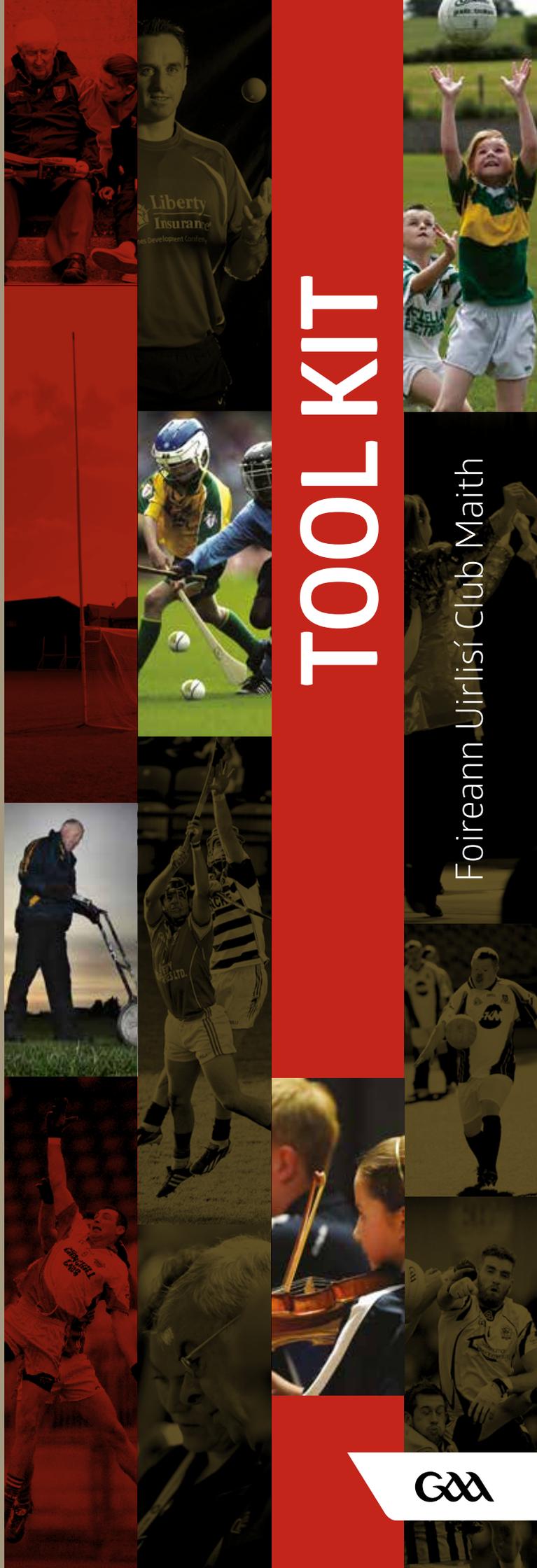




CLUB
MAITH



TOOLKIT

Foireann Uirlisí Club Maith





WELCOME

Welcome to the Club Maith Tool-Kit

FÁILTE GO FOIREANN UIRLISÍ CLUB MAITH

The Ulster Council values volunteers and recognises the absolutely central contribution that GAA Clubs led by volunteer officials make to the Association. This resource has been designed to support you in the ongoing development of your Club and the betterment of your community. Ulster GAA is here to support you!

Club Maith is a GAA Club development and volunteer support programme. It has several elements and resources:

Club Maith Website

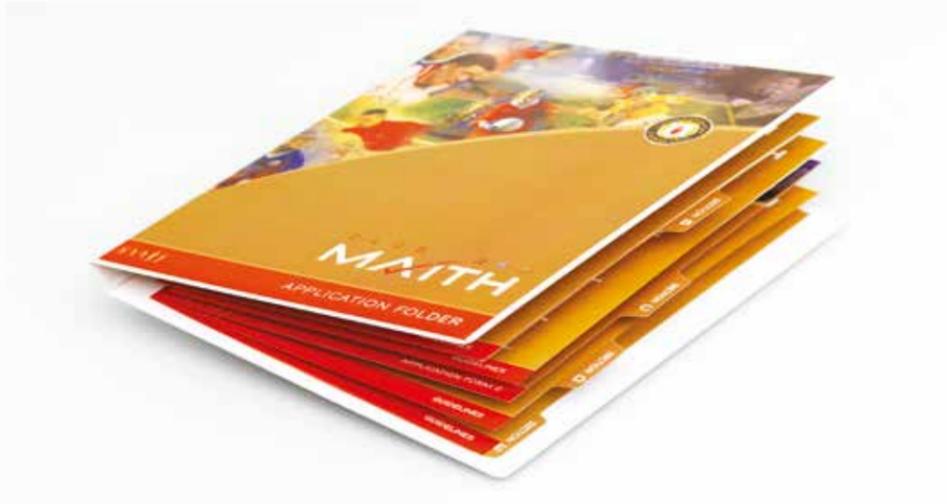
The development of the website is ongoing and at the moment includes sample policies, procedures, Club plans, advice notes and a message board for you to share information with other Club volunteers elsewhere. If you require more information or want to access sample policies and procedures, then register as a member of the Ulster GAA Club Maith website on www.ulster.gaa.ie



Club Maith Tool-Kit

The tool-kit is a resource manual which brings together a whole raft of relevant information for Club officials. It covers all aspects of Club activity.

Welcome to the Club Maith Tool-Kit



Club Maith Accreditation

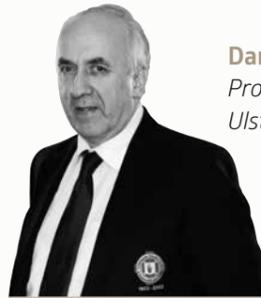
The Club Maith accreditation is a scheme which allows Clubs to bench-mark themselves against best practice. In doing so it encourages them to aim for excellence in the core areas of GAA Club activity, ie governance, duty of care, community outreach, culture and coaching and games. Clubs are then given a level of accreditation which acts as a quality mark for them.

Ulster GAA also has a dedicated team available to support our Club volunteers in their ongoing work at all levels of the Association. In addition to the Club Maith website we have established an email for Club queries, queries@ulster.gaa.ie where we hope to respond to your questions within 48 hours.

We hope this resource assists you further developing your Club and making your local community and the GAA better. Finally, the Club Maith resources aren't meant to provide a set instruction manual for Clubs, all of which has to be taken on board by all Clubs. It's deliberately designed as a support pack, which Clubs can pick and choose from. But we're confident every Club in Ulster can learn from some part of the Club Maith resource.



Mairtin Mac Aibhne
President
Ulster GAA



Danny Murphy
Provincial Director
Ulster GAA

To register for the Club Maith Accreditation Process:
Email: clubmaith@ulster.gaa.ie

For general Club queries:
Email: queries@ulster.gaa.ie

Club Maith Website: <http://ulster.gaa.ie/club-maith>

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Managing Meetings and Committee Working

Ag Bainistiú Cruinnithe agus ag Obair le Coistí

Although a sound committee structure is at the core of an efficient GAA club, committees are not an end in themselves. Committees are vital for a Club to operate, but they are there to serve the core business of the Club; playing our Gaelic games, and promoting our Gaelic culture. Meetings are an effective way to ensure cohesion within a Committee, but these must be well-planned and managed in order to serve their purpose.

The Club's Executive Committee must comprise of the following officer positions: Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Registrar, Officer for Irish and Culture, one Players' Representative, PRO, Childrens' Officer, and at least five other Full Members. Although other positions are required to cover all aspects of Club business, these need not necessarily sit on the Club's Executive Committee. Examples of these additional, and often essential elected positions are as follows: Development Officer, Insurance Officer, Coaching and Games Officer, and possibly a vice or assistant position to the secretary and treasurer positions. Since 2014 the Club ASAP Officer has been renamed the Club Health & Wellbeing Officer, to reflect the introduction of Health & Wellbeing committees at County level. It is important to note that in order to meet child protection requirements clubs should also appoint a Designated Person to work alongside the Childrens' Officer, and each of these positions should have a deputy to assist them.

As is evident from the list of positions above, often a Club's Executive can become a large group. This need not necessarily be the case, and in fact often minimum numbers on the Executive Committee work best. The Executive Committee is required to meet at least once a quarter, although monthly meetings are recommended.

Sub-Committees

In order for all the work to be taken care of Clubs should carefully consider their subcommittee needs and their remit. Usually 4-5 subcommittees are suffice, and the chair of each sub-committee should sit as a member of the Executive Committee, reporting back on a monthly basis to update on progress made, and issues needing attention. It is important that the subcommittee fully understands its remit, and duplication across subcommittees is avoided. Although not exhaustive nor descriptive, a list of typical subcommittees are as follows:

- Finance and Development
- Culture and Language
- Health and Wellbeing
- Coaching and Games
- Youth and Duty of Care

Sub-committees, when operating correctly, allow volunteers with certain skills or interests to work on topics which best suit them. Sub-committees avoid the need for club officers with little involvement in certain tasks being involved in roles which are not relevant to them. Sub-committees don't tell the Executive Committee what to do but seek the approval of the Executive Committee when necessary.

