shall ensure compliance with COVID-19 guidelines within their own area and for the health and safety of their colleagues.
- Parents/Guardians will be responsible for dropping underage players to, and collecting underage players from, training sessions or games until further notice and should avoid congregating.

## ENSURE SESSIONS TAKE PLACE OUTDOORS

- All Players and Teams must conduct their training sessions outdoors; dressing rooms, showers, clubhouses and other club buildings should remain closed until further notice.
- Toilets will be available on a controlled basis.

## WHERE CAN I GET ADDITIONAL COVID-19 CLUB INFORMATION?

For further Covid-19 Club Education related information, online training and resources please log on to <https://learning.gaa.ie/covid19>.



## WHAT COACHING & GAMES DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY IS PERMITTED TO TAKE PLACE UNDER CURRENT GUIDELINES:

- Non-contact training in Pods of 15 for juvenile club teams in the 26 counties.
- Full squad training for youth & adult teams in the 6 counties. Please see page 7 for further details on return to squad training and competitive games in the Six Counties.
- Coach, Referee and Safeguarding Training courses are not permitted to take place either indoors or outdoors, but can still continue to be delivered online where applicable.

Please note the following Child Safeguarding Ratio's apply:

- SUPERVISION RATIOS: Playing and training activities must abide by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 10 children, (2:10).
- This ratio requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other responsible adult to be present at all times
- Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times

## GAELIC GAMES ACTIVITY IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- [The GAA Activity Planner](#) - Contains a section on social distancing friendly activities that can be delivered to players and teams. [Log on](#) for activities and coaching ideas.
- [Moving Well Being Well](#) - A large-scale project assessing fundamental movement skills (FMS) of young people participating in Hurling and Gaelic football. [Log on](#) for activities and coaching ideas.
- [Be Ready to Play](#) - The programme, in partnership with UPMC, and rolled out jointly across the GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association, is a holistic coaching and performance plan that will be of great benefit to all club coaches and players, male, female, adult, and youth alike. It will help them return to training post Covid in a way that will hopefully increase enjoyment, performance, and participation, while simultaneously reducing the risk of injury. The programme will initially be tailored to help people to be active in lockdown, then progress towards a development phase and a prepare to play phase before culminating in a prepare to perform phase which will help players be at their peak for important matches. [Log on](#) to register and access webinars.
- [Returning to Schools Coaching Programme & Support](#) - The Coaching Programme & Support document outlines a number of resources that can help Teachers in the planning and delivery of physical activity opportunities and the wider curriculum in the months ahead. [Log on](#) for access to the Returning to Schools Coaching Programme & Support resources.
- [Camogie Association](#) - For additional camogie-related Covid-19 club information and socially distanced training activities for camogie coaches, visit [camogie.ie](http://camogie.ie).

## Ulster GAA Updated Return to Gaelic Games Guidelines

### RETURN TO SQUAD TRAINING AND COMPETITIVE GAMES IN SIX COUNTIES Covid-19 Guidance from Ulster GAA

The NI Executive at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021 confirmed that squad training and competitive outdoor sport could return on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021.

This followed the first phase where 15 people (including coaches), could resume in the 'Six Counties' on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

As a result of the announcement Ulster GAA, following consultation with the GAA Covid Advisory Group and the Department for Communities/Sport NI, is providing the following guidance to our clubs in the 'Six Counties;'

1. From **23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021**, full squad training can resume for youth and adult teams in preparation for a return to the playing of our games.
2. From **1<sup>st</sup> May 2021**, challenge matches are permitted subject to County Committee and Provincial Councils being informed in advance through the proper channels. Such challenge games must be played in the 'Six Counties' and can only involve teams from the 'Six Counties.'

## Ulster GAA Updated Return to Gaelic Games Guidelines

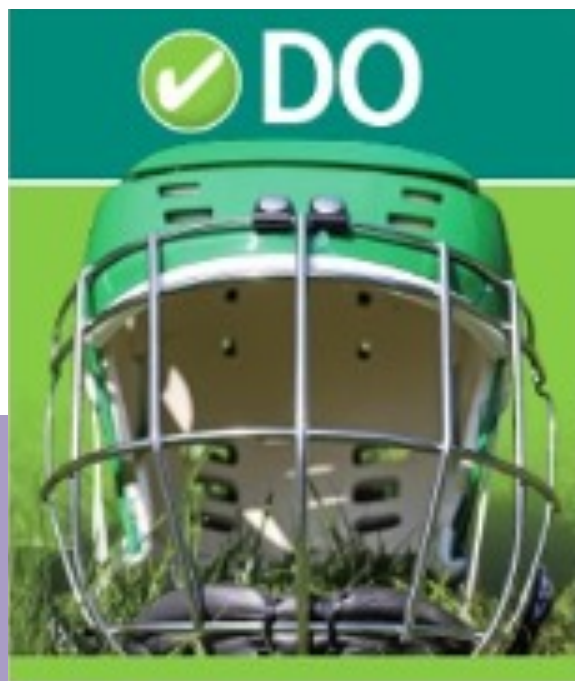
3. From **7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**, competitive games under the control of County Committees can re-commence for youth and adult teams.

The following regulations apply in relation to the playing of games in the 'Six Counties':

- a. The maximum number of personnel involved at games must not exceed 100 persons which includes players, team managers, officials, support personnel, medical etc under any circumstances.
- b. The attendance of spectators is strictly forbidden including parents at youth games. A parent transporting a child to a match/training who wishes to remain on-site must remain in their car during the activity.



## HURLING HELMETS



- ✓ **ENSURE THAT** your helmet is an approved, NSAI Standard IS355, helmet with facial guard
- ✓ **WEAR AN APPROVED** helmet for ALL training sessions and matches
- ✓ **ALWAYS CHECK** that your helmet is in good condition



THE  
DAMHÓG  
ASSOCIATION



# HELMET SAFETY INFORMATION



- ✗ **TAKE PART IN ANY** game or training session without an approved helmet with facial guard
- ✗ **REMOVE/REPLACE** the facial guard with an alternative facial guard
- ✗ **MODIFY YOUR HELMET** or facial guard in any way

By Martin Fogarty, National Hurling Development Manager

## KNOW YOUR HURL (AND HURLEY!)



### CHOOSING A HURL

Choosing a hurl is a personal decision and there is no “right or wrong”. Some players like a heavy hurl, others like a light one. Some prefer a short hurl while others like a bit of length. In this article we will look at some of the choices and options and hopefully help players, especially those without a hurling background to choose the “best hurl for yourself or for your child”.

Many children use hurls that are too long and too heavy. This can have long lasting consequences by giving the child a poor grip and swing which can be very difficult to correct in later years.

To begin with, hurling and camogie are striking games and needless to say if a player can develop a good strike, then he/she is going to be a much better player. Good striking comes from having a good

“swing” and a good swing comes from having a “good grip”. There is a saying that “the hurl becomes an extension of your arm” and that is very true, so ideally a player should be able to manipulate the hurl in the same way as they use their arm and wrist. If the hurl is too heavy or too long, then that will not be possible and poor habits will develop. Striking in hurling is a “wristy action” with the hands locked as can be seen in Fig.1. If the hurl is too heavy a player tends to separate the hands – not locked – and this results in a “shovelling or pushing” action when swinging instead of a nice wristy sweet swing. If the hurl is too heavy or the players wrists are too weak or both, then we have a problem which must be addressed as best possible. Ideally children will be able to play a little sword fighting (Zorro) game as again for about 30 seconds, holding the hurl at full length with one hand!

So, the first message or piece of advice is to have the hurl light enough for the player to handle it with one hand. ***If in doubt, go lighter.***

### Strong Flexible Wrists

- Strong flexible wrists will improve your use of the hurl greatly.
- Sports such as Handball, Badminton, Tennis and Squash are all excellent to help improve your touch, use of your wrist and general footwork and movement.
- Press-ups and pull-ups will help to strengthen your arms and wrists.
- A mock “Sword fighting or Fencing” game is an excellent way to improve your wrist work and control of the

hurl.

- It is also excellent for footwork and movement.
- You can play the game with a “real” or “imaginary” opponent.
- This exercise will improve your ability to block, hook, kill and flick the ball.
- The “wristy” as it is known as up north is a small hurl about 16” long. It is used with one hand only and is a great way to encourage children to use their dominant hand when gripping the hurl. It is also excellent for strengthening and flexing the wrist. See here for a short video.

<https://learning.gaa.ie/sites/default/files/Wristies.mp4>



What affects the weight of a hurl – The length, the thickness, the size of the “bas” and the material all affect the weight of a hurl.

### NEXT, WE LOOK AT THE LENGTH OF THE HURL.

Remember, length of hurl is absolutely a personal choice but there are some points worth considering. Fig below shows some of the considerations. For the beginner, bear in mind that "weight" is most important and the longer the hurl the heavier it will be. So, if in doubt go shorter, at least initially until a good swing and handling of the hurl has been achieved. Weight aside, let us now look at length in its own right. The image on the left shows a long hurl that, when the player is standing up straight and gripping the hurl firmly, appears to have an excess of around 6". That 6" will get in the player's way and make swinging awkward, with the excess length constantly digging into the player's stomach. For an adult to get a proper perception on how this feels to a child, try kneeling down with your own hurl and notice how difficult it is to swing or to rise a ball. The image in the centre shows a 6" gap between the heel of the hurl and the ground. Swinging and handling this hurl will be much easier. However, reach will be compromised.

The image on the right looks comfortable and is the best fit!

However once again **If in doubt, go shorter** especially for the beginner.

#### SIZING YOUR HURL

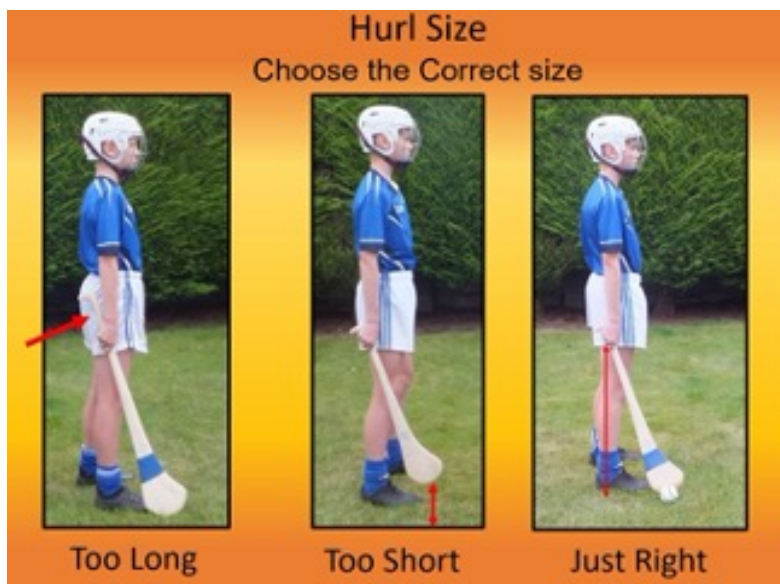
- Standing straight, looking forward with your hurl held firmly (shaking hands with the hurl) at the "butt" (top of handle) swing your hurl like a pendulum.
- The hurl should brush the ground just opposite your toe.
- Your hurl will be held at a slight angle and the heel will almost be on the ground.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

- For tall youths and adults, using a short hurl 32" or 34" puts the player at a serious disadvantage when it comes to reach. It is very easy to shorten a 36" hurl down to a 30" for a tidy strike or to avoid a hook but it is impossible to lengthen a 34" to a 36" or 37" when you need that extra reach to hook, block, flick or even rise a ball.

#### SIZE OF "BAS"

The size of the "bas" has increased enormously in the last 30 years, ridiculously so in some cases. You can see from Fig below a difference of 3cm. between a modern hurl and one from earlier years. Some people are of the opinion that the bigger the "bas" the easier it is to strike and block the ball. This is not true as if you notice the markings on a used hurl, you will see that the ball contacts the hurl usually in the "sweet spot" Fig below which leaves much of the "bas" unnecessary and just adding weight to the hurl. Again, this is a personal choice but for children in particular a smaller "bas" is more suitable.



