

# The GAA Club Plan & Community Consultation

*Plean agus Comhairliúchán Pobail an Chlub CLG*

Most successful organisations – including successful GAA Clubs – aren't successful by accident. They're successful because they planned to be successful. If we take our GAA business seriously then we shouldn't be leaving anything to chance. We should instead be very clear about what it is we want to achieve as a Club and how we're going to go

about it. In order to do this we first need to understand the position we are in currently.

The importance of planning is highlighted by the fact that by 2015 all GAA clubs are required to have a five-year Club Development Plan in place, according to the GAA's Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009 – 2015.



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#### A good Club Development Plan will:

- Provide us with a clarity of purpose.
- Reflect the views of the Club Membership and wider Community.
- Identify the key issues that face us.
- Give us a clear and agreed sense of direction.
- Provide a framework within which we can allocate resources: human, financial and other.
- Allow us to check on progress as time moves on.

A good Club Development Plan need not be a long document; many will be no more than 10 pages and will incorporate all areas of Club business.

#### Sections of a Club Development Plan, and Focus Groups:

1. Coaching & Games Development
2. Club Structures & Administration
3. Finance & Fundraising
4. Facilities & Physical Development
5. Communication, PR & Culture

The National Club Planning Programme is being rolled-out in Ulster through the Provincial Council in conjunction with County Development Officers. This is twelve-week programme which supports clubs through the process of creating their Club Development Plan. Trained “Club Planners” will work with a Club’s *Club Plan Steering Committee and Focus Groups* through-out the twelve-week process and will have a pivotal role in facilitating the Planning Workshop.

Overleaf is an overview of a typical Club Development Plan:

	SECTION	WHAT IT SHOULD INCLUDE
01	Our Place	An outline of the Club's catchment area, i.e. who lives here; what the population trends are; what people do; other facilities/assets in the area; significant local community issues; etc.
02	Our Club	A summary of the Club, i.e. its origins and brief history; performance and achievements on and off the field; its assets/facilities; and how it's organised.
03	Key Issues	A soundly-based analysis of the main issues facing the Club, e.g. lack of playing facilities; falling primary school numbers; minimal cultural activity; local community or economic issues; plans that others have for our area; etc. These will be teased-out through the Planning Workshop.
04	<p><b>What we Plan to do in the areas of:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coaching &amp; Games Development</li> <li>2. Club Structures &amp; Administration</li> <li>3. Finance &amp; Fundraising</li> <li>4. Facilities &amp; Physical Development</li> <li>5. Communication/ PR &amp; Culture</li> </ol>	<p>Focus groups will lead out on this process. The heart of the document, based on the key issues we've identified, and outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will be done</li> <li>• Who will be responsible</li> <li>• When will it be done</li> <li>• What costs or other resources will be needed</li> <li>• How we'll know we've achieved what we set out to do (i.e. our targets or measures)</li> </ul>

The "What we Plan To Do" section is the "active" part of the Plan and will take the format of:

Action	Outcomes Sought	Timescale	Milestones	Responsibility
To engage with Club Maith	To achieve a Gold Club Maith accreditation	By the end of 2015	Appoint a Club Maith workgroup	Club Maith workgroup

### Community Consultation

We always take great pride in the fact that our GAA Clubs are rooted in their communities. A strong GAA Club keeps in touch with its Community by regularly asking its Club Membership and wider Community for their views. By consulting with the wider community the GAA Club will:

- Be in a better position to deliver the Gaelic activities that local people want and in a way that they want
- Get new ideas, expertise and volunteers into the Club
- Make local people more aware of the GAA and the Club
- Improve local support for what the Club is doing
- Prove to others a "need" for proposed projects

Before getting the opinions of the Community, the Club should agree steps in the consultation process:

- Make it clear from the start why we are consulting
- Target those we wish to consult with
- Keep it focused
- Plan the process

- Take on board what we find out
- Give feedback to those we consulted
- Thank people for their involvement

### Approaches to Community Consultation

There are various ways to consult with your community, and some will be better than others at targeting the people you wish to hear from.

