

CUMANN
NA MBUNSCOL



**MORE THAN JUST
CHILD'S PLAY ...**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2007 - 2012**

CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL

**SCOI
SPORT**



CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

Children who live with criticism, learn to condemn.

Children who live with hostility, learn to fight.

Children who live with ridicule, learn to be shy.

Children who live with shame, learn to be guilty.

Children who live with tolerance, learn to be patient.

Children who live with encouragement, learn confidence.

Children who live with praise, learn to appreciate.

Children who live with fairness, learn justice.

Children who live with approval, learn to like themselves.

Children who live with acceptance and friendship, learn to find love in the world.

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TO HAVE GAELIC GAMES THE GAMES OF CHOICE FOR IRELAND'S PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN





Teachtaireacht an Uachtaráin CLG

I am delighted to be afforded this opportunity to pen a few words on the publication of your Strategic Plan.

Cumann na mBunscol has had a wonderfully positive effect on the GAA since it was founded in 1971. Literally hundreds of thousands of young footballers and hurlers have begun their careers in Cumann na mBunscol competitions. Many have had the honour of pulling on their county colours for the first time in games organised in conjunction with the provincial championships while a select few have even graced the sod of Croke Park on All-Ireland Final day. It is fair to say many might never have done so without the positive influence of this wonderful organisation.

The Association nationally owes a great debt of gratitude to all those who continue to ensure that our games continue to blossom in primary schools. The commitment and dedication of those involved in the promotion of hurling and football at this level on a voluntary basis is truly heroic and for this we offer our humble thanks.

Those who founded Cumann na mBunscol initiated excellent structures which have served you well through the years. The great social and demographic changes that have occurred in Ireland over the last 10 years now pose an altogether new set of challenges for those who promote our games. In this context, I welcome the publication of this Strategic Plan as it offers an opportunity to take stock of the long road you have travelled and to plan for the future in a rational and deliberate manner. Such foresight and the continued hard work of all those associated with Cumann na mBunscol throughout the country will go a long way to ensuring that Gaelic sports remain to the fore in Irish schools for a very long time to come.

Tá éacht déanta ag Cumann na mBunscol dúinn 'sna Bunscoileanna is táimid fíor bhuíoch daoibh uile.



Nioclás O Braonáin,
Uachtarán

INTRODUCTION

Margaret Cunningham (Cathaoirleach Cumann na mBunscol)

Many people have asked the question why does Cumann na mBunscol need a Strategic Plan. After a third of a century it is very appropriate for Cumann na mBunscol to review itself and its work and to set out a strategic way ahead. In that understanding, Cumann na mBunscol was particularly keen to:

- Build on its achievements to date
- Respond to the many and significant changes in the Ireland of the 21st. century
- Provide a bright and prosperous future in Gaelic games for the up-and-coming generations of Irish children
- Create positive attitudes towards our national culture and heritage
- Support the teaching of Gaelic games in a developmentally appropriate and inclusive manner



The importance of the work of Cumann na mBunscol knows no boundaries for children, schools, the GAA and the country as a whole. Cumann na mBunscol exists because the GAA exists. Cumann na mBunscol works within a formal constitution and has a structure that reflects that of the GAA overall.

Primary schools can survive without the GAA but the GAA can't survive without primary schools. The 2,900 schools that participate in Cumann na mBunscol are spread across the island of Ireland. As a result Cumann na mBunscol has a number of target markets, e.g. children, teachers, parents and others in the GAA.

Our Strategic Plan outlines many ways in which our Gaelic games etc. can be promoted to better effect. It is vital that both Cumann na mBunscol and the GAA work hand-in-glove at National, Provincial, County and local/Club levels.

Little did Tom Garry, Peadar Mac Craith, Martin Kitterick and Pat Guthrie realize when they were setting up a national body in 1971 to promote Gaelic games in Primary Schools that Cumann na mBunscol would become the largest sports organisation within the primary education system in Ireland.

We are very fortunate in Cumann na mBunscol to have committee members who are full of enthusiasm and very progressive in their thoughts and actions. Over the years as a result of their hard work, all 32 counties and the London, Hertfordshire & Warwickshire Primary Schools' GAA Boards have well organised committees comprising of Primary Schools' teachers who promote and organise Gaelic games for the primary schools in their counties. Several children receive national acclaim through the Mini-Sevens exhibition games at half-time during major GAA matches. Some children would never have been introduced to Gaelic games only for Primary Schools.

Boys' and girls' football, hurling and camogie, handball and rounders are the games promoted by each County Committee. Some counties also organise athletics, quizzes and other projects of a GAA/Educational content e.g. the Gaelic Telecom Awards and the O'Neill's Awards.



INTRODUCTION

The success of Cumann na mBunscol lies in the development and delivery of a wide programme of activities across each county. However we cannot rest on our laurels. In recent years the following programmes were developed but are still in their infancy stages:

- promotion of indoor hurling and football
- the “Young Whistlers” referees programme
- building a presence in Britain.

With time and commitment the above will become as well established as our leagues, athletics, quizzes etc. However in order to make this possible we will have to make Cumann na mBunscol more attractive to our teachers and especially our female teachers as volunteerism and male teachers seem to be on the decline. We will also have to address the growing numbers of ethnic minority populations. Primary Schools are an ideal location to welcome and integrate ethnic minorities into our Irish culture and games.

