

# MARCH 2021 MÁRTA 2021 NUACHTLITIR



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By Cian Murphy

## LET THE CHILDREN PLAY – UACHTARÁN



NEWLY INAUGURATED GAA PRESIDENT - LARRY MCCARTHY

**NEWLY INAUGURATED GAA PRESIDENT, LARRY MCCARTHY, HAS CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT FOR CHILDREN TO RETURN TO PLAY WITH THEIR CLUBS.**

The Cork native became the GAA's 40th President since 1884 and the first overseas representative elected to the high office when the New York GAA man succeeded John Horan at Congress on February 27.

He used his inaugural address to salute the work done by GAA clubs and volunteers during the Pandemic to date.

And he is hopeful that the phased

reopening of schools during March can be followed up by a Government decision to allow children back into training outdoors in their clubs – as was the case pre-Christmas.

He said: “We are operating at the behest of the Government and the public health authorities, and we will continue to do so.

“I would respectfully ask the authorities that we be allowed to have activity for children in our clubs once schools have safely opened. We showed last year that we can do this very safely and very effectively. Acknowledging that the circumstances are more onerous now, there is no doubt in my mind that we can do so again.

“This will have a threefold effect, it will get our children engaged in organised physical activity with their friends, it will allow the parents a slight relief from the stress of the pandemic, and it will bring fun back into many people's lives. To the public health authorities, please give consideration to this request. We did it last year, we can do it again.”

Asked afterwards in a media briefing what he felt the GAA's biggest challenge was, McCarthy said bluntly: “Getting back out onto the field again.”

At home and abroad, McCarthy said the work of GAA clubs in the last 12 months has been inspirational.

He stated: “Uachtarán John Horan suggested to Congress three years ago that the GAA would front up and would not be found wanting in addressing the issues of the day. Let me suggest that in the last 12 months, CLG has more than fronted up, has not been found wanting in addressing the issue of the day, and has not been found wanting in its contribution to communities around the world.

“You, and I mean every one of you, have been magnificent in serving your communities, and we are rightly proud of what has been achieved in minding and taking care of those communities. The millions of things that you have done, phone calls to the elderly for a chat, groceries delivered, pitches and facilities given over to public health authorities, fundraisers to help those who did not have security of accommodation or food, have been a magnificent response, but at one level, we are not surprised, are we? This is what we are all about. This is what the GAA does all

the time. Our communities, our place, our home.”

One area that the new Uachtarán has looked to tackle is online abuse of GAA members – be they players, referees or officials.

He added: “One of the lessons that we might learn from the recent near collapse of democracy in the United States is that words matter.

“What one says matters, what one puts in the public domain matters.

“In that regard I would ask all of us to tone down the tenor of our public commentary. Social media has wonderful aspects to it, but there is also a dark side. One of which is, in the words of sports commentator Bob Costas, “a corrosive assault on civility”.

“By all means let us express an opinion, but please let's do it in a manner that is respectful. There is no place for the type of abuse that many of our players, volunteers and officials have been subjected to in recent years.

“By all means argue the point in a public discussion, but do so in a manner which does justice not only to yourself but to the GAA. If you are one of those keyboard warriors who, in cowardly fashion hides behind nom de plume's and aliases, and castigates our officials, players or referees, stop.

“Your behaviour not only has a corrosive effect on civility, it has a long term corrosive effect on the GAA as it discourages people from volunteering as members of our Association.”

# CHANGING FACE OF GAA AS CONGRESS PASSES MAJOR REFORMS

**CONGRESS 2021 WAS A GAA LANDMARK IN BEING THE FIRST REMOTELY HELD ANNUAL CONVENTION. BUT THAT WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE SIGNIFICANT AND HISTORIC REFORMS VOTED THROUGH AS ALL MOTIONS MOVED FOR DECISION WERE CARRIED.**

There are 10 motions which were set aside for a more intensive debate at a Special Congress planned for this autumn.

But in the meantime GAA Congress paved the way for the new Split Season from 2022, a Concussion substitute, tough new rules to target cynical fouls, the tightening up of pitch incursions except for medical attention and some new formats for underage competitions.

## MOTIONS PASSED

**MOTION 2:** Financial year end changed from Oct 31 to Sept 30

**MOTION 4:** Anti-Doping regulations are those determined under Sport Ireland rules

**MOTION 5:** Team sheets can be signed by a designated person other than a secretary

**MOTION 6:** The period defined as a closed season will be determined by Central Council

**MOTION 7:** Only one person to receive a trophy in a presentation

**MOTION 8:** The penalty for a defender who receives a kick-out and passes back to the

TEAMS WILL NOW USE A TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTE IN THE EVENT OF A HEAD INJURY



goalkeeper is a free-in.

**MOTION 10:** Inter-county players must complete an on-line anti-doping education course prior to the season.

**MOTION 12:** The Split Season: All-Ireland senior finals moved forward to the 29th Sunday of the year or the 30th Sunday if January 1 is a Sunday. Moves All-Ireland finals into July.

**MOTION 13:** Limit on number of teams in a senior club championship is 16.

**MOTION 14:** All-Ireland U20 Hurling

moves Galway and the Ulster champions into Leinster. Munster winners v Leinster winners is the All-Ireland final.

**MOTION 15:** Restricts U20 hurling championship to players who haven't already played in that year's senior championship

**MOTION 16:** All-Ireland post primary schools finals on St Patrick's Day. Fitzgibbon and Sigerson Cup finals to be played by the seventh and eighth Sundays.

**MOTION 17:** New All-Ireland Junior

Football Championship to feature Kilkenny, New York (US born players) and the British junior championship finalists and played over one weekend.

**MOTION 20:** Cynical fouling. On a trial basis in 2021 at inter-county level, the referee will award a penalty against and sin bin a player who illegally prevents a goal scoring opportunity by committing a cynical infraction inside the 20m line or its arc.

**MOTION 20:** The referee keeps his arm up while playing an advantage.

**MOTION 22:** Imposes match-based rather than time-based suspensions on team officials guilty of misconduct. Applies in 2021 inter-county Championship and from 2022 for other levels.

**MOTION 23:** Only a medical person is now allowed enter the field of play.

**MOTION 24:** Rules governing the use of racist or sectarian remarks to be punishable under rules of games similar to aggressive fouls.

**MOTION 25:** Teams with only 13 players on the field at throw-in do not need to have 15 for throw-in at their start of the second half.

**MOTION 26:** Bans the waving of arms or hurleys in front of a free taker or for puck outs.

**MOTION 27:** Provides for the use of a temporary substitute where a player suffers a head injury and needs to receive treatment.

**MOTION 30:** Allows World GAA to submit a motion to Congress.

**MOTION 31:** Allows World GAA to have a rep on Central Council.

**MOTION 32:** Allows Central Council to act on jurisdiction in World GAA.

**MOTION 33:** Defines the powers for World GAA.

**MOTION 34:** Central Council can appoint the Chair to World GAA.

**MOTION 38:** This motion proposes to extend the requirement of names on team-sheets to be written in Irish to also include the name of the official in charge of the team.

**MOTION 39:** This motion proposes that a club adopt its Official Club Constitution at a General Meeting.

**MOTION 40:** This motion is quite a lengthy and technical one that seeks to update some of the literature of the Club Constitution.

**MOTION 40:** Allows County Hearings Committees to also adjudicate on disciplinary matters arising under the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee of a Club within the County.

**MOTION 42:** Provincial Conventions shall be held prior to January 18th.

**MOTION 43:** The motion requires that any proposed playing rule motions would first have to be referred to the Standing Committee on Playing Rules for assessment and adjudication before being brought to Annual Congress.

**MOTION 44:** This motion clarifies the definition of 'Other Relevant Connection' in terms of a player's eligibility to play for a club/county other than the one of his birth. Basically it would allow the player to play for a club/county that either of his parents were in the catchment area of/ resident in at the time of the player's birth.

**MOTION 45:** This motion redefines the category of misconduct in terms of playing infractions.

**MOTION 46:** This motion permits evidence older than 96 weeks to be submitted to a Hearing if the matter is deemed sufficiently serious.

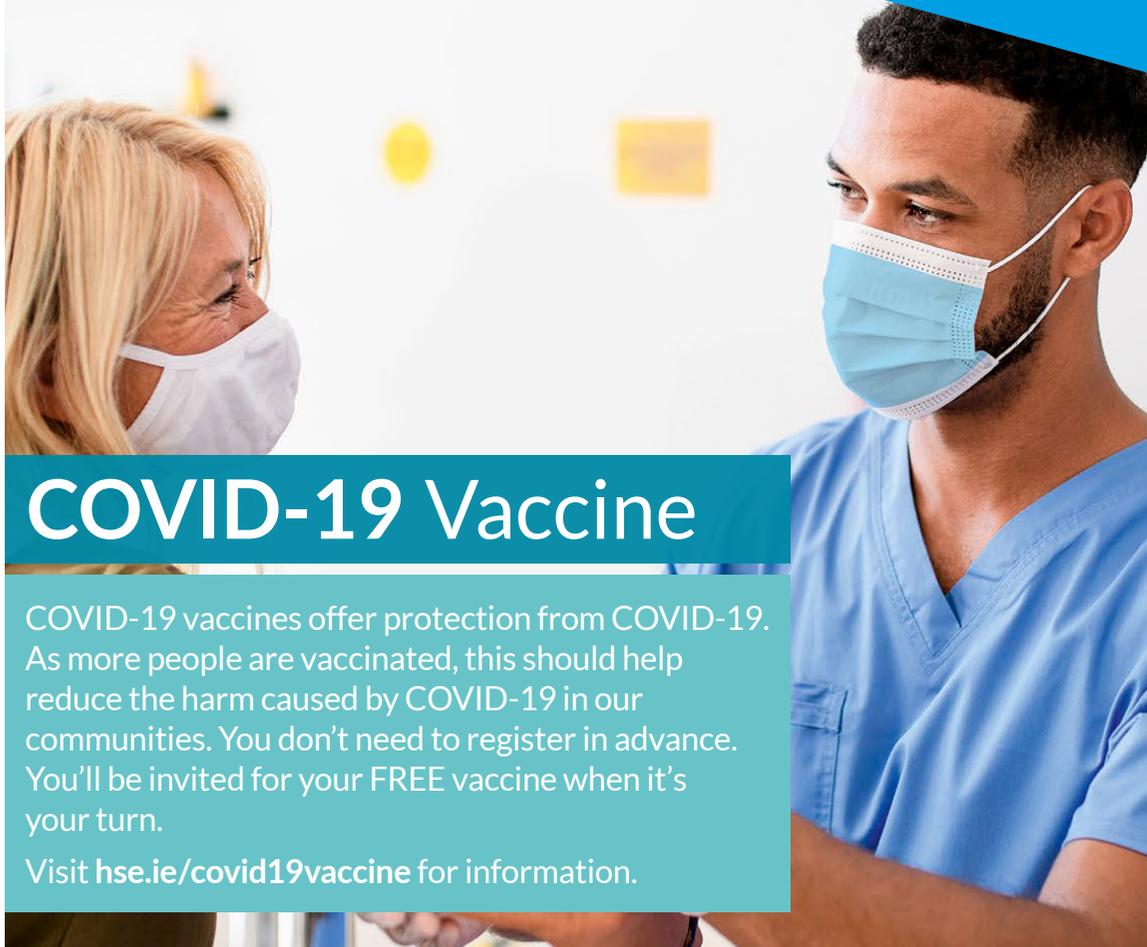
**MOTION 47:** This motion declares that there shall be no appeal from outside the county regarding a decision of a County Hearings Committee in relation to disciplinary action initiated by the Executive Committee of a Club.

**GALWAY PENALTY TAKER JOE CANNING. PENALTIES WILL BE AWARDED AS PART OF THE NEW CLAMPDOWN ON CYNICAL FOULS THAT DENY GOALSCORING CHANCES.**





COVID-19  
VACCINE  
Public Health  
Advice



## COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 vaccines offer protection from COVID-19. As more people are vaccinated, this should help reduce the harm caused by COVID-19 in our communities. You don't need to register in advance. You'll be invited for your FREE vaccine when it's your turn.

Visit [hse.ie/covid19vaccine](https://hse.ie/covid19vaccine) for information.

#HoldFirm



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

The GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association in conjunction with the GPA and WGPA are supporting a new advertising campaign highlighting the vaccine roll-out and which will be prominent in the coming weeks.

You can watch a video with information on the vaccine roll-out via

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1P\\_vOCgyc6U.&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1P_vOCgyc6U.&feature=youtu.be)

## FOIREANN MEMBERSHIP & REGISTRATION

**MANY GAA CLUBS HAVE ALREADY STARTED THE PROCESS TO COLLECT THEIR MEMBERS' SUBSCRIPTIONS AND TO COMPLETE THE SUBSEQUENT REGISTRATIONS WITH THE GAA. IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN COLLECTING YOUR CLUB'S MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS OR REGISTERING YOUR MEMBERS WITH THE GAA, OR OTHER ASSOCIATION AS RELEVANT, YOU SHOULD ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS TO LOGIN TO FOIREANN AND ARE FAMILIAR WITH HOW TO USE IT.**

### **Support**

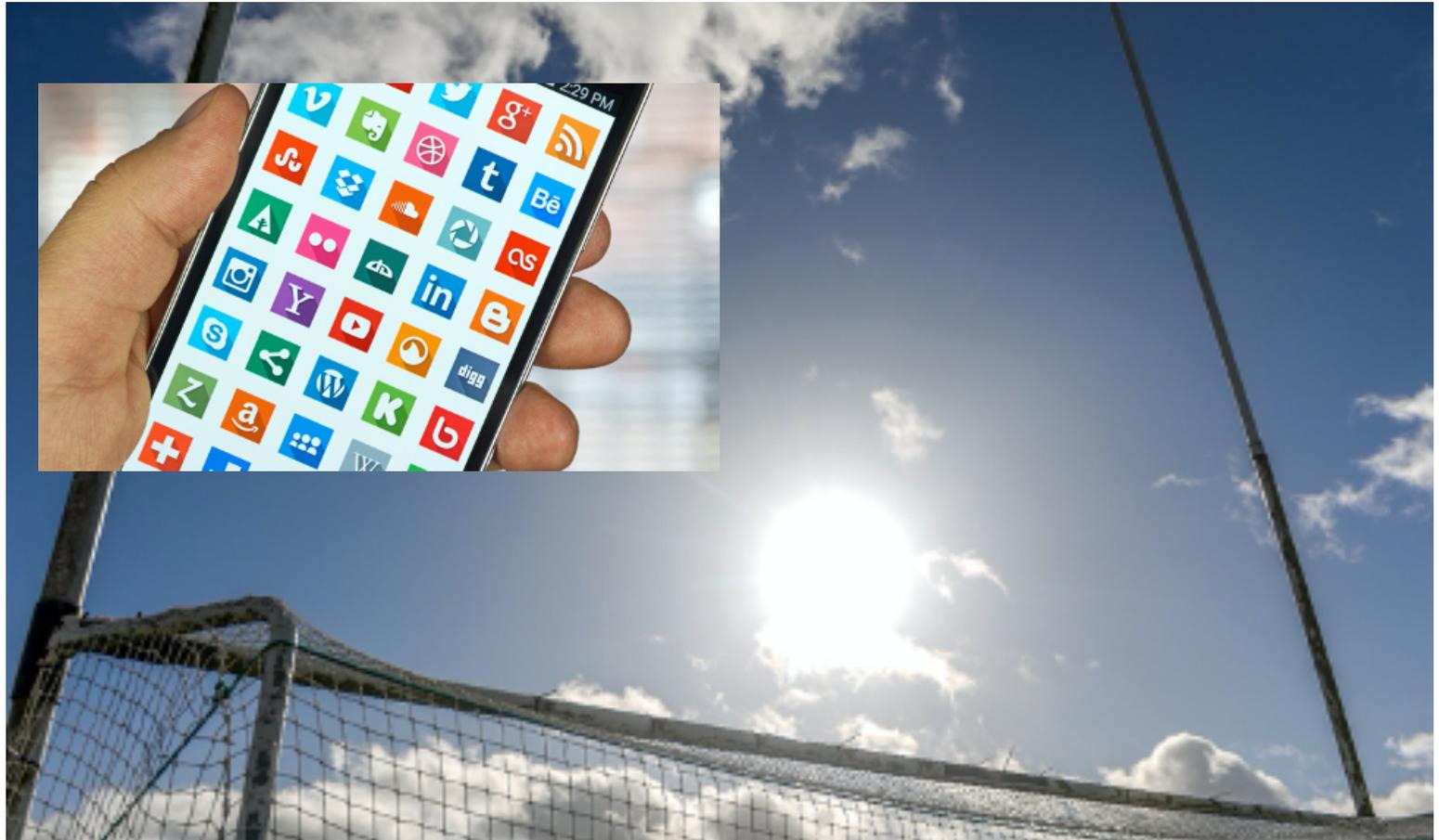
As Foireann is a new system, significant support materials, including videos and Support Documentation, have been prepared and are available [HERE](#).

Alternatively, you can email queries relating to Foireann to the support Help Desk using the following email address [gmssupport@gaa.ie](mailto:gmssupport@gaa.ie) and your query will be answered as soon as possible.

### **Training**

Online training and webinars will be delivered throughout the coming weeks to assist you, and an updated schedule of upcoming sessions is available [HERE](#).

Please note that a detailed update on Foireann will be issued to Club Secretaries shortly.



By John Harrington

## GAA USING TECHNOLOGY TO TACKLE RURAL DECLINE

**THE GAA IS READY TO ROLL OUT A GROUND-BREAKING GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) IT HOPES CAN HELP ADDRESS THE HUGE CHALLENGE POSED BY IRELAND'S POPULATION SHIFT FROM RURAL TO URBAN AREAS.**

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

The first of those increasingly problematic issues reared its head again last week when Valentia Young Islanders announced they wouldn't be able to field a senior team this year and requested help from the South Kerry board to find a club they could amalgamate with at senior level.

This trend is likely only going to accelerate in the coming years, but clubs and county boards will soon be in a position where they can anticipate these problems and plan for remedies rather than belatedly react to them.

That's thanks to a significant body of work carried out by the GAA's Community Development, Urban and Rural committee chaired by Colm Cummins.

As part of their work they have developed a GIS with Future Analytics that collates all demographic data relevant to GAA clubs from the Central Statistics Office, the Department of Education and equivalent bodies in the six counties.

This will allow clubs and counties to know



PICTURED IS O'CONNOR PARK, THE CLUBGROUNDS OF VALENTIA YOUNG ISLANDERS.

the birth-rate and population in their catchment area, how many players they have in their club at any one time at all age-groups, and what the participation rate is compared to the overall population in those age-groups.