No matter how the tasks are divvied-up meetings are a normal part of GAA voluntary life. Meetings, when conducted correctly, are an excellent forum in which to inform, raise issues, debate, feed-back, make decisions, and conduct GAA business. However, too often our meetings are poorly-run; badly-timed; achieve little and are off-putting to those involved. Meetings should be well-managed and in order to do this a little preparation goes a long way. Below are a few tips on holding successful meetings.

Meetings, when conducted correctly, are an excellent forum in which to inform, raise issues, debate, feed-back, make decisions, and conduct GAA business.

“ ”

Before the Meeting:

- Ensure everyone knows the meeting is on including date, time and venue. Try to schedule meetings on a monthly basis so people can plan around them. For example, the first Monday of every month etc.
- Have a clár for each meeting with agreed items featuring on it for discussion
- If there's a major issue to discuss provide a written summary of it for Committee members
- Apologies should be sent to the Secretary in advance of the meeting

During the Meeting:

- Start on time
- Welcome everyone and thank them for coming
- State a finish time and stick to it
- Some clubs have it as a matter of policy that no meeting lasts more than a set duration e.g no more than an hour
- Arrange the clár so that the most important items are discussed first and in full.
- Follow-up on things that were to be done from the previous meeting
- Make sure that all business is covered and everyone gets a chance to contribute

- Don't allow private conversations, or "meetings within meetings"
- Finish the meeting before the stated finish time if all items have been covered
- At the end of the meeting summarise the main discussion points and actions to be taken
- Close with a cup of tea – don't forget the social aspect of the GAA
- Try to incorporate Irish phrases into the meeting; even if it's just a few words to open and close the meeting

After the Meeting:

- Make sure the minutes are written up
- Ensure actions are progressed. Remember the work takes place between meetings not at them!

A typical Club meeting Clár could look like this:

- Welcome and apologies
- Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
- Chairperson's Report
- Report back from County Committee
- Any Other Business
- Summary of decisions made
- Close and date of next meeting



Key Roles & Responsibilities

Príomhrólanna agus Príomhchúraimí

It takes a number of committed people to run any GAA Club. Just like the teams on the field they need to work like a team off the field. To do that people need to know their jobs ... what their responsibilities are. Outlined below are the key tasks associated with the main officer roles in a GAA Club.

Chairperson *Cathaoirleach*

A Club Chairperson has been entrusted with responsibility for "leading" the Club. A Chairperson's leadership should encourage participation by all the Club volunteers in Club decision making and acknowledge the roles of others. Ideally the Chairperson should be someone who has time to put genuine effort into the job, has a clear understanding of the importance of the GAA in their local community and has the necessary knowledge of the administration and workings of the GAA at Club, County, Provincial and Central level. It is vitally important that the Chairperson acts with integrity at all times and ensures that he/she has the respect of their fellow officers and Club members. The Chairperson needs to develop an overview of the committee and the Club's objectives over their term of office so that he/she can facilitate good decision-making and identify and address conflict if it arises with the Club.

Skills Required to be a Chairperson

- Enthusiasm
- Organisation
- Timekeeping
- Decision Making
- Confident at public speaking and keeping order during meetings and when making presentations within the Club.
- Leadership
- Integrity

The Chairperson has prime responsibility for the following areas in the Club:

- **Planning:** Overseeing the strategic direction of the Club and ensuring the Club has a vision.
- **Delegation:** Ensuring the Management Committee Members, Sub-Committee Members and Club Members are aware of their roles and responsibilities within the Club, in addition to delegating special projects within the Club to sub-committees or workgroups.
- **Prime representative of the Club to the outside world.** Ideally the Club Chair should act as delegate to the County Board and should liaise with external organisations and other local community groups if necessary.
- **Overall Management of the Club:** Working with both the Secretary and the Treasurer to ensure that the day-to-day tasks are carried out within the Club.

The duties of the Chairperson are:

1. Chairing all Club Management Committee meetings, General Club Meetings and Emergency General Meetings and Annual General Meetings. In the event of tied vote at any of the above meetings the Chair shall have the casting vote.
2. Represent the Club at County Committee meetings as and when required.
3. Take responsibility for managing the Club Management Committee and the affairs of the Club.

It takes a number of committed people to run any GAA Club. Just like the teams on the field they need to work like a team off the field.



4. Oversee and guide all decisions taken by the Management committee and sub committees.
5. In liaison with the Secretary, oversee the work of all officers.
6. In conjunction with the Secretary, prepare and present the annual report.
7. Liaise with the Secretary on the agenda for each meeting and review the minutes before they are circulated.
8. Be completely familiar with the Official Guide, Club Constitution and GAA Committee procedures.
9. Liaise with the Treasurer to ensure that the Management Committee approves all funds and ensure that they are spent properly and in the best interests of the Club.
10. Help the Club Development Officer, Treasurer or other committee members prepare and submit any statutory documents that are required (e.g. grant aid reports, CASC etc).
11. Be aware of current Child Protection legislation within the Club and act as the Club Designated Officer, assisting the Child Protection Officer in their duties.
12. The Chairperson may, subject to approval by the Club Management Committee, appoint Chairs and members of Club sub-committees.
13. Sign the minutes of previous meetings
14. If unable to attend any committee meeting, a written report should be sent to the meeting and the Vice-Chairman briefed on the Agenda

It is good practice for a Chairperson to serve no more than five years in office, (three years would be preferable) to encourage other committee members to serve in the position.

Vice-Chair *Leas Cathaoirleach*

- Stands in for the Chair when necessary
- Plays a prominent role in the Club
- Usually chairs an important Sub-Committee
- Is usually seen as the Chair-in-waiting
- Contributes at County level as appropriate

The post of Vice-Chairperson should be regarded as a training post of a future Cathaoirleach. The Vice-Chairperson should be given specific duties apart from the obvious one of taking the place of an absent Cathaoirleach, such as being nominated Cathaoirleach of a Sub-Committee or taking responsibility for assisting the Chairperson in developing links with other local community groups.

Secretary *Rúnaí*

The main purpose of the Club Secretary is that of principal administrator for the Club. The Secretary carries out or delegates all of the administrative duties that enable the Club and its members to function effectively. The Secretary has a pivotal role within the Club, with a close involvement in the running of the Club.

The Secretary will work closely with the Club Chairperson and Treasurer and if required will make important decisions between Executive Committee Meetings.

The role of the Secretary includes good communication skills and a good knowledge of the Official Guide, County and Club byelaws.

The Secretary is usually the first person an outsider contacts, and a good Secretary is vital to the successful management of the Club.



The Secretary is usually the first person an outsider contacts, and a good Secretary is vital to the successful management of the Club. As the principal administration officer the Secretary provides a link between the members, the Executive Committee, the Players, team Management, County Board and other Clubs.

The role of Secretary is diverse and varied and they will often be at the forefront of a mix of duties all of which are as important as each other.

Meetings

- Club Executive/Management Meetings should be held once a month, on a specific day i.e. First Monday of each month etc.
- The Secretary calls the meeting, an agenda and minutes of the previous meeting should be sent to the committee members at least three days in advance, the Secretary and all committee members should be proficient in the use of ICT and all correspondence should where possible be done by email.

The qualities to be good a Secretary are;

- Be methodical and reliable
- Good Communication skills
- Be Impartial
- Good Planning
- Good Organisation Skills
- Good Decision Maker
- Be able to maintain confidentiality
- A reasonable knowledge of the Irish Language.

The duties of the Secretary are:

- Receiving and dealing with all correspondence.
- Attending meetings to represent the Club, i.e. County Fixture meetings, local sports council meetings.

- Organising and Attending Executive Meetings.
- Organising and Attending all Annual General Meetings/Emergency General Meeting.
- Taking and distributing minutes and maintaining accurate records.
- Ensuring meeting action points are carried out.

Things to Remember

- You need to be motivated to do a good job.
- You need to be well organised and conscientious.
- All correspondence must be dealt with quickly.
- Follow meeting guidelines to ensure they are productive.
- Remind yourself that the important thing about keeping records is keeping the right records and being able to find them quickly and easily. Have hard paper copies, store on a computer and have back up facilities available.

It is good practice for a Secretary to serve no more than five years in office, (three years would be preferable) to encourage other committee members to serve in the position.

In Brief, The Secretary.....

- Is the administrative hub of the Club.
- Acts as the point of Club contact.
- Sends and receives correspondence on behalf of the Club.
- Takes and keeps minutes of Executive Committee meetings and AGMs.
- Keeps Club files and records.
- Works closely with the Chair.
- Knows how to say "No" to extra work (too often Club Secretaries are expected to do everything!).
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

Treasurer *Cisteoir*

The Treasurer has responsibility for all Club finance which includes Cash; Assets; Games Equipment; Fittings/Fixtures etc. In corporate language, the Treasurer is the Chief Financial Controller of the Club.

An Cisteoir is responsible for:

- The safe-keeping of the funds of the Club in conjunction with the Chairman and Secretary.
- Ensuring that the personal property of the Club is protected.
- Organisation and management of the Club finances.