There are many challenges facing Gaelic games and we have to respond effectively to these ongoing changes and needs. They include:

- Unprecedented economic prosperity and the effects this has had on volunteerism
- The growing numbers of ethnic minority populations
- A sedentary lifestyle which has led to an alarming rate of childhood obesity
- The dramatic population shifts which result in a sense of not belonging
- Attractiveness of other professional sports. We have to ensure that Gaelic games and their uniqueness are not swamped or pushed aside by others who are more powerful than us in some ways.
- Fewer teachers becoming involved in after school activities due to family constraints
- Too much emphasis on competition. We should be encouraging participation as this will make Gaelic games more inclusive rather than exclusive.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the compilation of our Strategic Plan. There was widespread consultation and views were sought from many people involved in the GAA family. A special thank you to Mark Conway, Niall Laird and the National Committee of Cumann na mBunscol who met on numerous occasions to prepare a draft on our Strategic Plan. Mile buiochas freisin to Paul Duggan and Pat McGivern who played a pivotal role with Mark Conway in the early stages of our Strategic Plan.

We should all embrace the Strategic Plan because Cumann na mBunscol has a significant role to play in the promotion of our Gaelic games and culture. President Mary McAleese was very much aware of this when she made the following statement at our National Awards a few years ago: “On a September Sunday in Croke Park, when we watch the cream of hurlers and footballers, male and female, it is worth reminding ourselves where it all starts, where the seeds are sown. Cumann na mBunscol can lay claim to a significant part of the credit for the dynamism that typifies Gaelic games all over Ireland.”

Margaret Cunningham
Cathaoirleach Cumann na mBunscol

CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL: THE STORY SO FAR

Origins

Cumann na mBunscol was established in 1971 with the aim of developing as a national body to promote Gaelic games in Ireland’s primary schools. For its first decade it was concentrated in Munster and Leinster but now has Coiste in all 32 Counties and in Britain. From its minimalist beginnings it has developed a presence from the very local to the national levels, becoming the largest sporting organization within Ireland’s primary education sector. It has also achieved a position of respect within the GAA; educational; business; and government sectors.

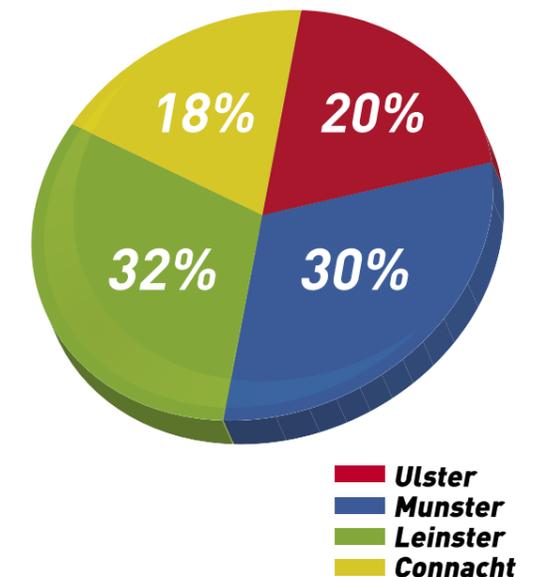
Role and remit

The role of Cumann na mBunscol is to promote, in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment, the national games of Ireland within primary education. It works across a full spectrum of Gaelic games, i.e. boys and girls football; hurling; camogie; rounders; and handball. In also promoting athletics, Cumann na mBunscol also holds true to a focus of the original GAA. It has a “market base” of almost 2,900 primary schools across Ireland. Those schools range in size from just a few to 1,000 or more pupils and can vary greatly in terms of their settings and the scope and quality of their facilities, both sporting and educational.

Structure

Cumann na mBunscol works within a formal constitution and has a structure that reflects that of the GAA overall with an integrated County; Provincial; and National hierarchy. Each County has its Management Committee, elected annually at an AGM of all participating schools. Provincial Committees are in turn elected by the Counties on an annual basis. Finally a National Committee is elected annually by delegates from the Counties and Provinces.

The 2,900 schools that participate in Cumann na mBunscol are spread across Ireland as follows:



Performance

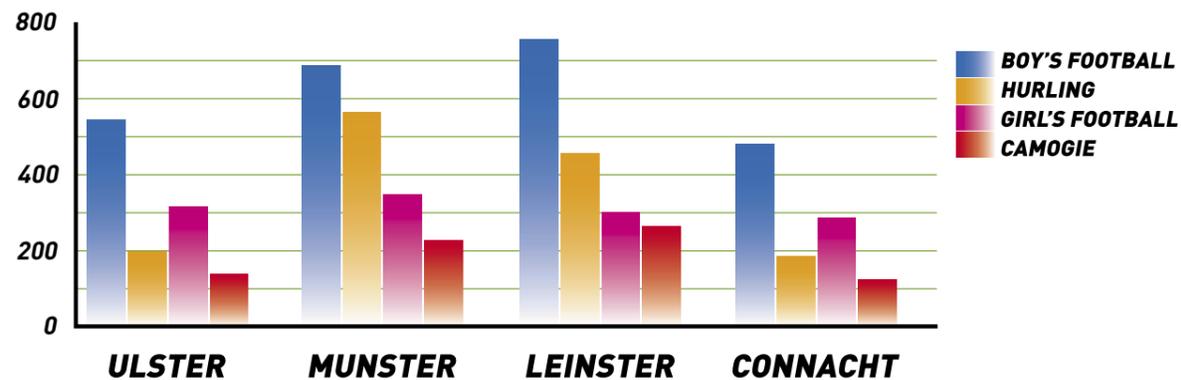
The main strategic success of Cumann na mBunscol over the past third-of-a-century has been its growth and increased strength throughout Ireland. During that time its landmark achievements have included:

