

# The GAA Pavilion

*An Clubtheach CLG*

The basic building blocks of today's GAA are pitches and pavilions which complement each other in practical and meaningful ways. A good pavilion allows a Club to get the best out of its pitch(es) but will also help it drive forward every other aspect of its GAA business.

## Starting at the Beginning

It's a rule of good design that 'form follows function'. GAA pavilions should reflect that and be designed to reflect the Club's needs and deliver its business, current and future.

Clubs should begin by working through the pitch development template set out in Advice Note 19 and applying its principles to the planning of their pavilion.

Whether you're designing a pavilion from scratch or renovating/improving an existing building, good practice also tells us to:

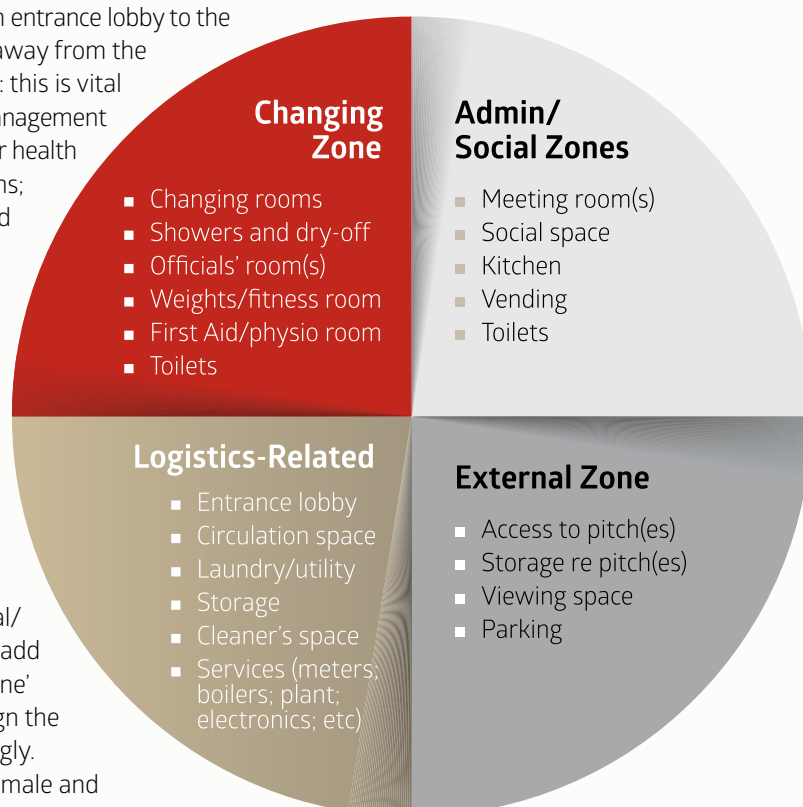
- Always include an entrance lobby to the building (ideally away from the prevailing winds): this is vital for the proper management of the building; for health and safety reasons; and for good child protection
- Think in terms of three basic zones within the building, principally a 'changing/showers/toilets' zone; a 'club administration' zone; and a 'social/activities' zone ... add in an 'external zone' ... and try to design the building accordingly.
- Think also about male and

female use of the pavilion and its facilities.

- Avoid upstairs changing rooms.
- Be efficient in terms of circulation space: it costs as much to build and maintain this space as it does re changing rooms etc.
- Orientate the building East/West so it gets the best use of the sun-light.
- Locate the building where it delivers the best combination in terms of use of the overall site; access to pitches; links to parking; and access to/from the 'outside world' beyond the Club.
- Think about including a viewing area re the pitch(es) ... but if you do, avoid having it facing the setting sun

## The GAA Pavilion Shopping List

GAA Club pavilions should ideally include most if not all of the components below:



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## The Changing Zone

Most Clubs will require a minimum of four changing rooms. These should be able to accommodate panels of thirty players plus coaches/managers/back-up teams (often five/six people, most of whom will also require changing space).

All new GAA changing facilities should also accommodate women: this effectively means the provision of individual, screened showers. Power-points for hairdryers and 'grooming areas' are also important.

In many Ulster Counties two blocks of two changing rooms, each block with a shared shower area works well as it reflects their Adult Leagues' home/away and First Team/Reserves fixtures configurations.

When scoping out what a Club may require re changing provision, good practice suggests:

- Changing room floor-space of 1.2 sq m per person: that's 40/45 sq m for a full adult panel and back-up people.
- Changing room bench space of 500mm (by 450mm deep and 450mm above floor level) per person: that's 15/20m of bench space for a full adult panel and back-up people.
- One shower point for every three/four people; 1.0 sq m shower floor-space per shower point; and 1.0 sq m of drying space per shower point: that's 8/12 shower points and 16/24 sq m of shower area for a full adult panel and back-up people.
- If showers are placed on opposing walls they should be 2.5m apart to allow for circulation.
- Individual shower units/cubicles – which should always now be provided to meet the needs of the women's Gaelic games - will increase the space needs.
- Two WCs and two wash-hand basins per changing room or 'changing block'.