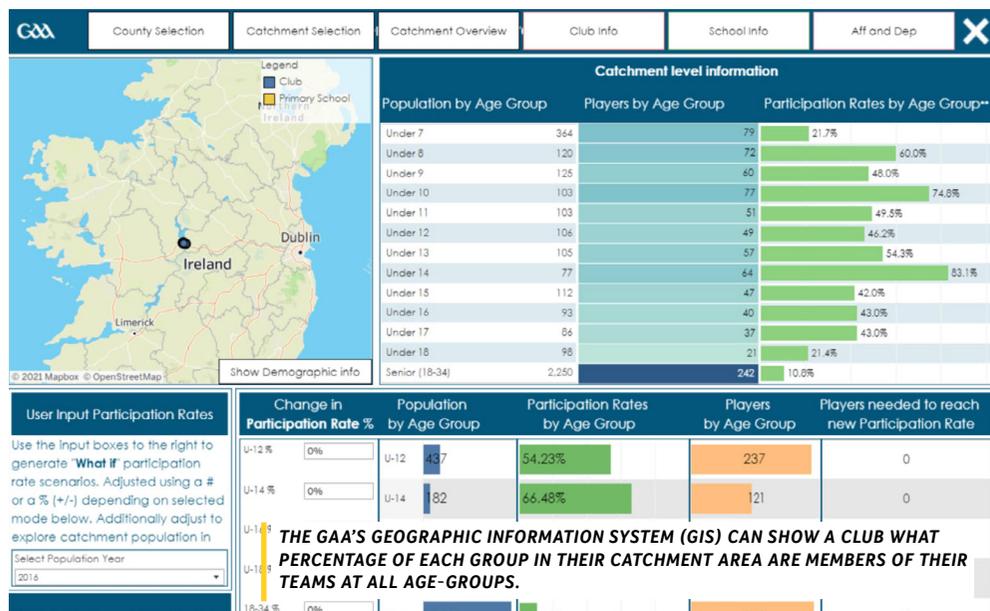
The value of this information is obvious. For example, if a club knows that the birth-rate in its catchment has plummeted over a sustained period of time they'll

know they need to start planning now for possibly amalgamating with another club at underage level in order to ensure the children in their catchment area will have a team to play with.

The GIS has been successfully piloted in four counties - Kerry, Westmeath, Roscommon, and Tyrone - and now the plan is to roll it out to the 28 remaining counties, a process that will

be spearheaded by the GAA's Education Officer, Peter Horgan, and part-funded by the Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts Fund.

The timing is serendipitous, because the GIS can now be synced with 'Foireann', the GAA's recently launched new Games Management System which tracks club registration and playing numbers among many other features.



This means it will be possible to continue updating the data on the GIS on a live basis.

“For the pilot counties it was done with a questionnaire sent out to each club and that was completed by all clubs and sent back to the counties and uploaded and analysed,” Peter Horgan told GAA.ie.

“That’s obviously just a snapshot in time, so if we had gotten every county on board in 2020 we would just have had the 2020 data. 2021, 2022 and 2023 comes around quickly and if we gathered the data like we did for the pilot counties it would be a very labour intensive process each time.

“What we want to happen is that the new Foireann system would be able to update the GIS project more or less on a live basis.

“So, as clubs register their members and so on, that data would feed straight into the GIS which would mean that it’s live as

in we’d be able to see how the progress of the registration system is going, but also it would be consistently updated so we wouldn’t have to do the survey of clubs each year.

“It would just be a case that as clubs update their Foireann system each year that would automatically update the GIS system and we would build up a picture over a period of time.

“Whereas you can imagine that if you were issuing a questionnaire to clubs every year it would get quite monotonous for everybody involved and quite difficult to build up that longitudinal approach to it.

“At the moment we’re working with Colm and his committee who are finishing up on a formal hand-over. But we’re also looking at how we can progress their work over the rest of this year.

“We’re going to try to roll out the GIS to as

many of the 28 counties as we can while focusing on maybe four to eight counties at a time.

“Future Analytics are our partner in this project so they will assist us in uploading all that material to the GIS system and that obviously takes a bit of time and a bit of preparation work needs to go on in order for data from any individual county to be uploaded to the system and then to be utilised.

“So we’ll be working with them on doing that over the coming months. At the same time we’ll be gathering information from counties and clubs around the country so we’ll be able to do this as seamlessly as we can.”

The GIS is a very powerful tool that can be harnessed to provide the GAA with all sorts of valuable information.

In the pilot counties it focused on the number of players active in a club and the participation rates in relation to the population in those catchment areas, but the possibilities are endless.

For example, it could also quickly illustrate how many coaches are active in each club, what level they are qualified to, and what age-grades they are working with.

Knowledge is power, but only if you put it to good use, and Horgan agrees how the GAA uses the information it collates will be just as critical as collecting it in the first place.

“In a lot of cases the GIS is really going to give us data for what is happening, but we’re going to have to interrogate that information to understand the hows and whys of it,” he says.

“We’ll know a lot more about club numbers and population trends, we need to work on understanding what is happening that

causes these numbers, what could assist clubs and how do we progress that.

“How do we apply the information and knowledge we glean to policy change and potentially rule change within the organisation?”

“I think you can guarantee that it won’t be a one size fits all solution.

“There’s no two counties the same or even two clubs the same. That’s why it’s a little bit dangerous just going with raw numbers and information and not looking into the hows and whys of these things.

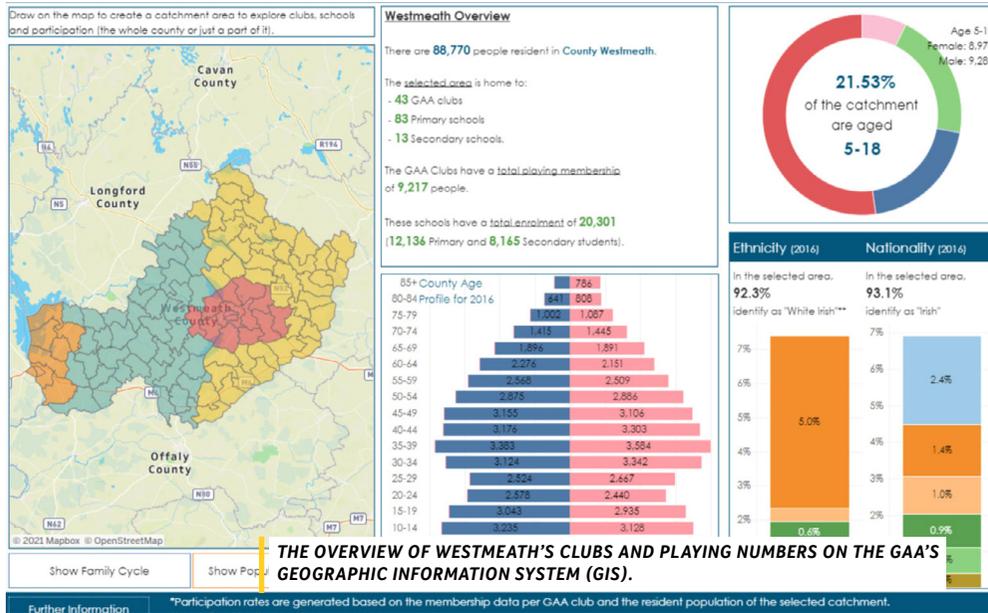
“I think it is an important job and as an organisation I think we’re becoming far more aware of the types of information that we have and how that might be useful to us in organising ourselves into best doing our business.

“There’s a lot of work involved in it. The four pilot counties that we had, there was a huge amount of things that we learned in working with those four pilot counties which will make the next step a little bit more manageable.

“How we go about bringing the next 28 on board will be important. I think there will be good buy-in from clubs because I think the four counties that have been involved in the pilot will see the benefits from the information that they are getting.

“It’s going to be a tough process but I think it’s something that when we look back on in three or four years time when we have the live information that we’re going to see huge benefits from having a longitudinal approach to what we’re doing instead of just having a snapshot from a single survey in a single year.”

As well as piloting the GIS in Kerry, Westmeath, Tyrone, and Roscommon, the Community Development, Urban and Rural



committee chaired by Colm Cummins has also put considerable thought into how best use the information it has collated in those counties.

Cummins believes the continued population shift from rural to urban areas will require the GAA to be open-minded about player eligibility to ensure that many rural clubs don't go out of existence in the coming years.

"We would suggest that we have to begin to introducing some element of flexibility to cater for the modern world and the way it works," Cummins told GAA.ie

"I think, we've just discussed this at a casual level, that you feel like the Association is maturing a bit and we don't have to be as strict in relation to eligibility rules if we could trust people to do the right thing.

"There may be a bit of flexibility where

a lad is, for example, living and working in Tralee and plays away with a club in Tralee but then could also get sanctioned for particular periods to go back and play championship with his home club in a rural part of Kerry or a club he has a connection with if they were under pressure.

"The data would be there to say that a club like Valentia had only 12 registered players so, yes, we'll allow them an additional 10 sanctioned players from outside.

"So, things like that, and they have been introduced previously in different ways such as weekend sanctions to go to play in the USA, et cetera. So we have precedents there.

"It would help if we were able to introduce things like that to cater for the changing environment. It would be a terrible shame to let any other club go out of existence if there was a way of keeping it there.

"They might just need to get over the hump for a couple of years, they might need that bit of flexibility just to keep the thing going and the numbers might show that some new families have moved into the area and in ten years the club could be back on its feet.

"Again, it goes back to having the data and knowing that. Then you can make those informed calls which would be the important piece.

"The question is whether are people are open to change, and I think they are. People will have to ask themselves would you rather introduce that flexibility or see these small clubs go out of existence.

"To me, it would be about keeping our spread of clubs as we have them or even increase it. We should be increasing them as the population is growing and looking at new clubs in urban areas, but as a minimum we should hold what we have

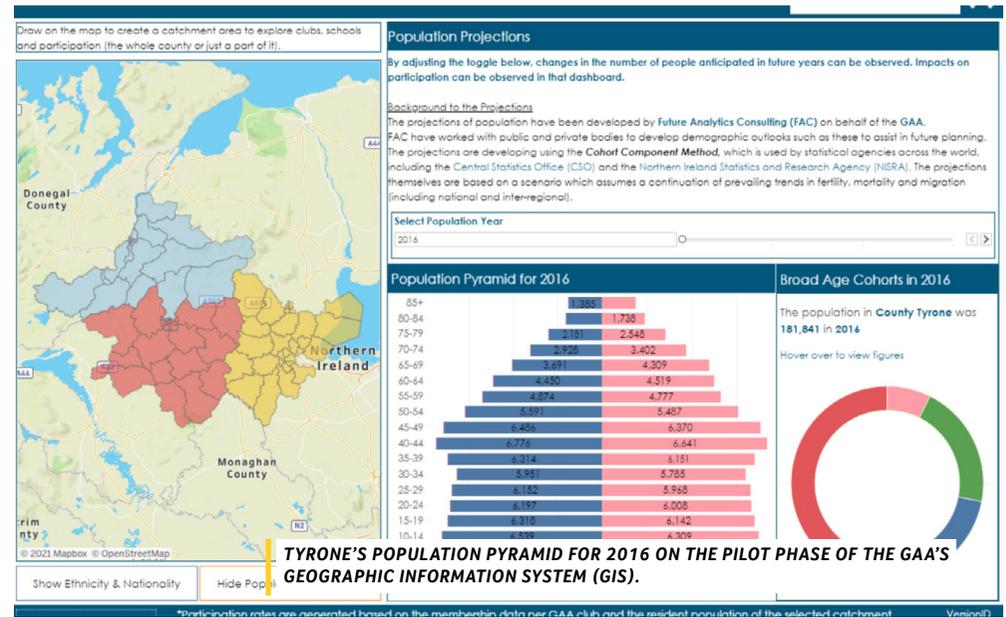
and that means introducing flexibility."

Valentia are a topical case-study and suggest there's a lot of merit in Cummins line of thinking.

They don't have enough players right now to field a senior team, but if they could provide an outlet for what senior players they do have through an amalgamation for the next few years, then further down the road they may be in a position to field a senior team of their own again.

That's what the data collated by the pilot phase of the GIS suggests at least, because Valentia have 45 registered players from U-10 to U-14 level who could provide the numbers required to field a senior team in the not too distant future.

What's for certain is that clubs and county boards in the coming years are going to have to be open-minded about such possibilities because the core issue is not



going away, there will always be a natural move towards urbanisation in this country.

“In fact, if anything, the rate of change is probably going to accelerate on two fronts,” says Cummins.

“One is what was happening already in terms of the natural move towards urbanisation.

“Another area that our group looked at over the duration of its term was planning

policy and who the GAA should interact with planning policy.

“We’re lucky we had former minister Noel Dempsey on our committee and Noel did some great work in putting that together.

“We sent out a lot of advice to clubs in terms of interacting with our county development plans. There is a big move within the county development plans because they now must be consistent with national policy.

“And the national policy is dictating that for sustainable settlements they must be clustered. The day of single one-off housing is at its end.

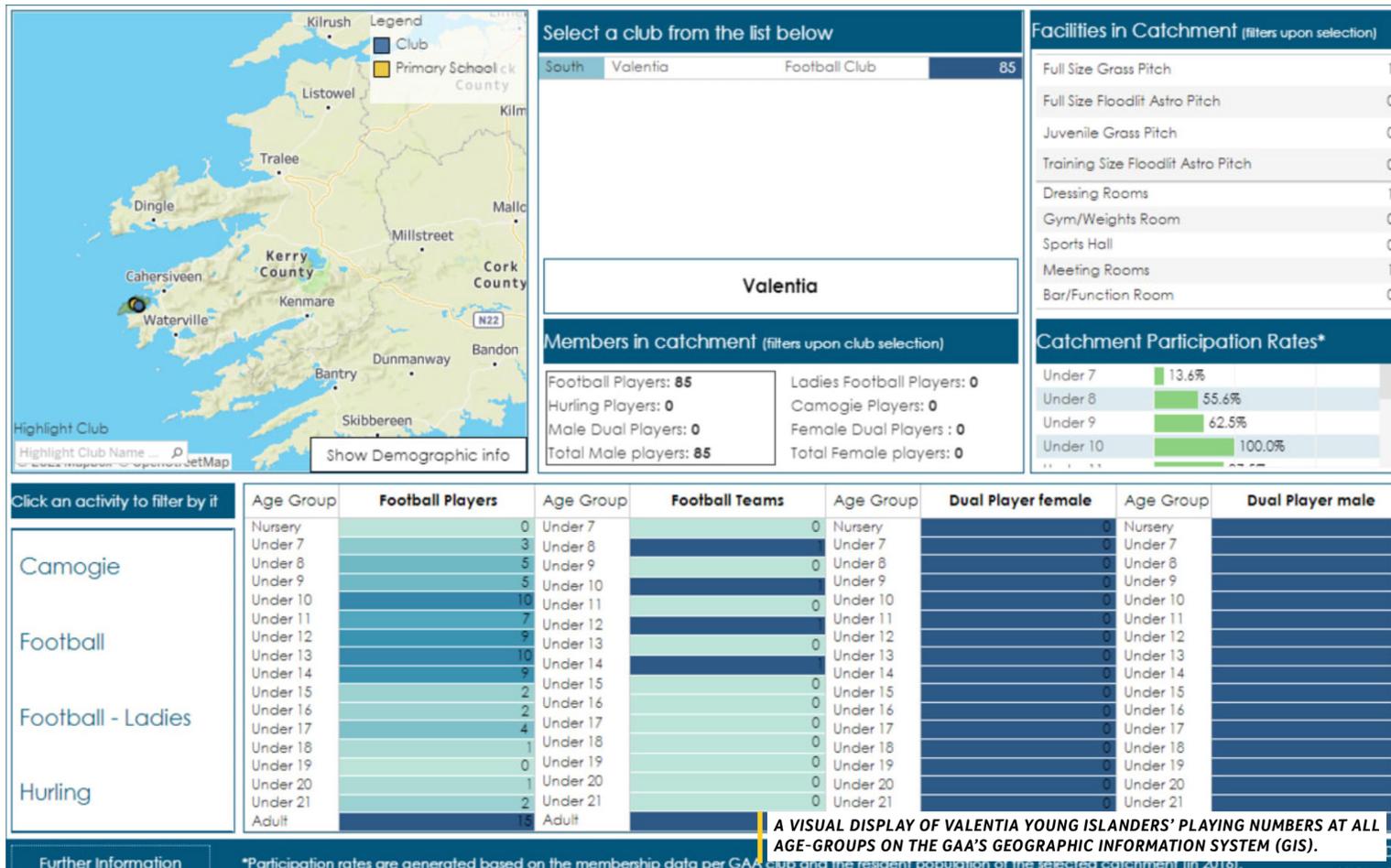
“What we’re saying is that there’s an opportunity here for the GAA that if counties and clubs engage correctly with the system, then we can push that development towards existing facilities.

“So, if there is going to be a cluster of housing in a rural area, then let it be

around the GAA pitch. That’s one aspect we’re looking at.”

Ireland’s transformation from a largely rural society to an urban one presents a huge challenge for the GAA.

But there is surely some encouragement to be drawn from the fact that the wit and the will exists within the Association to address it.



A VISUAL DISPLAY OF VALENTIA YOUNG ISLANDERS' PLAYING NUMBERS AT ALL AGE-GROUPS ON THE GAA'S GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS).

# GROUNDBREAKING 'BE READY TO PLAY' COACHING PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

**THE GAELIC GAMES FAMILY LAUNCHED 'BE READY TO PLAY', A COACHING AND SPORT SCIENCE PROGRAMME IN ASSOCIATION WITH UPMC, OFFICIAL HEALTHCARE PARTNER OF THE GAA AND GPA, THAT WILL BE DELIVERED VIA WEBINARS, WEBSITE PROGRAMMES, INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS AND LIVE ONLINE SESSIONS.**

The 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.

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 Kearny, 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.

This multi-disciplinary programme will be delivered by

- Fortnightly Athletic Development Programmes. (Instructional Video & Live Sessions).
- Monthly Coach education webinars (Gaelic Games Coaching Experts & Guests).
- Monthly Sport Science support webinars (Every Sports Science Discipline covered).

Des Ryan, Head of Sport Medicine and Athletic Development at Arsenal FC and Athletic Development Lead with the Gaelic Games Sports Science Working Group, is one of the main drivers behind what he believes will be a ground-breaking programme.

Ryan said: "We'll make it enjoyable, challenging, progressive and very user friendly. It will be an evidence informed plan of returning to training and returning to play that will help you avoid injury, maximise enjoyment and reach peak performance when required.

"This will include a top-class athletic development programme and I don't say that lightly. There is nothing being done



**Be Ready To Play**

In Partnership with **UPMC** LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

**Register for the programme From March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Programme Lead:**  
Gaelic Games Sports Science Workgroup

**Delivery Partner:**  
SETANTA College

**THE GAMBOIE** A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE  
An Official Sponsor of the GAA

**LGFA** PEIL na mBAN

**GAA** WHERE WE ALL BELONG

'Be Ready to Play' is a season-long Coaching and Sports Science Programme delivered via webinars, website programmes, instructional videos and live sessions.

A holistic programme supporting youth & adult players and coaches in their return to play, the aim is to increase enjoyment, performance, participation and reduce the risk of injury.

on the scale of this anywhere else in the world that is so multi-disciplined.

"Many topics will be covered including injury prevention, game-based skills development, psychology and wellbeing, skill acquisition and biomechanics, performance analysis, rehabilitation, nutrition and athletic development.

"I can categorically say that the club players in Ireland that takes part in our 'Be Ready to Play' programme will have the best management team in Gaelic Games available online.

"It would be great to have the majority

of club players on the island of Ireland registering and, at the very least, seeing what this programme has to offer because I guarantee you there'll be something for everyone in it."

Shane Flanagan, the GAA's Director of Coaching & Games Development, said: "Be Ready to Play has been developed to support and optimise the opportunity presented through this pandemic whereby all clubs will be preparing in unison - a heretofore unusual feature within the Gaelic Games landscape.