- development and delivery of a wide programme of activities across each county
- development of the Mini-Sevens exhibition games at half-time during major GAA matches
- establishment of annual awards schemes (currently sponsored by Gaelic Telecom and O’Neills)
- promotion of indoor hurling and football
- the “Young Whistlers” referees programme
- building a presence in Britain



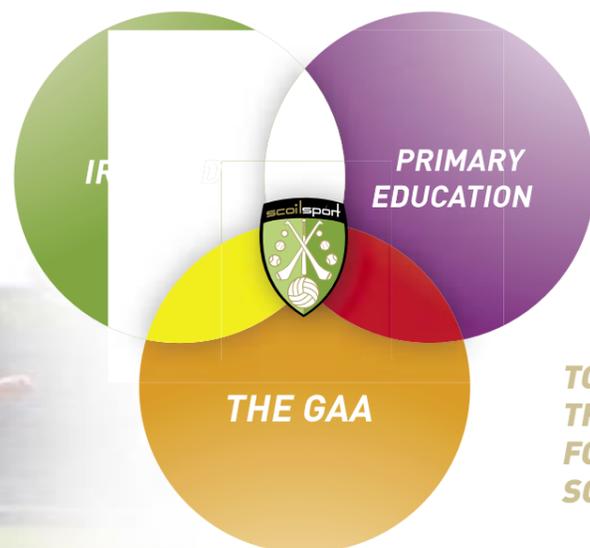
CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL: THE STORY SO FAR

Whilst Cumann na mBunscol has effectively led the way in the equal promotion of Gaelic games for girls, the national pattern remains one where the boys' games have primacy (although in both Ulster and Connacht, girls' football is stronger than boys hurling):



Cumann na mBunscol has achieved a great deal. But it still has more to do. That includes more of the same ... and new, additional work. For Cumann na mBunscol how things are done is as important as what is done. This Plan aims to show how all this can be taken forward.

Where Cumann na mBunscol Fits In



**TO HAVE GAELIC GAMES
THE GAMES OF CHOICE
FOR IRELAND'S PRIMARY
SCHOOL CHILDREN**

THE WORLDS CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL WORKS IN

What we mean by this

Cumann na mBunscol does not operate in a vacuum. Neither is it just an end in itself. It is, rather, a means of helping achieve a whole series of important aspirations and objectives. Cumann na mBunscol wants to fit comfortably and effectively within its various contexts ... to respond effectively to ongoing changes and needs ... and to deliver value to, in particular, the primary school children of Ireland. It's important therefore that it has a clear understanding of what those contexts are. Part of our strategy development process thus focused on progressing that understanding. There are three contexts particularly critical for Cumann na mBunscol – Ireland the country; primary education; and the GAA.

Ireland: as it is and as it's changing

For most of the lifetime of Cumann na mBunscol Ireland was a place of limited opportunity and wealth, a place that many of its dynamic young people wanted to leave rather than remain in. It was a country of a slower pace and where traditional institutions; beliefs; and standards held sway. Ireland was effectively a series of small places, in many ways isolated from each other and the rest of the world. Parts of it were also consumed by the conflict that really began to rage around about the time Cumann na mBunscol was founded.

Over the past decade in particular many of Ireland's traditions, good and not-so-good alike, have been swept away. Chief amongst the features of the new Ireland are:

- unprecedented economic prosperity and wealth (although not for everyone) leading to:
 - parents/adults with no spare time
 - dramatically increased childminding
 - a focus on consumerism
 - people wanting/insisting on the "best in class"

- growing ethnic minority populations
- more sedentary lifestyles (children preferring play-stations; computer games; etc) and associated obesity and other health issues
- population shifts; growing towns and cities ... and some acute inner city problems; much less focus on attachment-to-place
- growing community apathy ... and a decline in volunteering generally
- dramatic changes in social and kinship patterns and a diminution in traditional authority
- Ireland now firmly fixed in a global economy and society

- Nearly 5.9 million people now live in Ireland ... an increase of almost 1.7 million since 1961: the Republic's population grew by 8% in 2002-06
- The country is now about two-thirds urban and one-third rural
- In 2002-06 County Meath alone grew by nearly 29,000 people ... the equivalent of the entire population of County Leitrim
- Average household sizes are now 2.7 (NI) and 2.9 (Republic): in 1926 the average was 4.5
- In 2005 alone over 100,000 new houses were built in Ireland
- By 2020 one person-in-five in Ireland is likely to be a migrant: we now have for example 160,000 Polish people in Ireland ... more than there are of Wexford or Kerry or Mayo or Donegal people
- Ireland has about 125,000 lone parent families: in 2005 36% of births in the Republic were outside marriage
- In the Republic 7% of people (nearly 0.3m) and 10% of children (nearly 0.09m) are in Consistent Poverty



THE WORLDS CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL WORKS IN

Education: as it is and as it's changing

During the lifetime of Cumann na mBunscol primary education in Ireland has also changed dramatically. The change has been constant and has ranged across how people see education; how education is managed; the purpose and content of the curriculum; and the role of the teacher. Some of the consequences of this are:

- curriculum pressures and overload and associated pressures on teachers: greater emphasis on the achievement of academic results
- huge obligations in terms of health and safety and child protection
- primary education rapidly becoming a "male-and-religious-order-free-zone"
- limited availability of teachers and children after school hours
- the PE curriculum bringing in sports other than Gaelic games (albeit Gaelic games are seen to have a particular place): reduced time generally for Gaelic games
- fewer teachers volunteering for "after school" activities
- fewer teachers from a "traditional GAA background"
- growing issues re discipline
- the rationalisation of schools in many areas