- A large “bas” will not improve your striking or stopping ability. However, it will add unnecessary weight to your hurl and as such limit your touch, swing, and reaction.
- Chose a “bas” that is not too wide.
- If you look at the markings left by a sliotar on a hurl you will notice that much of the bas never comes in contact with the sliotar, so is unnecessary. The centre of the bas or “sweet spot” is where the striking and blocking is done.
- Spring- What about the Spring! – The spring in a hurl is a term for “flexibility”. This is tested by holding the hurl by the handle with one hand, with the “bas” on the ground, while exerting downward pressure with the other hand around the centre of the hurl. This should be done with care and not frequently as it can break or weaken the hurl. Usually, some degree of a bend is desirable as it absorbs some of the shock when a ball is hit resulting in no “sting” coming through to the hands. (This issue has been alleviated in recent times with good quality grips).
- If the quality of ash is poor and there is no “give” at all in it, players often refer to such hurls as “planks” or “boards” and cast them aside. It must be said that some players do not favour any spring in a hurl at all, again personal choice. Ash quality varies greatly, much depending on where it is grown, heavy ground, wet ground, by a river or on a ditch etc.
- Grain- What about the grain? The grain tells you about the age of the ash. If the grains are spread out Fig.5 then the ash is young. If they are close together the ash is old. The grains are the “rings” of a tree with each one denoting a year’s growth. If a tree is cut in cross-section the age of the tree can be calculated by counting the rings. Young ash is more flexible and pliable and is the preferred choice for hurls. Another important point to note is that usually when a hurl cracks or splits, it will do so along the grain. If the grain curves, as in Fig opposite. with the shape of the hurl then that hurl can be repaired by banding (or hooping) and gluing or “splicing”. If the hurl has a straight grain, then usually a section of the “bas” breaks off and the hurl cannot be repaired. Hurls with well-spaced out curved grains are keenly sought after and much coveted by those who do not own one.



# SUSPECTED HEAD INJURY

- Concussion is a brain injury that can be caused by an impact to a player's Head or Body.
- Over 90% of Concussions occur without a loss of consciousness therefore recognition of other signs and symptoms is crucial.

**“IT’S NOT ALWAYS A KNOCK-OUT”**

# Observation

## Initial Signs:

### The Nature of the Impact:

- The speed of the impact / collision
- Was the player braced for impact? (Did they see the impact coming)
- Was there any rotational (twisting) motion of the head / neck caused by the impact?

## Indicators:

### The Player's reaction:

- Did they lie motionless for any period of time?
- Were they unsteady on their feet?
- Did they clutch their head?

## Red Flags – urgent medical attention:

- Possible neck or spinal Injury – player should not be moved
- Prolonged Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Convulsions / Seizures
- Vomiting
- Double Vision
- Disorientation/Confusion
- Severe or increasing headache
- Abnormalities of balance or coordination
- Slurred or incoherent speech
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs

**A simple two-step process should be applied:**

**1.RECOGNISE** – the Signs and Symptoms

**2.REMOVE** – the player from the field of play

**Remember, if there is any suspicion of Concussion, the player should be removed from the field of play:**

***“IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT”***

By John Harrington

## SHANAHAN SHOWS HOW SHARING YOUR PROBLEMS IS EMPOWERING



PICTURED IS FORMER WATERFORD HURLER, MAURICE SHANAHAN, WHO HAS TEAMED UP WITH ELECTRIC IRELAND TO INVITE THE PUBLIC TO JOIN THEM FOR A SPECIAL 'ONE SUNRISE TOGETHER' FOR DARKNESS INTO LIGHT ON SATURDAY, MAY 8TH, IN ORDER TO RAISE VITAL FUNDS FOR PIETA'S LIFESAVING SERVICES.

**WHEN MAURICE SHANAHAN TALKS ABOUT HIS DAUGHTER ROSIE, HIS CHEST SWELLS AND THE HAPPINESS BEAMS FROM HIS FACE.**

She was born six weeks ago and he's very much a besotted first-time father.

When he holds her in his arms, he can't help but feel relieved all over again that he eventually reached out for help in 2014 when he was suffering so badly with depression he came close to taking his own life.

He eventually found his way out of that dark place when he opened up and spoke honestly to those closest to him about his inner struggles.

He's always been happy to share his story to help others and has now teamed up with Electric Ireland to invite the public to join them for a special 'One Sunrise Together' for Darkness Into Light on Saturday, May 8th, in order to raise vital funds for Pieta House's lifesaving services.

He knows from his own experience that talking to people who want to help you is the vital first step you need to take if you're suffering from depression or suicidal thoughts.

The moment you're in right now might be a very tough one, but there's always hope for a better future if you seek help, which Shanahan is reminded of every time he holds Rosie in his arms.

"Jesus, being in that room when Rosie was born was a different feeling altogether," he says.

"It was the best feeling I ever got in my life to be honest. To hold my daughter in my arms straight away and thankfully everything is good with her since. She's flying at the moment.

"If I didn't talk out in 2014, who knows? I might never have witnessed that. But, it was the best day of my life so far, witnessing the birth of our daughter.

"I suppose when I was suffering, I probably thought there's no better days ahead for me.

"But if you can speak out and talk to people, you will see things improving down the line and I wouldn't change my life for anything at the moment."



MAURICE SHANAHAN PICTURED WITH THE HURLING ALL-STAR HE WON IN 2015. A YEAR PREVIOUS HE HAD SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED TAKING HIS OWN LIFE.

When he looks back now, Shanahan can't pinpoint exactly when his mental health nosedived in 2014.

It was probably a confluence of events. He was injured and so cut off from the positive environment of training with his club and county team-mates.

There was also a frustration with the slow progression of his Waterford career up to that point.

He was coming into his prime years as an inter-county hurler, but hadn't yet managed to become the central figure in the team he was putting pressure on himself to be.

He started waking at 4am and would then cry uncontrollably for the next five or six hours. Eventually it got to the point where he felt he had little alternative but to end it all and take his own life.

"I suppose in 2014 I kind of saw no way out, to be honest," he says. "I kind of locked myself away for nearly two months and then my family members knew there was something wrong and were trying to look after me but I didn't really want their help either at the time.

"One day below in the kitchen inside in the house I saw my father and he just busted out crying. It hit home with me then.

"My father had cancer at the time as well and, I suppose, he had his own battles that he kind of had to win himself but I was putting more doom and gloom down on him because he kind of forgot about his own battles and looked after me more so than his own thing.

"But, thankfully, he got the all-clear a few months later from that as well.

"My brother Dan had a stern talk with me and I got in touch with Conor Cusack. The

one thing I would say is I was talking to a few people who were trying to help me, but it was going in one ear and out the other.

"But when I talked to Conor, I could understand it with his GAA background and from a guy who had played sport and done what I had done growing up. So whatever he said to me, I took it on board and I found it a great help to be honest."

The pressure he put upon himself to be the best hurler he could be was one of the reasons why his mental health suffered.

But the game of hurling itself and the friends he made from it also ultimately helped him find his way out of the dark place he was in.

The then Waterford manager, Derek McGrath, was a constant support, and he was just one of many who made it their business to help Maurice in any way they could.

"To be fair to Derek, he was very good to me. He said 'take the year out now and come back the next year stronger and better.'

"It wasn't that Derek just hung up the phone and left it then until the following year, because he was in touch with me every day, trying to look after me in a way.

"Sean Prendergast who is a teacher in Lismore was training the Lismore senior team at the time and he was very good to me too. I could hear the school-bell going at half two or a quarter to three and five minutes later, Sean would arrive up to my house for two or three weeks solid with bottles of water, bottles of Lucozade. 'Could you come up to the field to training tonight? You don't even have to train, just to be with the lads,' he'd say.

"To be honest, I didn't want to go. I didn't want to play. I'll never forget, we were

playing Roanmore in the championship below in Walsh Park. I remember the lads training of the Thursday night, and me having done nothing for maybe a month. I remember Mattie Pender - he was a selector, he said 'we need you tomorrow evening.' I said 'I have no interest in playing that match.' And I didn't, I didn't want to.

"But it was the best thing I've done. I got the gear the following day, went down, was inside full forward and we got three goals between us, myself and Dan, I got two and it kind of brought a pep back into my step.

"I'll never forget it, we got a free to win the game around 60/70 yards out. I'd say most of the lads didn't want me hitting it because they didn't know what kind of headspace I was in but, thankfully, it went over the bar.

"The joy I got from that day. I remember the huddle after the match, I thanked every one of them that got me down there and that gave a bit of life to me again.

"There was a long road after that, there was, we lost to Ballygunner in the county semi-final but I was back into it big time and I wanted to go to the field, wanted to be back hurling. It got me back."

It took Shanahan a long time to fully open up about his problems because his feeling was that the only person who could deal with them was himself.

He almost felt like he would be burdening people if he shared his issues with them, forgetting of course that those closest to him would be happy to share the load if it helped him in any small way.

"The one thing I would encourage kids, male or female, is to maybe talk to your mam or dad, a brother or sister, a friend, even a stranger because there are counsellors out there who are great," he says.



MAURICE SHANAHAN PICTURED WITH HIS BROTHER DAN.

“It’s just about going out and opening up to people that you trust, really. The minute you do that, there’s always light. It’s like a dark tunnel, but the minute I opened up I could see a small bit of light at the end of it straight away.

“You have kids going back training now, so even if you spoke to your coach, they’re going to help you, they’re not going to tell you to go away, they’re going to try to help you.

“I would encourage everyone just to open up if anything is bothering them. It might be only a small thing, but it could be a big thing in their heads.

“You hear every day about people unfortunately passing away from Covid but you don’t really hear about the people that are dying from suicide.

“People are ashamed to be saying it, but what’s there to be ashamed of? I suffered. I know two or three other people that suffered.

“We’re as normal as anyone. Everyone has ups and downs in life, and it hits people differently.

“The one bit of advice I’d give is that you’re no different to the person who’s not suffering.”

Former Waterford hurler, Maurice Shanahan, has teamed up with Electric Ireland to invite the public to join them for a special ‘One Sunrise Together’ for Darkness Into Light on Saturday, May 8th, in order to raise vital funds for Pieta’s lifesaving services.

You can sign up now at  
[www.darknessintolight.ie](http://www.darknessintolight.ie)

MAURICE SHANAHAN IN ACTION FOR HIS CLUB LISMORE.







By John Harrington

## BLARNEY GAA WANT YOU TO 'BE KIND TO YOUR MIND'

*Be kind to your mind!*

SAMARITANS ☎ 116 123		
FOCUS IRELAND ☎ 021 427 3646	HSE CRISIS TEXTLINE ☎ 50808	
WOMEN'S AID ☎ 1800 341 900	CHILDLINE ☎ 1800 666 666 ☎ 50101	
MEN'S AID ☎ 01 554 3811	PIETA HOUSE ☎ 1800 247 247 ☎ 51444	
SIMON COMMUNITY ☎ 021 4278 728	HSE DRUGS+ALCOHOL HELPLINE ☎ 1800 459 459	
	AWARE ☎ 1800 80 48 48	

**BLARNEY GAA HAVE LAUNCHED A 'BE KIND TO YOUR MIND' CAMPAIGN.**

**BLARNEY GAA HOPE THEIR 'BE KIND TO YOUR MIND' POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN WILL CONTINUE GATHERING MOMENTUM IN THE COMING WEEKS.**

Put together by the club's always proactive Healthy Club Committee, the campaign seeks to help those who might be struggling with the considerable mental stresses and strains of life during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The 'Be Kind to your Mind' campaign began on March 24th when renowned psychologist, Dr. Sharon Lambert, joined Blarney club members online for one of their 'Wednesday Night Chats' where she talked about the various mental health support services that are available.

The club then produced 'Be Kind to Your Mind' posters and business cards that feature the contact details for 10 different support services – HSE Crisis Textline, Childline, Pieta House, HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline, Aware, Samaritans, Focus Ireland, Women's Aid, Men's Aid, and Simon Community.