Main Duties

- Receive all money on behalf of the Club.
- Act as a signatory on all Club bank accounts.
- Keep an accurate set of accounts.
- Present the annual audited accounts to the AGM.
- Ensure that all receipts are kept.
- Ensure all fees are paid.
- Ensure that the Club does not fall into debt.
- With the Chairperson and Secretary make important Club decisions between Club Executive Meetings.
- Present a budget to the Executive Committee at the first Executive Committee meeting of the Year.

The treasurer must not commit the Club to any expenditure for which prior approval has not been given by the Club Management Committee.

Qualities of Treasurer:

- A Planner who is ideally chairperson of Finance Committee.
- An Organiser to assist in organising fund-raising.

The Treasurer of the Club does not have to be an accountant, but must have the ability to keep accurate records.



- A Controller responsible for the day-to-day cash receipts and disbursements.
- A Recorder who accurately records all financial transactions.
- A Reporter who provides the Club Management committee with all financial information.

The Treasurer of the Club does not have to be an accountant, but must have the ability to keep accurate records.

Club Accounts - Cheque Book and Bank Statements

- The Club must open a bank account (Rule 11.1).
- All cheques drawn must be signed by the treasurer and co-signed by the Secretary or Chairperson (Rule 11.1) Cheques should not be pre-signed.
- To ensure accountability, all financial transactions in the Club should only take place by cheque.

The Executive Committee shall cause proper Books of Account to be kept in respect of:

- All sums of money received and expended by the Club, and the matters in respect of which such receipts and expenditures take place.
- All Sales and Purchases of goods by the Club.
- The Assets and Liabilities of the Club.

An Cisteoir should keep the following record books:

- Income Record book
- Payments Book
- Invoice Book
- Receipt Book
- Notebook in which to enter monies received at matches, meetings and functions etc.

- Make payments by cheque and retain cheque stubs.
- Pay for nothing using cash!
- Retain all bank statements and ensure that cheque numbers correspond to those on the bank statement.
- All Bank statements to be forwarded to an officer other than cheque signatories.
- Use a lodgement book for all lodgements into the account.
- Enter transactions in Income and Expenditure Books.
- Give receipts for cash received and get receipts for cash paid out.
- Keep receipts on file.
- Report placed before the AGM for consideration.
- Copy of financial statement should be forwarded to Clubs members prior to AGM (Rule 8.5.3).
- It is recommended that Annual Accounts should be audited independently.
- Financial statement to be approved by the Executive Committee prior to AGM, and signed by two of three officers – Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer (Rule 11.7).

The financial report presented to the AGM must include the following:

- Income
- Expenditure
- Bank Balances with statements reconciled.
- List of accruals and payments.
- Debts
- Details of investments and bank loans.

In brief...the Treasurer

- Oversees the Club's accounts.
- Maintains the Club's financial books, ie records all items of income and expenditure: this includes keeping all invoices; bills; and receipts and noting what all payments, cheque or cash, are for.
- Gets cash paid into the Club's account as soon as possible.
- Keeps the Executive Committee up to date on all financial matters.
- Prepares and presents a financial report for the Club AGM.
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

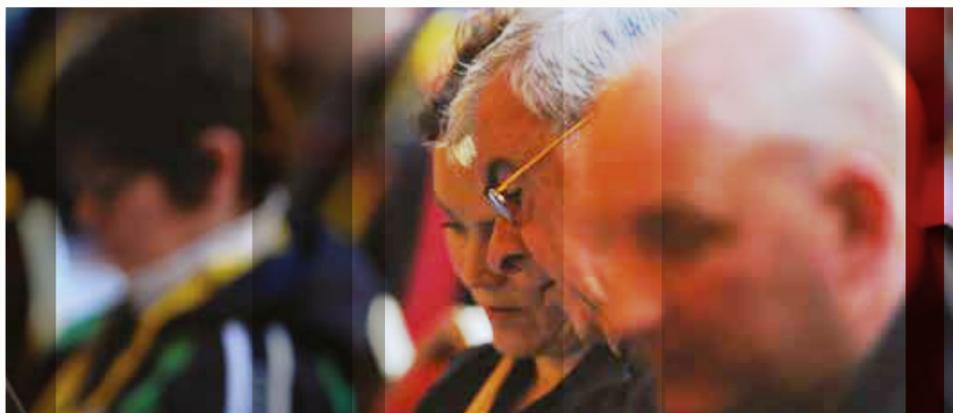
Club Executive Meetings

The financial report to all Executive meetings should include the following details:

- Income
- Expenditure
- Bank Balance(s) – with statements reconciled.
- List of accruals (e.g. when we account for something when it's earned or spent, rather than when we actually get or handover the cash or asset) and prepayments (where appropriate).
- Details of investments and bank loans (where appropriate).
- Financial Commitments.

Treasurer's Duties at the AGM:

- The main duty of the Treasurer at the AGM is to prepare an Annual Financial Statement and Balance Sheet (Rule 11.8).



The need for good PR in GAA Clubs has never been greater given the increased competition for players which Clubs face.



Registrar

- Oversees Club membership.
- Ensure all members are registered using the online GAA Player and Member registration system, which is the only acceptable method of registering players and members with the GAA. All GAA codes are now using this system.
- Ensures all membership fees are paid.
- Keeps an up-to-date register of Club members.
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

Players' Representative

- Brings player issues to the Executive Committee.
- Feeds back on overall Club issues to players.
- Encourages players to become involved in other non-playing aspects of the Club.

Public Relations Officer

The PRO will find the Advice Note on PR and Communications useful in supporting them in their role. The job of PRO is one of the most important positions in the Club. The main function of the PRO is to present a good image of the Club and Cumann Lúthchleas Gael in the local community and beyond. The need for good PR in GAA Clubs has never been greater given the increased competition for players which Clubs face. The PRO is the official spokesperson for the Club, all dealings with the media should be coordinated through him/her.

Responsibilities of the PRO:

- The updating and administration of the Club Web-site.
- Ensure that the weekly notes are published in the Newspaper.
- Ensure that the weekly notes/Club newsletter is published in the parish bulletin.

- Submit the match results on a weekly basis.
- Publish the activities of the Club on a weekly basis.
- Prepare an annual report and present it to the AGM.
- Ensure that the teams are updated using the text messaging system.
- Ensure that Club has a high status in the community.
- Keep records of Club games, team photos etc. This is historically invaluable information!
- Provide match results to County PRO and other relevant people.
- Work as part of a team along with the other Club Officers, team mentor and the various sub-committees in the Club.

The PRO must be well informed of all Club activities and keep a constant link with officers and team mentors. It is vital that the PRO builds up links with local newspaper and radio personnel and if a controversial issue arises it should only be dealt with in consultation with other officers (particularly An Cathaoirleach). The PRO must consult widely with relevant people in the Club regarding the public perception of the Club. Also it's vitally important that the PRO brings a camera to games and events but is fully aware of the Child Protection requirements in terms of taking photographs.

A PRO should not:

- Push his own agenda - Club policy and decision making supersedes personal opinion!
- Criticise the Club in public or private.

A well informed PRO needs:

- Good communication with fellow officers and team mentors.
- Good links with Division and County Board PRO.

In brief the PRO

- Looks after all public relations and publicity issues.
- Ensures weekly Club notes appear in the local press.
- Oversees the Club website.
- Draws together Club news-sheets.
- Issues press releases.
- Deals with the media regarding Club affairs, eg major games; Club events; openings; successes; etc.
- Takes the lead re publications such as programmes and yearbooks.
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

Youth Officer

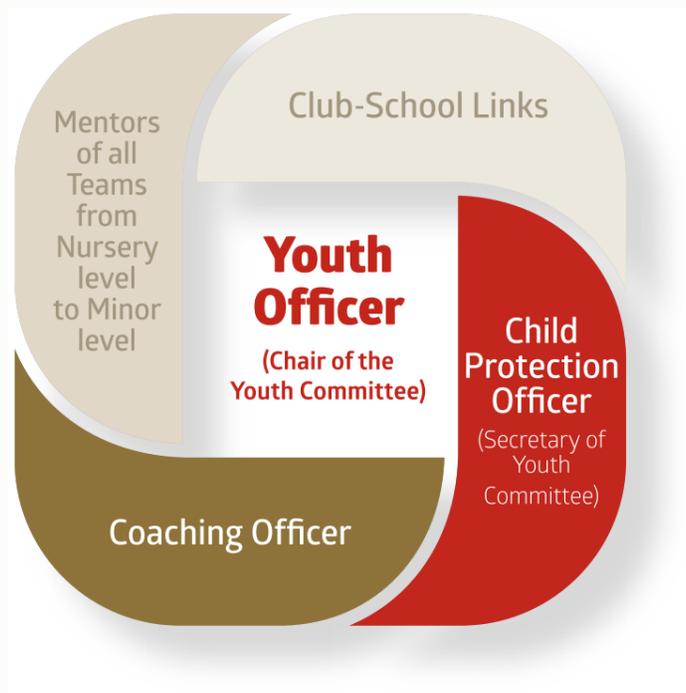
The Youth Officer is central to the development of any good Club. The officer should be someone with a good knowledge of the GAA coaching structures and have a clear understanding of Club child protection policy and procedures. The Youth Officer should be an enthusiastic, well-organised person who has the capacity to deal with children of all ages, in addition to parents and teachers.