"The programme is exceptionally well-designed and is holistic in its content

DES RYAN, HEAD OF SPORT MEDICINE AND ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT, ARSENAL FC ACADEMY, SPEAKING AT THE 2020 GAA GAMES DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SKY SPORTS.

and delivery and above all tailored with the club player and coach in mind. The programme will be adaptive to mirror changes in public health guidelines. As a current senior coach with my club, I am very much looking forward to engaging in this programme and learning from the best practice advice and guidance - which are so important in terms of sustaining my own and our club players motivation. The programme has the potential to leave a legacy by providing collateral to support future player and coach development initiatives.

"I'd especially like to thank UPMC for their support on a project that aligns very much with their values and vision for player development and welfare. Huge credit must go to Sports Science Workgroup - especially Des Ryan - who has driven this project and the many staff around the country who have supported its development and will lead its implementation.

"In Setanta College and through Shayne Murphy and Annie McCarra we will bring a wealth of experience and expertise. Finally, I'm delighted this is another collaboration with LGFA and Camogie and presents an opportunity for all club teams to work together and engage in this programme."

Lyn Savage, National Development Manager with Ladies Gaelic Football, said: "We are delighted to be collaborating with the GAA and Camogie Association through the Gaelic Games Sports Science Group to support players and coaches, both of youth and adult teams, as they prepare for their return to play.

"It has been a difficult few months for everyone involved and it will be essential to ensure our members get back safely on the pitches renewing their enjoyment levels and reducing the risk of injuries."

"We urge all coaches and players to access this wealth of knowledge from the experts

in the weeks ahead and put into practice in your own counties and clubs."

Louise Conlon, Technical Development and Participation Manager with the Camogie Association said: "It is fantastic to see this important initiative come to fruition as we aim to ensure that when it is safe for our members to return to training pitches around the country, that they can do so as prepared as possible.

"The skills and information which members will gain through this initiative will help to engage members over the coming weeks, as we all wait eagerly to return to the games we love."

"We recommend and encourage that members of all ages and at all playing levels take part in this initiative so that they can hit the ground running when we return to action!"

David Beirne, Managing Director of UPMC

in Ireland and SVP of UPMC International, said: "UPMC are changing how healthcare is delivered in Ireland and we are excited to become the title partner of the 'Be Ready to Play' initiative in association with UPMC. This is an important programme that will be delivered to players and coaches in every corner of Ireland to help ensure they are best prepared for the much-anticipated return of our games. UPMC are proud to be the official healthcare partner of the GAA and GPA and as an organisation that is recognised globally as a leader in sports medicine and rehabilitation, we are delighted to be able support and help deliver this initiative."

The 'Be Ready to Play' programme will commence on 2nd March with a live broadcast to outline the programme available and the schedule of coaching and sports science webinars. This will be presented by Des Ryan and others after which registration to participate in the programme will open.

By John Harrington

## GAELIC GAMES CONCUSSION AWARENESS ELEARNING COURSE LAUNCHED

**AN UPDATED GAELIC GAMES CONCUSSION AWARENESS ELEARNING COURSE HAS BEEN LAUNCHED THAT WILL HELP PLAYERS AND COACHES OF GAELIC GAMES (GAA, CAMOGIE AND LGFA) RECOGNISE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION AND UNDERSTAND BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT.**

By completing the course both players and coaches will have a greater understanding of the symptoms of concussion, how to manage and cope with concussion, and eventually return to play in a safe way by following the Gradual Return to Play Protocol.

This initiative comes hot on the heels of the Standing Committee on Playing Rules, in conjunction with the GAA's Medical and Scientific Committee, bringing a motion to Congress that proposes a new temporary substitute rule at all levels of both codes along the lines of the blood sub that would allow teams to replace a player who has suffered a potential concussion.

Last year the GAA also launched a new Concussion Awareness Campaign which featured a series of videos designed to increase awareness of the symptoms and treatment of concussion.

"Concussion is an ever present item on the agenda for the GAA's Medical and Scientific Welfare Committee, it's never not close to the very top of the agenda," says Kevin Leahy, the GAA's Player Welfare Manager and Secretary of the Medical and Scientific Welfare Committee.



"The fact that we've gone out and produced two awareness videos on top of refreshing an awareness course that was already there in conjunction with the proposed rule change at Congress, I think that emphasises how seriously we are taking it.

"We just have to be careful because everything we do has to be implementable across all levels and all grades. Whatever we do is as applicable on a Sunday morning in a Junior League game as much as it is in Croke Park on All-Ireland Sunday.

"Concussion is the same as any other injury, if you leave it untreated it'll get worse, not better. But if you do go through the proper mechanisms you'll get back to full health and there's no reason why you can't get back to play if you take your time and do things properly.

One of the most challenging aspects of diagnosing and treating concussion is that no two concussions are identical.

They can present with a wide range of symptoms, and quite often those symptoms only become apparent in the days after an impact injury.

“What we’re hoping this course will highlight is that it may not be in the immediate aftermath of an impact where a player will feel concussed,” says Leahy.

“They could feel fine at the time, they could play the rest of the game, and it could be that evening, the next day, or in subsequent days where they start to get some of the symptoms.

“So, it’s important they realise that if they took an impact in a game a few days previously that they should be getting it checked out.

“It’s not a case where if you finish a game you’re automatically okay. It’s about recognising symptoms no matter when they occur.

“The course is designed for Gaelic Games in general. There can be subtle differences between concussions in females versus concussions in males, and there’s a specific section in the course that reflects that.”

The updated Gaelic Games Concussion Awareness eLearning Course can be accessed [HERE](#).



**DR. KEVIN MORAN, CONSULTANT SURGEON IN LETTERKENNY UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AND DONEGAL GAA TEAM DOCTOR, IN ATTENDANCE AT THE 2016 NATIONAL CONCUSSION SYMPOSIUM AT CROKE PARK IN DUBLIN.**

By John Harrington

## ARD STIÚRTHÓIR HOPES 2020 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS CAN BE CONCLUDED

**GAA ARD STIÚRTHÓIR, TOM RYAN, ADMITS IT'S A HUGE SOURCE OF REGRET THAT NOT ALL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPAIGNS WERE CONCLUDED IN 2020.**

Early last October the GAA's Management Committee endorsed a decision to suspend all GAA club games with immediate effect in the interest of public safety after post-match celebrations and a lack of social distancing at certain events posed a health risk.

It was a decision that weighed heavily on Ryan, who hopes all the club championships that weren't completed in 2020 will be concluded at the first available opportunity.

"We didn't fully deliver on all of our objectives," wrote Ryan in his 2020 Annual Report which was published today.

"We scheduled a return to mass participation at juvenile and club level first, and I like to think that went well. When I look back on the year those few weeks stand out as one of the real positives.

"So, it is a matter of real regret that we didn't manage to finish the championships in every county. I regret also that this was largely our own fault. Faced with the health risk and reputational damage from a number of high-profile post-match events we had no alternative but to suspend the games in the remaining counties.

"That day, and that decision weighed heavily on me. Our job is to promote games, not to stop them, but there was a greater imperative that we couldn't shy away from. I sincerely hope those championships can be concluded.



"I estimate we missed out on the playing of 11 senior finals which was a regrettable blight on an otherwise excellent programme of games. I'm thinking too of those competitions that did not proceed at all, or were halted mid-stream through no fault of their own. Second Level Schools, Club All-Irelands and so on. It was a summer of hard choices."

With the benefit of hindsight, Ryan admits that the scale of the challenge posed by

Covid-19 to the Association has proven to be much more significant than originally expected.

He is proud though of the way that GAA clubs up and down the country responded to that challenge by showing real leadership within their communities.

"When it first became apparent that a Covid threat was emerging we did not foresee the extent or duration of what was ahead."

"The initial shutdown of our activities in late March was in the sincere expectation of a difficult few months and no more."

"We expected to be able to weather a brief interruption."

"But what followed proved more difficult than we could have imagined. We tried our best to live up to our responsibilities to the Association and to society."



“The pressure on the Association was amplified by what was at stake – peoples’ health and the Association’s future wellbeing – and by the degree of scrutiny that was applied to us at every juncture. We did not always get everything right, and we did not fully deliver on every aspect, but I do think we comported ourselves reasonably well and lived up to our responsibilities.

“Perhaps the most heartening aspect of the GAA response to the crisis was manifest at local level. Whether through national initiatives like Community Call, or local county or club projects, and even individual acts of kindness, we can all be very proud of the work undertaken by

clubs to help vulnerable people in their neighbourhoods.

“You will recall too that dozens of GAA grounds all over the country were repurposed in order to house temporary Covid test centres – from clubhouses to county grounds, to Croke Park itself.

“I think that the most impressive aspect of all of this was the fact that this outpouring of goodwill and desire to help was unprompted and spontaneous.

“Indeed one of our early challenges was to try to build a structure around it to protect volunteers regarding insurance, vetting and so on. And the hardest part was just

keeping pace with the sheer volume of volunteers and initiative.”

Ryan admits 2021 will also be another difficult year for the Association because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but he is also optimistic that the lessons learned in the past year can be put to good use when strategising for the months ahead.

“It now seems certain that 2021 will also be overshadowed by Covid,” said Ryan.

“Indeed, it may, in many respects, prove even more difficult. Last December for example, after lengthy deliberation, we decided upon a modified fixture schedule for 2021.

“Two months later events have again overtaken us and we will have to think anew. Similarly, after a lot of positive momentum before Christmas, the prospect of spectators returning to matches suddenly seems very remote again.

“Consequently, our financial prospects for the year ahead are not good. So we could be forgiven for conceding that 2021 only means more of the same.

“But perhaps it can be better. We are a little better equipped to deal with what is ahead of us. Last year’s travails were thrust upon us suddenly.

“This year we can at least plan for what may be ahead. Last year taught us, as if we didn’t know already, that the GAA can adapt, it can show its true worth and it can overcome. Many of the challenges of prior years...fixture congestion, giving sufficient priority to clubs, the costs of preparing teams, challenges to our core values and so on...they still apply.

“One good outcome from 2020 can be a realisation that these things are less daunting than we might have thought. We were sorely tested this year and we kept going. And I hope that we are a better organisation for all that.

“We are certainly all the stronger for the huge voluntary effort that we saw throughout the GAA this year.

“Sincere thanks are due to everybody who played a part – on the field and off – in keeping the Association and our games to the forefront of Irish life. If we can harness the confidence and conviction and cooperation that was in evidence throughout the GAA last year I know there are better times ahead for us.”

Download the annual report [here](#)

By John Harrington

## MAKING SKILL ACQUISITION A GAELIC GAMES FUNDAMENTAL



**PHIL KEARNEY IS A LECTURER IN SKILL ACQUISITION, COACHING, AND PERFORMANCE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS SCIENCES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK AS WELL AS BEING CO-FOUNDER OF MOVEMENT AND SKILL ACQUISITION IRELAND.**

He's also a member of the newly formed Gaelic Games Sports Science Working Group where he's the lead for the Biomechanics and Skill Acquisition sub-group.

Passionate about the discipline of Skill Acquisition and how it can be best applied to Gaelic Games, he spoke to GAA.ie about the work the Sports Science Working Group hope

to carry out in this area.

GAA.ie: Phil, for the uninitiated, exactly what is Skill Acquisition?

Phil Kearney: I'll give the slightly longer definition. So, in any of the Gaelic Games that you look at, Gaelic football, hurling, camogie, handball, you're problem solving. In Gaelic football the central problem is how do I get the ball over the bar? Where and how do I move the ball to get into a position from which I can attempt to make a score?

And when we say a player is skilful, we mean that he or she solves that problem consistently and efficiently. The player adapts to the demands of the situation and

solves the movement problem. I've used a video of Peter Duggan's point for Clare from a couple of years ago multiple times where he managed to find a way through a host of Galway defenders and adapt and still get the shot away. I'll probably update that video this year following Richie Hogan's goal against Galway. You tune into the possibilities that the situation offers and you adapt, adapt, adapt. Skill Acquisition is the scientific study of how we develop adaptable problem solvers in a movement context.

We look at questions like how do we design practice sessions? How should coaches interact with players? What should an athlete be thinking about when they're practicing? All with a view towards accelerating their development into adaptive problem solvers who can deliver performance under pressure.

GAA.ie: I presume you would take exception to someone who watched Peter Duggan's point or Richie Hogan's goal telling you that's the sort of natural skill you just can't teach? Presumably you would believe it's possible to learn how to be skilful, it's not something you're born with?

PK: Whenever anybody says anything like that my hackles rise. Because, for me, we've got to think about the opportunities and be more imaginative. How would you go about developing that skill in a player, that ability to adapt in a player? What would you do if you had to break it back and think through what kind of sessions would I design, what kind of experiences, has Peter Duggan, for instance, had which have enabled the development of that?

I think you'll find that there are very good coaches out there who are engaging in some very creative, very effective practices, which are helping to develop more Peter Duggans and more Richie Hogans. I very much would say that there's a lot of guidance in the skill acquisition literature which will help a coach to understand how to both develop high performance in that instance, but also at the other end of the spectrum to develop competent movers. People who have the basic movement skills to feel competent engaging in games which might sustain their participation in sport. Because there are lessons from skill acquisition across the whole spectrum from participation through to high performance.

GAA.ie: I have seen how working on fundamental movement skills with very young players produces significant improvement in a short period of time. Presumably skill acquisition is very relevant to coaching underage players?

PK: Very true. We do have a big emphasis on



**DR PHIL KEARNEY IS LEAD OF THE BIOMECHANICS AND SKILL ACQUISITION SUB-GROUP OF THE GAELIC GAMES SPORTS SCIENCE WORKING GROUP.**



PAUL FENNEL, A MEMBER OF THE CASTLETOWN GEOGHEGAN GAA CLUB IN WESTMEATH, PUCS A SLIOTAR AGAINST A WALL OUTSIDE CROKE PARK STADIUM IN MAY, 2020.

what the movement fundamentals should be and how can we encourage coaches to develop these movement fundamentals most effectively with young people. But I would also stress that it is not just young people. It's important that it's right the way through an athlete's development. They should always be returning to and refining these movement fundamentals in the same way that a musician will never stop practicing scales. These movement fundamentals are really valuable for athletes at all levels to be practicing. But they're most important and they form a larger part of the experience for the younger children.

As you say, it's extraordinary the difference that it can make where you design games and activities that incorporate turning, catching, evading people, hopping, all these various different movements skills. And this is not just movement, as in movements that you perform, it's also fundamental game skills. So, the ability to track an opponent is a fundamental game skill. The idea about having patience. So, when you time your run, that's a fundamental game skill that appears in many different games, but can be taught to young children out of the formal game

context through some basic chasing type activities that have huge benefits to their overall development.

GAA.ie: Someone like DJ Carey would have often spoken about the importance of spending time every day striking a ball against a wall. Is practice and repetition crucial?

PK: Repetition is a really huge part of it. And, again, there are a number of nuances to this idea of repetition. The first one is that your role as a coach, particularly working with young people, is to inspire a love for the sport. Because if you've got somebody who's got this real love and passion for the sport you don't need to worry about repetitions and the amount of time they invest. Because every opportunity they get they will be engaging in some form of practice, they will be engaging in the skills for the pure enjoyment of engaging in extra practice. So that's a more important part.

Particularly when we look at the high performance level then, you mentioned DJ Carey and we talked earlier about Peter Duggan and Richie Hogan, at that level, yes,

of course, repetition has to be important. We want players who are engaging in lots of practice. But what's really important there is repetition, without repetition. That's a bit of a strange phrase, but what that means is we are learning to adapt to different situations. If skilful movers are those who can adapt to any situation then when you are engaged in your practice, when you're getting your repetitions in, you want to be always changing the nature of those repetitions. So you're always moving at different angles or moving at different speeds or responding to slightly different changes in context. Because if you want to be a really adaptable, skilful performer who can consistently deliver, the skill there is being able to tune in to your environment and to adapt. And so the repetition is really important, but they have to be repetitions with these subtle variations. Repetition without repetition.

GAA.ie: What plans does the Gaelic Games Sports Science Work Group have in the sphere of Skill Acquisition? What are you guys working on?

PK: At the moment we're working on trying to put together a position statement which will clarify exactly what skill acquisition is and what a skill acquisition specialist does. Because I think there are a number of misunderstandings out there. There is some really good practice, I will stress that definitely in terms of what we have observed. But there are also some misunderstandings. So, an important thing to start off with, is just raising the general awareness around Skill Acquisition. Some of those misunderstandings are things like skill acquisition relates to technique, but forgetting that the decision making aspects are also a really core part of skill acquisition.

It's not just fundamental movement skills like hopping and catching. It's also fundamental game skills like off the ball movements that are really important. And being able to create a little bit of space, that's a skill that can be practiced and

these game skills need to be understood as distinctive skills. And also things like the importance of fundamentals which I think is pretty well established, but the importance of fundamentals as a core underpinning part of athletes all the way up through their development. Not just restricted to children's fundamental skills or in children's initial years in the sport. So these are a couple of the areas where we want to put forward a position statement to start some discussions and to raise the level of awareness about the potential the science of skill acquisition has for enhancing practice.

And that will tie in very much with the GAA's initiatives around Coach Development. So what are the ways in which we can tie into support coach development, education workshops and so forth over the coming years? And we're also having a look very much around accreditation. So, again, if clubs or coaches are looking to work with someone in the area of skill acquisition, what should they be looking for in terms of a role profile? What should they be looking for in terms of accreditation when making the decisions as to who to work with?

We're also hoping to get a piece of research off the ground in terms of current practice, what are people currently doing in terms of skill acquisition, what's their baseline level of knowledge. Because I think if we are going to design some educational initiatives we need to have a better understanding of what the base is. We'll see how all that lands and we've got a big meeting coming in June to establish what the next steps will be after that.

GAA.ie: Paul Kinnerk, the Limerick Senior Hurling team coach, is a member of your Skill Acquisition sub-group on the Gaelic Games Sports Science Work Group. He is a big advocate of games-based training where you replicate scenarios in training that you're likely to encounter in a match such as the creation and exploitation of space. That sounds like the skill acquisition of decision

making you're talking about, and has certainly been an approach that has been successful for the Limerick hurlers.

PK: Certainly they are a standard bearer for that approach. In fairness, I think the GAA has really promoted game centred approaches for the last few years now.

I would say that they are one of the more advanced sporting organisations in the world in terms of saying, look, there's an awful lot of real positives that we can take from this game centered approach if you understand it correctly and can implement it correctly.

I think Paul's work is bridging the science and the practice really nicely and is a case study there as to what can be achieved. Paul is implementing a game centred approach at a high performance level and we also have other members in the group like Ed Coughlan from Munster Technological University and Wesley O'Brien from UCC who have experience in designing similar activities, but for children and their development of the fundamentals.

So this idea of game centred, activity centred approaches, is a really nice example of how we can make some changes to how coaches are organizing and delivering their sessions that would have a really nice impact on enjoyment in sessions, in the learning from sessions, in the greater competence of players in the sport, in the retention of players in the sport, and in the development of high performance as well.

GAA.ie: Some people might hear the term skill acquisition and think incorporating these methods would just be the icing on the cake of what they do. But what you're saying is that skill acquisition should be a fundamental element of sports coaching that can be incorporated into almost everything you do? Is that fair enough to say?