- there are around 585,000 primary school pupils in Ireland
- of nearly 26,300 Primary teachers in the Republic, some 22,000 (83%) are women: of 3,550 in training, 3150 (89%) are women
- a third of the Republic's primary schools have three teachers or fewer; a third have 4 - 7 teachers; and a third have eight or more
- over 1,200 of the Republic's primary schools (37%) have women-only staff
- primary teaching has been dominated by women for some time: in 1970, only 35% of the Republic's primary teachers were men
- about 20% of Irish children are reckoned to be overweight

The GAA: as it is and as it's changing

The GAA has always been in and of Ireland and for an organisation widely assumed to be traditional and even conservative, has consistently been one of our most dynamic and innovative organisations. The Association reflects much of the new Ireland but is equally good at holding to strategic positions and principles. The main GAA issues that influence Cumann na mBunscol have been identified as follows:

- huge growth in the profile; popularity; and status of Gaelic games
- increased "professionalization" at the higher levels, raising the risk of alienating and/or leaving behind the grass-roots
- the need to foster and grow Gaelic games in new urban settings
- the surge in interest in women's football
- the new, iconic status of Croke Park
- burn-out of the brightest and best and associated concerns that fun is being replaced by drudgery in the GAA
- soaring sophistication in terms of coaching and player/team preparation
- periodic lack of communication and collaboration between GAA colleagues
- the SRC recommendation that for children up to 14 the emphasis should be on coaching and regular games ... but based on participation, not competition

- The GAA has about 2,700 affiliated Clubs: 583 (21%) in Ulster; 669 (25%) in Munster; 1096 (40%) in Leinster; 275 (10%) in Connacht; and 85 (3%) in Britain
- An estimated 0.5million people in Ireland play Gaelic games regularly in a formal, structured way
- Over 2 million people attended the GAA inter-County Championships in 2005



DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

Why the work was done

After a third of a century it is very appropriate for any organisation to review itself and its work and to set out a strategic way ahead. In that understanding, Cumann na mBunscol was particularly keen to:

- build on its achievements to date
- respond to the many and significant changes in its working environments
- take Gaelic games forward to best effect in the primary education setting.

It also recognized that it faced parallel issues in terms of both its image/identity and its own governance, i.e. how it does its business.

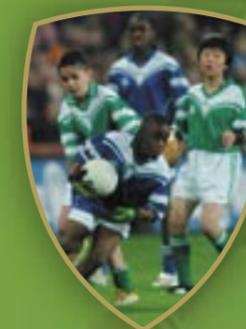
How the work was done

Cumann na mBunscol is, simply, in; of; and for both primary schools and the GAA. Any worthwhile strategic review and planning process had to reflect and capitalise on those realities. Accordingly, this Plan was developed out of a process led by a small planning group put in place by the National Committee. That process was substantively based on a widespread consultation which sought the views of:

- those directly involved in managing and delivering Cumann na mBunscol
- other primary teachers not as heavily involved
- other GAA stakeholders
- people involved in other aspects of education
- people involved in other aspects of sport.

The consultation processes/events used included discussions with the National Committee; a discussion with delegates at the September 2006 General Meeting; questionnaire surveys of primary teachers/schools (both those heavily involved and those not); and discussions with people across the GAA family. Finally, almost 80 people from all of those backgrounds, and representing 24 different Counties, all four Provinces and Britain, came together in a structured planning workshop held in Na Fianna GAC, Dublin in November 2006. In all, well over 200 people contributed directly to the analyses and discussions.

Meanwhile, the consultation input was informed and complemented by a number of analyses carried out in the background.





CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL: THE STATE OF PLAY



The Core Issues

Cumann na mBunscol, through its own ongoing business and its periodic internal discussions, had already identified a number of strategic issues facing it and its work. The consultation feedback added to this and as the planning process developed, it became clear that Cumann na mBunscol's future well-being was woven in and around eight frequently-related headings. Those headings form the framework around which this Strategic Plan is structured and are outlined briefly in turn below.

Coming to terms with the "new" Ireland

Ireland is no longer the country it was and will never return to being that country again. The main features of the new Ireland that Cumann na mBunscol needs to reflect are:

- it's now a place of increased wealth ... but also one of, in places, acute poverty and social exclusion
- economic prosperity mean people have much less "non-work related" time
- greater mobility has significantly reduced people's attachment-to-place
- family/household patterns continue to change and fluctuate, with consequences for primary school children
- a "me too" culture has emerged, bringing with it less interest in community and in volunteering
- teachers and others don't have the status they once had.

In that Ireland, sport is increasingly seen as having a value well beyond games themselves. Sport, and particularly Gaelic sport, build social capital; improve health status; and provide important, structured frameworks for young people. The significance of Gaelic games is now greater than ever.

Being more inclusive

As Ireland changes it becomes much more diverse. The notion of equality runs through every sphere of activity, with its traditional ethical underpinnings now supported by the law of the land. For most of its life the GAA was essentially male; Catholic; and white ... and concerned with football and hurling. Cumann na mBunscol takes a particularly wide view of inclusion and the areas it now wants to look more closely at include:

- achieving a proper place for girls and women and their Gaelic games
- responding to ethnic minority children, welcoming and integrating them
- promoting and delivering rounders and handball as part of the GAA portfolio
- dealing with the culture/heritage aspects of the GAA in the primary school setting

The teacher gender (im)balance

Primary school teaching has been; is now; and will be for the foreseeable future, the realm of women, not men. Men still tend to dominate the management of primary schools but that too will rapidly change. The emerging issues here include:

- the need for Cumann na mBunscol to reflect a women-dominated profession
- making Gaelic games and their management more "women friendly"
- addressing gender stereotypes
- working more closely with those involved in teacher training.