"What we found was before Christmas when we could still meet up for running and stuff was that people really needed an outlet," says Blarney Healthy Club officer, Martina McCarthy.

"We were noticing then as the restrictions were going on that people were retreating more into themselves and getting down.

“As the months were going people just seemed to be really struggling to snap out of it and we were getting concerned about that.

“I was coming across younger people that were really, really struggling and they didn't know where to turn to.

“So we wanted to get it out there that there are organisations like the Samaritans that you can get in touch with for help.

“The reason we went with the business cards was that we felt that if someone was struggling and they didn't want to talk about it with other people around them, then if you could just give them a card then they could have it and take it out when they needed it.

“That's what triggered the whole conversation at the start, how could we get the message out there that it's okay to talk. Everyone is struggling, both young and old. What we're going through isn't normal.

“We want people to go easy on themselves, be kind to themselves, and know that there is help out there.”

Blarney GAA's 'Be Kind to Your Mind' has already gathered significant momentum in recent weeks and Hayes is hopeful it can be extended across Cork and beyond in the coming weeks.

“The secondary schools are back so we've given them the posters and cards,” says McCarthy. “We've also given them to the Guards who think they are fantastic and will hand them out to people they believe could benefit from having those contact numbers.

“We're also going to Cork County Council to see if they could come on board, or maybe the HSE, to bring the campaign



BLARNEY GAA HEALTHY CLUB COMMITTEE (FROM LEFT) MARTINA MCCARTHY, LISA HEDDERMAN, VALERIE KIRBY, AND JIM MCEVOY.

more to the forefront.

“We've gotten a great response from other clubs sending messages on Twitter supporting us, they all thought it was a really great thing to do and have passed it

on to their players which is great.

“We've tried to get it out to as many people as we can. Hopefully we can get it to be a bigger campaign around the county.

“We just want to get it out there that people are struggling and we're all in the same boat. And it's okay not to be okay.”

By John Harrington

## GAA LAUNCH RECIPES FOR SUCCESS HEALTHY EATING VIDEOS

**THE GAA TODAY LAUNCHED A NEW SERIES OF HEALTHY EATING VIDEOS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NATIONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR HOME ECONOMICS, ST. ANGELA'S COLLEGE, SLIGO AND RECIPES FOR SUCCESS.**

Over the course of the next five weeks a number of videos and other resources will be published on the GAA's e-learning platform and social media channels.

As well as tips on general healthy eating, the series will also feature videos on how to prepare simple but nutritious meals that are perfect for fuelling young athletes.

The recipes are based on the GAA's Recipes for Success initiative which has been a big hit in secondary schools right across the country. This involved 'hands-on' food skills workshops, facilitated by Home Economics teachers, using the Recipes for Success Toolkit and has equipped hundreds of young Gaelic Games players with a good grounding in healthy eating and practical food skills.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions those workshops can't currently take place, so the upcoming video series will help fill the void.

Roisin Lydon is a lecturer in the School of Home Economics, St Angela's College and is one of the authors of the Recipes for Success Toolkit.

She has also created the healthy eating videos and hopes they will prove to be a useful resource for young Gaelic Games players in the absence of the Recipes for



BREAKFAST GRANOLA IS THE FIRST RECIPE FEATURED IN THE RECIPES FOR SUCCESS VIDEO SERIES.

Success kitchen-based workshops.

“We decided to create some resources to be made available for players to enable them to take part in this at home because those workshops can’t take place currently,” Lydon told GAA.ie

“Healthy eating is so important for us all to provide us with the correct balance of nutrients we need on a daily basis but particularly for GAA players so that they are adequately fuelled for training and exercise. Players need the correct nutrition for energy but also for recovery and repair after games.”

Through Recipes for Success, we want to show players that healthy eating doesn’t have to be difficult or time consuming; these resources are very practical and aim to provide players with easy to follow, nutritious recipes as well as information on healthy eating.

“Now more than ever, people are interested in the area of good nutrition and cooking, so it’s all about bringing the resources to the players and to club members so that they have the knowledge and skills themselves.”

Resource sheets will be published every week to go with each video and recipe and Lydon is confident that anyone who decides to get involved and try the recipes themselves will find it’s easily done.

“It’s all very doable,” she says “I think some people have the view that healthy eating and cooking is difficult. But when you break it down into simple steps it’s very doable for players and anybody really. And that’s essentially what we do in these videos.

“We want to impart the knowledge to empower players, in particular young players, so that they have these skills for when they’re older, because cooking is a skill for life. It’s so important to develop these practical food skills in our young GAA players to help establish healthy dietary patterns throughout life.”

“We all lead very demanding lives and we really have to nourish ourselves as best we can with healthy, nutritious food.”

“The nutritional adequacy of an athlete’s diet is a hugely important factor in achieving success in sport whilst providing fuel for strength, conditioning and recovery.

“Research shows that good nutrition isn’t just vital for optimal athletic performance but also for growth, development, and overall health to everybody at different stages of life”.



MULLINGAR SHAMROCKS GAA, AS PART OF ITS HEALTHY CLUB PROJECT, TOOK PART IN A RECIPES FOR SUCCESS PROGRAMME.

## THOMAS DAVIS EASTER EGGSELLENCE

**DUBLIN'S THOMAS DAVIS GAA CLUB IN TALLAGHT HAD AN EGGCELLENT IDEA AT EASTER AS THIS RENOWNED GAA HEALTHY CLUB PARTICIPANT DROPPED OFF 150 EASTER HAMPERS TO MANY OF THEIR ELDERLY CLUB MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS.**

Club PRO Colin Browne told us: "It was a very important club initiative for us to try look after the people who have done so much for Thomas Davis and their local community over the years. Many of the people we delivered to are former players, coaches, managers, committee members, local volunteers and long-time supporters of Thomas Davis so for us it was great to be able to give them a small gift to let them know we are thinking of them during these hard times.

"Each hamper consisted of the SDCC Hope booklet, a custom TD Easter card, TD wall calendar and of course an Easter egg and plenty of goodies!

"We very much look forward to welcoming all our club members back to Kiltipper Road in the coming months as restrictions ease up.

"Many thanks to all our club volunteers who helped with the hampers and deliveries. Special mention to Niamh Maguire, Aideen O'Hara, Terry Carthy and Marie Brown for putting it all together."



## OOLA GAA STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE

The GAA Healthy Club Steps Challenge in partnership with Irish Life that took place last January proved such a hit in Oola, County Limerick, that they're still clocking up the kilometres at a tremendous pace three months later, writes John Harrington.

Oola GAA club member, Tom Bourke, was recognised as a Healthy Club Walking Hero for the fantastic job he did organising the Steps Challenge in the club, and since then he and the Oola Healthy Clubs Committee has built impressively on that achievement.

"We did the Irish Life challenge back in January and a good few people joined up for that," he told GAA.ie

"Then a local shop, O'Donovan's Londis shop, had a steps challenge in February for Laura Lynn so a lot of people carried on and did that. Then March came and we just felt it would be good if we could keep people out walking because there had been such a positive reaction to it. So we started an initiative we called 'March for a Million'. We set up teams of five people and the aim was to get a million steps done by the end of March. I think around 150 people took part, a huge number.

"And now we're running another challenge for April, an individual one with three levels, Gold, Silver, and Bronze, which equate to a different amount of steps. Again, there are over 100 people doing it. During lockdown it has been difficult to see people regularly so this has been a nice way for them all to keep in touch with one another. And it's been great to see people out and about doing their walking and being involved in something together. What we've seen from these walking challenges is that it's involved people who have never been involved with the club previously who are now showing an interest in the club and following events on social media. Hopefully when matches come back they'll now show an interest in them as well.

Their latest fund-raising drive takes place in early May and will help a local child, Darragh Ryan, who has been diagnosed with a rare disease, Mitochondrial Complex 1 Deficiency Disease.

"We're calling it a 'Dash for Darragh'", says Bourke. "It's for a local child who has fallen ill and his family need funds to renovate his home. So, over the May Bank Holiday we're running an event. It's €20 to enter and people can run 5k, walk 10k, or cycle 20k and all the profits will be going to the 'Future for Darragh' fundraiser."



Residents of St. Anthony's nursing home show their support for Oola GAA's 'Dash for Darragh' fundraiser.

## CLAN NA GAEL DREAM BIG AND PLAN BIG

**“A DREAM, WITHOUT A PLAN, IS JUST A WISH” – GOES THE FAMOUS SAYING. AND WITH TIME ON THEIR HANDS IN LOCKDOWN, MANY CLUBS HAVE TAKEN THE LAY OFF FROM ON FIELD ACTIVITY TO FOCUS ON BIG ISSUES LIKE A CLUB STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

**CLAN NA GAEL IN LURGAN ARE ONE SUCH CLUB WHO HAVE JUST FINALISED AND PUBLISHED A THREE-YEAR PLAN.**

It was agreed to facilitate a Club Planning Consultation workshop to allow members, parents, players, and community representatives the opportunity to air their views and encourage a wide range of input to the plan.

The workshop was facilitated by Ulster Club Planning Facilitator, Jimmy Magee, who was the assigned facilitator for the club as they went through the planning process. It saw 120 people take part in what was a remarkably well supported and productive session. A key output from the workshop was the decision to establish five Focus Areas of Strategic Development, and then to assign suitably qualified volunteers to each area, from where the future visions and methodologies that the club wished to pen would be agreed.

The five Focus Areas that Clan na Gael chose to build their plan around were -

- Coaching & Games Development
- Finance & Fundraising
- Club Management, Governance & Administration
- Club & Facilities Development
- Culture, PR & Community Development

The Plan Coordinator for Clan na Gael, Paul Kelly, who was heavily involved throughout the process believes it was very worthwhile exercise for both the Club and wider community.

He said: “The most significant thing we learnt as a Club is that there were many very capable people within our club that could greatly contribute to successfully undertaking this extensive project. Like most things in life, it all appears rather daunting at the outset. However, with very worthwhile guidance from both Croke Park and in our case the Ulster Council, we were able to clearly understand what was expected and the best approach and template in how to deal with it.

“Our Club placed great trust in the process as outlined, sought internal leadership from within our general membership and most importantly allowed these people to focus on the project without distractions. We had around 120 attendees at our information gathering evenings which clearly demonstrated the wishes of our members, players etc to express their opinion in how they best felt our Club could develop for the betterment of everyone. If you are interested in viewing the plan developed by Clan na Gael, please [click here](#).

An aerial view of Clan na Gael's grounds.

## LGFA POEM

**SILENT FOR NOW  
A POEM BY NICOLA NALLY  
GOLDSMITHS LGFA CLUB SECRETARY.**

I am silent now but not for long,  
once again, will I hear their jubilant song.  
Running up and down my blanket course,  
digging deep into my brown earth  
beneath the green.

Oh, how I miss the sounds and sights,  
Tis the rabbits and bumble bees now  
that only I have seen. But not for long!  
They will come and play loudly and laugh,  
and cry and sweat and bleed,  
onto my open embrace.

They will stand between my goal posts and wait,  
They will kick and delight at the outcome,  
or turn and curse my soil for not guiding  
it over the bar.

I am ready now; I can see you through the gates.  
The Paddy's, the Dempsey's, the Mary's, the Kate's.  
Come quick, puck your sliotar towards the net, pick up that ball  
and fist it to your neighbour, your friend, your school mate.

I am gleaming now, wait and see,  
grass cut, stands painted, dug-outs dry.  
Wear your Jersey with pride,  
and come and play on me once more.  
I do not like this lonely shore,  
thinking of generations that have gone before.

As evening calls, a dewy blanket falls  
upon my earthly skin,  
and I alone weep for those that will never see  
you lift the cup or vow for next year once again.

I am silent now but not for long.  
We will once again be able to play,  
For after all we are the GAA.