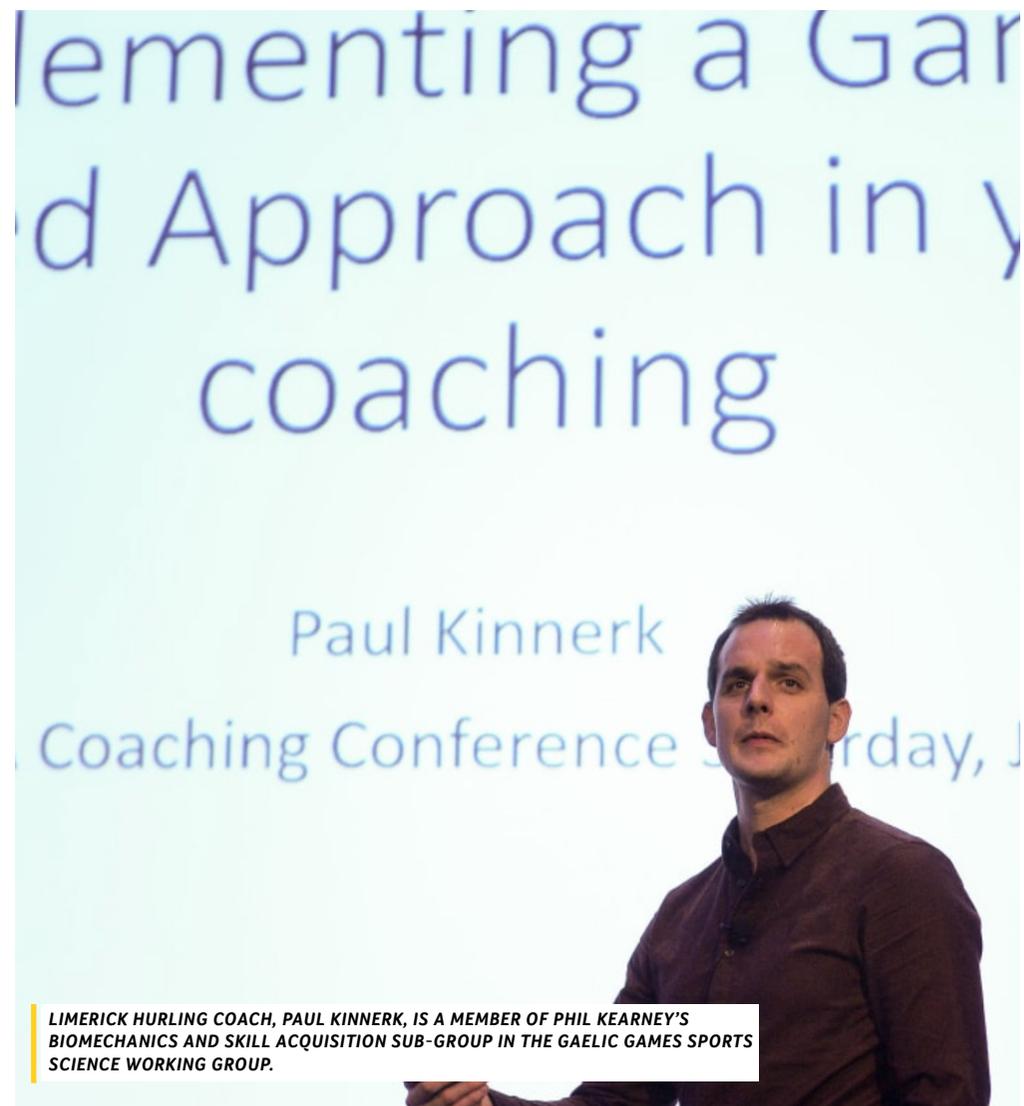
PK: It is, absolutely. Coaches will be the people who will be delivering or translating the skill acquisition knowledge into their practice directly. So we're very much looking to work with and through coaches at the club level in particular, that's our primary focus. But, skill acquisition is not just delivered by coaches. When you have physios and those engaged in rehabilitation and they're instructing athletes and designing activities for athletes, there's an element of skill acquisition that comes in there as well.

When you've got athletic development coaches who are looking to physically prepare players to engage in games, again, there's an element of skill acquisition that can come in to inform their practice. And, likewise, with performance analysis and with psychology.

So I think one of the really exciting things about this broader Sports Science Working Group is the understanding of how interconnected all of the different sports science disciplines are. But certainly we would see skill acquisition as something that isn't equipment heavy but it is something that any coach can understand and implement to make a difference to the experience of the players.

GAA.ie: Are you excited about not just how the discipline of Skill Acquisition is evolving, but what this Sports Science Working Group can achieve in terms of demystifying it and enabling it to become a core part of the GAA coaching curriculum?

PK: Absolutely. I think it's very exciting, it's really pleasing that GAA has recognized Skill Acquisition and Biomechanics as one of the core areas, it's a really great opportunity for us. But what I've enjoyed most has been the conversations I've had within the Working Group. We have coaches in our Skill Acquisition sub-group like Paul Kinnerk, Donie Buckley, and Molly



Dunne who have been contributing from a coach's perspective in terms of what we're hoping to put together. But also before I set this up I reached out to coaches across numerous counties and numerous codes

for conversations. And I'm really excited by what's happening and I'm really excited by the potential of could be developed as a consequence of some of the stimulus this working group might provide.

## GAA LAUNCH MOVEMENT BREAK RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN



A partnership between



**THE GAA ARE DELIGHTED TO LAUNCH A NEW SERIES OF MOVEMENT BREAK RESOURCES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MOVING WELL-BEING WELL (MWBW) INITIATIVE. AIMED AT FOUR TO 8-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN, THESE EVIDENCED-BASED AND DEVELOPMENTALLY SOUND VIDEOS AIM TO ENHANCE THEIR FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS (FMS).**

To help meet the challenges of home-schooling and no club activity, this set of video learning resources provide assistance to both primary teachers and parents to contribute to children's physical activity needs.

FMS are the 'building block' of more advanced sport-specific skills and are key to

children being active later in life. Each video series concentrates on a specific skill and then progresses to a slightly more difficult version of the same skill.

The Moving Well-Being Well project is a partnership between the GAA, the DCU's School of Health and Human Performance, and the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics and Dublin GAA. The team are also delighted to collaborate with the PDST PE department.

The MBWB resources are designed as a tool to support the outstanding services continuing to be provided remotely by GAA Coaching and Games Development personnel throughout the island of Ireland. Face-to-face coaching has been provided

across a number of schools in each county since Sept. With schools closing at the beginning of the year, personnel in many counties have taken innovative steps to continue providing these services remotely.

Ulster GAA's DENI Curriculum schools' coaches have delivered 27 physical activity challenges and over 60 live lessons to schools and homes of pupils since the beginning of January. Over 1,550 children have logged into these lessons. Schools Project Coordinator Michael Glover said, "the school's staff have fully come on board, even though the schools have been closed. Principals and teachers are acutely aware of the need for children to be physically active and our staff have responded to deliver lessons tailored for children and parents at home. From the roll out of virtual lessons in

April 2020, there have been around 200,000 views which shows the colossal general engagement."

Similarly, Carlow GAA GDAs have been running live coaching sessions for primary schools across the county. Carlow GAA Games Development Manager, Sean Gannon, noted that "the sessions are being run in conjunction with the teachers across 23 schools. This week alone we ran 30 live classes and provided coaching to 948 different households Teachers are present for all sessions to moderate. If that even goes a small way towards helping either the children or parents cope a bit better, it will have been a very worthwhile exercise."

The GDAs of Rebel Óg Coaching in Cork have been posting Gaelic games coaching and



**AIMED AT FOUR TO 8-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN, THE MOVEMENT BREAK RESOURCES ARE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THEIR FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS.**



FMS videos on the YouTube channel weekly since the start of January. Cork GAA Games Development Manager, Kevin O’Callaghan said, “this initiative is being rolled out in collaboration with Sciath na Scol, who do an excellent job of emailing the videos to all the schools in their network every week. Their support and that of all the primary teachers and parents has been outstanding, with over 30,000 video views to date.”

The MWBW Movement Break resources are the latest addition to a bank of children’s learning and physical activity resources that the GAA has produced in response to

Covid-19 restrictions in collaboration with Cumann na mBunscol, the GPA, the LGFA and the Camogie Association. The #GAAPrimary Challenges are designed to help Primary Teachers and parents to work on the cross-curricular lesson plans with children. Gaelic game-themed lessons are across all curriculum subjects and are for children at every class level. These and other resources are available [learning.gaa.ie/primary-school](https://learning.gaa.ie/primary-school).

Speaking about the launch, the GAA’s Director of Coaching and Games Development, Shane Flanagan noted:

“The achievement of this latest milestone for the Moving Well Being Well project teams is timely for the GAA as we will soon be launching our new Player Pathway Framework. The pathway is based on the FTEM Framework and its purpose is to support player development by providing the right support, at the right time for the player.

“In partnering with DCU and others, we now have an outstanding, evidenced-based research set of resources to ensure the child in the participation phase of our pathway experiences an environment that focuses on physical literacy and helping children to

learn basic movements skills, while having fun. Acquiring these skills through the delivery of our club and school programmes will help these young participants remain involved in sport and physical activity for life. Key to this will be the coach/teacher and we will be using the research to inform our coach education framework.”

The GAA MWBW Movement Break Resources are available here - <https://learning.gaa.ie/movingwellbeingwell>

# GAA & IRISH LIFE'S MYLIFE APP 'HEALTHY CLUB STEPS CHALLENGE' KEEPS COUNTRY MOVING DURING LOCKDOWN

**ALMOST 25,000 WALKERS REPRESENTING OVER 600 CLUBS HAVE AMASSED AN INCREDIBLE TALLY OF 2.3 MILLION KILOMETRES ALREADY AS WE APPROACH THE HALF-WAY MARK OF THE CHALLENGE.**

In the void left by the cessation of training and matches the GAA Healthy Club Steps Challenge, delivered in partnership with Irish Life's MyLife App, has provided the GAA community with a healthy competitive outlet.

An incredible 25,000 walkers representing 616 GAA clubs have been traversing every inch of their 5km radius in an attempt to win for their club one of the €2,500, €1,500, and €1,000 O'Neill's gift vouchers up for grabs in each province with thanks to Irish Life. Any club that registers on the App and whose team records at least 4,000km – the equivalent of walking around the coast of Ireland – is in with a chance to win. The competition will run until March 3rd. In June 2020 over 400 clubs registered for the first Healthy Club Steps Challenge on the MyLife App, which saw 12,000 participants record 2.2 billion steps over four weeks during the first lockdown.

**GAA President John Horan said:** "The response to the 'Healthy Club Every Step Counts Challenge' has been incredible. We are delighted that Irish Life, as CSR partners of the Healthy Club Project, is once again working with our Community & Health department to keep our members healthy and connected while they are forced to stay apart. It's been a great tonic during difficult times."

**Head of Wellness, Irish Life Stacey Machesney said:** "At a time where every day schedules are disrupting workout routines,

we are delighted to support GAA clubs and communities around the country again through the MyLife app 'Every Step Counts' challenge. This time we decided to do something a little different and challenge each club to travel the circumference of Ireland. The response has been amazing during these challenging times with over 25,000 participants. Once again it is great to see all communities and clubs coming together responsibly to participate. Exercise is essential for wellbeing during these times as it can, reduce stress, improve immune function, aid relaxation and sleep quality and prevent weight gain."

The 'Every Step Counts Challenge' has taken on additional importance in light of the forced postponement of Ireland Lights Up (delivered in partnership with RTE's Operation Transformation and Get Ireland Walking) due to the escalation of community transmission rates of Covid-19. The GAA is still hoping to activate Ireland Lights Up as soon as public health restrictions allow and will keep the 600 clubs that have already registered updated on any changes.

Seamus O'Cathasaigh, chairperson of St. John's GAA club in Sligo, featured on Operation Transformation on RTE 1 on Wednesday, January 27th. Seamus revealed the transformative impact his club's involvement in the Healthy Club Project and initiatives such as the 'Steps Challenges' has had on his health and lifestyle.

A total of 640 delegates registered to participate in the GAA Healthy Club Conference on Saturday, January 23rd reflecting the growing interest amongst GAA clubs in driving a health agenda. The Healthy Club Project currently engages 300 clubs and expressions of interest will open



for new clubs in November 2021. It is delivered in partnership with Irish Life, Healthy Ireland, the HSE, the National Office for Suicide Prevention, and the Tomar Trust. For more information see: [www.gaa.ie/community](http://www.gaa.ie/community)

The 'Every Step Counts Challenge' has commenced however clubs and individuals can join at any stage.

How do club members join the challenge?

1. Download the MyLife app from the App store or Google Play store
  - Apple App Store - <https://apps.apple.com/ie/app/mylife-by-irish-life/id1459620652>
  - Google Playstore - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.irishlife.mylife>
2. Register your details
3. Tap on the social tab on the MyLife app
4. Select challenges
5. Select the challenge for your province



Tap on join & select your club!

For MyLife support and help:  
Email

[support@mylife.irishlife.ie](mailto:support@mylife.irishlife.ie)

# GRADAIM AN UACHTARÁIN GAA PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

**THE GAA IS PLEASED TO CONFIRM THE RECIPIENTS FOR GRADAIM AN UACHTARÁIN 2021. THESE PRESTIGIOUS ANNUAL AWARDS, ORGANISED WITH THE SUPPORT OF AIB AND BROADCAST BY TG4, AFFORDS UACHTARÁN CUMANN LÚTHCHLEAS GAEL, JOHN HORAN, WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT AND LONG SERVICE ACROSS THE CLUB AND COUNTY NETWORK.**

The 11 awards are a cross-section of people who have shared the common theme of making an inspirational impact on their code and also their club and community.

Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Seán Ó hOráin said: "The GAA stands on the shoulders of the people we are fortunate to be able to call our own. Ultimately, the strength of the Association is down to the resilience, dedication and inspiration of the volunteers who make it happen, week after week, year after year.

"These awards give us an opportunity to single out a group who are not motivated by recognition, but who have made an invaluable contribution to our Association and are worthy of this acknowledgement and are great ambassadors for the tens of thousands like them all across the GAA.

"I would like to acknowledge AIB for their ongoing support of these awards and of their wider commitment to Gaelic games.

"Míle buíochas also to TG4 for their assistance in helping us to bring these awards to the widest audience possible and for the work they do each year in showcasing Gaelic games."



## **Buaiteoirí Gradaim an Uachtaráin 2021**

### **LEINSTER RECIPIENT – Denis Carr, St. Oliver Plunketts/Eoghan Ruadh GAA Club – Dublin**

Denis Carr has made an extraordinary life-long contribution to the GAA in Dublin at club and county level. A member of St. Oliver Plunkett Eoghan Ruadh since the early '60's, Denis has managed many teams at underage and adult level in the club. At committee level he has held several key roles and responsibilities, including Chairman and Treasurer. In the mid-80's when the club launched an ambitious plan to develop a clubhouse and dressing rooms, Denis, as club treasurer, played an integral part in the success of the project. His passion and enthusiasm for the

promotion of Gaelic games and culture in his local community has been infectious. He has been a club delegate to the Dublin County Committee for an incredible 48 years and has served as an Officer of various subsidiary Boards during that period, including Hurling Board Chairman.

### **ULSTER RECIPIENT – Fr. Seán Ó Gallchóir, Cloughaneely GAA Club**

Fr. Seán Ó Gallchóir is synonymous with every facet of the GAA in Donegal through coaching, refereeing, Scór competitions and administration. He began teaching in Holy Cross College in Falcarragh in 1971 later in Pobalscoil Chloich Cheann Fhaola when a new School was built, the same year he was ordained a Priest. He immediately began to coach and manage



FR. SEÁN Ó GALLCHÓIR, CLOUGHANEELY

Gaelic Football teams within the School who enjoyed unrivalled success in Ulster from 1974 -1986. In 1982 he won the All-Ireland Scór title for Aithriseoireacht representing CLG Chloich Cheann Fhaola (Cloughaneely). His bother Noel had won the National title in 1981 representing CLG Gaoth Dobhair. Fr. Seán wrote many plays and dramas which were used by competing Teams in Scór competitions.

He is renowned for his most celebrated book, the Book of Donegal GAA Facts which has just seen its 7th volume published in 2020. This book is an absolute must have book for any Donegal GAA aficionado as it references every competition winner at every grade in Donegal since that respective competition began. He has had Various other books published on subjects such as history and the Irish Language but another book of note which he has had published relating to GAA is: "The Story of the Donegal Senior Football Championship 1919 -2001" (2002).

#### MUNSTER RECIPIENT – John Clifford, Laune Rangers GAA Club

John Clifford is a lifelong member of Laune

Rangers Club. He has lived all his life in Dromin, which is on the border of the parish, bounding near neighbours, Milltown/ Castlemaine. While he may have lived on the periphery of the parish, both he and his family have been at the heart of the Laune Rangers Club. His family members have all been involved in the club's activities. He played football at all levels of the club and has the distinction of toggging out for the senior team in four decades! However, it is his involvement with the club off the field of play that stands out. He took part in two major fundraising trips in the past, one to America in 1972 and the other to London in the 90's. He has been Chairperson for eight years in the late 90's and 2000's. He was also delegate to both the County Board and the Mid Kerry Board in the past.

You will see John every Sunday morning at the football field overseeing the activities of the juveniles and looking out for new talent.



JOHN CLIFFORD, LAUNE RANGERS

His enthusiasm knows no bounds. He can be seen walking the grounds on any given day checking the state of the field. He lends a

hand with his pike to fork the field or to help with the lining of the field. He puts out chairs for meetings. He helps make the tea at half time during matches.

#### CONNACHT RECIPIENT – Peter Joe Fitzmaurice, Kilmore GAA Club – Roscommon

Peter Joe was born in September 1930 and has given outstanding service to the Association. Kilmore GAA club was



PETER JOE FITZMAURICE, KILMORE GAA

reformed in 1972 and Peter Joe became vice-chairperson in its inaugural year and has been involved in the club ever since. A selector on junior, intermediate and senior championship winning teams, he was a crucial part of the club drive back in 1979 when Kilmore acquired new ground and developed the current pitch and facilities which were opened in 1982.

More than 30 years ago Peter Joe began organising an annual card game for the club, the card game continues every December and is a crucial fundraiser for the club and Peter Joe organises the card game every

year since it began. He has also given over 20 years of service to Roscommon GAA as a loyal gate collector on gates for club & County games. He is a volunteer who has been inspired by giving back, helping and nurturing and sustaining development and has left his mark on the club and on the membership who have benefitted from his decades of unbroken service.

#### CAMOGIE RECIPIENT – Linda Kenny, Burren Rangers Hurling & Camogie Club – Carlow

In 2009 Linda became fixtures secretary of Carlow Camogie and since then has been fundamental to the rebuilding of Carlow Camogie. Linda has served as secretary for five years and is the current Chairperson. Carlow Camogie has been a rising star in the game, moving up the ranks from Junior B to Intermediate All-Ireland Championship grade, and winning titles at both adult and underage grades.

In 2017 Linda was appointed by Leinster GAA as Camogie Representative to the Féile Organising Committee and served as PRO. Throughout 2017 Linda and the organising



LINDA KENNY, BURREN RANGERS

committee worked tirelessly to ensure what was one of the most successful Féile na Gael's on record, with the largest number of hurling and camogie teams participating ever.