Responding to the competition

Gaelic games are the core business of Cumann na mBunscol. And Gaelic games have many competitors, both sporting and otherwise. Most of these are commercially-based; have a global presence; and enjoy vast resources, financial and otherwise. Some, for example computer

games, are more insidious and less obvious, but are competitors to Gaelic games nonetheless. Cumann na mBunscol is not about "defeating" any other sport or activity ... but it is about ensuring that Gaelic games and their uniqueness are not swamped or pushed aside by others who are more powerful in some ways.

Making GAA activity happen in primary schools

Good strategic analysis and thinking that lack implementation at the day-to-day level are of little value. Ultimately Cumann na mBunscol will be judged by the children and others on the basis of what they see delivered in and around the primary school setting. The key associated issues therefore include:

- fitting Gaelic games into an increasingly pressurised school day
- providing and funding equipment/gear for the games; accessing pitches; and obtaining transport
- "in school" coaching input
- moving beyond the games ... and reducing the emphasis on competition/winning

Marketing and promotion

Good products that are well-hidden benefit neither their producers nor their potential consumers. The marketing and promotion dimension cuts across virtually every one of the strategic issues discussed in this Section and is fundamentally central to the health of Cumann na mBunscol; its work; and Gaelic games generally in primary schools. The main sub-issues identified here include:

- the fact that Cumann na mBunscol has a number of target markets, e.g. children; teachers; parents; and others in the GAA
- its image and awareness levels
- promoting and celebrating Cumann na mBunscol and Gaelic games
- developing the role of sponsorship, including

events and awards

- communication within and beyond Cumann na mBunscol

Cumann na mBunscol and the wider GAA

Cumann na mBunscol exists because the GAA exists. Its purpose is to promote and deliver Gaelic games. The GAA's SRC report outlines many ways in which that can be done to better effect. Whilst it's vital that both organisations should work hand-in-glove, in seamless ways, that hasn't always been the case. That lack of synergy has been found at the National; Provincial; County; and local/Club levels. Among the areas to be addressed are:

- developing and maintaining Club/school links
- developing and maintaining County; Provincial; and GAA HQ links
- connections into/liaison with second level education
- rolling out the Grassroots to National programme and other national GAA initiatives

"Minding our own business": the governance of Cumann na mBunscol

The phrase "fit for purpose" now runs right across organisational life in Ireland. It's a basic concept ... essentially meaning that if the vehicle that delivers the business isn't right, then neither will the business itself be as good as it should be. In organisational terms then, Cumann na mBunscol has to be as good as it can be. That means its governance, how it manages and delivers its business, is and will remain a core strategic issue. The main areas of focus here include:

- being "businesslike" and improving our business practices and procedures
- getting our fixtures; events; and activities right
- ensuring officer turnover/new blood
- introducing other dimensions to Cumann na mBunscol business, e.g. health and well-being.



SWOT ANALYSIS

On the basis of the discussions in and around the areas outline above, a SWOT analysis (Strengths; Weaknesses; Opportunities; and Threats) of Cumann na mBunscol was drawn up. It followed the traditional approach in that:

- Strengths and Weaknesses are things internal to Cumann na mBunscol, over which it has control
- Opportunities and Threats are external things ... over which it has no control but to which it must or should respond

 STRENGTHS	 WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established track record • Range of activities covered • Committed people involved • Presence across Ireland's primary Schools • Mini-Sevens games • National awards programmes • Growing sponsorship portfolio • Links with the GAA • Clarity of purpose • Focus on the child and his/her well-being and protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all Coiste at the same levels • Low officer turnover in places • Poor links/liaison with other parts of the GAA • Over-emphasis on competition • Over-emphasis on boys' games • Poor image/recognition levels • Lower involvement of women teachers
 OPPORTUNITIES	 THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing popularity of the GAA • Presence of ethnic minority children • Overall health/well-being agenda • "Go Games" model • Collaboration with rest of the GAA • Focus on culture and heritage • New, growing urban communities • The Equality agenda • Ireland's wealth • Delivering on health/safety and child protection requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less time/space within curriculum • Teacher burnout • Increasing workload associated with legislative requirements • Growing power of other games • Reduction in volunteer input • Globalisation of sport • "Price-of-everything" mentality • Decline of some rural communities

OUR STRATEGY TO SECURE THE NEXT GENERATION

Our vision, mission and guiding principles

Cumann na mBunscol essentially works to a vision that is both ambitious and plainly put:

"To have Gaelic games the games of choice for Ireland's primary school children"

It recognises that the achievement of this vision will of course require an input from many other GAA stakeholders. Cumann na mBunscol's specific contribution – or its mission – will be:

"To foster, promote and deliver the national games to children, parents and teachers in the primary school setting, at the same time creating positive attitudes towards our national culture and heritage"

In taking forward this work, Cumann na mBunscol will be guided by a number of core principles. Those, which effectively govern "the way we do things around here", are as follows:

- In all our work, the safety and well-being of the child will be paramount
- Our games will be delivered in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment, one that is open and welcoming to all, regardless of background, tradition or ability: we will offer, not impose, Gaelic games
- We will continue to appreciate that Gaelic games are there to bring value to the children and to the school setting ... rather than vice versa
- We will work and liaise positively with other colleagues elsewhere ... in education; the GAA; other sports; and community and political life
- We will continue to sustain and acknowledge volunteerism
- Gaelic games and Irish culture will be seen as assets to be cherished and celebrated

Cumann na mBunscol's plans to achieve its mission are outlined below.