By John Harrington

## OISIN MCCONVILLE WARNS OF GROWING 'HIDDEN PROBLEM' OF GAMBLING

**FORMER ARMAGH FOOTBALLER, OISIN MCCONVILLE, SAYS THERE HAS BEEN A MASSIVE INCREASE IN PROBLEM GAMBLING DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN.**

McConville himself had a serious gambling addiction until he sought treatment at the age of 30, and is keenly aware of the devastating impact it can have on people and those closest to them.

That's why he's happy to be a spokesperson for the 'Hidden Problem' campaign launched Extern Problem Gambling today.

"Yeah, they reckon an increase of 60 per cent in gambling during the pandemic," says McConville. "That's more or less the figure that's floating around the world.

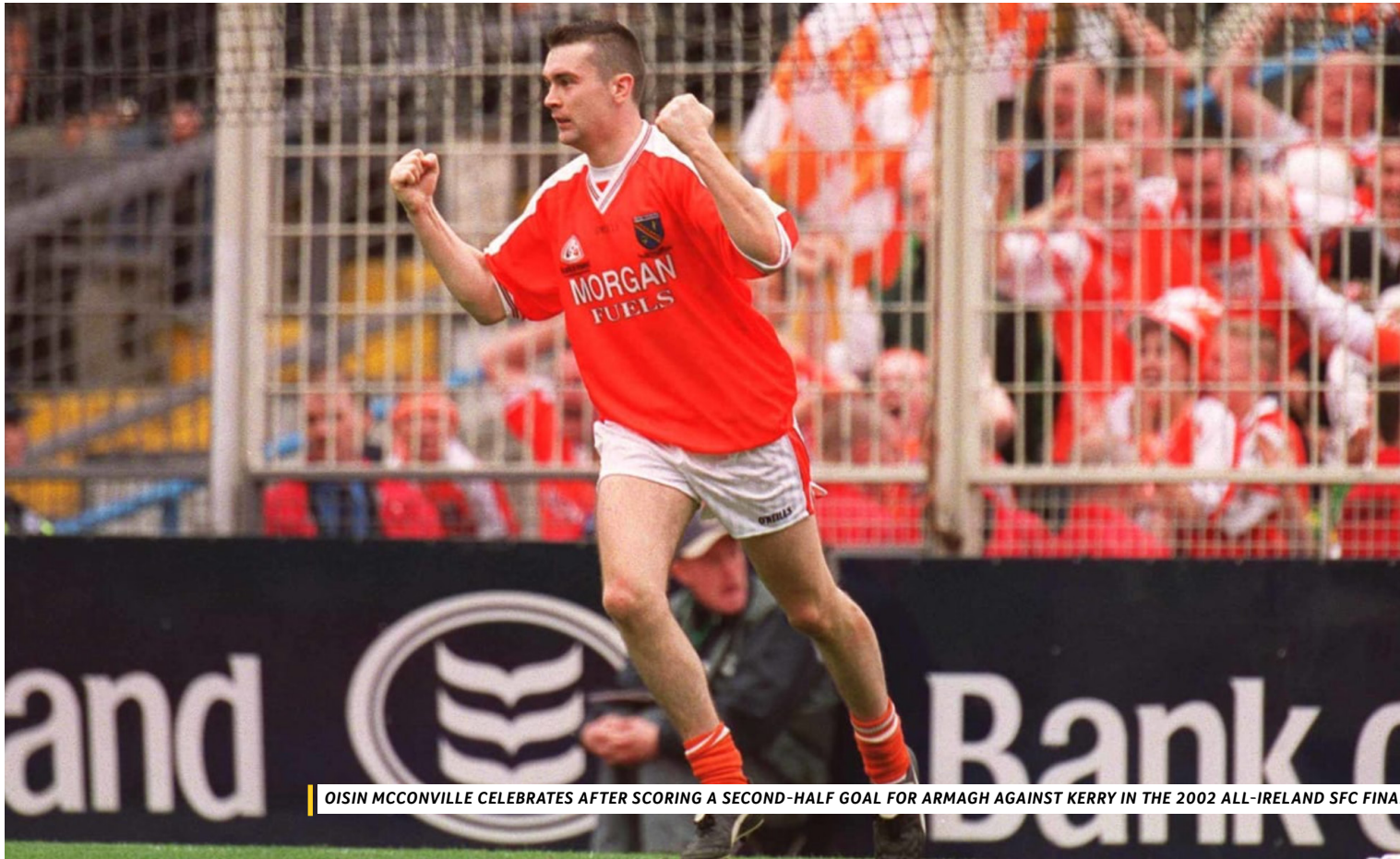
"So, yeah, I think the timing of it is good. I don't think there would be a bad time to do something like this, but, yeah, I think the time and the fact that the majority of gambling going on is online and I think that we probably even when the lockdowns finish up I think more people have been introduced to that online thing now and I don't think we'll ever go back to the level of traffic that there was in bookmakers shops."

The GAA's stance against gambling could be accurately described as a zero tolerance one with sponsorship by a betting firm of any competition, team, playing gear, or facility prohibited.

The gambling awareness campaign 'Reduce the Odds' was launched in 2018, and the Healthy Clubs Project has also



FORMER ARMAGH FOOTBALLER, OISIN MCCONVILLE.



OISIN MCCONVILLE CELEBRATES AFTER SCORING A SECOND-HALF GOAL FOR ARMAGH AGAINST KERRY IN THE 2002 ALL-IRELAND SFC FINAL.

been to the fore in helping GAA members with gambling addiction.

But, despite this concerted effort, McConville says that there's a greater incidence of problem gambling among those who play team sports than the rest of society.

"I don't know if you've seen the stat, but if you play competitive team sport you're three times more likely to have a gambling problem," says McConville.

"That for me when I first heard that it was pretty stark but not surprising.

"I think it's a big part of the culture and there's a couple of reasons for that.

"One of the reasons is that if you're playing any sort of high level sport, then alcohol and drugs are usually taking a major back seat, especially during the season. And people see gambling as a harmless pastime if that's the best way to put it.

"And, don't get me wrong, I'm not anti-gambling, and for a lot of people it is a harmless pastime and it's something that some people can do socially.

"But once it gets a grip of you then that's where the problems start to manifest themselves. I would have said that the teams that I played on had a gambling culture within them.

"But, on the face of it, I was the one who

was gambling compulsively because I wasn't just gambling with them, I was gambling on my own. If I was doing just the gambling that I was doing with them, we were all throwing a fiver on the way down the road on the bus or whatever, I think that was a very social thing, a very manageable thing, but the stuff I was doing away from that was very unmanageable.

"It's the crux of a lot of the conversations that go on in buses and in changing rooms up and down the country and WhatsApp groups is dominated by it. Yeah, I think it's very prevalent within sports teams."

As part of the 'Hidden Problem' campaign, Extern Problem Gambling have set up a freephone number you can ring if you think that excessive gambling has become a problem in your life.

McConville believes that will be a very valuable resource because reaching out for help can be a very first difficult step for problem gamblers.

"I think the first thing is that it's very difficult to admit something like this to a family member or a friend because there's a couple of things at play.

"There's the pride thing. And usually with gamblers whenever we tell people we have a problem it's usually at crisis point.

"And the fact that it's at crisis point means that you could be talking about the loss of a family home or something like that. You could be talking about severe financial difficulties.

"But also, huge emotional upheaval. And I think a lot of times people just aren't willing to share that with a family member. And, as you say, the buffer zone between that could be a number, talking to someone on the other end of a line, to make sense of where exactly they are at.

“There’s a massive piece in this about sorting out your finances. But there’s also a massive piece in this sometimes about just damage limitation, keeping someone alive for a certain amount of time.

“I know that sounds dramatic, but that sometimes is how important this stuff is to keep someone alive and to point out to them that this sort of thing can be sorted out.

“There’s obviously a process to doing that, but once you’ve shared it with somebody you’ve started that process.”

From working with gambling addicts on a one to one basis, McConville has discovered that the first step to helping them is making them see the reality of just how big a problem they have.

“What I do for a living is I work for a foundation called Sporting Chance,” he says.

“It was a foundation set up 20 plus years ago by Tony Adams because he didn’t see the support there for sports-people.

“One of the first things we do with somebody, who may not be sure that they have an issue, we’ll do a financial health check.

“So if you’re an online gambler, you’re entitled to all of your information - we get that. I would talk to that person - they could say to me ‘I don’t really know if I have a problem, spending a good bit of time gambling but I’m not losing any money.’

“We go through the finances ‘Well there you go, you lost fifty grand in three months or 500 quid you couldn’t afford to lose.’ Sometimes, people need to see it in black and white to know what’s going on.

“To get away from the finances, the big thing is what affect is it having in your life,

on your relationships? Are you as attentive with your kids, is it causing issues in your work-place?

“If people then are willing to be honest with themselves they’ll realise it is affecting all of those things. That’s when people go, ‘wow, I have an issue here, a massive issue.’”

McConville himself hasn’t gambled for 16 years, but still refers to himself as a gambling addict.

It’s something he knows he needs to continue working hard on to prevent a relapse.

“A lot of people think when you go into treatment, you get a tablet and that’s you, you’re cured for life,” he says.

“But, no, it’s something I continue to work on. I am almost 16 years away from gambling but I still go to Gamblers Anonymous. The reason I do that a lot of the time is to remind myself but to check in.

“People think Gamblers Anonymous is about people telling their war stories about what things happened, how I ended up here, how much I’ve lost and all that sort of thing.

“It’s more about emotions and how I feel. It’s a powerful place to be when you see men from between the ages of 18 and 80 talking about their emotions. It’s not something you hear in the changing room to be honest so it’s a completely different space.

“It’s where you can share things safely. I’m lucky I’m able to share things at home, I’m sure my wife doesn’t really always want to hear the stuff but I’m able to come home from work and share.

“My gambling losses used to shape how I was for the week or the next few days. Football matches used to shape how I was,



OISIN MCCONVILLE MANAGED INNISKEEN IN THE 2020 MONAGHAN SENIOR CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.

I’m able to snap out of that just that little bit quicker now and I’m more in check.

“I’m more aware of myself than I ever have been. When I went into treatment at 30 years of age, I thought someone in addiction was a guy on a park bench with a bottle of wine in a brown bag.

“How did I get to 30 years of age thinking that? So I had no self-awareness of what was going on. I just kept looking myself in the mirror and saying, ‘That’s not me, I’m not that person.’

“I don’t look like somebody who’s addicted. But believe me, I was addicted and I was in a bad place.

“Just the toolbox that I was taught, I keep opening up that toolbox and using them.”

Less than 1 percent of people who could benefit from treatment from problem gambling ever seek it. Extern Problem Gambling provides support for anyone affected by problem gambling and offers remote services by fully qualified and accredited addiction counsellors.

If you or someone you know needs help with dealing with gambling, you can get help and support now by sending a text to Extern Problem Gambling on 089 241 5401 (ROI) or 07537142265 (NI).

For more details, please visit:

<https://www.problemgambling.ie/>

# GAA BECOMES OFFICIAL SUPPORTER OF ALL-IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN

**TO MARK WORLD EARTH DAY 2021 (THURSDAY, APRIL 22), THE GAA IS ANNOUNCING THAT IT HAS SIGNED UP AS AN OFFICIAL PARTNER ORGANISATION OF THE NEW ALL-IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN 2021-2025.**

The Association has pledged to increase the number of clubs and venues that are pollinator friendly by promoting to all its units the new Pollinator-Friendly Management of Sports Clubs resource, developed recently by the National Biodiversity Data Centre. The booklet includes five practical actions to support pollinators in sports ground and features examples from GAA clubs across the island. It is also one of the resources that is guiding the 45 clubs and two regional grounds active in the GAA's Green Club programme pilot, launched in December 2020 as part of the GAA's work as an official SDG champion of the Irish government.