Her kindness and professionalism are evident in all tasks she undertakes. Linda's true home though can be found in the pitches of Carlow such as the Fighting Cocks GAA, Fenagh, Tinryland GAA and Netwatch Cullen Park where, never seeking the limelight, she personifies the role of the Volunteer with selfless determination to promote the games.

#### **HANDBALL RECIPIENTS – Michael & Ann Naughton, St. Coman's GAA Club – Roscommon**

Michael and Ann Naughton have served their club, county and province in a coaching and administrative capacity since 1980.



MICHAEL & ANN NAUGHTON, ST. COMAN'S GAA

Michael and Ann coached both boys and girls in St Coman's, Roscommon, over this period and were particularly influential in promoting and developing girls and Ladies handball at the club.

An incredible haul of honours followed and titles in Féile na Gael, Community Games,

Tailteann Games, All-Ireland 40x20 & 60x30, Girls Team of 10, World Championships, USHA Nationals, 40x20 and 1-wall Nationals were brought back to the club and county during their time.

Their protégés went on to win various Intervarsities and Collegiate events too. Ann served as Team manager to official Irish teams at various World Championships. Michael developed a strong link with local media in Roscommon, providing regular weekly columns in the local print media for over 30 years, in his capacity as club and county PRO.

Michael won a number of Masters titles in both 40x20 and 60x30 and had a long playing career. He continues his promotional work for handball through the Roscommon GAA History Committee and is still coaching at the St Coman's Handball Club.

Both have been lifelong devotees to Handball and have given a lifetime of invaluable service to the game and have made a lasting impact that is most worthy of recognition.

#### **LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL AWARD – Catherine Murphy, Mungret St. Pauls GAA Club – Limerick**

Catherine has been a volunteer and active member of the club since its foundation 27 years ago, spending many years in executive roles or in the background on committees



CATHERINE MURPHY, MUNGRET ST. PAUL'S GAA

as well as being an active player at club and county level.

Since retiring from county level she is now regularly seen as linesperson at National games or refereeing at local level to add to her workload. Catherine does everything to keep the club running smoothly however and her ability to get everything done is invisible to most, except those in the club fortunate enough to work closely with her. Catherine is available on the phone, email or if you even drop up to her house on a 24/7 basis. The most significant impact of Catherine's involvement is best seen at the under-age academy. From its inception, Catherine has been an omni-presence in the academy. Over the years she has encouraged parents to get involved in the club at some level, no matter how small. The majority of the current coaches 'graduated' through this academy route. Some of the U6 and U8 teams Catherine trained went on to represent the county at various Féiles over the years.

Catherine's dedication to Ladies football is second to none and if she is not in the club, you will most likely find her at a county board meeting, refereeing a game somewhere in the county, umpiring at matches or running the line at an inter-county game. These go unnoticed by many, but these other volunteering activities have a major positive impact. With Catherine, it is not all about the club, it is about the sport of Ladies football, it is about the organisation and its values. And above all else, it is about developing players as people. Ladies football is her passion, but enabling players and people to be the best that they can be is her mission. She is, undoubtedly, an ambassador for all things ladies football in the club and in the county.

#### **EDUCATION AWARD – Michael McMahon (AIT and Clare/Galway)**

Mike has been involved in AIT GAA since joining the staff as a lecturer in Civil Engineering in the early 90s. He has been a driving force in the hurling club ever since, in good times and bad.

Mike was involved with CA for a long number of years, serving in a number of roles most notably as Rúnaí. Mike's dedication to CA was unwavering and he put in countless hours, above and beyond what most would



MICHAEL MCMAHON (AIT AND CLARE/GALWAY)

deem necessary.

He has been a driver of competition for the 'weaker' colleges, notably the Corn Pádraig MacDiarmada. Mike no longer serves on CA having finished up at the 2019 AGM but left a great legacy through his devotion to the role and to Gaelic games in this sector.

A native of Kilfenora in the Burren, Mike is heavily involved in Clarinbridge GAA Club and Galway GAA and a great role model for his selflessness and commitment.

#### **INTERNATIONAL AWARD – Tony Bass, Maastricht Gaels, The Netherlands**

Maastricht-based and member of the Cuala GAA Club in Dalkey, Tony Bass has been involved within the European Board from soon after its inception under the guidance of the late Joe McDonagh and during his GAA Presidency in 1999.

He has carried out phenomenal development work in all GAA codes in this time, having

acted in numerous positions within the European Board, most notably as: Chair, Secretary, Ard Chomhairle delegate, and has attended the annual GAA Congress to make representations on behalf of Europe GAA. He has been involved in the continued expansion of competition within Europe and in organising many teams from there to travel to the GAA World Games - where in an invaluable volunteer capacity - he has fulfilled many functions: as referee, mentor, manager, liaison officer and advocate for the promotion and development on a world-wide basis.

Tony was also involved in establishing his home club in Europe, Maastricht GAA, and the strategic nature of his input is reflected in the fact that the Club - in conjunction with the municipal authorities - secured a 15-aside floodlight 4G pitch which has hosted the European Finals on many occasions.

Over the past two decades he has carried out enormous work in bringing the games in mainland Europe to an incredible level. In 1999 the Board had eight affiliated Clubs and this has now grown to over 90 Clubs - ranging from Rennes to Russia. This spans 22 Countries and Tony has been a pivotal factor in all of this and the fact that over 50% of the membership is not of Irish extraction shows the popularity of the Games.

**GAEILGE AWARD - Fergus Mac Aoidh, CLG Naomh Adhamhnáin - Dún na nGall**  
Rugadh agus tógadh Fergus Mac Aoidh i nGaeltacht Loch an Iúir i gcontae Dhún na nGall agus ó bhí sé sa chliabhán bhí Gaeilge, ceol, seanchas agus amhráin le cloisteáil timpeall air. Bhíodh daoine ag teacht chuig a theach le haghaidh oícheanta airneáin ina mbíodh seanchas agus amhráin an-choitianta, nuair a bhí sé óg.

Bhog sé go Leitir Ceanainn ag deireadh na nóchaidí tar éis dó seal a chaitheamh i gCill Dara agus ó shin i leith tá sé sáite ina chlub áitiúil, CLG Naomh Adhamhnáin, agus an

t-uafás déanta aige thar na blianta chun an Ghaeilge agus Scór a chur chun cinn sa chlub - mar bhall agus mar Oifigeach Gaeilge. Bronnadh bonn cré-umha de chuid Fhondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Dhonncha ar an gclub sa bhliain 2019 mar aitheantas ar iarrachtaí Fhearguis agus an club trí chéile an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn.

Ní hamháin go raibh Fergus bainteach lena chlub thar na blianta ach chaith sé tréimhsí éagsúla mar Oifigeach Gaeilge agus Cultúrtha ar a chontae dúchais, Dún na nGall, i measc rólanna eile, chomh maith. Is minic é le cloisteáil, freisin, ag spalpadh Gaeilge mar 'fhear tí' ag cluichí baile Dhún na nGall i mBealach Féich agus i Leitir Ceanainn. Ba mhínic a d'fheicfí ailt Ghaeilge dá chuid i bhfoilseacháin oifigiúla de chuid Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, freisin. Bhí Feargus ar Choiste Gaeilge agus Cultúrtha Chúige Uladh, freisin, áit a raibh an Ghaeilge lárnach i ngach a rinne sé ann agus is ball reatha é de chuid Chomhairle Uladh.

Tá sé ina Chathaoirleach ar Choiste Scoil Samhraidh Shéamuis de Faoite agus spreag sé na mílte ball de chuid Chumann Lúthchleas Gael le freastal ar an gcúrsa cáiliúil Gaeilge sna Dúnaibh i nGaeltacht Thír Chonaill thar na blianta.



FERGUS MAC AOIDH, CLG NAOMH ADHAMHNÁIN

Bhailigh sé airgead don Chumann gach bliain trí pháirt a ghlacadh i mBailiúchán Náisiúnta Chonradh na Gaeilge agus chuir sé scéim scoláireachtaí ar fáil gach bliain le deis a thabhairt do bhaill óga CLG Dhún na nGall freastal ar choláistí Gaeilge sa samhradh. Chomh maith leis sin, tháinig forbairt ar 'Choirnéal na Gaeilge' ag cluichí baile Dhún na nGall le linn thréimhse Fhearguis mar Oifigeach Cultúrtha agus Gaeilge. Tá 'tráth na gceist boird' á eagrú go bliantúil ó 2007 i leith i nDún na nGall agus baint mhór ag Fergus leis ó shin.

Tháinig fás agus forbairt ar Scór i nDún na nGall le linn d'Fheargus a bheith mar Oifigeach Gaeilge agus Cultúrtha. Creideann sé go docht daingean i Scór agus b'iomáí comórtas ar ghlac sé féin páirt ann thar na blianta. Tá an cháil amuigh ar Fheargus de thairbhe a chuid amhrán agus a chuid aithriseoireachta. Dar ndóigh, tá cúpla dlúthcheirnín eisithe aige.

Tá a shaol caite ag Feargus ag cur chin cinn na Gaeilge agus an chultúir Ghaelaigh i nDún na nGall agus is aitheantas é an gradam seo, ach go háirithe, ar an obair mhór atá déanta i gCumann Lúthchleas Gael.

#### THE DERMOT EARLEY FAMILY AWARD - The Dempsey Family, St. Joseph's GAA Club, Milltown, Co Laois.

Jack Dempsey, from Laois, and Annie Spain from Offaly were married on 3rd of July 1957. There was a strong GAA gene from the start.

Annie came from a large family of 13 - seven girls and six boys. Five of her brothers went on to represent the local club Drumcullen over many years and represented Offaly at senior level, with Matt refereeing the All-Ireland senior finals of 1958 and 1972. Mickie Spain, another of the clan, has a long career in playing and coaching being a selector on Offaly All-Ireland hurling winning teams of 1981 and 1985, and was a recipient of the President's award for his contribution to the GAA in 2019.

Jack Dempsey comes from a family of eight children, five boys and three girls. Four of the boys, (one son named Danny died at a young age) would go on to represent local teams in the St Joseph's Parish for many years winning a number of county titles at various levels. Their sister Bessie was an accomplished Camogie player whose daughter Elizabeth Condron represented Clare and Munster for many years.

Jack's brother James was one of the founding members of the present St Joseph's club in 1954 and later served as Chairman. All four brothers, Paul and Mikie being the other two, were active club members throughout their lives. Growing up in a three-bedroom thatched cottage, in which a bachelor uncle also lived, and with no running water would ensure that no-one was going to ever feel a sense of entitlement. Betty is the most senior of the Dempsey family, her three daughters play with a local club, and two of them Anna and Jane have represented Laois at Senior level. When Betty's husband Mick was club manager she became the jersey wash lady - a job she learnt from her mother Annie a generation earlier. Michael represented St Josephs and Laois throughout the 70's 80's and 90' winning seven Club titles and a National League in 1986 with Laois. As a Coach/ Manager he has guided St Joseph's to a county title in 2000 in a year where he also managed O'Hanrahan's of Carlow to a Leinster club title. Michael managed Laois U-21's to Leinster success in 1984 and went on to manage the Laois Senior team in 1997 and 1998. He was trainer/ selector under Martin Fogarty when Kilkenny collected successive All Ireland U-21 Hurling titles in 2003 and 2004 before joining the senior management with Brian Cody. During his long tenure with the Kilkenny senior hurlers they captured, eight senior All-Irelands, 12 Leinster Championships, and seven Allianz Leagues. He has recently served as Chairman of the National Academy Committee whose report is now reflected in GAA policy on Academy and player pathway. Michael is

currently IT Carlow's GAA programme director and has returned to his native St Joseph's as senior football manager for the coming season.

Anne Dempsey is one of those people whose time, dedication and energy make the GAA such a vibrant and dynamic organisation. Her efforts ensure our youth find enjoyment and a sense of community by immersing themselves in the Club. All young players' efforts are valued because of her infectious enthusiasm and warm heartedness. She is an outstanding volunteer who lives and breathes St. Joseph's GAA Club. No job is too onerous or troublesome for Anne. She has mentored underage teams, fundraised, served on numerous committees, organised refreshments and acted as club treasurer and secretary for many years. Her driven approach to fundraising, particularly Strictly Come Dancing and Lip Sync in recent years, has succeeded in eliminating a substantial club debt. A quotation from Seamus Heaney: "Even if hopes you started out with are dashed, hope has to be maintained." Stellar Anne maintains hope in St. Joseph's GAA Club.

Seán has also represented both club and county over many years and holds four Club titles. Seán managed Laois minor footballers to All Ireland success in 2003 and Leinster success in 2004 before managing the U-21's to Leinster wins in 2006 and 2007. He has managed at all levels from U-14 to senior in 2009 and 2010, and also managed the Ladies senior team in 1999 and 2000. Seán served as selector under Val Andrews when Leinster won Interprovincial competitions in 2005 and 2006, also serving with Jack Sheedy when Longford were promoted from Division 4 in 2015. He served as Football

Officer for Laois GAA between 1997 and 2007, as Chairman of Leinster Council's Football committee 2009-2014 and currently acts as Coaching officer for his club. After managing Ferbane to a County title in 2019 he is currently managing Ballinteer St. Johns in Dublin. Martin is a holder of six Laois championships, a Leinster U-21 championship winners' medal in 1982, was full back on the 1986 National League winning team and was a stalwart for Club and County for many years. Known as "Miley" to many as he has remained on the family farm. He has served as selector with a number of club senior managers, managed a number of club underage teams as well as the club junior team. He volunteers a lot of time to club infrastructural work and is a tireless fundraiser for the club. His son Miki is currently on the senior team and his daughter Áine plays with the ladies. Margaret is a former Ladies player with the club with whom her daughter Sinead and son Seamus now play on their respective senior teams. Having risen through the age groups she is now assisting the ladies senior team. When Margaret resided in Dublin she was mentor to various underage boys and girls teams in Castleknock. PJ has played at all levels with Laois and holds six championship medals and a Leinster U-21 championship in 1987. He has the distinction of having managed at every level within the club and is currently managing the girls U-10 team which his daughter Maria plays on alongside his role as selector to the Laois minor footballers. PJ has managed the clubs Senior Footballers twice (2009 & 2010, 2014 & 2015) winning a county league in 2010 and managed the club U-21's to its first success in the competition in 2008. PJ held the position of club Treasurer in 2006 and Secretary



in 2013. Ann is the youngest and in her own words says she played a bit in her younger days. A mother of four girls, who have all played or are playing and has

one boy James, who plays for the club's Seniors. Since returning from the Middle East a number of years ago she has been immersed in the running of the Club.

## LGFA HONOUR VOLUNTEERS

**THE LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION HONOURED THE WINNERS OF THE PRESTIGIOUS 2020 LGFA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS, AT A VIRTUAL CEREMONY ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12.**

The 2020 winners are as follows:

- **Young Volunteer of the Year – Sandra O’Donoghue (Rosscarbery, Cork)**
- **School Coach of the Year – Conor Maguire (Loreto, Cavan)**
- **Club Coach of the Year – Colin Kenny (Naomh Ciaran, Offaly)**
- **Local Journalist of the Year – Ian Cooney (Roscommon Herald)**
- **PRO of the Year (Peter O’Leary, Cork LGFA)**
- **Club Committee Officer of the Year (Helen Clarke, An Caisleán Glas agus Sperrin Óg, Tyrone)**
- **County/Provincial Officer of the Year (Sinead Reel, Armagh LGFA)**
- **International Volunteer of the Year – Clodagh Harris (RAK Ropairí, UAE)**
- **Overall Volunteer of the Year – Mikey Hyland (Shanahoe, Laois)**
- **Volunteer Hall of Fame – Kathleen Kane (St Nathy’s, Sligo)**

The Overall Volunteer of the Year winner, Mikey Hyland from Shanahoe in county Laois, received the Lulu Carroll award.

This award is named after the late Lulu, a 2001 All-Ireland Senior Medallist with Laois who sadly passed away in 2007, following a battle with cancer.

Mikey is a worthy recipient of the Lulu Carroll award, due to his sterling work with the Shanahoe club, of which he was a founding member in 1994.

At the start, Mikey’s daughters lined out for the club, and now he’s watching his granddaughters play, while also continuing to fulfil various roles himself.

The Volunteer Hall of Fame winner, Kathleen Kane, has contributed as a club player, county player, club manager, county manager, club officer, county officer, provincial officer and national officer.

She represented both her club, St Nathy’s, and county Sligo as a player, and managed the Yeats County in two All-Ireland Final appearances.

Kathleen would later become county board chairperson, before moving on to become Connacht LGFA President. She’s now fulfilling the role of Assistant Secretary at national level.

The awards were held in conjunction with [currentaccount.ie](http://currentaccount.ie) who are also sponsors of the LGFA’s All-Ireland Club Championships



## 2020 EDITION OF 'A SEASON OF SUNDAYS' LAUNCHED

**THE GAA PRESIDENT, JOHN HORAN, ATTENDED A VIRTUAL LAUNCH TO OFFICIALLY UNVEIL THE 2020 EDITION OF A SEASON OF SUNDAYS**

Over the past 24 years, the publication of Sportsfile's A Season of Sundays has become an annual sporting tradition, marking the end of each GAA season with a stunning collection of images.

This year's eagerly anticipated offering looks back at all the memories throughout a year like no other and is once again supported by Carroll's of Tullamore.

The 2020 edition captures the highs and lows of an incredible GAA season with another captivating and colourful look back on a season that hung in the balance because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While the highlights of another spectacular calendar year in the life of the GAA are expertly captured by the lenses of the Sportsfile photographers – and enhanced by Alan Milton's perceptive captions – even they could not have envisaged the challenges that 2020 would bring to people's lives and by extension to the activities of the GAA.

While the initial shutdown in March is expertly captured, so too is the grassroots volunteer movement that sprouted up across the wider GAA club network, underpinning a massive community effort during the first lockdown.

When training and games did return, much of the activity took place in front of small crowds or none at all and a host of new



LIMERICK AND NA PIARSAIGH STAR WILLIAM O'DONOGHUE RELAXES WITH A COPY OF THE NEW SEASON OF SUNDAY'S FROM SPORTSFILE

precautionary measures accompanied the staging of matches and training sessions.

Thankfully, the club and intercounty championships exploded into life, providing a welcome distraction and memorable onfield exploits followed.

Dungannon's success in Tyrone and Kiladangan's hurling in Tipperary were just two standout moments of the club scene.

On the county scene, Waterford's march to the hurling final before Limerick's eventual Liam MacCarthy success captivated the masses from afar while Cavan and Tipperary stole the limelight in football with their provincial final breakthrough wins before Dublin finished top of the pile to claim a sixth consecutive title.

The poignant event that was the 100-year commemoration of Bloody Sunday also

features, as do a myriad of other memorable moments including Kilkenny's camogie final victory and the latest success of the Dublin ladies footballers.

Speaking at the launch, the book's creator Ray McManus said: "While we all knew that something was heading west we never thought it would have such an impact on Irish society and indeed on the world. I remember sitting at my desk waiting on the

TV broadcast (by the Taoiseach) and trying to work out what would happen games and sports in general. That may seem somewhat selfish but it was my staff in Sportsfile I was really thinking of and how it would affect us as a group.