Our Five Strategic Themes

Whilst the planning process teased out the various issues under eight different headings, it became apparent that the tasks needed to deliver Cumann na mBunscol's ongoing well-being and effectiveness could most meaningfully be grouped under five different themes. These incorporate all the issues discussed earlier – for instance the teacher gender imbalance runs across all five – and can be represented as follows:





Glossary:
NatCom National Committee, Cumann na mBunscol
ProvCom Provincial Committees, Cumann na mBunscol
CoCom County Committees, Cumann na mBunscol
GAANat GAA at National level
GAAProv GAA at Provincial level
GAACo GAA at County level
Clubs GAA at Club level
All All the above
Short Short term, i.e. by 2008
Medium Medium term, i.e. by 2010
Long Long term, i.e. by 2012

THEME 1

REFLECTING THE NEW IRELAND AND INCLUDING EVERYBODY

Rationale

Cumann na mBunscol wants to reflect and respond to the realities of the new Ireland. It also wants to be inclusive ... and sees inclusion running across gender (both of teachers and pupils); ethnic minorities; people of different abilities; and the full spectrum of Gaelic games.

WHAT we will do to develop this theme	WHO needs to lead and be involved	What RESOURCES will be needed	The ideal TIMESCALE	How success will be MEASURED
Develop and disseminate a specific Cumann na mBunscol Charter, based on principles of inclusion; fair play; personal growth; volunteerism; and enjoyment	NatCom All	Time and finance	Short	Charter agreed and in place
Use "Ceim ar Aghaidh" as a resource in all schools to promote the completeness of Gaelic games	NatCom	No additional	Short	"Ceim ar Aghaidh" used in 75% of schools
Adapt the "Go Games" model in all schools to suit the primary school setting and to ensure the widest possible participation, regardless of children's backgrounds or levels of ability. Identify roles (e.g. Public Relations Officer) for children unable to actively participate.	NatCom All	Facilities and playing gear/equipment	Short	"Go Games" played in 90% of schools
Develop a briefing brochure on the completeness/inclusiveness of Gaelic games and distribute to all primary schools	NatCom GAANat	Time and finance	Short	Leaflet published and circulated
Develop and implement a strategy of recruiting women teachers into the work and management of Cumann na mBunscol	NatCom ProvCom; CoCom	Time	Medium	Women to comprise at least 40% of Committees
Develop and implement a strategy of improving parental involvement in Cumann na mBunscol	NatCom ProvCom; CoCom	Time	Long	Parents involved with 50% of schools
Contribute to the ongoing Gaelic games integration process by developing a Cumann na mBunscol-specific Good Practice Guidance Note based on existing successful practice in primary schools across Ireland	NatCom ProvCom; CoCom	Time and finance	Medium	Note drafted and circulated to all schools
Offer "full" membership to Coiste based in Britain	NatCom	No additional	Short	Membership achieved
Ensure an adapted version of Rounders (as a powerful vehicle for inclusion) is offered in every participating primary school	CoCom	Time; facilities; and playing gear/equipment	Medium	Rounders played in 90% of schools
Seek a national-level GAA input to Teacher Training Colleges to outline the key social and inclusion roles of the GAA and Gaelic games	GAANat	Time	Short	Annual input achieved
Lobby GAA at national and provincial levels to provide free Foundation and Level 1 coaching courses aimed specifically at women primary teachers	NatCom ProvCom GAANat GAAProv	Finance (at GAA national and provincial levels)	Short	Courses available once a year in all Provinces

THEME 2

MAKING GAELIC GAMES HAPPEN IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Rationale

The delivery of Gaelic games and associated activities within the primary school setting is the core business of Cumann na mBunscol. It is vital that this work is done effectively and efficiently.

WHAT we will do to develop this theme	WHO needs to lead and be involved	What RESOURCES will be needed	The ideal TIMESCALE	How success will be MEASURED
Produce and circulate to all primary teachers a short leaflet outlining what Cumann na mBunscol is and what it does. Produce a DVD version of same.	NatCom	Time and finance	Short	Leaflet circulated and copy of DVD in 80% of schools
Carry out within each County a Gaelic games facilities audit to establish what's available to primary schools, both "in house" and at "second hand" from Clubs and others	CoCom	Time	Short	Audit completed
Work with GAA County Committees to ensure primary schools' needs are reflected in County coaching strategies	CoCom GAACo	Time	Short	Collaboration in 90% of Counties
Develop an annual coaching template for Cumann na mBunscol schools which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> breaks the school year into 6 to 9 week "coaching blocks" makes best use of the final "summer" term includes a record or profile of each child's needs/progress identifies the coaching input required, including a strong focus on discipline outlines a range of coach education programmes tailored to primary children's needs identifies the time input required from teachers relates this overall input to the core curriculum 	NatCom All CoCom	Time	Short	Template developed and used in 75% of schools
Seek a dedicated Cumann na mBunscol notice-board in each school	NatCom	No additional	Short	Boards in 90% of schools
Ensure all coaching programmes undertaken by primary teachers (Fundamentals; Level 1; etc) are free of charge to the teacher	All	Finance	Short	All programmes free of charge
Ensure as many teacher coaching programmes as possible are run during the summer holiday break	ProvCom All	No additional	Medium	75% of programmes delivered in summer
Lobby all other parts of the GAA to ensure new GAA pitches can accommodate cross-field, underage pitches	NatCom All	No additional	Long	75% of new pitches meeting this standard
Lobby government/Depts of Education to recognise the significance of Gaelic games within the school curriculum and the voluntary input of teachers here	NatCom	No additional	Short	Government recognition of significance of Gaelic games
Seek full recognition from other parts of the GAA for the key roles played by Cumann na mBunscol volunteers in enthusing the young people of Ireland and beyond for our national games and past-times	NatCom ProvCom CoCom	No additional	Short	Appropriate recognition (e.g. via tickets) of volunteers' input
Establish for each County a database of involved teachers; Club/ other facilities that are available for Cumann na mBunscol use; and contact names and details. Publish/circulate these as appropriate.	CoCom GAACo Clubs	Time and finance	Medium	Databases in place in 75% of Counties
Monitor the content and quality of coaching delivered into schools from the outside to ensure it's appropriate to the primary setting	CoCom	Time	Medium	Counties reporting