The Kilmeen/Kilbree GAA club in West Cork is one of the clubs featured in the Pollinator-Friendly Management of Sports Club toolkit and is also involved in the GAA Green Club programme pilot, focusing specifically on the theme of biodiversity. A biodiversity audit of the club grounds on March 9, 2019, identified (amongst others):

- 47 different flora species, including bluebells (Coinnle corra) and Sticky Mouse Ear (Cluas luchóige ghreamaitheach), Foxglove (Lus mór) and Hawthorn (Sceach gheal)
- 12 bird species, including buzzard (Clamhán) and Stonechat (Caislín cloch)
- 4 insect species, including the 7-spot Ladybird (bóin) and Buff-tailed Bumblebee (bumbóg).
- 11 species of moth, including the Poplar hawk-moth and Early Tooth-striped.



**UACHTARÁN CUMANN LUTHCHLEAS GAEL, LARRY MCCARTHY, PLANTED A NATIVE OAK, TO MARK THE LAUNCH OF PHASE 1 OF THE GAA GREEN CLUB PROGRAMME. THE EASY TREESIE – CRANN PROJECT ([WWW.EASYTREESIE.COM](http://WWW.EASYTREESIE.COM)) SUPPORTED BY COILLTE ([WWW.COILLTE.IE](http://WWW.COILLTE.IE)) AND TREES ON THE LAND ([WWW.TREESONTHELAND.COM](http://WWW.TREESONTHELAND.COM)) HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE GAA, CAMOGIE AND LGFA CLUBS WITH A GENEROUS ALLOCATION OF NATIVE TREE SAPLINGS, WHICH DUE TO CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS TO CLUBS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT PLANTING SEASON IN NOVEMBER. COILLTE AND TREES ON THE LAND WILL DONATE AND DELIVER APPROXIMATELY 50,000 NATIVE SAPLINGS TO THE PROJECT.**

Kilmeen/Kilbree GAA Green Team member Orla Harrington said: "Through our participation in the GAA Green Club Programme and with help from Biodiversity Ireland, Kilmeen/Kilbree GAA is devoting some of the club's lands to planting pollinator-friendly scrubs and trees, community orchards, while creating biodiversity walkways and areas for wildflowers, to try to reverse declines in our biodiversity to make an Ireland where pollinators can survive and thrive."

The two regional venues of O'Moore Park in Portlaoise and Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence, both members of the GAA Green Club Programme, have developed their own biodiversity and pollinator-friendly projects.

Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence in Began, Co. Mayo has developed a biodiversity programme in collaboration with Teagasc and a number of local schools to plant native trees, flowers and shrubs, build bug hotels and install educational signage throughout the complex while Laois GAA have worked to remove invasive species from O'Moore Park, have planted native trees and pollinator-friendly meadow flowers and have installed biodiversity signage in the stadium.

Dr. Úna Fitzpatrick from the National Biodiversity Data Centre is the expert advisor on biodiversity to the GAA Green Club Programme: "One third of our 98 wild bee species are threatened with extinction in Ireland. They are in serious trouble, but we can change this. We are delighted to partner with the GAA to encourage clubs and venues to become more biodiversity friendly. This will create small refuges for pollinators right across our landscape and give them a fighting chance at survival. Lots of small actions, taken together, can make a big difference!"

To support clubs in this work, Dr. Fitzpatrick will contribute to a GAA Green Club webinar on Tuesday, May 11th, exploring the new Pollinator-Friendly Management of Sports Clubs resource while highlighting some of the actions clubs can take to become more biodiversity friendly. It will also feature case study activities being undertaken by units in the GAA Green Clubs pilot. Please register here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/J3MXHybCwu>

The Pollinator-Friendly Guidance for Sports Clubs is Free to download from <https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/>

More information on the GAA Green Club Programme is available at [www.gaa.ie/greenclub](http://www.gaa.ie/greenclub)



## WORLD EARTH DAY 2021 CELEBRATED AT CROKE PARK

**EACH YEAR, APRIL 22 IS DESIGNATED WORLD EARTH DAY BUT IN CROKE PARK, WE'RE MINDFUL THAT EVERY DAY IS EARTH DAY. OUR SUSTAINABLE STORY BEGAN OVER TEN YEARS AGO WITH A FOCUS ON IMPROVING OUR ENERGY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY IN THE STADIUM.**

Along the way, we've added & continued to build water, biodiversity, and local community programmes, and we were so proud to become the first stadium in the world to reach the highest environmental standard the ISO 14001 in 2015. We've also reached the ISO 20121, which is the international standard for the management of sustainable events.

We continue to reach these highest standards each year through audits and re-certification. The standards are important to us as they provide us with a platform for continuous improvement in all our sustainable and environmental programmes.

Today, for World Earth Day, we are sharing just some of the latest 'improvements' to the stadium that you'll be able to see or use next time you visit, as well as some welcome but temporary visitors to the stadium that are currently in residence but only on a 'flying visit'.

### Watch the Birdie

The raven, known as gaeilge as the 'fíach dubh' is a member of the crow family. Ireland's largest breeding songbird, they are slightly larger than a buzzard and have distinctive all-black legs, beak and feathers.

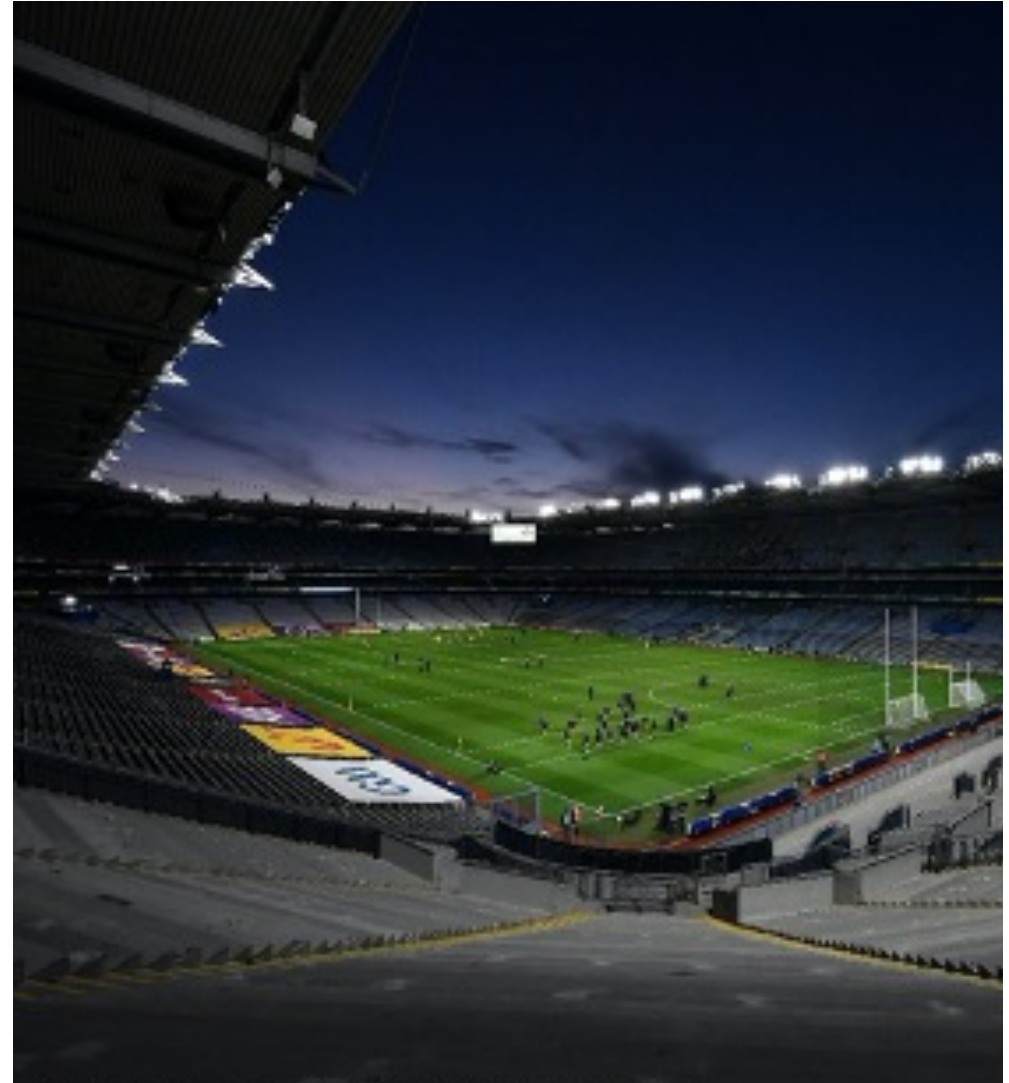
Traditionally ravens are found and nest in

restricted upland areas but are increasingly reported in lowland and even suburban areas. So, we were delighted to find out recently that for the second time in four years, a family of ravens are currently nesting in the stadium. The last time they built their home behind the giant screen in the Davin Stand; this time, they can be found living on top of a speaker system. Our new neighbours will be guaranteed to have an eagle-eyed view of matches this summer - if the family haven't flown the nest by then!

Ravens aren't the only birds to be spotted in the stadium as in addition to our bird nesting boxes in the Cusack concourse that regularly welcome smaller nesting birds like blue tits every Spring, we've also installed swift boxes behind Hill 16 and in the new Handball Centre. Ireland's swift population has fallen by nearly 40% in the past ten years, which means this intriguing little bird who can fly at speeds of 110km an hour is now on the amber conservation list. These boxes are in combination with a caller to attract the birds to our area and boost the local swift population.

### Growing Native

Anyone arriving at the stadium on the Cusack side in the coming months will be delighted to see the beautiful new landscaped area of the carpark opposite the GAA handball centre. Local resident and member of the Croke Park community team Aonghus O'Briain, is a very talented landscape gardener and has recently worked his green-fingered magic on several spaces across the stadium and our local community area. Not only does Aonghus work with native Irish plants, trees, and flowers; he also picks species that provide an ideal habitat



for multiple species of birds and insects throughout the year. If you'd like to learn more, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan has tips on how on to create food sources and habitat for bees and other pollinators in your home [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

#### Still Watching our Waste

We're all looking forward to a return to matches and when that day comes, it will be a 'bring your own (water) bottle event! There are 23 new, state-of-the-art water bottle filling-points now installed throughout the stadium as part of our waste-reduction policy. We will be encouraging all our staff and visitors to bring their own empty water bottles to the stadium from now on, to further reduce the amount of plastic rubbish we generate.

In 2019, the total amount of rubbish produced in the stadium fell by over 10% year on year. This great result was helped by the introduction of compostable cups and crockery during stadium event days. For the last seven years, we have proudly maintained a zero waste to landfill policy & each year, our waste focus is on continuing to decrease the overall amount of waste, as well as red bin waste we generate.

***"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."***

Behind all these projects and campaigns is the stadium's environment and sustainability management group who, each year set out an ambitious set of objectives, to deliver against both our environmental and sustainability policies. Their hard work and passion for what they do continues to make a difference in ways you can see and more often, in ways that are not so obvious throughout the stadium.