“Little did I know then that a hashtag used by the Press Photographers Association of Ireland would never be more relevant. #CapturingHistory is what photographers do every day and this year was probably the best example ever. In this, the 24th edition of A Season of Sundays, I believe we have captured a most extraordinary year in Gaelic games.

“When the historians or The National Museum of Ireland – specifically the Decorative Arts & History branch in Collins Barracks – look back in 100 years’ time I hope that this pictorial record of a strange year accurately reflects the 2020 GAA season.”

Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Seán Ó hÓráin added: “We might be a little later than normal marking the release of A Season of Sundays – through no fault of Ray McManus or Sportsfile it must be noted – but isn’t it fantastic to have a high-quality collection capturing the highs and lows of a season we thought we’d never see in our lifetime.

“I’m delighted Ray and his team waited to capture the finals and the front cover picture of Gearóid Hegarty celebrating a memorable final performance and Limerick’s win underlines the importance of the finals to the season as a whole.

“This year’s edition will doubtless be remembered for the many non-playing pictures it includes and in capturing them, Sportsfile have secured important snapshots in history. Congratulations to Ray and his team and also to Carroll’s of Tullamore for their ongoing support of this treasured publication.”



HSE STAFF MEMBER KATHRYN BROWNE, A DENTIST BUT A ‘SWABBER’ FOR THIS EXERCISE, PREPARES TO ATTEND TO A PATIENT DURING A HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE / GAA DEMONSTRATION TO THE MEDIA OF THE TESTING FACILITIES IN CROKE PARK.

John Comerford, the chief operating officer of Carroll’s of Tullamore, said at the launch: “We are delighted to once again sponsor A Season of Sundays. There were many wonderful moments during the 2020 GAA season, despite the difficult year that it

was. The book is a fantastic celebration of the unique images which were captured during the year. Our support of the GAA will continue in 2021 as we mark 30 years of sponsoring Offaly GAA.”

An ideal gift for any GAA fan, the book is available at bookstores nationwide and online at [www.sportsfile.com](http://www.sportsfile.com) and is priced at €27.95.

## GAA MUSEUM LAUNCHES NEW VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

**WHILE IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO VISIT THE GAA MUSEUM OR ITS LIBRARY & ARCHIVES IN PERSON RIGHT NOW, YOU CAN STILL LEARN MORE ABOUT GAELIC GAMES AND THE HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION BY BECOMING A MEMBER OF THEIR NEW VIRTUAL GAA MUSEUM BOOK CLUB.**

Each month the GAA Museum team will choose a well-known GAA book to read and review. At the end of the month, the museum will host a free online interview with the author, in which members can submit questions and comments.

The ambition of the book club is to review some of the great GAA books and to give us all a much-needed sporting boost as we stay at home.

Books will vary each month and will include histories, biographies, autobiographies and memoirs - all of which are selected from the museum's own library. Members can make suggestions for upcoming books too via the website. To become a member, sign-up on [www.crokepark.ie/bookclub](http://www.crokepark.ie/bookclub)

The first pick is one that's close to the heart of the GAA - 'The Bloodied Field' by Sunday Times journalist Michael Foley. In this publication from 2014, Foley recounts the story of Bloody Sunday and the shootings in Croke Park that changed history. The book is described as a 'deeply intimate and detailed account' where Foley tells the personal stories of those killed, of the police and military personnel involved and of all the families left shattered in the aftermath of the day.

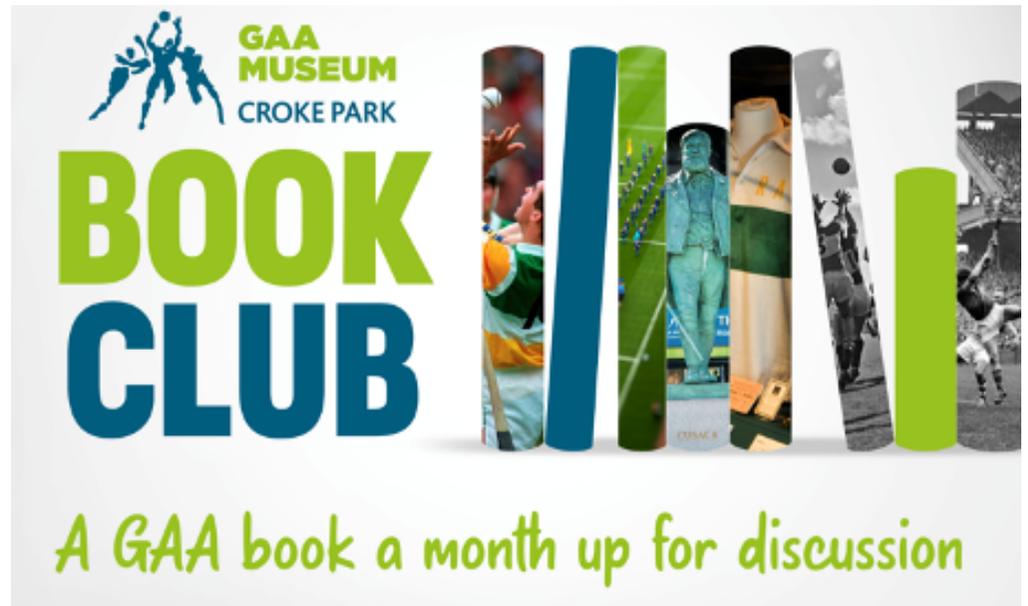
For those who don't own or can't borrow a copy of the book, the GAA Museum Gift Shop is offering a 20% discount on The Bloodied Field for the month of February. You can purchase at the reduced rate on [www.crokepark.ie/Shop/The-Bloodied-Field](http://www.crokepark.ie/Shop/The-Bloodied-Field)

The first author interview and Q&A session at 8.30pm on Thursday 4th March. The one-hour live event will take place via Microsoft Teams and a video link will be shared with members in advance.

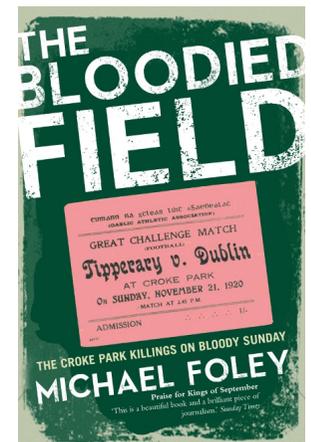
The next book will be announced on Friday 5th March.

The Book Club aims to raise awareness and celebrate the GAA Museum Library & Archive - the national repository for the GAA's records, archives and publications. Its mission is to collect a copy of every book published by the GAA and every book written about the GAA. The GAA Museum and its archives house almost 20,000 items in its collection. Readers, researchers and students can access the archive in Croke Park by appointment when it's safe to do so. Until then you can search the archive on [crokepark.ie/library](http://crokepark.ie/library)

Sign up now to join fellow book lovers and GAA enthusiasts and get reading. For more information and to become a member, visit [crokepark.ie/bookclub](http://crokepark.ie/bookclub)



The first pick is one that's close to the heart of the GAA - **'The Bloodied Field'** by Sunday Times journalist Michael Foley.



## ÁR GCLUICHÍ, ÁR LAOCHRA #23 – TADHG Ó CORCORA

**AS CILL NA MARTA I LÁR GHAELTACHT MHÚSCRAÍ AN CHÉAD LAOCH EILE ATÁ AGAINN SA TSRAITH ÁR GCLUICHÍ, ÁR LAOCHRA. CUIREANN MUID 20 CEIST SCIOBTHAÍ AR GHAISCIÓCH ÓG CHORCAÍ, TADHG Ó CORCORA, ANSEO.**

Thosaigh Tadhg ag imirt le Foireann shinsir Chorcaí i 2019 agus ó shin i leith tá sé tar éis dul i bhfeidhm go mór ar bhainistiocht Chorcaí agus é ag daingniú a áite ar 15 tosaithe a chontae mar leathchúlaí ar dheis. Bhuaigh sé Craobh Idirmheánach an Chontae lena chlub, Cill na Martra, sa bhliain 2018 agus bhuaigh sé Roinn 3 de Shraith Peile Allianz le Corcaigh anuraidh.

‘Tá tábhacht ollmhór ag an nGaeilge i mo shaol. Táim ag iarraidh bheith i mo mhúinteoir corpoideachais agus Gaeilge agus mar sin bíim ag labhairt agus ag léamh na teanga go minic. Chomh maith leis sin, is as ceantar Gaeltachta mé, Gaeltacht Mhúscraí i gcontae Chorcaí, agus mar sin is í an príomhtheanga atá againn i m’áit chónaithe.’

Tadhg Ó Corcora, Feabhra 2021  
Seo mar a d’fhreagair Tadhg ár gcuid ceisteanna!

**Ainm:** Tadhg Ó Corcora

**Aois:** 22

**Club:** Cill na Martra

**Contae:** Corcaigh

**An scannán is fearr leat?**

“Warrior” nó “The Shawshank Redemption”

**An banna ceoil is fearr leat?**

Kings of Leon

**An bia is fearr leat?**

Burrito

**Clár teilifíse is fearr leat?**

Peaky Blinders nó Planet Earth

**An t-imreoir ab fhearr leat nuair a bhí tú óg:**

Nollaig Ó Laoire nó Tomás Ó Sé

**An chéad chuimhne CLG atá agat:**

Ag imirt ar scoil nuair a bhíos sna naíonáin mhóra

An chéad uair ar imir tú le do chontae: Primary Games i gCill Airne i 2011

**An t-imreoir is fearr le himirt leat:**

Ian Maguire nó Dano Dinneen

**An t-imreoir is fearr le himirt i do aghaidh:** David Clifford

**An cluiche is fearr a d’imir tú riamh:**

Ciarraí 2020

**Buaicphointe do shaoil imeartha le do chontae go dtí seo:**

Ag sroichint Chraobh na Mumhan i 2020

**Buaicphointe do shaoil imeartha le do chlub go dtí seo:**

Ag buachaint Chraobh an Chontae i 2018 nó ag sroichint Chraobh Roinn a haon den tsraith i 2019

**An duine is mó a raibh tionchar aige/aici ar do shaol imeartha go dtí seo:**

Traenálaí sa chlub agus mo thuismitheoirí, Ian agus Martina

**Aon chomhairle agat d’imreoirí óga?**

Ní féidir obair chrua a shárú

**Aon chaitheamh aimsire eile?**

Ag féachaint ar scannán nó ag léamh

**Laoch spóirt agat taobh amuigh de CLG?** Paul O’Connell



### Gluais / Glossary

**gaiscíoch** – warrior **dul i bhfeidhm** – influence **bainistiocht** – management **daingniú** – consolidate **tábhacht ollmhór** – huge importance

**múinteoir corpoideachais** – P.E. teacher **ceantar Gaeltacht** – Gaeltacht area **príomhtheanga** – main language **i m’áit chónaithe** – where I live **scannán** – movie/film

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

G A A N A T I O N A L  
C H I L D R E N ' S O F F I C E

C O N G R E S S 2 0 2 1



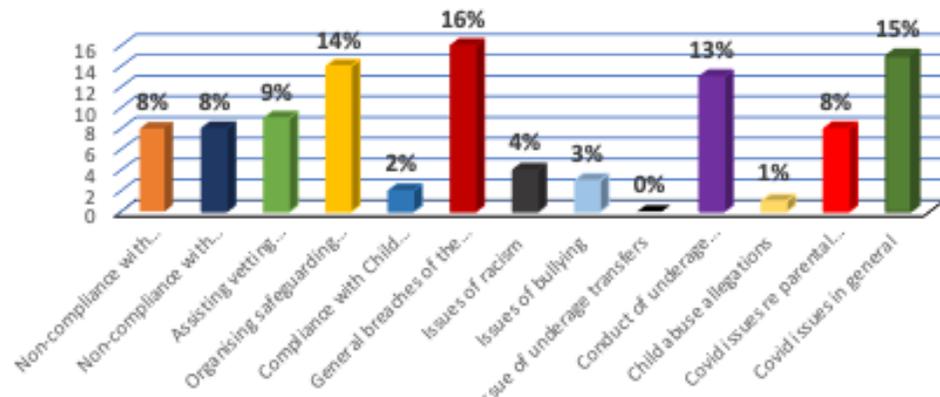
# COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICERS END OF YEAR SURVEY 2020

**THE GAA CHILDREN'S OFFICE ASKED COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICERS TO COMPLETE A SHORT END OF YEAR QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE RESPONSES ALLOW US TO CAPTURE THE MAIN ISSUES THAT AROSE DURING 2020 IN THEIR WORK, HOW THEY PERCEIVED THEIR ROLE AT COUNTY LEVEL AND HOW THEY WISH TO BE SUPPORTED IN FULFILLING OR DEVELOPING THEIR ROLE IN THE FUTURE.**

**THIS BRIEF SUMMARY GIVES AN INSIGHT INTO THE YEAR OF THE COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER IN 2020, A YEAR TO REMEMBER!**

## QUESTION 1

In 2020, what were the main issues/topics that occupied your role as County Children's Officer. Please tick the top three main issues for 2020



Given a choice to identify the top 3 issues, from a long list of headings, it will come as no surprise to many that Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) with 16% was the main issue closely followed in 2020 by Covid issues in general (15%) and this is despite the many other Officers that also had Covid responsibilities as part of their roles. Indeed both Covid heading responses come in at an accumulated 23% indicating how high on the agenda Covid issues were for all of our Officers, members and parents in 2020.

Parental rights to attend their child's Gaelic Games training during times of Covid restrictions (8%) is also worthy of noting. This proved to be a very emotive issue, even if it was a once off scenario, where many parents notwithstanding the many restrictions that were in place for society in general, still wished to be present at their child's training sessions. This is in addition to the other Covid heading above.

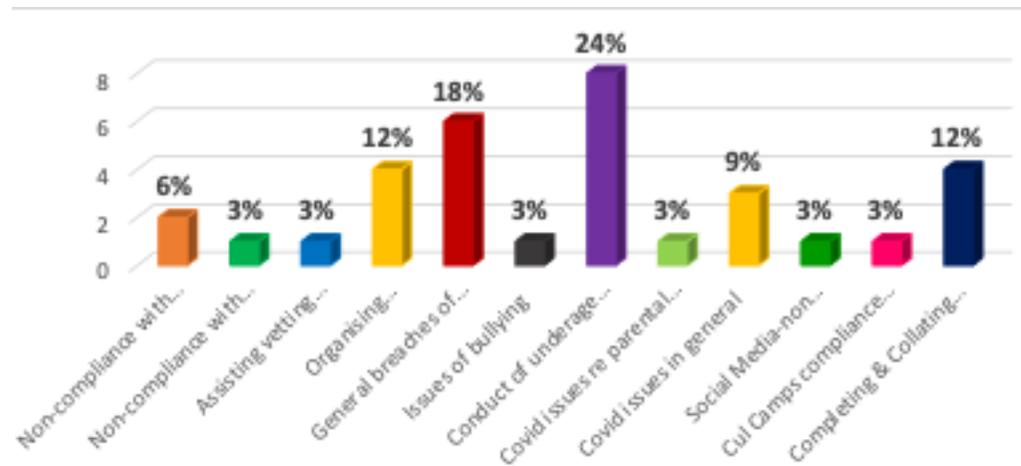
The central role that County Children's Officers fulfil in co-ordinating Child Safeguarding Training is reflected with a 14% return and at 9% in assisting the vetting process while issues surrounding the Conduct of Coaches still remains worryingly high at 13%.

Non-Compliance with vetting and safeguarding training are both at 8%, which could in extreme circumstances be deemed a breach of law by those responsible.

It is noteworthy that in answering this question it appears that despite the level of complaints received by our National Children's Office and by Club Children's Officers that the responses to this question indicate that the transfer of children issue did not appear high on the 2020 agenda for our County Children's Officers.

## QUESTION 2

BASED ON THE FOLLOWING LIST WHAT WAS THE MAIN TOPIC/ISSUE YOU DEALT WITH IN 2020?



When asked to isolate the main, and probably most regular topic, that County Children's Officers dealt with in 2020 the Conduct of Underage Coaches was at 24% with (other) General Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) at 18%.

Some may think that this may be the norm in this role but it indicates that much of the County Children's Officer's time is now

occupied by accumulative breaches of the Code at 48%. The downside of this is that the opportunities to profile and promote the code are greatly minimised while dealing with such breaches and the time commitment that this involves. At 3% we are now perhaps for the first time recording issues of bullying, that may be seen by some as being unusually low while also at 3% were issues relating to non-safeguarding compliance at Cúl Camps.

## QUESTION 3

IN YOUR ROLE AS COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER HAVE YOU ASSISTED CLUBS IN ORGANISING A VIRTUAL SAFEGUARDING 1 WORKSHOP?

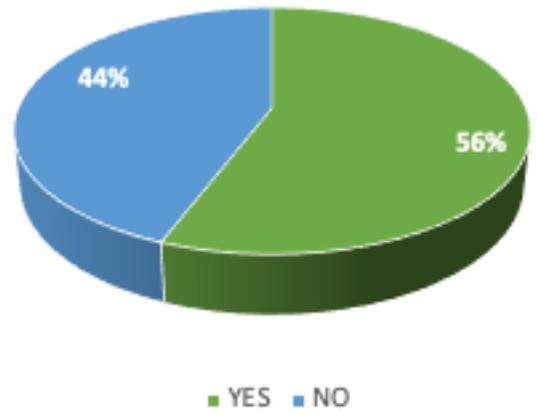


Following the commencement of virtual (online) safeguarding training the County Children's Officers became more central to the delivery of the Safeguarding 1 Workshops. This involved taking queries from Clubs in their County, liaising with our National Children's Office, and identifying suitable

dates for delivering the training. With 56% now involved in this process in 2020 we can anticipate a more central role for the County Children's Officers in the roll out of the virtual training workshops when hopefully the face to face workshops return later this year.

### QUESTION 4

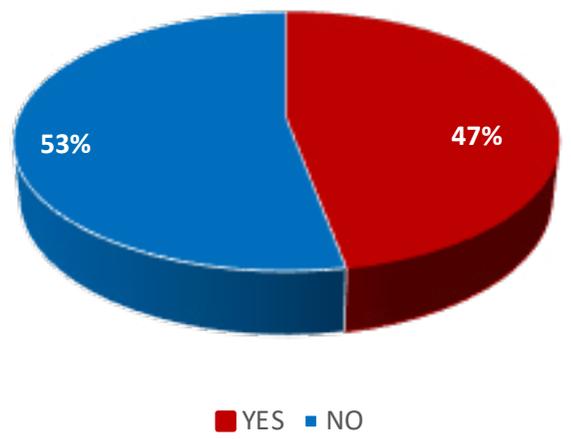
**WOULD YOU AGREE TO COMBINING THE ROLE OF CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER AND DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON AT CLUB LEVEL?**



56% of County Children's Officers were in favour of combining of the Club Childrens Officer and Designated Liaison Person roles at Club Level. This is a question that will not go away and it is interesting to note that other Sports NGBs combine both roles while others do not. The challenge is always to note that even if the same person fulfils both roles, if so agreed at Club level, they are still two distinct roles and must be treated as such.

### QUESTION 5

**WOULD YOU AGREE TO COMBINING THE ROLE OF COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER AND DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON AT COUNTY LEVEL?**



A similar question re combining the role of County Children's Officer and Designated Liaison Person at County level was asked of our County Children's Officers. This time however they did not agree with the proposal at County level with a slight majority of 53% against such a proposal despite them approving of the same proposal for their club counterparts. A topic for debate no doubt and perhaps the subject of discussion at a forthcoming Safeguarding Webinar or a Child Safeguarding Information Seminar.