THEME 3

WORKING HAND-IN-GLOVE WITH THE WIDER GAA

Rationale

Cumann na mBunscol is not an end in itself. It is rather a means to an end ... that end being the development and delivery of Gaelic games and all the richness associated with them. It is simply vital that collaboration with the wider GAA underpins all our work.

WHAT we will do to develop this theme	WHO needs to lead and be involved	What RESOURCES will be needed	The ideal TIMESCALE	How success will be MEASURED
Ensure all County Coiste make full use of their representation at County Committee level (e.g. by requesting a Cumann na mBunscol "reporting slot" at each meeting)	CoCom	Time	Short	80% attendance at meetings
Each primary school to identify its "parent" Club(s) and develop formal links with that Club. Links to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appointment of school liaison officer within the Club • complementary/shared branding between school and Club • direct support from the Club (financial; resources; coaching; use of facilities; in kind) • use by the Club of school pupils in projects; events; etc • annual meeting between school and Club officers 	CoCom Clubs	Time	Medium	75% of schools to have formal Club links
Develop links with local second level schools (e.g. by briefing them about the needs/abilities of transferring pupils and handing over of pupils' Gaelic games profiles and by showing overt support for those schools in their GAA activities)	CoCom	Time	Medium	75% of schools to have formal second level links
Seek Cumann na mBunscol involvement from the outset in all National and Provincial coaching and games development initiatives (e.g. Go Games and Ceim ar Aghaidh)	NatCom GAANat; GAAProv	Time	Short	Involvement in 100% of initiatives
Request a Cumann na mBunscol slot/input at all National and Provincial coaching conferences and similar events	NatCom GAANat; GAAProv	Time	Short	Involvement in 100% of events
Seek support for an annual "Gaelic games in Education" conference/workshop which will discuss Gaelic games-related issues across the primary; secondary; and third level sectors	NatCom All	Time and finance	Medium	Event held annually
Continue with and expand as appropriate the "Mini-Sevens" concept ... at Club; County; Provincial; and National levels	NatCom All	Time and finance	Medium	Mini-Sevens at 100% of AI and Provincial SFs and Finals and at 75% of County Finals

Glossary:
NatCom National Committee, Cumann na mBunscol
ProvCom Provincial Committees, Cumann na mBunscol
CoCom County Committees, Cumann na mBunscol
GAANat GAA at National level
GAAProv GAA at Provincial level
GAACo GAA at County level
Clubs GAA at Club level
All All the above
Short Short term, i.e. by 2008
Medium Medium term, i.e. by 2010
Long Long term, i.e. by 2012

THEME 4

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO: THE MARKETING AGENDA

Rationale

Cumann na mBunscol needs to constantly tell people who it is; what it's business is; and how it delivers its business. It also has a role in raising awareness of Gaelic games and Irish culture generally.

WHAT we will do to develop this theme	WHO needs to lead and be involved	What RESOURCES will be needed	The ideal TIMESCALE	How success will be MEASURED
Re-brand (i.e. new corporate image, including a new logo and possibly a new name and strapline) and re-launch Cumann na mBunscol, giving primacy to the organisation and its work	NatCom	Time and finance	Short	New image in place and used in all materials
Re-construct the Cumann na mBunscol website to reflect its new corporate image and its operations at the National; Provincial; and County levels. Identify an individual at each level charged with keeping the site up-to-date.	NatCom ProvCom; CoCom	Time and finance	Short	New website in place and updated weekly
The National Committee and each County Coiste will draw up and work to an annual PR plan which will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the issues/events to be profiled during the year • schedule when the profiling will be done • identify what media will be used The National Committee to identify one core theme each year which will form part of all Coistes' PR plans.	NatCom CoCom	Time	Short	National plan and 75% of County plans in place and worked to
Fund each County to provide a digital camera for Cumann na mBunscol uses	NatCom CoCom	Cash	Short	Cameras used in 90% of Counties
Draw up a sponsorship strategy for Cumann na mBunscol which will outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is available for sponsorship • length of sponsorship • appropriate types of sponsor • balances between National and more local sponsorship 	NatCom	Time	Medium	Strategy agreed and worked to
Devise, as part of the new corporate image, a plaque or other marker that will clearly identify Cumann na mBunscol-participating schools	NatCom	Time and finance	Medium	Plaques/markers displayed in 80% of participating schools
Draw up, using the GAA's "Club Mark" scheme, a Cumann na mBunscol Schools Quality Award scheme and integrate this into the Annual Awards event	NatCom All	Time	Long	Scheme in place and 50% of schools accredited by it
Develop a "From Cumann na mBunscol to Croke Park" theme which highlights (a) the potential for any child to play in Croke Park via the Mini-Sevens and (b) the journey noted inter-County players; referees; and administrators, men and women, have followed from Cumann na mBunscol to All-Ireland level	NatCom	Time and finance	Medium	Feature on this theme in every All-Ireland Senior Final programme
Put in place in each County an annual programme of visits by County players to primary schools	CoCom GAACo	Time	Medium	Each school visited once every two years
Each primary school to hold an annual event (in association with local Clubs/others as appropriate) celebrating Gaelic games and local participation in them	CoCom Clubs	Time	Medium	Events held by 60% of schools
Develop and circulate a brief "How To ..." guide to marketing the GAA for primary schools	NatCo	Time and finance	Medium	Guide distributed to all schools
Seek a dedicated Cumann na mBunscol page in all Provincial and National Finals programmes, with editorial to be provided by Cumann na mBunscol	NatCom ProvCom	Time	Short	Page made available in programmes
Commission a history of Cumann na mBunscol	NatCom	Time and finance	Long	History published for 40th anniversary in 2011