TYPE OF CONSULTATION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>Questionnaire-based Surveys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional method</li> <li>- Older populations may be familiar with them</li> <li>- Can be hard-copy or electronic in nature</li> <li>- Reaches the hard-to-reach</li> <li>- Tackles the wider issues</li> <li>- Results of a survey can be used to show statistical significance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can be paper-heavy</li> <li>- Can be expensive</li> <li>- Don't get face-to-face interaction</li> <li>- Can be time-consuming</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can tackle specific issues</li> <li>- Can utilise expertise</li> <li>- May be more appealing to certain groups</li> <li>- More time-efficient</li> <li>- Cheap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only specific to certain people</li> <li>- Doesn't tackle the wider issues</li> <li>- Requires facilitation</li> </ul>
<b>Open Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusive of everyone</li> <li>- Can cover a wide-range of topics</li> <li>- Can create a positive image of Club</li> <li>- Allows face-to-face interaction</li> <li>- Cheap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hard-to-reach people are unlikely to attend</li> <li>- Can often lose focus</li> <li>- Can create a negative image of Club, if not properly managed</li> <li>- Don't allow specific issues to be covered in-depth</li> </ul>
<b>Structured Workshops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusive of everyone</li> <li>- Time-efficient</li> <li>- Can create a positive image of the Club</li> <li>- Allows face-to-face interaction</li> <li>- Can tackle issues in more detail than an open meeting</li> <li>- Cheap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If not well managed can lose focus</li> <li>- Hard-to-reach people may be unlikely to attend if not invited in the correct manner</li> </ul>



*The Planning Workshop is the key event in the Club Planning Process. It is an opportunity for the Club to invite Club members and the wider Community to share their views.*



The Club Planning process will utilise a number of these community consultation methods. However, the Planning Workshop is key.

### The Planning Workshop

The *Planning Workshop* is the key event in the Club Planning Process. It is an opportunity for the Club to invite Club members and the wider Community to share their views. The Club Plan Steering Committee will organise the event, while the Club Planner will have a facilitation role during it.

It is very important that the Planning Workshop is widely promoted, using all available channels; invites to families, club notes, website, social media and so on.

The idea of the Planning Workshop is that attendees are randomised into groups of one of the five sections of the Club Development Plan. Groups sit at a table, chaired by a Club Executive Member. Prompt notes should enable a structured, valuable conversation to take place. A note-taker at each table will record the discussion. Key points at each table are agreed and are fed-back to the entire room at the end of the table discussion. In this way all attendees hear a little of what has been discussed about topics other than those they were allocated.

After all groups have fed-back key-points the Club Planner asks that anyone willing to become a member of a Focus Group volunteer their name at the end of the event. A Focus Group is set-up for each section of the Club Development Plan. All attendees are thanked for their time, and given a cup of tea.

### A typical Planning Workshop agenda is below:

#### 7pm – 7.15pm:

Welcome, Rationale, Background

#### 7.15pm – 7.20pm:

Welcome of Club Planner by Chairperson

**7.20pm – 7.30pm:** Introduction by Club Planner, Clár for tonight, What happens next, Ground Rules for table discussion

**7.30pm – 8.20pm:** Round table discussion

**8.20pm – 8.30pm:** Identifying Key points

**8.30pm – 8.50pm:** Feedback by groups

**8.50pm – 9.00pm:** Thanks, call for Focus Groups volunteers and CLOSE (Cup of tea)

Questionnaires can be sent to those who were unable to attend, structured around the discussion of the Planning Workshop. This information is added to that emerging from the Planning Workshop, and Focus Groups take the information away to develop actions around the points raised. Focus Groups are an excellent way to get those people with specific areas of expertise to invest this into the Club in a time-framed manner. Each Focus Group is chaired by a member of the Club Plan Steering Committee, and should meet as often as necessary to fully develop the actions relating to the specific section. The Club Planning Steering Committee, and Focus Groups work together in bringing the plan to fruition, overseen by the Club Planner. It is good practise to invite everyone in the Club and Community back for a launch of the Club Development Plan at the end of the twelve weeks.

Moving forward the Club Development Plan should be the Club's roadmap for the next five years. At the end of each year the Club should reflect and report on progress made, and rationalise the reasons for any amendments to the Plan. Towards the end of the fifth year the process should be repeated to ensure the Club always has an active Club Development Plan operating in the Club.