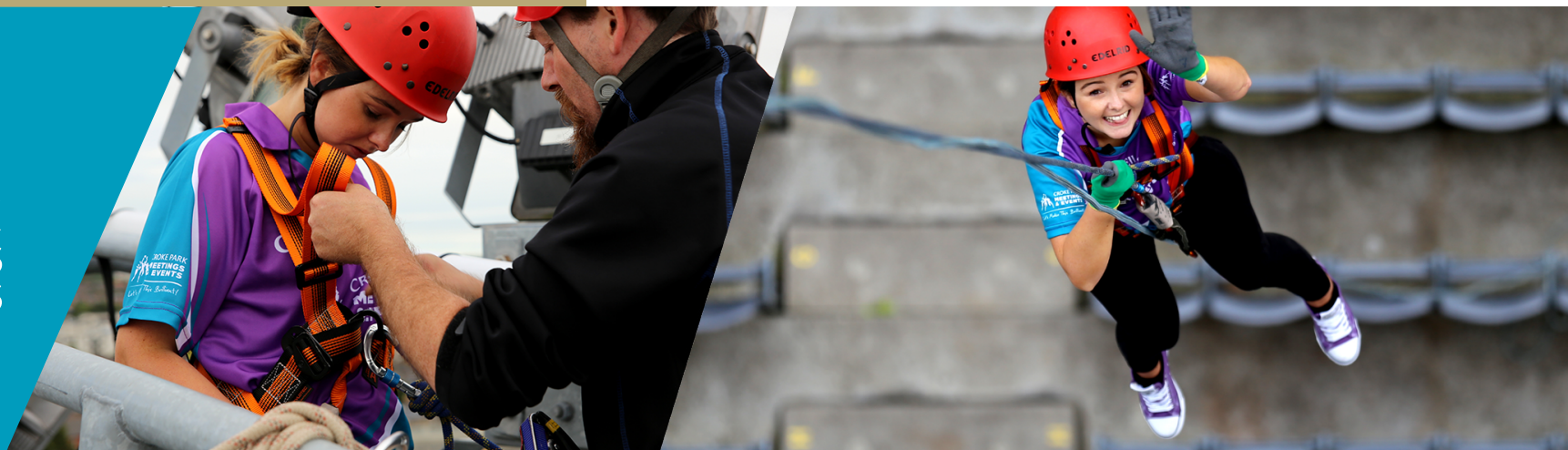
Since 2019, their work has been backed up by the stadium's very own 'Green Team'. This team is made up of stadium and GAA staff, who volunteer their time to learning more about the environment and sustainability, as well as supporting and organizing events and activities in the stadium to encourage environmental awareness and sustainable behavioural change.

#WorldEarthDay2021 #RestoreOurEarth  
#EarthDayEveryDay





CROKE PARK  
MEETINGS  
& EVENTS



## WORKING ON YOUR NEXT CLUB FUNDRAISER?

*WHY NOT COME HANG OUT WITH US?*



All safety standards  
applied under COVID  
Level 3 restrictions.

Our abseil adventures are the perfect adrenaline rush to ensure your event at Croke Park is one you will never forget! We have done it and can't recommend it highly enough (pardon the pun!). Take in the views from our rooftop Skyline, then drop almost 150ft (44 metres) to the hallowed ground below.



*We've had a Croke Park Abseil as part of our fundraising mix since 2015 and it really is one of the highlights in our calendar. It's an amazing day out in GAA HQ and the experience our supporters get from the minute they arrive on Jones Rd, to abseiling down the Hogan Stand is just brilliant. The funds raised from the event continue to grow every year, and we see so many supporters coming back again and again to take part. I can't recommend it highly enough to charities big or small as a fantastic fundraiser."*

**Justin McDermott, Fundraising Manager, Jigsaw**

## FROM €100 PER PERSON

Subject to VAT. Minimum number of 30 applies.



### PACKAGE INCLUDES

- Hire of all equipment and event space
- Highly qualified instructors
- Insurance and security personnel
- Tea/coffee/cookies and bottled water
- Access to stadium stand seating for catering breaks



adventure.ie

Contact us on +353 1 8192300 or visit [crokepark.ie/meetings-events](http://crokepark.ie/meetings-events)

# IT IS NEARLY TIME FOR THE GAA NATIONAL CLUB DRAW... THE NATIONAL CLUB DRAW DATE IS 4TH JUNE

**GET YOUR CLUB INVOLVED AND BE IN WITH THE CHANCE OF RAISING €25,000!  
GET YOUR CLUB INVOLVED IT'S NOT TOO LATE !!**

*Please contact your County Liaison Officer in relation to the return dates in May and delivery of all Tickets to your County Board.*

*Tickets should not be sent directly to Croke Park by any club.*

*Tickets (sold/unsold) must be entered onto the Online Ticketing System before they are returned to your County Liaison Officer.*

*If you have not already received your login details, or if you have any further questions, please contact [nationalclubdraw@gaa.ie](mailto:nationalclubdraw@gaa.ie) or your County Board Liaison Officer.*

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CLUB**

Opportunity for your GAA Club to raise up to €25,000



## THE GAA DEVELOPMENT FUND IS OPEN!

- **THE GAA DEVELOPMENT FUND IS OPEN FOR SAVING DEPOSITS FROM GAA CLUBS**
- **CLUBS ARE ENCOURAGED TO DEPOSIT MONEY INTO THE FUND E.G. CLUB LOTTO**
- **THE VARIABLE INTEREST RATE A CLUB CAN EARN ON THEIR DEPOSIT IS CURRENTLY 1.9%**
- **MINIMUM DEPOSITS ARE €1,000/ £1,000**
- **DEPOSITS CAN BE SENT VIA BANK TRANSFER OR BY CHEQUE**
- **CLUBS WHO SUPPORT THE FUND ARE GIVEN PRIORITY WHEN APPLYING FOR A LOAN- WHEN APPLICATIONS FOR LOANS REOPEN**
- **FORMS FOR DEPOSITING FUNDS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL FINANCE TEAM IN CROKE PARK- PLEASE CONTACT [EOGHAN.MAGUIRE@GAA.IE](mailto:EOGHAN.MAGUIRE@GAA.IE)**

# ADOPTING THE CORPORATE TRUSTEE

- The Executive nominate the Trustees for and on behalf of the Club;
- As per Rule 5 the County and Provincial Council nominate a Trustee to act on its behalf, Counties and Provincial Councils have nominated the GAA Corporate Trustee to act on their behalf.
- The nominated Trustees are ratified at a General meeting, this requires a simple majority.
- Existing Trustees should be advised of the proposal before it goes to a general meeting as they are required to transfer their interest to the Trust Company.
- Once this has been completed a Solicitor is appointed by the Club to update the title in line with the decision of the Club
- The minute of the Club should be forwarded to [Kathy.slattery@gaa.ie](mailto:Kathy.slattery@gaa.ie) to enable the Corporate Trustee to execute the transfer.
- There is an information pack with templates available to your Solicitor to assist with the transfer and declaration of trust.
- The Declaration of Trust states that the property is being held for and on behalf of the specific Club.
- Documents are signed locally by the existing Trustees and forwarded to Croke Park for signing and sealing by the GAA Corporate Trustee.
- The transfer needs to be signed by two Directors of the Trust Company or the Director and Secretary.
- The Directors of the Trust Company are the four Provincial Secretaries, the Árd-Stiúrthóir and Finance Director, the Head of National Finance acts as Secretary to the Trust Company.
- The Solicitor registers the transfer in the Property Registration Authority and stamps the Deeds. Each unit of the Association should be exempt from Stamp Duty if they have applied for the tax exemption, this exemption can be checked on the Revenue website:
- <https://www.revenue.ie/en/corporate/information-about-revenue/statistics/other-datasets/sport-bodies.aspx>
- Entities such as the CSSO and the banks who have a charge/ mortgage on the Clubs property should be advised of the transfer by the Clubs Solicitor.
- Clubs who adopt the GAA Trust Company are eligible to a grant of €1,000, this is available when the transfer is registered.

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CORPORATE TRUSTEE

### Does the club lose any control over the property?

The Corporate Trustee (ICCLG) can only act following a request from the Club, you will see in the code of Trustees that the Minutes of the Club signed by the Secretary is required to progress action by the Trustee.

### Is Approval of property transactions still required?

Under Rule 5 all property transactions require the consent of Central Council and you are advised to approach your County Development/Facilities Officer in this regard, approvals are required for all the following transactions:

1. Acquisition of Property,
2. Disposal of Property,
3. Borrowings,
4. Charges on Property to drawdown grants
5. Leases

This consent is separate to the Trustee sign off and will be required before the Trustees can sign for such matters.

The Trust Company holds the property for and on behalf of the Club.



## DO CHLUB, DO CHONTAE – CLG ROIBEARD EIMÉID, SLEACHT NÉILL

**I MBAILE FEARAINN SHLEACHT NÉILL IN AICE LE MACHAIRE RÁTHA I GCONTAE DHOIRE ATÁ CLG ROIBEARD EIMÉID, SLEACHT NÉILL, SUITE AGUS MAR CHUID DEN PHARÓISTE TÁ NUA-GHAELTACHT CHARN TÓCHAIR ANN. CUIREADH AN CLUB AR BUN THIAM SA BHLIAIN 1953 I GCUIMHNE AR ROIBEARD EIMÉID A CAILLEADH 150 BLIAIN ROIMHE SIN I 1803 AGUS, Ó SHIN I LEITH, TÁ AN CLUB AG GABHÁIL Ó NEART GO NEART.**

Dar ndóigh, ó 2013 i leith tá Craobh Shinsir Peile Dhoire buaite ag Sleacht Néill cúig huairte agus tá Craobh Iomána Peile Dhoire buaite acu seacht n-uairte. Tá trí cinn de Chraobhacha Uladh buaite ag an gclub sa pheil agus san iománaíocht ó 2013, freisin, gan trácht ar an bhfoireann camógaíochta a bhuaigh trí cinn de Chraobhacha Camógaíochta Uile-Éireann i ndiaidh a chéile idir 2017 agus 2019. Club óg lán de ghaisc!

Mar sin féin, tá i bhfad níos i gceist le CLG Roibeard Eiméid, Sleacht Néill, ná cumann peile, iománaíochta agus camógaíochta. Labhair Caroline Mhic Ainmhire liom le gairid thar ceann an chlub agus mhínigh sí dom an tábacht a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge agus leis an gcultúr sa chlub.

“Tá cáil níos mó bainte amach ag ár gclub le blianta beaga anuas mar gheall ar ár n-éachtaí ar pháirc na himeartha, ach bhí cúrsaí teanga agus cultúir i gcónaí i gcroí an phobail anseo agus bhí ról lárnach ag an chlub san athbheochan teanga sa cheantar. Tá 2 naiscoil Ghaeilge agus bunscoil Ghaeilge sa cheantar, agus is i bhfoirgneamh réamhdhéanta a chuir an club ar fáil ag Páirc Eiméid a thosaigh an chéad naiscoil.

“Glacann baill an chlub páirt i Scór na nÓg

agus i Scór Sinsir. Tá spéis ag cuid mhór dár gcuid ball sa cheol, san amhránaíocht, sa damhsa agus sa drámaíocht, agus thug an club ardán ar líne do chuid den talann áitiúil sin i ‘Spraoidh Shleacht Néill’ anuraidh.”

Sa bhliain 2000 ainmníodh CLG Roibeard Eiméid Sleacht Néill mar ‘chlub na bliana’ ag Bronnadh Gradam Chumann Scríbhneoirí CLG Uladh.



FOIREANN CAMÓGAÍOCHT SHLEACHT NÉILL TAR ÉIS CLUICHE CEANNAIS NA HÉIREANN A BHUACHAN I 2018

**Bunaithe:**

1953

**Dathanna:**

Marún agus Bán

**Líon Ball:**

858 (414 faoi aois agus 444 duine fásta)

**Craobhacha Sinsir Camógaíochta:****Doire:** 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020**Ulaidh:**

2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

**Uile-Eireann:**

2016, 2017, 2018

**Craobhacha Sinsir Iomána:****Doire:** 1965, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1993, 2000, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020**Ulaidh:**

2016, 2017, 2019

**Craobhacha Sinsir Peile:****Doire:**

2004, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020

**Ulaidh:**

2014, 2016, 2017

**Laochra móra de chuid an chlub:**

Tomás Ó Caiside (RIP)

Francie Burke agus Pat 'Tad' Cassidy – na fir a chothaigh an chuid is mó de na himreoirí reatha nuair a bhí siad faoi aois.

An fhoireann camógaíochta a bhuaigh 3 chraobh na hÉireann I ndiaidh a chéile.