Glossary:
NatCom National Committee, Cumann na mBunscol
ProvCom Provincial Committees, Cumann na mBunscol
CoCom County Committees, Cumann na mBunscol
GAANat GAA at National level
GAAProv GAA at Provincial level
GAACo GAA at County level
Clubs GAA at Club level
All All the above
Short Short term, i.e. by 2008
Medium Medium term, i.e. by 2010
Long Long term, i.e. by 2012



THEME 5

FITNESS FOR PURPOSE: THE GOVERNANCE OF CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL

Rationale

Cumann na mBunscol's work is important and is taken seriously by it. That means it needs to have systems, procedures and ways of doing things that meet the highest standards. Second best just isn't good enough.

WHAT we will do to develop this theme	WHO needs to lead and be involved	What RESOURCES will be needed	The ideal TIMESCALE	How success will be MEASURED
Using the Cumann na mBunscol Constitution and good practice from elsewhere in the GAA and beyond, draw up a business template which outlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the roles and responsibilities of the various committees and their officers how often various committees should meet and for how long the way business should be dealt with how "five year officer turnover" can be achieved how "non-primary teachers" can usefully be involved in Cumann na mBunscol 	NatCom	Time	Short	Template used by all Committees
Reflecting the business template above and the GAA's Comhairle Programme, draw up and roll out a Cumann na mBunscol-specific officer/committee training programme, focusing in particular on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the significance of the primary schools sector to the GAA key aspects of corporate governance officers' roles and responsibilities practical marketing and promotion 	NatCom ProvCom; CoCom	Time and finance	Medium	75% of Counties taking part
Each County Coiste to draw up and submit to the Provincial and National Committees a short five year plan outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the basic GAA issues in their County the basic GAA issues in the primary schools sector plans/consequences of primary schools' growth and/or rationalisation other relevant issues, including those highlighted in this National plan resultant priorities for local Cumann na mBunscol action, including targets for achievement 	CoCom NatCom; ProvCom	Time	Medium	80% of Counties with plans in place
Seek an input to the GAA's Annual Report to Congress	NatCom GAANat	Time	Medium	Report published
Meet formally once a year with the County Chair or Secretary and Coaching Officer or GPO/GDO to ensure mutual awareness and cooperation	CoCom GAACo	Time	Short	Meetings taking place in 75% of Counties

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

Implementation and Managing Performance

This strategic plan puts forward almost 50 actions under five strategic themes or headings. It also presents a number of guiding principles which will govern the way these actions are taken forward.

Cumann na mBunscol is very aware that a plan without implementation has no value. As people working in education we appreciate the importance of performance; of setting targets; and of working towards those targets. We also recognise the importance of discipline as a thread through all that work.

We have tried to make our Plan "SMART", i.e. every action in it is Specific; Measurable; Agreed and Achievable; Relevant; and Timebound. To make sure we live up to the standards we have set, we intend to "performance manage" our business as follows:

- a Strategic Oversight Committee will be set up at National level
- that Committee will maintain an overview of the Plan's implementation
- twice a year the Strategic Plan will form an agenda item at National Committee meetings
- the Strategic Oversight Committee will report on performance/progress at Cumann na mBunscol's General Meeting in September each year
- the Plan will form an item for discussion at that Meeting
- each Provincial and County Coiste will, pending the development of their own Plans, be expected to formally assess their progress against the Plan at least once a year
- a clearly-specified project manager post will be created to manage the delivery of the plan for its first three years.

Cumann na mBunscol will seek, and then in turn allocate funding only on the basis of activity planned, or performance delivered, against the Strategic Plan.

Monitoring and Review

The approach outlined above will ensure the Plan is effectively monitored. After no more than three years a formal review of the Plan will take place. This review will include another widespread consultation, both within and beyond Cumann na mBunscol.





CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL



ANTRIM



ARMAGH



CARLOW



CAVAN



CLARE



CORK



DERRY



DONEGAL



DOWN



DUBLIN



FERMANAGH



GALWAY



HERTFORDSHIRE



KERRY



KILDARE



KILKENNY



LAOIS



LEITRIM



LIMERICK



LONDON



LONGFORD



LOUTH



MAYO



MEATH



MONAGHAN



OFFALY



ROSCOMMON



SLIGO



TIPPERARY



TYRONE



WARWICKSHIRE



WATERFORD



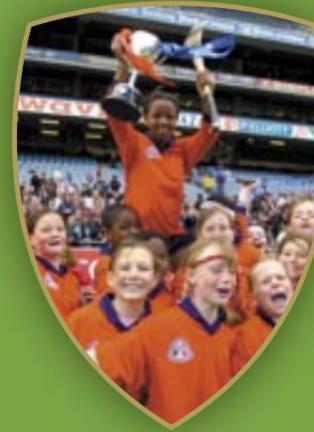
WESTMEATH



WEXFORD



WICKLOW



scoils



**TO HAVE GAELIC GAMES
THE GAMES OF CHOICE
FOR IRELAND'S PRIMARY
SCHOOL CHILDREN**