## QUESTION 6

**THIS QUESTION ASKED COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICERS TO AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:  
MY ROLE AS COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER IS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY THE COUNTY COMMITTEE (BOARD)**

A most disappointing response shows that 75% of the County Children's Officers believe that their role is not taken seriously by their County Committee with 25% of the view that it is taken seriously.

Given the central role that the County Children's Officers play in promoting the child safeguarding agenda and ensuring compliance with legal requirements this response needs careful analysis and perhaps some follow up research. Its approximately 10 years since we agreed to include the Children's Officer as a member of the County Committee (and the Club Executive Committee) but a perception held amongst many Children's

Officers is that a hierarchy of importance in officership roles leads to some officers dropping down the 'order of importance'.

This in turn, as the 75% response shows, can undermine the role and the legal responsibilities of the County Children's Officer. Any such circumstances are most regrettable and should be addressed by the County Children's Officer in conjunction with the Cathaoirleach of the County Committee. Never before in such times of need for so many children has the role of the Children's Officer been so important and let's not lose sight of this.

## QUESTION 8

**DID YOU ATTEND ONE OF THE ONLINE SAFEGUARDING WEBINARS THIS YEAR?**

74% of County Children's Officers attended at least one of our Online Safeguarding Webinars in 2020 which first took place as a result of our inability to host Child Safeguarding Information Seminars. The Safeguarding Webinars have proven to be most successful with representatives of all of the Gaelic Games Associations present. Seminars are recorded and made available to Children's Officers who were unable to attend.

## QUESTION 7

**HOW COULD YOUR COUNTY COMMITTEE/BOARD OR THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S OFFICE ASSIST YOU MORE IN YOUR ROLE?**

A most disappointing response shows that a number of suggestions and comments were received in response to this question some of which are recorded below.

- Penalise Clubs who do not appoint a Club Children's Office or a DLP
- Promoting the role of an Assistant County Children's Officer
- More engagement and closer working with Games Development and especially in trying to have greater input into Coach Education
- More regular emails updating on safeguarding matters in addition to the mailings that coincide with seminars and webinar or Congress
- Include the County Children's Office

as part of the County Management Committee.

- Place an update from the County Children's Officer as a standing agenda item for each County Committee meeting
- Re-engage in a campaign that highlights that the GAA Safeguarding procedures are also legal requirements
- Details of vetting and training should be uploaded to an accessible central registration system so all information is in one place.
- Is the role of Children's Officer taken seriously enough within HQ as all roles are very time consuming nowadays?
- Develop a newsletter that could provide regular updates to County and Club Children's Officers

## POC FADA HOPES FOR 2021

**ORGANISERS OF THE ALL-IRELAND POC FADA ARE HOPEFUL THAT RESTRICTIONS PERMITTING, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO STAGE THE FESTIVAL OF COMPETITION IN CO LOUTH THIS AUGUST.**

Plans to stage the great event were dashed by the Pandemic last summer in what should have been a celebration of the Poc Fada's modern day revival in 1960 and which would also mark the 25th anniversary of the support of long-time sponsor Martin Donnelly of myclubshop. ie for the competition on the Annaverna Mountain.

We will update clubs on progress.



## GAEIL TRIUCHA LIFTING MEMBERS AND RAISING GAA FOR ALL STANDARDS

**THE GAA HEALTHY CLUB CONFERENCE HEARD RECENTLY FROM THE INSPIRATIONAL JOANNE O'RIORDAN AND ONE OF THE LASTING MESSAGES WAS THE WORK THAT CLUBS SHOULD DO TO LIVE UP TO THE GAA FOR ALL MOTTO AND HAVE FACILITIES ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, ABLE-BODIED OR NOT.**

Last September Gael Triucha marked the GAA's National Inclusion Fitness Day by officially opening the new entrance foyer with an elevator at St. Mellans.

Making the facilities at St. Mellans accessible to all has been a development priority for many years and was only able to be brought to fruition by the hard work and dedication of club members who drove the roads of Ulster and afar with Development Draw tickets back in 2017. In 2018 they were also fortunate to be granted funding from the Sports Capital Programme, to the tune of €28,000, towards the project.

The project also received significant support from local businesses who contributed generously Errigal Contracts, Oakbeech Properties Ltd, Silver Hill Foods, Brian Rafferty Construction, Corrigan Plant Hire, Connolly's Organic Eggs, Emyvale Credit Union, Lavery Photos, Monaghan Electrical, Garage Door Sales, TruWood, Cornacrieve Mushrooms, Mullan Lighting, Coyle Complete, Watch It Security, Woodcraft Floors, SuperValu Aughnacloy, Craftstudio, and Eamonn Treanor Cars.

The project which transforms the building to an inviting and welcoming community facility was expertly designed by the fantastic team in Craftstudio and was constructed by Oakbeech Properties Ltd. Being a local contractor their care and diligence in delivering this community project was evident from the outset and the finished product is a credit to all involved.



**'STRESS TESTING' CLUB STALWART AND FORMER CHAIRMAN BRIAN MCKENNA TRIES OUT THE NEW LIFT.**

The club was delighted to welcome the Minister Heather Humphreys, who performed the opening ceremony and described the new development as a major improvement to the club's overall facilities.

The installation of the elevator shows their commitment to providing facilities which are fully accessible and inclusive

to everyone in our community. The club also has a close relationship with Errigal Truagh Special Needs and the installation of the elevator will allow them access to the function room for events ranging from exercise classes to fundraising activities.



**'SAFE SEAT'. MINISTER HEATHER HUMPHRIES AND CLUB MATRIARCH JOSIE BRADY AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW LIFT. THE CHAIR WAS MANUFACTURED AND DONATED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER KIERAN MCGINN. THE APPROXIMATE COSTS OF THE LIFT WAS €200,000 AND THE AMOUNT WAS MADE UP OF SPORTS CAPITAL FUNDING, DEVELOPMENT DRAW AND SPONSORSHIP FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES WHICH INVOLVED BUSINESS SIGNS AROUND THE GROUNDS AT ST. MELLAN'S GAEIL TRIUCHA IN MONAGHAN.**

Le Jamie Ó Tuama

## GAA HANDBALL MAKING WAVES DURING LOCKDOWN

**IT IS ALMOST A YEAR SINCE GAA HANDBALL'S PLANS TO OPEN THEIR NEW STATE OF THE ART HANDBALL CENTRE AT CROKE PARK WERE CURTAILED AND CAME TO A SUDDEN STANDSTILL DUE TO COVID-19. THERE WAS GREAT EXCITEMENT AT THE TIME, AND IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT A NEW DAWN WAS IN STORE FOR HANDBALL IN IRELAND WITH THE OPENING OF THE CENTRE AND THE NEW HOME OF THE GAME, JUST WEEKS AWAY. THE PANDEMIC COULD NOT HAVE STRUCK AT A WORSE TIME FOR THE SPORT.**

GAA.ie caught up with GAA Handball National Development Officer, Darragh Daly, this week for a chat about the new centre and how GAA Handball are spending their time in the absence of games, to progress the sport.

'It was a real kick in the teeth to be honest', was Darragh's initial response when asked about his disappointment regarding the timing of Covid-19 and how it coincided with the planned opening of the new centre at Croke Park. He remains upbeat, however:

'I suppose the only plus side is that it is still there waiting for us and once we get back, we'll have this spectacular new venue all ahead of us.

Whenever we left in March, we were just getting ready to move into the new offices and they were exciting times. We were just finalising the last few bits and pieces with the courts.'

Regarding the venue itself and the potential impact it is expected to have on handball, Darragh said:

'The new centre is going to be spectacular for handball. It gives a real wow factor to the sport, something that has been missing from us for the past while. We have been missing that spectacular venue to host our big finals despite having some cracking venues across the country, for example, we hosted a lot of finals up in Kingscourt, in Cavan. It a superb facility but I suppose the name and location of Croke Park is special for everybody in the GAA.

It wasn't ideal timing, but it is still there for us. It is not like it has gone away. It will be still there when we get back.'

With regards to the prospects of getting to both work and play in the new centre post lockdown, Darragh is equally as excited.

'The handball season is long, and a lot of players play all year round with the different codes, so the lockdown at the start of Covid was a bit of a welcome break and an opportunity to recharge the batteries a bit, but I think now, at this stage, everyone is chomping at the bit to get back!

Having it on the doorstep of the offices is going to be nice so hopefully I'll get a bit of training in it as well. There are exciting times ahead.'



THE NEW HANDBALL CENTRE MARKS THE START OF A NEW ERA FOR GAA HANDBALL

Darragh is not the only player to remain upbeat. His positivity and excitement were equally shared by other top players I chatted to this week. Top Ladies star, Cork's Catriona Casey, who has amassed a total of 20 All-Ireland Senior Medals commented;

'To say the opening of the new National Handball Centre is eagerly anticipated would be an understatement! It will be

brilliant to have a state-of-the-art multi court complex in Croke Park to showcase our sport. I think all young players will aspire to play on the glass show court. It makes for a spectacular arena, and I personally cannot wait to compete there'.

Reigning All-Ireland 40x20 and 60x30 Champion, Westmeath's Robbie McCarthy, echoed what Catriona had to say:



CORK'S CATRIONA CASEY

'This new centre will help drive handball to new heights. Having all codes of the game accessible under the one roof, in exceptional courts and surroundings is very exciting! I hope I get the opportunity to compete there in major finals in the coming years.'

In 2019, GAA Handball set about strengthening their structures and launched their 'Club Iontach' initiative on Inis Mór so that all clubs would function and grow in a structured and similar fashion. It has been a huge success across the board and has now led to the launch of 'County Iontach'. Darragh explains what the 'County Iontach' initiative entails:

'It follows on from our 'Club Iontach' which is our club accreditation scheme that we launched last year. The national handball landscape is very competition orientated and has many tournaments. Everybody wants to play which is good. However, we want to change the focus slightly to make time to strengthen our governance structures and provide supports for our clubs.

The 'County Iontach' is essentially the same as 'Club Iontach', but targeting County Board level, and is a support mechanism to provide a bit of guidance and structure for what county boards should be striving to achieve.

There is no point in sitting and resting on our laurels. We haven't seen much handball this last year so now is the ideal time to strengthen our club and county structures.

With the turn of the year there will be new county committees on board, and new people taking up position, so it was a good time to launch.'

The social aspect to handball is very important to GAA Handball, also, and Darragh explains how they have been trying to develop this aspect of the game over the past few years;

'This is something we are trying to change. There is a social handball played at club level but not so much at national level, a lot of your time is taken up with the elite and national competitions as well as the All-Ireland Finals.

There is a lot of potential there for recreational handball. A lot of people would play squash around the country for recreational purposes and fitness and there is no reason why our 200 plus clubs throughout the country could not be used for this purpose as well.

We have seen recreational handball grow within our schools in terms of the one wall and we do have a couple of initiatives planned out to expand that to all GAA clubs once we return from this pandemic closure. The social and recreational side of things is something we as an Association are looking at. It is something we are going to explore and try to grow. It is an avenue we are excited about with the potential for increasing the numbers that play the sport.'

Darragh also spoke to me about a new initiative, 'Healthy Handball', which is to be launched by GAA Handball in the months ahead and rolled out all over the country.

'We have a new concept coming, 'Healthy Handball', which aims to grow recreational handball in GAA Clubs. There are a lot of non-playing members in clubs, or players who have recently retired from Football, Hurling, or Camogie. When you finish up you kind of miss that outlet. That is why we are pushing the one wall in the clubs. It might be social, but a lot of the players would still

have that competitive element about them, so it is a perfect fit really and it is non-contact.'

There is a lot going on in GAA Handball at the minute outside of those ventures and Darragh outlined to me a few of the other initiatives being undertaken at present.

'She's Ace' is our Women in Handball programme, a highlight of which being an annual female only tournament that we run in Breafoy House, Castlebar every year. It has been growing considerably, year on year, so with the pandemic we obviously couldn't host the tournament in 2021, so instead we marked this year's event with an 'Online Festival Week' that really did go very well and saw great interaction and enjoyment within the Handball community.'

Darragh also exclusively announced GAA Handball's plans for a month-long Online Youth Expo in April.

'We are looking now at doing a month-long online festival throughout April for juvenile handballers who have really missed a year's handball now at this stage. We'll be getting big profile speakers from across the GAA and Handball codes. We'll have interactive challenges, talks, nutrition and handball skills etc...'

Handball is a fast-paced, highly skilled, hugely entertaining, and fully inclusive sport that appears to be on the up. Not only is it played in Ireland, but it is also played in strongholds worldwide such as USA, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the UK and Spain to name but a few and participation rates are increasing significantly in countries such as Holland, Italy and Ecuador, for example. With this growing popularity for the sport, I asked Darragh where he saw GAA Handball in ten years' time.

'Personally speaking, I see the 1-Wall code of handball playing a big part in the future of handball, especially when you see how it has developed not just in Ireland but internationally as well and across Europe.

You see courts popping up all over the country. In Ireland we have had 400+ Handball walls being built in schools & GAA Clubs nationwide in the last six years, all of their own accord and all on their own cost. The 1-Wall court opens up accessibility to new areas, to new people and to new demographics so I do see that as being a key part of the future of handball, not just in Ireland but worldwide.

The new centre is very exciting too because we now have a home to be proud of. In the next few years, we look forward to bringing people to play there and to children seeing the courts and inspiring them to play.'

You can find out more about GAA Handball, the County and Club Iontach and all the other initiatives being rolled out to promote the sport on their website [HERE](#). There are also numerous resources and information available on the game at this link.

Exiting times indeed for GAA Handball...



DARRAGH DALY, HANDBALL PLAYER AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER OF GAA HANDBALL

## HAVE YOU GOT YOUR TICKETS??

# GET YOUR CLUB INVOLVED AND BE IN WITH THE CHANCE OF RAISING €25,000!

**A club can get involved in the NCD by selling up to 2500 tickets. All money raised from selling the NCD tickets remains in the club.**

*The June Draw date will now allow Clubs the additional time to sell Tickets during the current public health restrictions thus enabling them to raise valuable funds for their Club.*

*Remember every person who buys a National Club Draw ticket are in with the chance of winning prizes such as a brand-new Renault Clio, All Ireland Ticket Packages and a variety of cash prizes & the club retains all the Sales money €€€€€.*

*Tickets & further Information can be requested by emailing [nationalclubdraw@gaa.ie](mailto:nationalclubdraw@gaa.ie)*

*Tickets (sold/unsold) must be entered onto the Online Ticketing System before they are returned to your County Liaison Officer by 14th May 2021.*

*The GAA National Club Draw will take place on Friday, 4th June 2021.*

## SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CLUB

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



## RENNES GAA EXTEND THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO REFUGEES

**THE FIRST LINE OF THE GAA OFFICIAL GUIDE DECLARES THAT THE ASSOCIATION'S AIM IS "TO OFFER AN INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE, AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE."**

To date all recognised vetting Those words were brought to life by Rennes GAA club in France over the weekend when they hosted an introduction GAA session for youths from under-privileged and refugee backgrounds.

The project was organised by 15 sports science (Staps) students who teamed up with the Breizh Insertion Sports Association to reach out to vulnerable and under privileged youth in the city.

"Within the club of Rennes, Mayo man Niall Murphy is an English teacher and has trained up Staps students in the past, so our club is already established in the university," explains Rennes GAA club stalwart and Gaelic Games Europe Vice-Chairperson, Anna Marie O'Rourke, of how the event came about.

"On Saturday we had 24 youths ranging from refugee backgrounds to socially deprived backgrounds who were offered the opportunity to discover Gaelic football.

"The club of Rennes chairperson Martial Chesnais organised the days events and myself and other members of the club did an initiation of Gaelic Football with them.

"We also chatted about the history and culture of Gaelic Games and why our sports are so important to us. It was a really outstanding day and the group loved it."

This is just the latest of many initiatives by Rennes GAA to make their community a more welcoming one and to spread their love of Gaelic Games.

As they say in France, chapeau!



PARTICIPANTS IN RENNES GAA'S INTRODUCTION SESSION LEARNED THE BASICS OF GAELIC FOOTBALL.



24 YOUTHS RANGING FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS TO SOCIALLY DEPRIVED BACKGROUNDS WERE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCOVER GAELIC FOOTBALL BY RENNES GAA CLUB.

By Ashley Grey

## 2021 TED O'SULLIVAN 9'S GAA TOURNAMENT

**THE PEOPLE OF MELBOURNE ENDURED ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST AND LONGEST LOCKDOWNS IN 2020 BUT THE TED O'SULLIVAN 9'S GAA TOURNAMENT HOSTED BY GARRYOWEN GAC IN EARLY FEBRUARY SHOWED WHAT IS POSSIBLE IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES. WITH STRICT COVID 19 SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE, THE EVENT WAS A TRUE CELEBRATION FOR THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN VICTORIA AND REINVIGORATED LIFE BACK INTO THE GAA HERE.**

This weekend, Garryowen GAC in We hosted 36 teams, 504 players and we welcomed 400+ spectators who cheered the teams, met up with old friends and had great craic all day – it was our most successful tournament ever.

We renamed our tournament to honour one of our long-standing Garryowen stalwarts the late Ted O'Sullivan RIP. A great Kerry man that contributed immensely to our club and Men's football in the '70s, Ted remained, after hanging up his boots a vital member of our club lending his knowledge and expertise in many different committee roles - Ar dheis De go raibh a anam dilis agus leaba l measc na naingéal ata aige.

This was also the first year an AFLW (Women's Australian Football League), RMIT University, entered a Gaelic team into the competition. This was a major development for the GAA in Victoria and fits well into the GAA's policy that our games are all-inclusive & multinational. We acknowledge the efforts and support of Gaelic Games Victoria (G.G.V.) and look forward to welcoming more non-Irish players into our community in the years ahead.



All teams looked very different this year due to a large cohort of the Irish community having left Australia during the pandemic, so titles were up for grabs in all codes! After a long day of 80+ games we finished at 7pm local time all a bit weary but delighted that we had pulled it off.

Buiochas mor leis na himreoiri, na hoifighigh, na saoralaithe agus an lucht tacaiochta go leir as ocaid iontach a dheanamh do, ocaid a mbeadh Ted fein thata a bheith broduil aisti.

Bhi meon an seanfhocal "Ni neart go cur le cheile" – there is no strength without unity ar taispeaint go hiomlan agus taimid ag tnuth le 2022 agus ag ostail Comortais Ted aris – go dti sin fan slan.

This year is the 65th year anniversary of the club, and the Ted O'Sullivan 9s will be a fitting celebration of Gaelic Games to mark that landmark in style.

### Winners of the Ted O' Sullivan 9's 2021 hosted by Garryowen:

- Hurling -
- Sinn Fein
- Ladies Inter' Football -
- Padraig Pearses
- Ladies Senior Football -
- Padraig Pearses
- Men's Inter' Football -
- Sinn Fein Camogie -
- Sinn Fein
- Men's Senior Football -
- Garryowen

Le John Harrington

## HIGH HOPES FOR MUNSTER GAA CLUB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



MUNSTER GAA HAVE LAUNCHED A NEW CLUB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

**CHAIRMAN OF MUNSTER GAA'S COACHING AND GAMES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, GER RYAN, IS CONFIDENT THE PROVINCE'S NEW CLUB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WILL HAVE A VERY POSITIVE IMPACT**

The programme aims to assist and enhance the work of GAA clubs in Munster in a variety of different ways.