**Imreoirí Reatha Idirchontae:****Peil:**

Críostóir Mac Thaidhg, Karl Mac Thaidhg, Breandán Mac Ruairí, Pól Mac Néill, Pádraig Ó Caiside, Shane Mac Uiginn

**Iománaíocht:**

Séan Ó Caiside, Cormac Ó Dochartaigh, Gearard Ó Brocháin, Oisín Ó Dochartaigh, Michéal Mac Craith, Sé Mag Uiginn, Marcus Mag Uiginn, Brian Ó Caiside, Sé Ó Caiside

**Camógaíocht:**

Aoife Ní Chaiside, Céat Nic Giolla Domhnaigh, Sinéad Ní Mhealláin, Cliodhna Ní Mhianáin Louise Dougan: Poc Fada:

**Doire:**

2014, 2018, 2019, 2020

**Uladh:**

2014, 2018, 2019



FOIREANN CAMÓGAÍOCHT SHLEACHT NÉILL TAR ÉIS CLUICHE CEANNAIS NA HÉIREANN A BHUACHAN I 2018

**Gluais / Glossary****baile fearainn** – townland **Cuireadh an club ar bun** – native language **i gcuimhne** – in memory**ó neart go neart** – from strength to strength **lán de ghaiscí** – full of achievements **Mar sin féin** – that said**le blianta beaga anuas** – in recent years **éachtaí** – achievement **pháirc na himeartha** – field of play**croí an phobail** – heart of the community **athbheochan** – revival **foirgneamh réamhdhéanta** – prefabs**ardán ar líne** – online platform**Bronnadh Gradam Chumann Scríbhneoirí CLG Uladh** – Ulster GAA Writer's Association Award Ceremony**Chothaigh** – to nurture **Imreoirí Reatha** – current players

## ROSCOMMON'S TOMÁS Ó MUIRÍ APPOINTED CHAIR OF COISTE NÁISIÚNTA SCÓR

**TOMÁS Ó MUIRÍ, HAS BEEN APPOINTED BY UACHTARÁN CHUMANN LÚTHCHLEAS GAEL, LABHRÁS MAC CÁRTHAIGH, AS CHAIR OF THE NEXT COISTE NÁISIÚNTA SCÓR 1921-1924. HE ALSO CONFIRMED THE OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHICH INCLUDED AN OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN JANE MCCARTER O'DOWD.**

Ó Muirí, who has been involved in Scór for much of his life chatted to GAA.ie, and explains how he was honoured to have been asked by Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, Labhrás Mac Cárthaigh, to fill the role.

"It is a fantastic honour to be the newly appointed Cathaoirleach of Coiste Náisiúnta Scór", says Ó Muirí. "An honour not just for me personally but also for my family, local club St Dominic's, Roscommon and indeed Connacht.

"Since my late teens I have been involved in Scór administration at all levels of the Association. My new appointment to lead Scór at national level is one I do not take lightly and I dedicate it to the various people who influenced me since I began.

"Today I remember all these stalwarts. Those locally Eileen Fallon and Donald Feeley at St. Dominic's level and indeed Phonsie Tully at Roscommon county level who christened Scór and formed part of the first Coiste Náisiúnta.

"I also remember some of those who went to their eternal rewards at local level the likes of Mary O'Connor and Éamon Beatty and indeed Pat Dennehy who gave their lives locally to the promotion of our culture.



"As I look across the province of course I follow the footsteps of great Gaels such as Seosamh Mac Donncha as Contae na Gaillimhe. He did so much for the promotion of our culture and our language."

The past year has been an incredibly difficult year for all involved in Scór and in the GAA due to the pandemic. Last March when Covid

struck most provinces were preparing for their provincial finals and looking forward to the All-Ireland finals in the INEC the following April. Tomás shares his thoughts on the difficulties of the last year and how Scór administrators rose to the challenge of keeping activity alive albeit in a new digital way.

"The past year has been incredibly difficult

for everyone and unfortunately, we bid a sad farewell to many great Gaels along the way. Just days before the commencement of the provincial finals in 2020 Covid-19 darkened all our doors and remains with us.

"While official competitions came to a sudden halt, alternatives were quickly put in place to keep our cultural activities to the fore. Virtual Scór, the brainchild of Aodán



Ó Braonáin, iar-Chathaoirleach Choiste Náisiúnta Scór, provided a much needed, non-evasive platform to keep both young and old engaged.

“We also had a number of intercounty and interprovincial performances and it would be remiss of me not to mention the great work of Gareth McCreevey who produced many of these fantastic videos to such a high standard that we can all hold and treasure for many years to come.

“There were many more plans to further develop Scór which unfortunately fell victim to the pandemic. It is my goal to now make these a reality along with a number of

additional targets.”

Ó Muirí has been charged with the task of leading Scór for the next three years and there is no doubting that he is looking forward to progressing the role of Scór in the GAA and leaving it in a better place come the end of his term.

“It is my strong opinion that Scór play a pivotal role in the Association. It is the one element that differentiates us from all other sporting bodies - the commitment to the promotion of our language and our culture.

“The opening chapter of An Treoir Oifigiúil outlines 4 broad aims of the Association

The first aim is immediately met through Scór – to actively support the Irish language and culture. These four aims must now be further developed as part of the overall GAA strategic plan from Autumn 2021 to 2026.

“In recent times the GAA has adopted the manifesto ‘Tá Áit Dúinn Uilig Ann’. In Cumann Lúthchleas Gael there is a place for everyone and for many this may solely be Scór.”

St. Dominic’s and Roscommon man, Ó Muirí, is raring to go and is very much looking forward to working with his fellow committee members. He also recognises the significant inclusions on the committee

of young Tipperary man Marcus Ó Duinn as well as New York representative, Jane McCarter O’Dowd among others.

“I really look forward to getting straight down to business next week with Coiste Náisiúnta Scór. Each member of An Coiste bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise so there will be no honeymoon period required!

“Two new exciting dimensions to the Coiste will be a representative from overseas to broaden our wings and further develop Scór in places like New York and indeed other units across the world.

“The Uachtarán has also appointed a young man from Tipperary, Marcus Ó Duinn, to help us further develop the views of our younger members compiled at last year’s youth forum at Páirc an Chrócaigh.

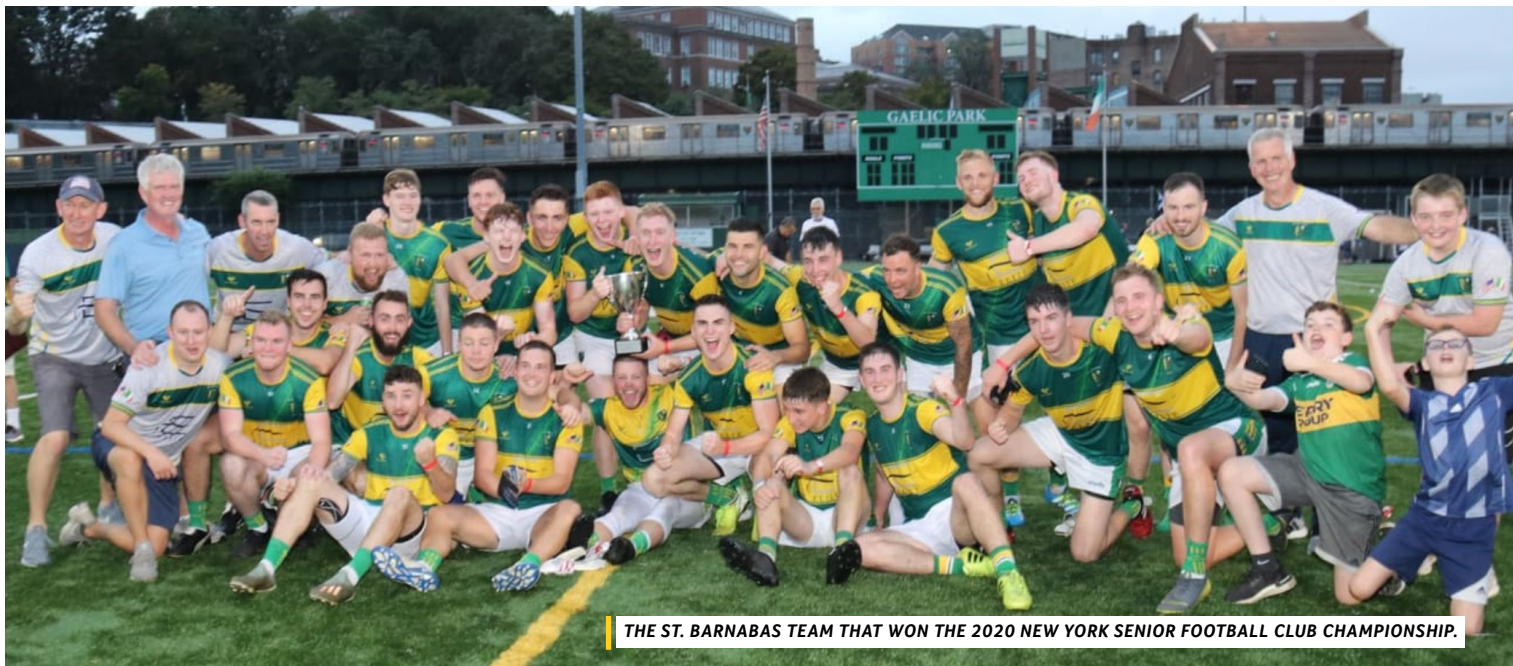
“The overseas representation and the voice of youth will blend in with the more experienced members to create a more informed Coiste in how best to lead Scór in 2021 and beyond.”

The following have been appointed members of Coiste Náisiúnta Scór, 2021–2024:

**Tomás Ó Muirí**,  
Naomh Doiminic, Ros Comáin  
**Póilín Mhic Aoidh**,  
Droichead Mhaigh Eo, An Dún  
**Uinseann Ó Náraigh**,  
Muine Chonalláin, Maigh Eo  
**Caitríona Uí Dhálaigh**,  
Baile Uí Chomaoil, An Iarmhí  
**Maighréad Uí Fhaoláin**,  
Naomh Caitríonaigh, Corcaigh  
**Bronagh Lennon**,  
Naomh Muire, Achadh Gallan, Aontroim  
**Liam Ó Cúlbaired**,  
Fine Ghalainn, Áth Cliath  
**Marcas Ó Duinn**,  
An Mhaighéan-Teampall Tuaithe, Tiobraid Árann  
**Ailís Nic an tSaoi**,  
CLG Sheáin Mhic Dhiarmada, Muineachán  
**Jane McCarter O’Dowd**,  
Gaeil Manhattan, Nua-Eabhrac

By John Harrington

## NEW YORK GAA DEVELOPING A GENERATION OF HOMEGROWN HEROES



THE ST. BARNABAS TEAM THAT WON THE 2020 NEW YORK SENIOR FOOTBALL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP.

**WHEN THE FINAL WHISTLE BLEW IN THE 2020 NEW YORK SENIOR FOOTBALL FINAL REPLAY LAST SEPTEMBER AND ST. BARNABAS WERE CROWNED CHAMPIONS AFTER A THRILLING VICTORY OVER SLIGO, IT FELT LIKE A REAL WATERSHED MOMENT FOR GAELIC GAMES IN THE BIG APPLE.**

What made the victory especially significant was that St. Barnabas achieved it with a team of native New Yorkers.

For New York GAA Games Manager, Micky Quigg, and Games Promotion Officer,

Simon Gillespie, watching clusters of young St. Barnabas supporters invade the pitch joyfully after the final whistle to get closer to their heroes was something very special.

Here you had a St. Barnabas team full of players who had been developed by New York GAA's excellent player pathway inspiring a new generation already following in their footsteps.

The symbolism of that moment was huge, and felt like a great reward for all the hard work that New York GAA have undertaken

in recent years to deliver high quality coaching to their young players.

"After the game the little St. Barnabas kids were asking the players for their autographs which was really nice to see," says Gillespie.

"Before they might have been looking for the autographs of the players who had come over from Ireland like Jamie Clarke.

"But now they're looking for the autographs of players like Shane Hogan, Mikey Brosnan, and Gearoid Kennedy.

"If those guys are now the heroes, it's a lot more relatable for little kids. They see these guys training in their club pitch and so reaching that same level themselves some day suddenly feels far more attainable.

"They want to be like these players when they're older, and that's a powerful motivator.

"When I started in New York, St. Barnabas were a junior team. They had a lot of kids playing, but at a young age-group from nines to twelves, and their older players were Junior level. There was just Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Football back then.