The Youth Officer is a leader in the Club a strategic thinker who is always aware that he/she is responsible for the future development of the Club. The Youth Officer should have the potential to be a future Club Chairperson. Ideally, the Youth Officer should have responsibility for all the administration and organisation of all coaching and youth activity for any member less than 18 years of age.

The Youth Officer should:

- Act as a member of the Club Management/ Executive Committee.
- Chair the Club Youth Committee and appoint (with Executive Committee Approval) members to the Youth Committee.
- Develop a structured youth development plan with other relevant Club members.

- Appoint appropriately qualified Coaches/Mentors to all youth teams.
- Organise all internal Club blitzes/ Youth Events.
- Co-ordinate the Club Nursery/ Primary School Coaching Programme.
- Liaise with the Club Coaching Officer, where appropriate, to ensure that appropriate coaching programmes are being developed at Club level.
- Liaise with the Child Protection Officer to ensure that all Club members who are involved in youth activities have taken the GAA code of ethics course and are vetted by Access NI/Garda.
- Promote and co-ordinate Scór na nÓg.
- Act as the Club-School Liaison, linking with the school principals, teachers and governors to ensure that Gaelic Games are being promoted in the local schools and assist where appropriate in Cumann na mBunscol competitions.
- Ensure that the Club has a dedicated, regularly updated, notice board in each school promoting Club activities and encouraging children to get involved in Gaelic Games.
- Establish and Chair a Parents Forum in the Club, which will meet four times a year. The role of the Forum is to receive feedback and encourage involvement from the parents in Club activities.



The Youth Officer is central to the development of any good Club and should be someone with a good knowledge of the GAA coaching structures and have a clear understanding of Club child protection policy and procedures. !

- Ensure that the Club is adhering to rules regarding eligibility.
- Represent the Club at meetings of the County Bórd na nÓg if appropriate.

Ideally, the Youth Officer should work closely with the following Club personnel who should form the Club Youth Committee:

The Youth Committee should meet monthly and the Youth Officer should deliver a report of the committee's activities to the Club Executive/Management Committee.

In brief the Youth Officer

- Oversees the Club's youth affairs.
- Ensures all youth players are properly registered.
- Maintains necessary records regarding youth players.
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

Development Officer

Oifigeach Forbartha an Chlub

- Oversees Club development issues.
- Leads on producing and monitoring the Club's development plan.
- Leads on major projects, e.g. new pitch; stand; etc.
- Keeps up-to-date on others' plans (eg local authorities & Sports Councils).
- Keeps up-to-date regarding funding programmes, GAA and other.
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

Cultural Officer *Oifigeach Cultúir*

- Leads on all aspects of gaelic culture within the Club.
- Oversees the Club's involvement in Scór.
- Rolls out the use/visibility of Irish within the Club and its premises.

- Ensures a gaelic dimension to all Club events.
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

Children's Officer (Child Protection Officer) *Oifigeach Óige*

The appointment of Club Children's Officer is a mandatory requirement in line with association rule, as recommended by the outgoing committee. It is vital that all clubs have a Children's Officer and Designated Person who command the trust and respect of the entire club membership to assume the role of the Children's Officer and Designated Person, as stipulated in the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport and the GAA Code of Behaviour for all Persons Working with Young People. Both Officers should sit as a member of the club management committee and be vetted through the Garda or Access NI.

Required Skills

- Approachable with friendly manner.
- Good listener
- Good listener
- Open Minded
- Well organised
- Motivated
- Prepared to pass on concerns to Provincial Council/Central Council and professional agencies if necessary.

Main Duties

- Ensure that the child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all members.
- Establish and maintain the complaints procedures.
- Attend the GAA workshop 'Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport' renewable every three years.
- Develop good practice procedures in the recruitment and selection of persons working with young people in the club.

It is vital that all clubs have a Children's Officer and Designated Person who command the trust and respect of the entire club membership to assume the role.



- Oversee the implementation of the Vetting through Garda Vetting/AccessNI as appropriate.
- Be familiar with current child protection legislation and The Children Act 1989.
- Understand the GAA Code of Ethics, child protection procedures, rules and regulations.
- In the event of a complaint being made ensure that the complaints procedures are met and see the procedures through to the final decision.
- Conduct an annual audit of best practice in child protection and welfare within the club and report accordingly.
- Influence policy and practice in the club in order to prioritise young people's needs.
- Encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in organising club activities.
- Attend meetings of Club Youth Committee as appropriate.
- Attend meetings of the County Youth Board as appropriate.
- Put in place a clear policy on Alcohol & Drugs, as per the ASAP programme guidelines.
- Organise Health Education events which are relevant to the needs of members
- Display posters promoting relevant health messages in Club premises.
- Organise training to allow members to be trained in First Aid and /or CPR.
- Provide a direct link with the County Health & Wellbeing Committees.
- Familiarise the Club with activities being promoted by Ulster GAA and those at National level.

Club - School Liaison Officer

Increasingly, the role of Club - School Liaison Officer is becoming one of the key roles in helping to develop Gaelic Games in the Club. All clubs should ensure that there is a Club-school link in operation in order to promote the games in the local schools.

The Club-School Liaison should:

- Link with the school principals, teachers and governors to ensure that Gaelic Games are being promoted in the local schools and assist where appropriate in Cumann na mBunscol competitions.
- Ensure that the Club has a dedicated, regularly updated, notice board in each school promoting Club activities and encouraging children to get involved in Gaelic Games.

It is necessary that the Club would also have a deputy Child Protection Officer. If the Child Protection Officer is male it would be good practice to have a female deputy Child Protection Officer. This could be the Club Chairperson, Secretary or another Club Management Committee member.

In brief the Children's Officer:

- Ensures the Club has in place all appropriate Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Contributes at County level as appropriate.

Health and Well-being Officer

Oifigeach Sláinte agus Folláine

- Develop and adopt an overall Health & Wellbeing Policy so that everybody knows it's a core part of the Club's business.

Coaching Officer and Coaching Administrator/ Youth Officer

(Please refer to Advice Note 14: Club Coaching Structures)



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.



Most successful organisations – including successful GAA Clubs – aren't successful by accident. They're successful because they planned to be successful.



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	What we Plan to do in the areas of: 1. Coaching & Games Development 2. Club Structures & Administration 3. Finance & Fundraising 4. Facilities & Physical Development 5. Communication/ PR & Culture	Focus groups will lead out on this process. The heart of the document, based on the key issues we've identified, and outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be done • Who will be responsible • When will it be done • What costs or other resources will be needed • How we'll know we've achieved what we set out to do (i.e. our targets or measures)

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

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 adopts a number of community consultation methods.

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. 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.

Financial Control and the GAA Club

Bainistiú Airgeadais agus Club CLG

GAA Clubs are complex undertakings. Increasingly they're also big businesses in financial terms, handling very large amounts of money. It's absolutely vital that GAA Clubs are open and accountable in financial terms.

Most Clubs get their money from other people ... so it's essential that those people are content that their money is being used properly. It's not difficult to put in place and maintain good financial systems and procedures, whatever the size of the Club.

Some Basic Financial Control Concepts

GAA Clubs aren't commercial businesses. But it's important they're aware of some basic concepts which can be applied in the GAA Club context:

Income and Expenditure Account

In a business this is often termed the Profit and Loss Account. Basically it outlines the Club's financial performance, usually over a year. The account should show what money has come into the Club and what money it has paid out. Typically the individual amounts will be grouped under headings, possibly as follows:

Income

- Membership fees
- Club Lotto
- Gates
- Events
- Draw
- Sponsorship
- "Friends of ..." subscriptions
- Grants
- Miscellaneous

Expenditure

- GAA affiliation fees; insurance; etc
- Playing gear
- Transport
- Teams' expenses
- Heat; light; and power
- Rates
- Maintenance
- Advertising
- Admin expenses
- Miscellaneous

Cash-Flow

This is exactly what it says ... the flow of cash into and out of the Club. It's a hugely important thing to be aware of: Clubs, just like businesses, need cash to pay the bills. It's quite possible to be financially sound and to be well on the way to producing a good end-of-year Income and Expenditure Account but to suffer cash-flow problems.

A well-managed Club won't allow this to happen.

Budget

Working to a budget is one good way of helping manage cash-flow. It's also a tried-and-tested overall financial management tool. Basically a budget is an outline of what a Club intends to spend during the year ahead and when it intends to spend it. It's a way of first planning and then monitoring the Club's income and expenditure.

A Club budget would use the types of headings listed above for the Income and Expenditure Account. The Executive Committee should decide at the start of the year what it intends to spend under the various headings (e.g. identify an amount

Usually you'll need some expert help to draw up a Balance Sheet but it can be a useful exercise to show the members just what the Club is worth.



for playing gear). The Treasurer should then allocate that spend appropriately: for example it's likely most playing gear would be bought at the start of a season with smaller "top ups" later on. As the year progresses what actually happens is monitored against what was planned to happen.

Club Income should be treated in exactly the same way.