"We're really focusing on the club as the pivotal part of the organisation," Ryan said.

"At a high level we're developing structures that will empower the volunteers, deliver appropriate coaching inputs, and enhance the club's structure to cater adequately for all its members.

"The programme is about engaging with both the adult and juvenile sections. What we're planning is to get this rolled out around the province in the next 18 months to almost 700 clubs.

"The idea is that every club participating

will get a visit from the Games Development Personnel in their county with additional support where necessary from other parts of the organisation.

"That will be done online to start with given that we're still in lockdown with Covid.

"Overall the programme will look at a number of different areas. Coaching and Games Development, volunteers and recruitment, communications, health and wellbeing, finance and fundraising, social

and the community, and organisational structures and governance.

"There's a lot to get through here and we think it will be of a lot of benefit to clubs, we think it will improve the way they operate.

"A lot of clubs have really good structures and good coaching and games structures in particular, but there's always room for improvement."

Coaching and Games Development in Gaelic Games has undergone a hugely positive transformation in the last 20 years.

Initiatives such as the Go Games and the recruitment of Games Development Administrators and Games Promotion Officers who have in turn rolled out a variety of impactful initiatives have led to a much more holistic approach to the development of young players.

Ryan hopes Munster GAA's Club Development Programme can build further on the already solid Coaching and Games Development foundations in the province.

"There's been marvellous work done there," he says. "I think through a combination of Games Managers, GDAs and GPOs around the province and country in general and also then with the level of volunteer involved that we have which obviously is ultimately what we are about.

"The amount of coaching courses and training that has been done, the amount of coaching that has been provided, all of those things I think combine to put us in a strong position.

“But also it’s an area of continuous improvement and continuous challenge.”

“I think all that goes on in terms of the science and the best way to do these things, I think it’s very important that clubs are supported in being as ready as possible for the ongoing demands.

“We’ve done a coaching investment return survey every four years over the last eight years, so three of them so far, and, again, that shows the importance of volunteers.

“Part of the genesis of this club programme came from those investment return surveys, particularly the 2015 one, and we had the most recent one in 2019.

“And they showed that clubs continue to face challenges about retaining players, having the right numbers of coaches, getting parental involvement, all of these things.

“There are a lot of very good things happening, but it’s also important to be aware of the challenges and try to respond to those as positively as we can.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted that GAA clubs are as much community organisations as they are sporting ones, with so many at the forefront of helping the most vulnerable in their community through a difficult time.

In recent years the community ethos of the GAA has been strengthened by the Healthy Club Project which has empowered GAA clubs to do all they can to enhance the mental and physical health of their members in a variety of different ways.

Ryan hopes Munster GAA’s Club Development Programme will further enhance this trend of GAA clubs engaging with their local community in a holistic fashion rather than simply as a sporting entity.



CHAIRMAN OF MUNSTER GAA COACHING AND GAMES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, GER RYAN.

“We’ve seen very positive feedback on the Healthy Club initiative,” he says. “And while every club would not have gotten to it yet, I think there’s an opportunity here to expand that as much as there are in other areas.

“I think Covid has shown how important GAA clubs are still in their community. They’re very much a great connection point for people.

“It’s cross-generational and it has shown that the GAA remains very welcoming to people of all ages and it is very much a case where we want children to come and play our games and start a life-long association with the GAA.

“While there will be a strong initial focus on games development, the importance of all of these areas can’t be understated. To have what might be regarded as a successful club

overall, you need all of the areas to be well looked after and for everything to come together as effectively as possible.

“That’s also an opportunity for everyone to be involved. I think the message here is that there is a place for everybody in our clubs. I think we can see that and we want that to continue to be the case and to provide as much support as possible to clubs doing that.”

# GAA LEARNING PORTAL

**WHEN IT COMES TO RUNNING GAA CLUBS, ALL CLUBS HAVE A WIDE RANGE OF NEEDS FOR INFORMATION AND TRAINING. THAT'S WHY WE'RE CONSTANTLY WORKING ON UPDATING ALL RESOURCES ON THE GAA LEARNING PORTAL FOR CLUB OFFICERS. HERE'S WHAT IS AVAILABLE:**

## Online Modules

- Club Officer Foundations - a 30-minute module which helps new Club Officers get started in their roles.
- Leading Effective Meetings - a 30-minute module on how to run effective Club meetings.
- Access here - [https://learning.gaa.ie/club\\_leadership](https://learning.gaa.ie/club_leadership)

## Learning Files

- A vast range of handouts relevant to each module in the Club Leadership Development Programme. For example, essential child safeguarding information, injury benefit fund guidance, independent team guidance, One Club guidelines, etc.
- Access here - <https://learning.gaa.ie/ClubOfficerLearningFiles>

## Role Profiles

- Sample descriptions of key duties for the roles of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, PRO, Registrar, etc.
- Access here - <https://learning.gaa.ie/OfficerRoleProfiles>

## Club Support Manual

- Advice sheets which explain key areas of Club administration, e.g. optimising Club structures, improving communication in the Club, recruiting volunteers, etc.
- Access here - <https://learning.gaa.ie/ClubSupportManual>

## Administrator Webinars

- Recordings of previously held webinars on a number of topics such as Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Forms and much more.
- Access here - <https://learning.gaa.ie/administratorwebinars>
- Also check out the GAA Learning YouTube channel for more videos - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCulyy46ph4519t573fa2Aww>

## IT Helpdesks

- 
- User guides and support service information for IT systems such as the Foireann System, Office 365 and the injury benefit fund.
- Access here - <https://learning.gaa.ie/ITHelpdesks>

The screenshot displays the GAA Learning Portal interface. At the top, the GAA Learning logo is on the left, and navigation tabs for 'GAA Courses', 'Planner', and 'ePortfolio' are on the right. Below these are dropdown menus for 'Covid-19 Club Education', 'Coach', 'Referee', 'Administrator', 'Player', 'Schools', 'Learning Events', and 'Safeguarding'. The main content area features a large image of two men in a training session, with the text 'Club Officer Training' overlaid. At the bottom, there are logos for 'CLUB LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME', 'GAA WHERE WE ALL BELONG', and 'LGFA PEIL na mBAN'.

# EXTRAORDINARY ATTENDANCES AT CLUB OFFICER TRAINING EVENTS IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

**AS THE SUN BEGINS TO SET ON ANOTHER JAM-PACKED SEASON OF CLUB AND COUNTY OFFICER TRAINING, ONE CONCURRENT THEME FROM NOVEMBER 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021 HAS REMAINED STEADFAST THROUGHOUT – THE ENTHUSIASM AND DESIRE OF VOLUNTEERS TO UTILISE THE DOWN TIME TO UPSKILL AND PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE LONG-AWAITED RETURN TO ACTION.**

The unprecedented times we find ourselves in has forced both administrators and volunteers to adapt rapidly to a changing climate of learning – and GAA, LGFA and Camogie Officers have done so with aplomb.

At the time of writing, over 4,700 officers have availed of online training across a multitude of areas – from role specific workshops for Chairs and Secretaries, to Health & Safety sessions and IT webinars. The success of the rollout suggests that whenever face to face contact is permitted again, a hybrid approach to training is the way forward.

A team of 30 trained Associates have been at the coalface of this year's programme – volunteers themselves from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences – across all three Associations. Their efforts – coupled with those of full-time Event Coordinators, and members of the National Officer Development Committee are due huge praise for their role in making this year's events happen.

The Club Leadership Development Programme has been proud to add several events to the overall Club Officer



Training Calendar from our colleagues in the GAA Community and Health Department this year. A list of remaining events open for registrations can be located below. This continued alignment of our educational efforts across Associations and internal departments will contribute in no small way to a more streamlined and effective learning vehicle for all our volunteers and officers.

This year has seen the scheduling of 50 online events as part of the CLDP, and the delivery of some 24 different modules - and we're not quite done yet! Given the uncertainty surrounding the return to play and indeed to any sort of "normal" club activity, the possibility of additional workshops surfacing is there. Correspondence will be issued as normal to clubs and county officers whenever details are confirmed.

In the meantime, we encourage volunteers to continue to register and attend our outstanding events, a list of which is available below – and thank all officers for their exceptional engagement, feedback and trojan efforts throughout the last year which has seen the GAA emerge as a beacon of resilience and hope among our communities.

## **Remaining Events –**

Register here -

**<https://learning.gaa.ie/officertainingcalendar>**

**Tuesday, March 2nd @7pm –**

How to Become a Welcoming Club

**Tuesday, March 9th @7pm –**

Diversity & Inclusion Visibility

**Thursday, March 11th @7pm –**

Commercial & Sponsorship Webinar – Club Officers

**Wednesday, March 31st @7pm –**

Healthy Club Officer Training

# CORPORATE TRUSTEE

## 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.

## Advantages of the Corporate Trustee

- Continuous amendments to title avoided when trustees die or retire (saving on legal costs)
- Avoids individuals' names being published on Judgments and Court Proceedings

## 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 minute 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.

## CLUBS WARNED OVER WATER SYSTEMS TO AVOID BACTERIA – NEED FOR A LEGIONELLA PREVENTION PLAN

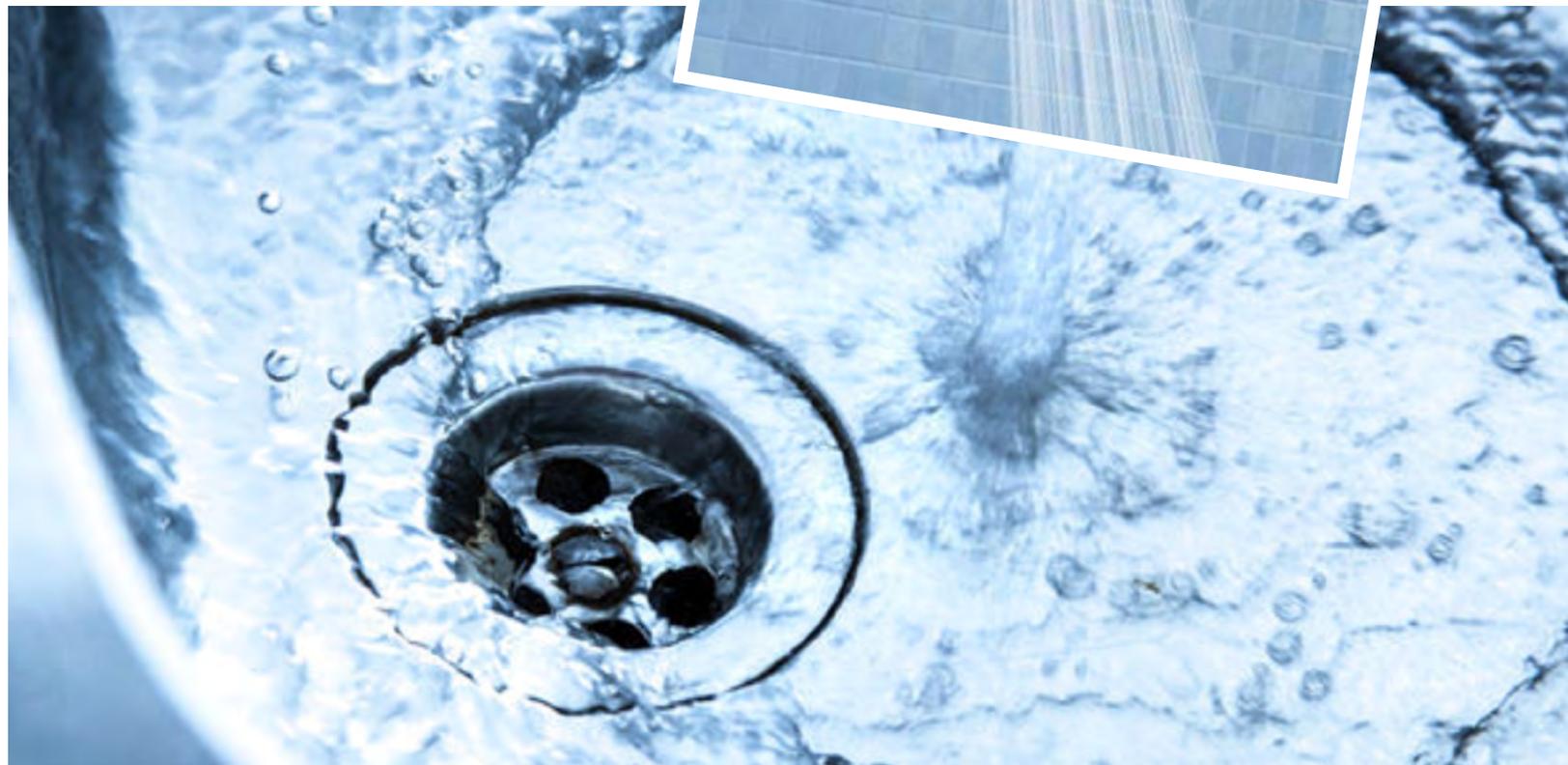
**ACCORDING TO THE CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL, 'LEGIONELLA IS A TYPE OF BACTERIUM FOUND NATURALLY IN FRESHWATER ENVIRONMENTS, LIKE LAKES AND STREAMS. IT CAN BECOME A HEALTH CONCERN WHEN IT GROWS AND SPREADS IN HUMAN-MADE BUILDING WATER SYSTEMS LIKE SHOWERHEADS AND SINK FAUCETS.'**

Clubs should implement simple, proportionate and appropriate control measures to ensure the risk of Legionella remains low.

For hot and cold water systems, temperature is the most reliable way of ensuring the risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria is minimised i.e. keep the hot water hot, cold water cold and keep it moving. Other simple control measures to help control the risk of exposure to Legionella include:

- Flushing out the system on a regular basis
- Avoiding debris getting into the system (e.g. ensure the cold water tanks, where fitted, have a tight fitting lid)
- Setting control parameters (e.g. setting the temperature of the hot water cylinder (calorifier) to ensure water is stored at 60°C)
- Make sure any redundant pipework identified is removed.

It is important that water is not allowed to stagnate within the water system and so there should be careful management of properties left vacant for extended periods. As a general principle, outlets on hot and cold water systems should be used at least once a week to maintain a degree of water flow and minimise the chances of stagnation. To manage the risks during non-occupancy, consideration should be given to implementing a suitable flushing regime or other measures such as draining the system if it is to remain vacant for long periods.



## IS YOUR CLUB STORM WEATHER READY?

All units should pay attention to weather warnings where the latest updates can be found on Met Eireann. Clubs should also pay attention via local radio to any local warnings which may be in effect for certain areas. In winter the expected main impacts will include high winds, heavy rainfall and an increased risk of flooding.

These warnings are in place for a reason - to protect lives and mitigate property damage. If clubs have any planned activities for example underage training sessions, scheduled to take place during the weather warning, the activities should be cancelled where appropriate. If you proceed with holding the activity, you are putting the lives of members, visitors such as parents coming to collect children and the club property in danger. A common sense approach should be taken.

Below are some of the most common claims which have arisen at GAA properties as a result of previous weather incidents / storms:

- **Ball Stop Nets:** It is a condition of Property Insurance cover that retractable nets are retracted when not in use. If your nets are retractable they need to be retracted & secured now.
- **Roof tiles & Roofs:** These are easily blown off in severe weather, and gutters and fascias can also sustain



some damage. Roofs in stands have also suffered damage in previous storms.

- **Fallen trees and building damage:** Trees are currently in full leaf with a large surface area, so even moderate strength winds can bring down weakened trees and/or tree limbs. Some trees may already be compromised due to saturated soils at the moment and during wind warning some disruption due to falling trees/branches is likely. Heavy rain, coupled with falling leaves may block drains and gullies, leading to surface flooding.
- **Flooding:** If your club property is located in an area where a flood warning is in effect it might be worth investing in some sandbags and/or flood barriers to protect your property, particularly if you live in a flood risk area.
- **Broken glass:** Glass in windows can be damaged by severe winds or flying objects. Take care if trying to remove the glass, wear protective gloves and eye goggles.
- **Boundary walls and fencing:** collapsing in storm weather

## Preparation:

- The best thing you can do at any time of the year is to make sure your property is well looked after. Property Insurance is not a maintenance cover and damage to property where the underlying cause of loss is determined to have occurred due to a lack of regular maintenance and/or upkeep will not be covered by property insurance
- Retract Ball Stop Nets: It is a condition of Property Insurance cover that retractable nets are retracted when not in use. If your nets are retractable they need to be retracted & secured now
- Check your roof regularly: Roof tiles should be checked once a year, and again after a severe storm, to make sure no tiles have come loose. Loose tiles could cause damage to your property or neighbouring property. Look for loose or missing tiles, crumbling pointing or any other signs of damage. Also ensure any television

aerials and satellite dishes are securely attached. Professional contractors should only be engaged to carry out such works

- Check and secure your fencing and check boundary walls: Secure all fences, gates or posts on your property and regularly inspect boundary walls. These can cause severe damage to club property and neighbouring properties if blown away in a storm
- Check any trees on the property and remove hazardous branches: Cut down loose or overhanging branches, particularly those close to windows or power lines. Professional contractors should only be engaged to carry out such works
- Keep gutters clear of moss and leaves: If your gutters overflow during a downpour, it's time to give them a good clean. Remember to make sure they're securely fixed in place once you've finished. Professional contractors should only be engaged to carry out such works

- Property Generally: Secure any loose objects such as portable goals or ground maintenance equipment which could be blown. Items must be locked away or safely secured at all times
- Windows and doors: Close and lock all windows and doors securely
- Services - ensure you know where water, gas and electricity mains are, should you need to turn them off or on at any stage. Have contact numbers available for professional contractors should services be required

Professionals perform many of the above jobs for a reason. If a task involves any hazardous activity such as working at heights, use of ladders, working near power lines, or use of power tools you must engage bone fide contractors to carry out such works.



#### After a Weather incident /Storm:

- If your property has been affected by a weather event / storm, it can be frightening, but do not panic; there are some steps you can follow.
- Be careful: The most important thing is that you look after your safety. Do not touch cables which may have been blown down or are hanging. If your property has suffered damage, proceed with caution do not walk too close to buildings or trees that may have been weakened. Check for damage from a safe distance
- Take photos: From a safe distance, take photos of any damage that occurred. Make a list also, as this will be useful for your insurer to process any claims more smoothly
- Report the damage: if your property suffers damage as claims can be reported to Marsh Ireland via email at [propertyclaimsgaa@marsh.com](mailto:propertyclaimsgaa@marsh.com) or to [sinead.leavy@gaa.ie](mailto:sinead.leavy@gaa.ie) or [ciara.clarke@gaa.ie](mailto:ciara.clarke@gaa.ie). Details on property insurance policy excesses are in the policy document
- Keep receipts: If you make any emergency repairs such as roof repair or glass replacement you must retain these receipts

Make decisions in the best interest of the club – do not reopen your club to normal club activities until it is safe to do so, be safe not sorry.

## Weather Warnings

**Yellow**

**Not unusual weather. Localised danger.**

**Orange**

**Infrequent. Dangerous/disruptive.**

**Red**

**Rare. Extremely dangerous/destructive.**



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).

Produced by the GAA Communications Department in Croke Park,  
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