



GAA Club Fundraising

Tiomsú Airgid don Chlub

CLUB MAITH TOOLKIT



INTRODUCTION

All clubs large and small, urban and rural, are often finding they are spending increasing amounts of money. Many clubs have taken the step of appointing a 'fundraising' unit whose remit is focused on ensuring that the club has a healthy revenue stream that fulfils the financial needs of the club.

The fundraising unit should report to the Club Finance Sub-Committee with Club Treasurer appointed as Chairperson of the group. It is recommended that the group consist of at least five but not more than eight individuals. It may be that not all are club members as the expertise of any individual on a specific project might be of great benefit to the club.

GETTING STARTED

When a fundraising unit has been set up within a Club and the financial needs of the Club have been identified, the next step is to explore all fund-raising options and determine what is best suited to the needs of the Club at the time and what is feasible to achieve in the community in which the Club exists. When considering any project, take into account what other fundraising is taking place in the geographical area and the impact that this will have on your activity.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Fundraising events come in all shapes and sizes. Some are easier to deliver than others, some ideas are likely to raise more money than others and some might be more appropriate for your members and community. Outlined below are some ideas that might help you develop an effective fundraising event for your club.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Collecting an annual membership fee is an often under-rated way of raising funds for your Club. For example, 200 adult members paying an annual fee of €/ \pounds 25 raises €/ \pounds 5000 for a club annually. Some tips for maximizing membership fee income include:

- Appoint a Club Registrar whose sole job is to look after membership & fees
- Look at providing certain benefits for members (i.e. priority access to big match tickets)
- Collect membership fees at AGM's – only those who are paid up members can vote
- Make sure all adult players are paid up members
- Consider family membership scheme
- Remind members about the good the GAA delivers to its members and its communities

GATES

Charging an admission fee is sometimes overlooked by Clubs, but by even charging a nominal fee much needed funds can be generated (this excludes County Championship & League matches which are administered by the County Board). For example, if your Club has 10 adult home games with an average of just 100 in attendance, by charging as little at €/ \pounds 4 or €/ \pounds 5 there is potential income of €/ \pounds 4,000 to 5,000.

Some areas to consider:

- Agree & implement a Club admission pricing policy
- Adopting the principle that all games have a value and therefore attract an admission fee, however small
- Put in place a team of people who will be responsible for looking after gates
- If at all possible, put turnstiles in place; ensuring that every entrant pays their admission

CLUB LOTTO

Clubs all over the island have been using this to raise funds. Small fundraising lotteries normally require a government licence. If you are currently running a fundraising lotto, it is critical that you have an active licence. Many Clubs are now using online systems; by offering lotto tickets for purchase online, Clubs can maximize sales by reaching out to supporters and friends all over the world.

CLUB EVENTS

These are another stalwart of the GAA Club scene, covering a huge range of things such as concerts; nights at the races; sports days; golf classics; gala dinners, coffee mornings, Fight Nights, Strictly Come Dancing.

Among the things to watch out for are:

- The Club should have a dedicated Events Committee in place.
- GAA events should always reflect the GAA ethos and core values.
- Put some thought into how you schedule your events: some things are naturally seasonal (e.g. golf classics work best in the summer) whilst others (e.g. gala dinners) will be undertaken only once every few years.
- Have an events plan for each year with maybe one event per quarter.
- Make sure there's variety in what you do: a good year's calendar of events will include something for everyone.
- Watch out for new and innovative things, e.g. "Who Wants to be a Thousandaire", "Biggest Loser" competition and so on.
- Always try to get the right balance between enjoyment and profitability: the best events achieve both.
- Always be aware of what's affordable in your local community.
- Selling tickets for events has to be well organised: like nearly everything else the GAA Club does, it needs to make sure it covers its entire catchment area with its sales.
- Make sure adult players in particular attend Club events.
- Make sure your events are well-stewarded.

CLUB DRAWS

Most Clubs will at one time or another run a draw. Experience to date tells us that we should:

- Be clear about why we're running the draw and how much we want to raise: ticket buyers will want to know this.
- Put a person/team in charge of the draw.
- Spend time working out the right pricing strategy: there are times/places when £10/€10 tickets are appropriate and times/places when £50+/€50+ tickets are appropriate.
- Don't keep waiting for the perfect time, i.e. when there's no other big competitor draws out there in the market; that time will never come!
- Talk to other Clubs about what they have done. Clubs which have recently run successful draws will be delighted to be asked to share their experiences with others.
- Publicise the draw well.
- Work out a sales plan: most GAA Club draws involve selling large numbers of tickets outside our own area, sometimes far beyond it.
- Get a good balance between the price of our tickets and the value of our prizes.
- Invest in good, well-designed tickets: something that looks good will sell better!