Using budgets means everyone knows what's what in financial terms within the Club. For example managers and coaches know what resources they have available and Events/Lotto Committees know how much they have to raise. Budgets of course should be set at realistic levels.

Depreciation

This involves spreading the cost of fixed assets (e.g. buildings and equipment) over their working life. For example if we bought a mower at £10,000/ €10,00 and expect it to last five years, then we depreciate it at £2,000/€2,000 a year. It's not as important in a GAA Club's accounts as it would be in a private business accounts: usually if our Club buys a mower we just post the total cost in the Income and expenditure Account for that year.

Where it is important for us is to realise that all fixed assets have a lifespan ... and that we (a) need to have a sense of what that lifespan is; and (b) start thinking before the event about how we're going to fund its replacement.



At least three tender prices should be sought for all works/tasks estimated to cost over £5,000/€5,000



Balance Sheet

The balance sheet gives you a snapshot of the financial standing of your Club at a particular point in time. Put simply it summarises your assets (i.e. what the Club owns or is owed) and your liabilities (what your Club in turn owes to others). If your liabilities are greater than your assets then you're in major trouble!

Usually you'll need some expert help to draw up a Balance Sheet but it can be a useful exercise to show the members just what the Club is worth.

Good Financial Practice in the GAA Club

The guidelines below reflect best financial management practice and should be taken on board by all GAA Clubs:

- The Club should have one or more bank accounts, eg a current account and possibly deposit and or loan accounts.
- Cash holdings should be kept to a minimum and all cash sums deposited into the Club accounts as quickly as possible.
- Cash transactions on behalf of the Club should be by exception and for small amounts only.
- All Club financial business should be carried out through these authorised bank accounts.
- A number of authorised cheque signatories should be approved by the Executive Committee.
- All cheques should be signed by at least two of the authorised signatories.
- The authorised signatories should include the Club Chairperson; Treasurer; and Secretary.

- All expenditure over £100/ €100 (or another agreed figure) should require a Purchase Order Number from the Club Treasurer
- All Club expenditure of over £500/€500 (or another agreed figure) should be formally approved in advance at a full Executive Committee meeting.
- The Treasurer should, at each Executive Committee meeting, give an account of all Income and Expenditure incurred since the previous meeting and give the current position in terms of each of the Club's bank accounts.
- All expenditure should be on foot of properly-vouched invoices or other appropriate documentation.
- At least three tender prices should be sought for all works/tasks estimated to cost over £5,000/ €5,000 (or another agreed figure).
- A proper, written financial statement should be presented at the Club's AGM: the Treasurer should explain the statement to the meeting and answer any questions on it.
- That financial statement should outline:
 - The Club's financial position at the start of the year.
 - Income during the year.
 - Expenditure during the year.
 - The Club's financial position at the end of the year.
- The Club should comply as appropriate with any other financial requirements imposed by funders and others the Club may work in partnership with.
- The Club should keep an up-to-date asset register of its main items of equipment, e.g. playing gear; footballs/sliotars/hurleys/helmets; mowers; gym equipment; computers; videos; televisions; etc.

Tax Exemptions and Allowances for GAA Clubs

Diolúintí agus Liúntais Ó Cháin do Chlubanna

Why should we be interested in this?

Most GAA Clubs now handle sizeable amounts of money and undertake major projects on a fairly regular basis. They also of course do that on a volunteer-driven basis. Because of that the governments in Ireland, north and south, have put in place tax-related schemes as an appreciation of and support to Clubs which do their work voluntarily and which therefore probably save the state from doing this work instead. These schemes can return a lot of otherwise "lost" money to GAA Clubs. Brief details are given below.

Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs)

What This Is

The CASC scheme is managed by the Inland Revenue and therefore applies in the six Counties only. It provides a range of benefits to encourage communities to support their local voluntary sports Club. Central to it is the idea of Gift Aid on donations to the Club by individuals: in some cases this can be worth an additional 24p on every £1 donated. Now that growing numbers of Clubs have "Friends Of-type" direct debt covenanting schemes, CASC registration can increase their income from these sources by nearly a quarter. What's even better is that it comes with no strings attached!

The main benefits of being a CASC-registered GAA Club are as follows:

- Exemption from corporation tax on profits from trading where the turnover is less than £30,000.
- Exemption from corporation tax under schedule A (Income from property) where the gross income is less than £20,000.
- Exemption from corporation tax on interest received.

- Exemption from corporation tax on chargeable gains.
- Range of tax reliefs to encourage individuals and companies to support CASCs.
- Non-Domestic rates relief for CASCs.

Some of these – for example money back from the taxman against donations pledged to the Club or rates relief on Club property – apply to virtually every GAA Club in the six Counties.

Will our GAA club qualify?

Before completing the application form the following five questions should be answered and the answers should all be yes;

1. Is membership of the Club open to the whole community?
2. Are all the Club's facilities available to members without discrimination?
3. Does the Club's constitution prevent profits of the Club being distributed among its members? (i.e any profits must go back into the Club)
4. Does the Club provide facilities for and encourage participation in eligible sports? (gaelic games are an eligible sport)

5. Does the Club's constitution provide that on dissolution of the Club, any net assets are to be applied for approved sporting or charitable purposes?

All Clubs registering should ensure the Club Constitution they have is that now in the Official Guide 2007 as it answers these questions satisfactorily for the Revenue.

How do we Register?

The Inland Revenue requires a two page registration form to be completed and

returned along with a copy of the Club constitution, a copy of the latest accounts and a copy of the rulebook. The form is straightforward and easy to fill in.

You can get more information at:

Inland Revenue Charities Sports Club Unit
St John's House, Merton Road,
BOOTLE,
Merseyside, L69 9BB.

Tel: 0845 3020 203 (Option 4)
www.hmrc.gov.uk/casc

Tax Exemptions in the 26 Southern Counties

What This Is

Section 235 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, grants exemption from certain taxes for certain bodies established for the sole purposes of promoting athletic or amateur games or sports. The exempt taxes include:

- Income Tax
- Dividend Withholding Tax
- Some relief from Capital Gains and from Stamp Duty.

The exemptions do not extend to D.I.R.T. or Capital Acquisition Tax and the normal obligations in relation to PAYE/PRSI and VAT still apply.

Why should our Club apply for this?

Without the exemption under Section 235, a GAA Club may be liable to income/corporation tax on any surplus income. It is also obliged to make annual tax returns to its local inspector of taxes. With the

introduction of the Tax Relief on Donations to Sports Bodies Scheme (Section 41 Finance Act 2002), a GAA Club must among other conditions be an exempt body under section 235 to be considered an 'approved body' for the purposes of that scheme. In future, Tax Clearance for lottery grants and other purposes will be dependent on Section 235 Exemptions of Income/Corporation Tax returns.

It is up to your Club to apply to the Revenue Commissioners for Section 235 Exemption. You can contact them at:

Office of the Revenue Commissioners Games/Sports Exemption Section,
Government Buildings,
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

All applications for Tax Clearance Certificates meanwhile should be made to: **Tax Clearance Section,**
Office of the Collector General,
Sarsfield House,
Limerick.

When the Revenue Commissioners have issued the appropriate certification, your Club is then regarded as "an approved sports body" under the Act.

Approved GAA Clubs will be obliged to keep formal financial records, books and accounts in relation to its income and expenditure.

Tax Relief for donations to GAA club projects

Section 41 of the Finance Act 2002 provides for tax relief for relevant donations to an approved sports body for the funding of approved projects. It applies only to donations received on or after 1 May 2002 which relate to spending on approved projects on or after that date. The minimum qualifying total donation amount by a single donor in any year to an individual sports body is €250. No project will be approved which is estimated to cost in excess of €40m.

If a GAA Club is acquiring land or a building, developing facilities, purchasing fixed, non-personal equipment for sports activities, or repaying a loan for these purposes, then Section 41 provides an incentive to individuals or companies to make a donation towards the cost of the project.

Clubs should apply to the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism to get approval for any project they feel should fit under Section 41.

Once a Club project is approved, for PAYE taxpayers the relief will be given on a "grossed-up" basis straight to the GAA Club. The donation will be treated as having been received by the Club 'net' of income tax. For example, if an individual who pays income tax at the higher rate - 42% - makes a qualifying donation of €580 to an approved GAA Club, that Club will be deemed to have received €1,000 less tax of €420. The Club will then be able to claim a refund of €420 from the Revenue Commissioners at the end of the year i.e. the amount of tax already paid by the taxpayer against the net sum of €580. This is a sizeable added, "free" income for the Club ... and one which doesn't cost the original donor anything extra.

In the case of a donation made by an individual who pays tax on a self-assessment basis, he/she will be entitled to claim a tax deduction for the donation. There is no grossing up arrangement here. Similarly, in the case of corporate donations, the company will be entitled to claim a deduction for the donation as if it were a trading expense or an expense of management.

What records and accounts must the approved club keep?

Approved GAA Clubs will be obliged to keep formal financial records, books and accounts in relation to its income and expenditure including donations received and expenditure incurred on approved projects. Ideally, a separate bank account should be set up for the lodgement of all donations received under this scheme.