"They basically worked hard and they won a Junior Championship in 2012 or 2013 and as they developed their younger players they were able to field a second team and now they have three teams, Senior, Junior A and Junior B teams.

"And while the standard of individual clubs like St. Barnabas has improved, the general depth of talent across the board has too because we now have two new divisions of football.

"Back in 2010 it was only Junior, Intermediate, and Senior, now there's Junior Novice, Junior B, Junior A, Intermediate and Senior."

Considerable work has been done by New York GAA over a sustained period of time, especially by the industrious New York Minor Board, to deliver Gaelic Games to



THE ST. BARNABAS PLAYERS CELEBRATE WITH CUP AFTER THEIR EXTRA-TIME VICTORY OVER SLIGO IN THE NEW YORK SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL.

the youth of the city.

The migration of so many Irish people to the city in the '80s saw a big growth in the number of kids playing Gaelic Games in the late nineties/early noughties and structures were put in place to nurture them.

St. Barnabas and New York county team star, Shane Hogan, is a good example of someone who benefited from a robust player pathway.

He played in the first Continental Youth Championship (CYC) in 2004, competed for New York in the Féile Peile na nÓg, played for New York in the Connacht minor football championship in 2010 and 2011, and made his senior debut for New York in the Connacht Championship at the age of just 17.

Have a read of the latest New York GAA Games Development Newsletter and you get a good sense of the considerable work that is being done at juvenile level in the city.

The dates for this summer's Cúl Camps are already set in stone, specialist sessions on sports psychology, physiotherapy, nutrition, and playing at the top level have just been completed with the U-21 development squad, their coach education program is a very active one, and they've even recently published a 'Big Book of Training Games and Activities' for U-7 to U-11 players.

"Our player pathway model has been strengthened in the last couple of years," says New York GAA Games Manager, Micky Quigg.

"Clubs now are coaching children from U-7 up and then the biggest formal competition would be the CYC in the summer.

"Then you're into Féiles and after that the footballers would join development squads.

"New York College teams have entered in the British University Gaelic Football

Championships for the past number of years and then in the last three years they've entered the Cork na Mac Leinn in the All-Ireland University Championships, reaching the final in 2020.

"Then you have the World Games every three years, and we'd hope to compete at minor level in the Connacht Championship in the future.

"We'll soon also have a native New York team competing in the All-Ireland Junior Football Championship so there's a very good structure there now for football, and we'd be hoping to replicate that in hurling too.

"We'd like to get a New York team in the Lory Meagher Cup, and we're making good strides in Camogie too with the New York Camogie League."

The consistently high quality of the New York teams that compete in Féile every year is a testament to the coaching they're receiving with their clubs, with the U-14 boys winning the Division 1 Cup in 2017 and the girls winning the Division 2 Cup in 2019.

Continuing to nurture that talent up through the older age grades into senior level has historically been a challenge, especially when those kids become teenagers and start attending college, but



SHANE HOGAN OF NEW YORK SHOOTS TO SCORE HIS SIDE'S FIRST GOAL DURING THE 2018 CONNACHT GAA FOOTBALL SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER-FINAL MATCH BETWEEN NEW YORK AND LEITRIM AT GAELIC PARK IN NEW YORK.



NEW YORK PLAYERS CELEBRATE AFTER WINNING THE GIRLS DIVISION 2 FINAL AT THE JOHN WEST PEILE NA NÓG.



NEW YORK PLAYERS CELEBRATE AFTER WINNING THE BOYS DIVISION 1 FINAL AT THE 2017 JOHN WEST PEILE NA NÓG.



the introduction of a Development Squad Programme is really helping in that regard.

“The Development Squad Programme for all codes was started back in 2017,” says Quigg. “Joan Henchy (New York GAA Chairperson), in fairness to her, has done a great job on them.

“We’re bringing players together from all clubs over an eight to ten week period.

“They get high quality training from inter-county players and they get a good competitive game against a USGAA team at the end of it where they all play regardless of ability. It’s all about attendance at training and commitment.

“Then they get a bit of gear at the end to encourage that feeling of pride in the whole thing. It has really brought on the players who have taken part. You look at that St. Barnabas success, a load of those lads have come through the development

squads in the last few years.

“Even look at the Junior B Championship Final last year, it was Rangers against Shannon Gaels, two native born teams. And then in the Junior A it was Kerry against an all-native Rangers team.

“We’re seeing those native-born teams getting better and better thanks to the structures that have been put in place over the last few years. It’s great to see it happening.”

The Covid-19 pandemic hit New York especially hard last March and April and Simon Gillespie admits he was concerned that the numbers of young people playing Gaelic Games when they did get things back up and running again would dip significantly.

But not only did the numbers in existing New York GAA clubs increase, a new club, Dutchess County Griffins, was established

in 2020.

“Dutchess County are in upstate New York where we’re seeing a lot of people migrate to because the city is now so expensive to live in,” says Gillespie.

“They’re basically our version of towns like Ashbourne in Meath where you’ve seen lots of Dublin people move to.

“A lot of former players, guys who retired from playing six or so years ago, have now moved to Dutchess County and have started an U-9 and U-11 programme.

“It’s going to be really interesting because they have a really good core group of people involved who have been very into getting things right from the start. They’ve got all their gear and they’re very active on social media.

“Seeing a new club be formed is fantastic. We were very worried this time last year

that our participation would collapse. But what we’ve noticed is that more kids have started playing GAA and we have a whole new club which is a big success story. We’re very hopeful that those guys will do well.”

As challenging as the Covid-19 pandemic was in New York when it was at its raging height there, the Gaelic Games family in the city has come out of it stronger than ever before.

GAA clubs were at the forefront of helping the most vulnerable in their community, and the fundraising initiatives of the New York footballers and hurlers generated massive good-will.

And because no players travelled over from Ireland to play in the New York Championships on sanctions, many more native-born players were given the opportunity to show what they could do at senior club level and really made the most of the opportunity.

“I think home-based is the way to go for us,” says Gillespie. “People used to think, and it was very much an 1980s mentality, but people used to think that people would only come to Gaelic Park if you had a star like Pat Spillane over from Ireland playing or if there was a big inter-county game.

“But it’s clear now that people want to go and see home-based players. The demand for our games last year showed that. People want to go to these games because their family, friends, co-workers are playing.

“We’re going to really benefit in the short-term from a lot of the American kids getting playing with the senior teams.

“It’s what they deserve, really, because it’s their county at the end of the day.”

By John Bobs, PRO, Wellington/Hutt Valley GFHA in New Zealand

## HISTORIC DOUBLE FOR WELLINGTON/HUTT VALLEY GFHA AT NEW ZEALAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

**OUR MEN'S FOOTBALLERS AND HURLERS CLAIMED A HISTORIC DOUBLE AT THE NEW ZEALAND CHAMPIONSHIPS IN CHRISTCHURCH IN MARCH, WITH THE FOOTBALLERS WINNING THE COMPETITION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LIVING MEMORY.**

The championships, played at a sun-soaked Hagley Park, were the highlight of the 2020/21 New Zealand GAA calendar. With the cancellation of the 2020 competition in Auckland due to COVID-19, and the GAA at a hiatus back home for the same reason, this tournament was savoured by players and spectators alike.

We had six teams lining out at the championships: a camogie team; junior and senior women's football teams; a hurling team; and junior and senior men's football teams. 65 players, along with coaches and loyal supporters, made the trip from the New Zealand capital south to the Garden City.

It was certainly a tournament to remember as our hurlers and men's senior footballers claimed a historic double. The hurlers defeated perennial rivals Canterbury in their final while the footballers won their title by overcoming a strong Celtic/Marist (Auckland) amalgamation. John 'Bobs' Daly (hurling) and Shane Bourke (football) duly picked up player of the final awards. That's four titles in a row for the hurlers and a first New Zealand Championship title for the senior footballers — an incredible achievement.

What's even more impressive is that we had players from 49 clubs in Ireland as well as other clubs from exotic locations such as Toulouse, Vancouver and Sydney lining out in the green and yellow. In total, 24 counties were represented across our six teams. In the week leading up to the tournament, we engaged with many of our players' former clubs on social



WELLINGTON/HUTT VALLEY PLAYERS, COACHES, AND LOYAL SUPPORTERS AT THE 2021 NEW ZEALAND CHAMPIONSHIPS.

MEN'S SENIOR FOOTBALL CAPTAIN CONOR TIERNEY (LEFT) AND HURLING CAPTAIN DARRAGH CORBOY LIFTING THE NEW ZEALAND CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHIES FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE CODES. PHOTOS: CHRISTCHURCH MCKENNA'S



media and there was a most enthusiastic response from the clubs in hearing about their past players continuing Gaelic games in the Antipodes.

We also note that between the 2020 Wellington Sevens tournament and the NZ Championships we have won silverware across the four codes this season. It's not something that happens too often and it's without doubt a testament to the hard work and commitment from our players, coaches, club administrators, as well as the culture of our club.

It is certainly fitting that, with 2021 being the 130-year anniversary of the first time Gaelic games were played in Wellington, our club enjoyed such a successful season. We look forward to celebrating our 130-year milestone later in the year with plenty of silverware on display.

You can view more photos and read reports of each of our teams' New Zealand Championships [here](#).



LOCATIONS OF CLUBS REPRESENTED ON WELLINGTON/HUTT VALLEY GFHA'S TEAMS AT THE 2021 NEW ZEALAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

By John Reaney Secretary Geelong Gaels GAA Club

## GEELONG GAELS – GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

**THE GEELONG GAELS JUNIOR GRASSHOPPERS FINISHED THE 2020/2021 SEASON WITH A SUCCESSFUL FINAL MORNING OF FRIENDLY COMPETITION BETWEEN OUR JUNIOR TEAMS AND YOUNG MELBOURNE (KIDS GAA MELBOURNE). THE MORNING CAPPED OFF WHAT HAS BEEN A VERY SUCCESSFUL SEASON GIVEN THE CHALLENGES THAT MANY SPORTS FACED DUE TO COVID-19..**

The morning commenced with the final session for the Gaelic for Mothers and Others who impressed with their level of skill in a 7 a side game. The G4MO program has provided many of our mums the opportunity to a bit of exercise and at the same time learn the rules and skills of Gaelic football. It has been a major success and we look forward to growing it in the coming season.

The Under 9's have been an extremely enthusiastic group all season and the morning provided them an opportunity to put their newly developed football and hurling skills to the test. The development of the group is amazing and watching them charge up and down the field, kicking and passing the ball to their teammates was great to watch. After a game of football, the group donned their helmets for a game of ground hurling.

The major competition of the morning was in the Under 10 and Under 12 age group where the Geelong Gaels played Young Melbourne in Gaelic Football. The standard of football played by all the teams was of a high standard. The skill level was exceptional; however it was the teamwork on display was the most encouraging as players shared the ball with each other, bringing their teammates into the game.

The older Grasshoppers also played a game of 7 a side football with first the Under 16 boys and then the Under 16 girls toting out for their final game for the season. Another highlight of the morning was the newly trained juniors refereeing games and gaining valuable experience in officiating games of football.

When we commenced training back in October as a club we were uncertain what the season would look like and how much we could achieve. Looking back, we were so fortunate to have the season we did. We had over 100 juniors register and the club continues to go from strength to strength. Planning is already underway for the 2021/2022 season and fingers crossed, a return to normality with our Youth Championships in late November.

Many thanks go to the dedicated group of coaches who have given of their time and effort all season to coach and mentor the juniors throughout the season. Young Melbourne have once again been a great supporter of our club and we value their continued involvement in our competitions and the strong relationship our clubs have developed.

Gaelic Games continue to go from strength to strength in the Geelong region.

*For more information on the incredible work and activity of the 460 Clubs that make up World GAA please click on this link*

<https://sway.office.com/Ko5VLLtTk71Gs9NG?ref=Link>





Football

Hurling

Club

General

## 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](mailto:clubnewsletter@gaa.ie).

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