- Timetable the draw: set a final date for it and change this only in the most extreme circumstances.
- Allow enough time for the target amount of tickets to be sold.
- Set up sales teams: tickets are easier sold by pairs/small groups of people than they are by individuals.
- Publicise the results of the draw and the amount it raised: ticket buyers need to know this, and most feel good about having been associated with successful draws. Use local and national press outlets to announce your winners also.
- Acknowledge your sellers in some small way after the draw is over.

CLUB SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING

Sponsorship of teams and the sale of advertising boards around the Club pitch and Club house are core sources of income for most GAA Clubs. Many Club sponsors and advertisers are involved because they want to support their Club and Community rather than for purely commercial reasons. But that's all the more reason why they should be treated well and in a business-like manner.

Some tips to remember:

- Always make sure your sponsors and advertisers fit with the ethos of the GAA and your Club
- Plan your sponsorship and advertising opportunities – work out what is available, at what price and also identify potential sponsors and advertisers
- Tell your potential sponsors about your Club and what it does
- Spell out for them the benefits they'll get from their sponsorship eg. Name of shirts, access to tickets, tickets to Club events, advertising boards
- In turn, spell out what the Club expects from them eg. Payment dates, payment amounts
- Treat sponsors well – promote their sponsorship, greet them at Club events, honour the commitment the Club makes.

Many Club members and businesses operating in the community are in a position to help their local GAA Club by influencing their business to support the Club by taking an advertising sign around the Club's main pitch. As advertising is a legitimate business expense it can be an effective way for a local business person to show their support for a Club.

STRUCTURED GIVING

Many GAA Clubs have put in place planned giving schemes as a core part of their fund-raising strategies. The basic principle is very simple: you ask people who have the welfare of the GAA in your Club area at heart to commit to paying a set amount to the Club. The commitment can be open ended or for a set period. In most cases the payment is of the order of £20/€20 per month.

Most of these schemes are essentially "one-way" ... i.e. the person gives the money but gets nothing (or very little) tangible in return. Some schemes offer subscribers a specific branded bit of Club merchandise, e.g. a coat. Some will offer a bit of hospitality once a year. But these aren't like draws or corporate tickets. The fundamental idea is that they're a means for interested, committed people to support the GAA at local Club level in a very effective way.

These schemes will only work in your own catchment area. They're not like draw tickets – you don't go elsewhere to sell them. However, this means that every Club in a County could have such a scheme in place, and no-one is treading on anyone else's toes. People who have moved away from their home area can also be signed up to make a contribution "back home".

Absolutely central to the success of such a scheme is persuading people to come on board. There are no shortcuts to this but equally it's not a hard task. Clubs just need to spell out what they offer, or plan to offer, the local community and particularly what they provide for young people.

Virtually every Club has a great story to tell in terms of what it has/does in terms of:

- Facilities: pitches; gyms; halls; changing rooms; etc.
- Coaching and the "Go-Games" model.
- Games for boys and girls of all abilities
- A hub for the local community.
- Good, robust healthy activities
- Cultural activities such as Scór
- Work with the local schools
- A "whole family" ethos

It's vital to get these stories across because most people want to be part of positive things like the GAA. Usually we get the stories across via a well-designed brochure. Clubs can then call people together and do a formal presentation of what they are and what they're trying to do. If taking this approach, put a good effort into the presentation, i.e. use PowerPoint etc. Equally you can approach individuals on a one-to-one basis. But a good brochure gives the message, loud and clear, that you're serious; business like; and respectful of your potential subscribers.

In terms of rolling out such a scheme in your Club, experience elsewhere tells us:

- Signing up to such a scheme doesn't suit everybody so don't approach everybody.
- These schemes should not be seen as competing with the weekly Lotto: they're different things aimed at different markets.
- Many people sign up because it's the only way they can make a real contribution to the Club (e.g. they don't have the time to do "hands-on" work).
- Asking people to sign standing orders/ direct debits makes the administration much easier.
- A specific Club bank account for the scheme helps emphasise how it's additional to other traditional fund-raising methods.
- It is appreciated by subscribers when the Club demonstrates that this income will be ring-fenced for a specific task, e.g. for development; a second pitch; youth coaching; etc.
- If there's no tangible return or "reward" subscribers may become demotivated in continuing their donations.
- All you have to do with most people is ask. If they're aware of what the GAA does locally (and that's up to you to tell them!) then most people are keen to make a contribution.
- Get a small dedicated group to run the scheme.
- Use IT to help manage it. It's important to have all your members on a simple database. That makes sure you know who's on board and what they have contributed. It also eases the workload when it comes to mail-merges for writing out to people.

It's absolutely vital to keep in touch with members. At least once a year go back to them, usually via a well-produced annual report, and tell them:

- How much they have contributed
- Where their money went
- How their Club performed overall
- What their Club's plans are
- How important they (as subscribers) are to their Club and therefore to the local community