Approved Clubs will also be required to

submit annual progress reports to the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

All relevant forms and documentation are available for download on the Club Maith website www.ulster.gaa.ie/Club-maith

Borrowing by GAA clubs

Whatever about their fund-raising abilities, most Clubs have to borrow money at some time. In order to better monitor and control Clubs' borrowing activities, and thereby

Clubs must enclose a copy of their cash-flow statement and Business Plan when seeking authorisation to borrow.



minimise the possibility of delinquent loans, banks across Ireland have, at the request of the GAA, agreed to implement the following procedures.

GAA Clubs incurring new or increased borrowings, for whatever purpose, must:

1. Have recorded written permission from the superior unit to undertake the project which necessitates the borrowing. This permission is subject to the following limits:

AMOUNT	AUTHORITY / APPROVAL NEEDED
Under €15,000 / £10,500	No external approval required
€15,000 to €75,000 / £10,500 to £52,500	County Committee approval required
€75,000 to €150,000 / £52,500 to £105,500	Provincial Council approval required
Over €150,000 / £105,500	Central Council approval required

2. Provide the relevant bank, in advance, with the appropriate written authorisation to undertake the borrowing, subject to the limits set out above.
3. Accept as a condition of any letter of sanction or offer letter, a clause giving the bank the right to inform Croke Park in the event of any loan falling into arrears or a regular pattern of excesses appearing on the current account.
4. Accept that the above limits apply to cumulative borrowing and not just to the borrowing relating to the project in question.

As well as giving approval for the borrowing, the Letter of Authorisation should also:

- a Confirm the existing Club balances outstanding with the bank.
- b Authorise the trustees of the borrowing Club to mortgage or charge all or any of the real property of the Club as security.

Clubs must enclose a copy of their cash-flow statement and Business Plan when seeking authorisation to borrow.

Forms for borrowing approval are available for download from www.ulster.gaa.ie

Clubs should liaise with their County Development Officer if they want to take forward borrowing approval.

Policies and Procedures in the GAA Club

Polasaithe agus Nósanna Imeachta an Chlub CLG

What these are and Why we need them

GAA Clubs are increasingly busy and complex places. They do a lot of different work with a lot of different people in a lot of different ways. Sometimes they work in partnership with others and often use other people's money to help them in their work. Above all, they very largely work with and for young people.

Because of all the above, Clubs can't afford to be haphazard about the way they do things. Neither should they become bureaucracies ... but they should have in place set, specified ways of carrying out their business.

To make sure that happens we should have in place a number of policies and procedures. These should cover our basic areas of work or activity and should spell out:

- How we approach things.
- What procedures we have in place for doing things.
- Who's responsible?
- What our members; players; and others can expect from us.

We need these so that:

- Our Club will operate to the highest possible standards: anything less isn't good enough in the GAA.
- We have a framework within which we make our decisions and which can help people learn about how our Club works.
- Our Club will be a safe and secure place for people ... and they in turn can be confident about that.
- We don't depend on unwritten knowledge held by a few people.
- We don't end up with inconsistencies in our Club, with how things are done just depending on the whims of individuals.
- Those of us running the Club can be secure in our own minds that we have protected

ourselves and everybody else in and associated with the Club.

Areas where clubs need policies and procedures

All Clubs should by now have in place a Child Protection Policy: it's a fundamental part of any Club's governance system. But the basic list of policies that Clubs should have is as follows:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Recruitment
- Valuing Volunteers
- Discipline
- Emergency Procedures
- Information and Data Protection
- Equality and Inclusion
- Conflict of Interest and Anti-Fraud
- Drug and Alcohol Policy - ASAP
- Disability and Special Needs

Making it all Happen

The good news is that Comhairle Uladh has a full suite of draft policy documents available for GAA Clubs: Clubs don't have to go off and draw up their own documents.

The Comhairle Uladh drafts can be downloaded from the Club Maith website. But it's vital that Clubs then:

- Edit or modify the draft to suit their own Club and its circumstances.
- Get those Club versions formally approved by the Club, at either an Executive Committee meeting or an AGM.
- Keep copies available for people to access, e.g. post them on the Club website and keep a policy binder/folder in the Club's premises.

Above all Clubs need to live up to and implement what's in the policies.



Public Relations and Communications

Cairdeamh Poiblí agus Cumarsáid

GAA clubs across Ulster are doing a great job providing playing and volunteer opportunities for club members, promoting healthy lifestyles, encouraging people of all ages to get involved in the club, improving the local community through its games and activities. But, very often GAA clubs shy away from PR and Communications, thinking it's not part of their core duties.

However, communicating to your members and the wider public is an important task for your club and should be a focus for your PRO and Communications Sub Committee. Sell the GAA message and emphasise the importance of your club to your community.

This advice note gives you some guidance on how to best communicate:

Club Notes

The single most important communications tool remains the club notes. PRO's across Ireland often spend their Sunday evenings writing up their club reports for their local newspapers and now you can publicise your club notes on your club website and your social media networks – making your notes more accessible to people.

Club notes are an ideal opportunity for you to provide short match reports across all age groups and all levels within your club. Try to make your notes completely integrated – so if you have Ladies Gaelic, Camogie or Hurling assign someone to provide you with notes on those sections of your club.

Your Club Notes should include match reports and promotion of upcoming events but you can also use your club notes to emphasise the place of your club within the community. You can do this by including: local deaths, births and marriages within your club, key school

events to promote good club-school links etc. Remember, your notes are targeting your club members and will include those living away from home – so try to provide an overview of what's going on within your community.

Every local newspaper is different in terms of coverage of club notes, so get to know your local newspapers and write your notes to suit. But remember your extended club/community notes can be published in full on your website and put a link onto your social media networks on a weekly basis.

Online Media

We are living in the digital era and that means you need a strong presence online. There are many ways to do this and there are many benefits including: instant updates, increased interaction, free or relatively inexpensive, and increase audience.

Club Website: The club website should be your online hub and your social media should be used to complement this. Your club website should be well designed and should include the features and content such as:

- Correct club name in English and Irish (refer to Ulster GAA Clubs & grounds booklet)
- Latest news / Club notes / Lotto results
 - Latest fixtures and results
 - Social media feeds / links
 - Photo Galleries
 - Sponsors ads
- About the Club
 - Location
 - History
 - Teams/Codes
 - Club committees
 - Contacts

Your club website should showcase the entirety of your club to include all codes at all

Communicating to your members and the wider public is an important task for your club. Sell the GAA message and emphasise the importance of your club to your community.

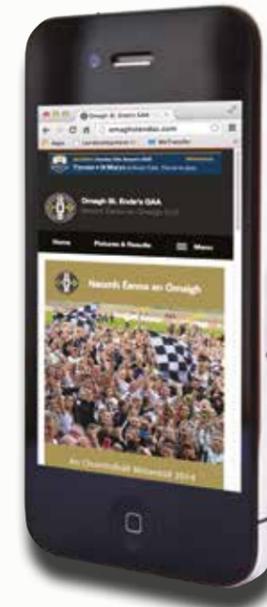


age levels and don't forget about your Scór and cultural activity.

Mobile Responsive Website

With the majority of users now viewing websites on tablets or smart phone devices as opposed to desktop computers or laptops, it is important that the layout and / or content of your website responds or adapts to this, based on the size of the screen it is presented on.

A responsive website will automatically change to best fit the device that you are viewing it on, so this should be a key consideration when designing a new club website.



Social Media

Social media networks are an essential means of staying connected with your members and remaining top-of-mind. They provide a great medium for sharing stories and encouraging interaction.

The two key social media platforms are currently Facebook and Twitter – both allow users to publish status updates, upload photos and videos, and send messages, but both also have their own particular advantages.

Facebook

There are two types of Facebook profiles: Personal Profiles and Fan Pages. GAA clubs should be set up as a fan page under the 'Amateur Sports Team' category.

Some of the key features of Facebook include:

- **Profile Photo** – This should be your official club crest
- **Cover Image** – This can be modified to promote an upcoming event, celebrate a recent success or display important club information such as website address and contact details.
- **Status Updates** - These allow you to update your followers with information. The best practice guidelines suggest that followers should be able to comment under your posts, but they shouldn't be able to create their own posts on your page.
- **Photos** – regularly update your Facebook Page with good quality pictures from activities taking place in your club and encourage your members to tag themselves in the photos. Photos can be uploaded individually or as part of an album.

Facebook is best for:

- Visual material such as photo galleries and videos
- More detailed, less frequent posts

Twitter

Twitter allows you to post short messages or 'tweets' to your followers. Tweets are limited to 140 characters in length – perfect for keeping your followers updated on match scores or short notices. Tweets can also contain links so you can direct users back to news items on your club website. You can also post individual photos on Twitter. You should encourage your followers to share or 're-tweet'

your messages with their followers in order to spread your coverage as much as possible.

Twitter is best for:

- Brief, to-the-point information and latest news
- Score updates from games
- Less detailed, more frequent posts

Club social media administrators should always remember: *Any posts on social media channels should accurately represent the official views of the club.*

There are GAA specific social media setup guides and usage guidelines, which are available to download from the Club Maith website at www.ulster.gaa.ie/club-maith

Local Newspapers

In addition to your club notes you can use your local newspapers to promote good news stories about your club. You can do this by releasing a Press Release and good quality photo. When writing a press release remember the The "Five Ws" - Who; What; Why; Where; and When. They provide a framework around which all press releases should be built:

WHO is doing it?