- Non-slip ceramic tiles on all floors: ceramic tiles on all walls.
- A temperature of 20/22C and good ventilation: changing-rooms provide conditions that are ideal for condensation and mould growth ... and these have to be prevented.
- Lighting of 100/150 Lux.

Ice-baths are also now an established part of the GAA and a built-in one will typically occupy a space of 2m x 1m x 1m. They need to have a water supply; drainage system; be tiled; and have built-in steps and hand-rails.

There should never be any cross-over between shower areas and any other part/use of the pavilion. All changing room door-ways should include internal sight screens. Doors should be solid and have kick-plates fitted.

Changing rooms should avoid including windows though roof-lights work well.

Officials also need changing rooms. These should:

- Be able to accommodate a team of seven officials, ie contain about 8 sq m of floor-space.
- Include a hot-water shower; WC; and wash-hand basin.
- Include about 4m of bench space.
- Provide secure lockers; a small table; good lighting; a mirror; and drinking water.

Clubs need to be aware that with the growth of ladies football in particular, mixed gender teams of officials are increasingly common and should try to provide accordingly.

## Admin/Social Zones

In today's world be wary of the 'multi-purpose' space which is hoped to cater

for everything from physical training; to meetings; to after-match hospitality; to youth discos; to social events; to storage: people increasingly want fit-for-purpose provision ... and, for example, don't want to attend a social/entertainment event where the smell of stale sweat still hangs in the air.

Each Club will have its own needs and solutions but tips here include:

- Include good meeting space: Club Committees drive the Club and need to be given quality 'meeting resources'.
- An 'events space' that's smaller than 8m x 4m x 3m will be of little use.
- Short-mat bowls require a space of 15m x 2.6m plus some margins.
- Be tuned into the importance of good acoustics.
- Be aware of the need for and potential of vending machines.
- Also recognise the potential for promoting and selling Club merchandise.
- Include somewhere for refuse bins to be safely stored between collections.

## Logistics

To work well a GAA pavilion has to include facilities; spaces; and resources which are not directly games-related. These will include:

- Circulation space to 'tie the building together': this should be spacious; attractive; and effective in terms of moving people around and within zones
- Laundry/utility: washing jerseys/playing gear is increasingly a job that is done within pavilions and space and equipment for washing; drying; and storing should be designed in
- Cleaner's space is needed to store equipment; materials; and protective clothing: a mop sink should be included as well as a wash-hand basin
- Services (which become more complex as pavilions become more complex): space needs to be identified for meters; boilers; plant; electronics; etc. It should be located to minimise the piping; cabling; and ducting needed and to ensure ease of access for maintenance and replacement.

- Storage: this will include games-related storage as well as that linked into the Club's administration and its social events. The space needed can be significant (eg for chairs and tables) and may work best if distributed throughout the pavilion.

Signage should never be just an after-thought but should be treated as central to how the building will work for its users. Signs tend to have one of four roles and should be planned accordingly:

- Giving information (about services; facilities; activities; 'what's on'; etc).
- Directional, showing where things are.
- Identification or 'labelling' things (usually doors; entrances; and spaces).
- Safety and regulation.

Visual technology (eg flat-screens) now provides added scope for effective signage, particularly in terms of providing information to people.

## External Zone

Again much of this will be down to 'horses for courses' but basic principles include:

- Locate disabled parking close to the entrance: 5% of all parking spaces should be disabled-specific.
- It is a good idea to reserve parking spaces for match officials.
- Ensure surfaces are non-slip and areas are well-lit and well-drained.
- Avoid light-coloured paving/surfaces as it will reflect glare.
- If a children's play area is being considered, think about its location vis-à-vis and its relationship with the pavilion.

Planning Approval for the pavilion may come with car-parking requirements attached. In terms of provision, car spaces should each measure 4.8m x 2.4m whilst coach spaces each take up 14m x 3.5m.

## Putting the Gaelic Polish on Things

A GAA pavilion should be more than just a functional building. It should 'sell' what the GAA and the Club are about. Simple ways of doing this include:

- Clearly labelling the pavilion on the outside as "ABC GAA Club".
- Use of Irish in all signage.
- Branding of the building with the Club crest, including indirect use of the images that make up the crest.
- Use of Club colours in the pavilion (though it can also be a good idea to use a colour-coding scheme to differentiate the pavilion's various zones).
- Inclusion of Gaelic Art.
- Use of local place-names and/or deceased individuals to name parts of/rooms in the pavilion.