This is usually your Club or someone in it. Ensure that you include the full name of the Club in the first paragraph. Remember there may be two WHOs ... for example your Club and a funder. Make sure to include both.

WHAT are they doing?

State clearly and precisely exactly what it is you are doing. Ideally you should only be doing one thing. If you are holding a fund-raising event or launching something state just that in the first paragraph. You can list all the various details later in the release.

WHY are they doing it?

Again state clearly and precisely why you are doing what you are doing. If you are opening a new pitch state just that in the first paragraph. Why you have developed the pitch and what you will do with it come later

WHERE and WHEN did it happen?

This is self-explanatory but is essential to include nonetheless.

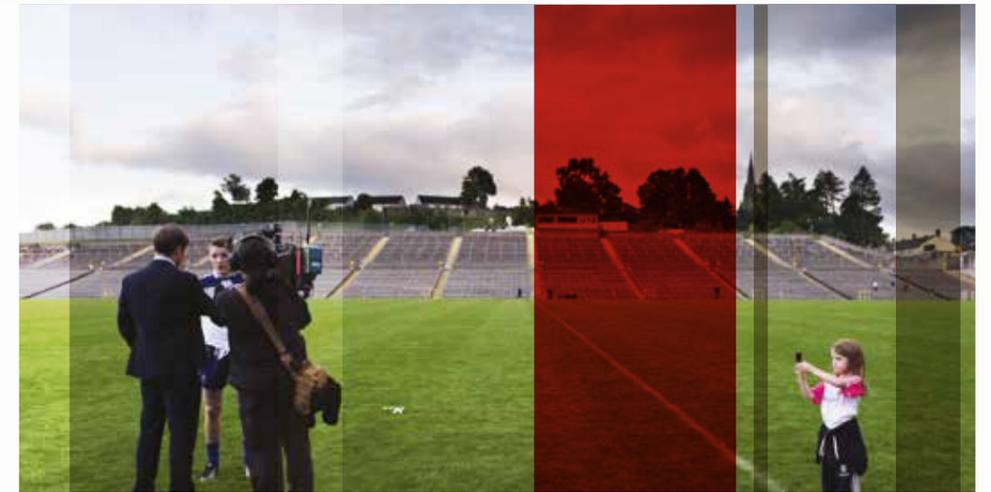
REMEMBER to send a good quality photo with your release as it will have better chance of being featured in the local media.

Broadcast Media

TV is not typically accessible to GAA clubs but local radio is a great way to get your news out to a wider audience. To get coverage on your local radio simply send through your press release with contact details of someone confident to speak on the airwaves. You can also follow up your press release with a phone call to the studio to encourage your local radio presenter to cover your story.

Some general points to remember for both TV and radio interviews are:

- Write a few facts and figures on a single sheet of paper and make a mental note of three major points you want to get across. Make sure you get the three points across.
- Anticipate the most awkward questions you are likely to be asked and rehearse your answers with a colleague.
- Ask the reporter beforehand the area he/she aims to cover in the interview
- Try to relax and keep the answers simple, avoiding jargon. Aim to be concise, alert and interesting. Speak slightly slower than normal.
- Tell others in the Club when the broadcast is planned so it can be monitored.
- Some tips for radio interviews are:
 - If it is over the phone, call the reporter back if you need to collect your thoughts and make sure you know when the recording starts and finishes.
 - Choose a quiet location for an interview into a tape recorder.
 - If it is in the studio get there in good time and tell them you've arrived.
 - Don't thump the table or use your hands to express yourself.



Newsletters

Newsletters are a great way to get news out about your club, but the key to success is distribution. Think about how to get your newsletter out – in your local shop, chapel, leaflet drop to all houses in your club, by email, through your online networks. When developing a club newsletter some things to think about include:

- Apply the "Five Ws" principle to your news-sheet.
- The key things with local news-sheets are circulation (i.e. making sure you get them to your readers) and regularity (i.e. infrequent, irregular news-sheets tend not to have much impact).
- Give someone in the group the job of producing the news-sheet.
- Make sure it's attractive to look at: use pictures and colour if at all possible.
- Allocate some money to it and get it well-designed and well-printed.

Other Promotional Opportunities

There are many more platforms available to you to promote your club activity including:

- Irish News ClubCall is published every Thursday to get a club notice in simply email clubcall@irishnews.com with no more than 100 word summary. You can

also email a photo if you have something that you would like to promote. Emails to ClubCall should be done by Wednesday 12noon at latest.

- Gaelic Life is always keen to publish good news stories about clubs. Simply contact the paper if there is something you want to promote. Remember to keep Gaelic Life on your Press Release Distribution list. Get the most updated email addresses for reporters at www.gaeliclife.com
- Text Messages are a great way for communicating with your members, especially your playing members. The GAA has an official text messaging service built into the Servasport Registration system at people.gaa.ie ***Remember child protection guidelines in relation to texting youth players. See the Advice Note on Duty of Care and Child Protection**
- Parish Bulletins are useful for promoting key events in your club.

What to do in a Crisis

From time to time, some clubs find themselves centre of a media storm for all the wrong reasons. This is an important time to ensure all communications are strictly managed. The message is very clear if you find yourself in a crisis situation, don't try to ride out the media storm on your own. Contact your county board or the communications team at Ulster GAA who will advise you on how best to deal with your crisis.

GAA Club Fund-raising

Tiomsú Airgid don Chlub

The GAA is amateur but uses increasing amounts of money to help develop and deliver its work. As a result 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. This unit works in conjunction with the Finance Sub-Committee and is headed by the Club treasurer. However, the make-up of this unit can be diverse and usually contains volunteers who may not ordinarily be involved at committee level but share an interest in securing the financial sustainability of the Club.

As most GAA Clubs have strong traditions of fundraising and regularly devise innovative fundraising methods, this note looks at some of those and highlights the key lessons learned to date.

Traditional GAA Fundraising Methods:

Good practice tips for a number of these are outlined below:

Membership Fees

This is an often under-rated way of raising funds, for example 200 adult members paying just a £25/ €25 membership fee will bring in £5,000/ €5,000.

Some tips for maximising membership fee income are:

- Keep making the point that GAA membership isn't free gratis.
- Keep highlighting what the GAA delivers for its members and its communities.
- Collect membership fees at AGMs: don't allow people to vote if they haven't paid.
- Appoint a Club Registrar whose sole job is to look after membership and fees.

- Place an emphasis on membership fees early in the year; have cut-off date after which people can't become members.
- Make sure all adult players are paid-up members; many Clubs do not however charge underage players membership fees.
- Look at the possibility of family membership schemes.
- Tie certain benefits into membership, e.g. access to big match tickets.
- Consider how gift-aid may be incorporated into voluntary donations towards a club membership fee.

Gates

Again this is something that's often allowed to go by default, leaving financial gaps that have to be filled in other ways. A Club with ten adult home games with an average attendance of just 50 people at each and an admission fee of £4.00/€4.00 has a potential income of £2,000/€2,000. To prevent this going by default Clubs should:

- Agree and implement a Club admission pricing policy.
- Adopt the principle that all our games have value and therefore attract an admission fee, however small.
- Put in place a team of people who will look after gates.
- If at all possible, put turnstiles in place: turnstiles make sure that every entrant pays their admission.

Lotto

The weekly Lotto has become the fundraising mainstay of the majority of GAA Clubs. Experience built up over the years tells us that the best Lottos:

- Are managed by a dedicated person/team of people within the Club.
- Take place week-after-week, without fail.



- Facilitate people who want to pay in/lump sums or by standing orders/direct debits.
- Make sure their whole Club catchment is covered in terms of sales.
- Hold the draw publicly, in a set place at a set time.
- Publicise the weekly winners in local press/parish bulletin/social media pages.
- Increase the jackpot by a reasonable amount each week ...and re-start it at a reasonable level when it's won.
- Have tickets available in shops and other public places for casual buyers.
- Sell Lotto tickets at Club events and games.
- Acknowledge Lotto sales people in some small way at the end of each year.

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: this always looks good.
- Make sure your events are well-stewarded.

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.

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!



Sponsorship

This is now central to most Clubs' fundraising. Many GAA Club sponsors are involved to support their Club rather than for commercial reasons. But that's all the more reason why we should be business like with them and treat them well:

- Always make sure your sponsors fit with the ethos of the GAA and your Club.
- Plan your sponsorship: work out what's available for sponsorship and at what price and also identify potential sponsors.
- Tell your potential sponsors about your Club and what it does. Send them a full colour brochure containing all the relevant information promoting the advantages of being associated with your club. Send them your Club Development Plan, if appropriate.
- Make it clear what's up for sponsorship and for how long. Spell out for them the benefits they'll get from the sponsorship ...e.g. name on shirts; other branding; access to tickets; places at Club events; etc.
- Spell out in turn what the Club expects from them ... payment amounts; dates; etc.
- Treat your sponsors well: promote their sponsorship; greet them at Club events; honour the commitment they make.
- Invite them to be part of any community consultation being undertaken by the Club; e.g. the planning workshop as part of the Club Planning Programme.

Grants

Grants from sources other than the GAA itself are increasingly important for GAA Clubs. Contrary to what some think, GAA Clubs do not have to compromise any core principles to obtain significant grant funding from places like the Lottery or government. Over the past decade or so, Clubs have learned a lot about grants and how to get them. That learning tells us:

- Never chase a grant just because it's there: always start by working out your needs (through the Club Planning Programme), and then look around to see if there's grant aid to help you meet them. Don't build a second pitch because there's a grant for it: instead look for a grant to help fund that second pitch your Club badly needs.
- Read the funders' criteria very carefully: remember you have to fit with what they want, not with what you might think they should want!
- That said, funders always want to spend, not keep, their money: you need to show how you can help them do that.
- Funders look closely at Who they're giving their money to as well as at What it's for: it's essential that Clubs can show that their governance arrangements are top class.
- Funders also like to see where their grant might fit in your overall scheme of things. It's vital to have a good Club Development Plan that spells that out for them.
- Always keep thinking about who will benefit from your project.
- Try to find out what assessment criteria the funders use and match your application to them.
- Look at how your project will deliver on wider issues such as equality; sustainability; partnership with others; the environment; etc. Does your project cater for under-represented groups – females, children, older people, people with disabilities. Can your project tackle issues centred on obesity, mental health, community relations etc.
- Be clear in your own mind what the ongoing costs (added maintenance for example) and benefits (increased participation) of your project will be: funders will want to see that.
- Spell out your competence in terms of developing and then managing projects: make sure your Club is credible in the eyes of the funder.

- Put in a quality bid. If it's form-based, answer every question you're asked, openly and honestly: if it's not form-based, tell them What you want to do; Why you want to do it; How you'll deliver it; When and Where you'll do it; Who will benefit; and How it meets their criteria.
- Always assume the funder knows nothing about your Club; its work; or the GAA: spell it out for them.
- Try and differentiate your bid: make it stand out from the crowd.
- Talk to other GAA Clubs which have been successful in getting grants.
- Be prepared to meet funders face to-face, either in a meeting or to make a formal presentation to them.
- Consult with your County Development Officer

Structured Giving at Club Level

Many GAA Clubs have put in place planned giving schemes as a core part of their fund-raising strategies. These replicate very successful approaches that have been developed at County level, e.g. Club Aontroma; Club Derry; Club Down; and Club Tyrone.

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.
- Teams
- 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
- A contribution to GAA activity at County level.

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 power-point 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 weekly Lottos: 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).

Many GAA Clubs have put in place planned giving schemes as a core part of their fund-raising strategies.



- 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.

Registering for CASC (Community Amateur Sports Clubs) and Section 235 status:

This monetary scheme, managed by the

Inland Revenue, was devised to encourage communities to support their local voluntary sports club.

With a Structured Giving Scheme (Friends Of.../Monthly Direct Debit) in place, many clubs can re-claim an additional 25p in every £1 donated by their members who have signed up to such schemes and are registered tax payers.

There are a number of considerations and requirements that Clubs should be aware of before registering for CASC status. More information can be found on www.hmrc.gov.uk

Clubs in Cavan, Monaghan, and Donegal can receive tax exemption on eligible projects, from eligible donors under Section 235. More information on this can be found on www.revenue.ie

In order to be deemed eligible for CASC and Section 235 registration clubs should be able to answer yes to all the points below:

- Is Club Membership open to all?
- Are Club Facilities available to all sectors of the community?
- Does the Club's Constitution prevent profits being distributed to members?
- Does the club provide facilities and encourage participation in eligible sports?
- Does Club Constitution state that on dissolution of Club Assets are to be applied to Sporting or Charitable Purposes?
- Does the Club have a full set of audited accounts?
- Has the Club an up to date Constitution and Deeds of Trust in place?

Clubs should contact their County Development Officer of the Community Development Department within Ulster GAA should they have any queries regarding this.

Valuing Volunteers

A Luach ar Oibrithe Deonacha

Getting the right people (and enough of them!) is one of the basic challenges for GAA clubs across the Province. Recruiting volunteers can be a chance to refresh and reinvigorate your club. A positive approach, combined with clear thinking and creativity, can make all the difference to your volunteer involvement.

Why do some people volunteer ... yet others don't?

Research has shown that people volunteer because:

- They were asked!
- They like it
- It keeps them busy/occupied
- They make and keep friendships
- It helps their career
- They got involved via their children
- They wanted to "give something back"
- They want to be associated with something positive and successful
- It is a family tradition

That same research tells us people don't volunteer because:

- They weren't asked!
- They think they haven't the skills needed
- They think they'll be over-burdened with work, and will never "escape" from it
- They don't have the confidence, or the time, or the interest
- They see what we call "red flag" words like "need" or "desperate" or "face closure" in our recruitment literature and are scared off by them
- They don't know about the GAA or our Club (much as we might think they do), or, worse, they have a poor image of them.

Meanwhile those already on board told us they remain there because:

- They feel valued; appreciated; and respected
- They're part of a group and feel part of "the team"
- It gives them a sense of pride. The GAA is a "badge of honour"
- Their work is productive and worthwhile.

Any GAA Club anywhere can act on these findings to help them Recruit; Retain; and Recognise volunteers.



A positive approach, combined with clear thinking and creativity, can make all the difference to your volunteer involvement.



Before you Recruit

Though it is tempting to jump straight into a recruitment campaign, you should first ensure that you are well prepared. It is unwise to recruit volunteers if you do not know what they will do, how you will support them, or what procedures you will have for selection.

The starting point is to decide why you want volunteers and what work you would like them to do for your club.

AREA OF CLUB BUSINESS	WE NEED HELP WITH	WHO COULD HELP US?	WHO'LL ASK THEM?
Administration			
Coaching			
Culture/Heritage			
Facilities			
Fundraising			

It can be useful to draw up a Volunteer Policy for the club, which outlines basic principles behind your volunteer-involvement and your practice guidelines for working with volunteers.

Support

All volunteers need support. What kind of support you provide will depend on the nature of their role and their needs.

Key elements of support can include:

- **Induction:** Inductions are an important opportunity to introduce volunteers to the club, communicate relevant policies and procedures and set out both what is expected of them and what they can expect in their new role.
- **Job description for volunteers -** People who volunteer like to know what they are getting into, hence the importance of a short and simple job description. This can simply give the job a title and a short description of what is involved and the amount of time the particular task will take.

Example:

IT OFFICER	
Description	Update website and social media sites on a daily basis with match fixtures, results, reports and general club activities.
Time	Will involve up to 6 hours every week liaising with Club PRO.
Training	Attendance at Ulster GAA Club Officer Training.
Benefits	Develop Key Skills in IT and Social Media.

- **Training** – The Ulster GAA Coach and Volunteer Development Programme is run annually for GAA members across all nine counties of Ulster and contains many courses, seminars, conferences and events to help develop GAA volunteers' skills and knowledge.
- **Recognition** - It's all-too-easy to take volunteers for granted. To keep everyone enthusiastic and refreshed we should check that we haven't overloaded anyone and keep providing feedback to them. It is important to give people variety and don't leave anyone in the same place/role for too long. Constantly acknowledge volunteers, formally and informally. Remember, that a simple 'thank-you' is all that is required. The club should also use its website and notes in the local newspapers to highlight the work that people are doing.
- Commitment to the GAA, so it is important to emphasise how their contribution will make a difference
- Meeting people - volunteering can be a very sociable activity!
- Gaining skills - when recruiting stress the skills and experience that volunteers can gain
- Utilising existing skills - some people want to put their skills to a good cause.
- Keeping active - more and more older people are volunteering.

Making it Easy

Putting oneself forward as a volunteer can be quite daunting. People might not be sure what they are getting into and might be worried that, for example, they won't be up to it or that the commitment will end up being greater than they want.

Each recruitment drive should begin with the most basic unit of voluntary commitment which is 'One Hour'. This is the shortest time per week during which one person can make a difference. While it might appear a small amount, lots of one hour voluntary commitments can add up to a highly effective, focused group of volunteers who can take much of the hard work away from others in the Club.

Motivation

It is useful to think about the possible motivations that people might have for becoming volunteers. This can help you to design volunteering opportunities and influence your recruitment message.

Motivations for volunteering might include:



Culture and Heritage in the GAA Club

Cultúr agus Oidhreacht sa Chlub

Tá dualgas ar leith ag Cumann Lúthchleas Gael ó thaobh cothú na Gaeilge de. Tá se leagtha síos sa Treoirí Oifigiúil go bhfuil teanga agus cultúr na hÉireann lárnach ar chlár gnó CLG. Ciallaíonn sé sin gur gá go dóibh bheith lárnach ar chlár gnó an Chlub. Is féidir leo bheith i measc na ngnéithe is taitneamhaí de ghníomhaíochtaí an Chlub, mar go mbeidh tú in ann baill nua nach n-imríonn a mhealladh isteach agus tá deis agat bheith cruthaitheach sna rudaí a dhéantar.

The opening lines of the GAA's Official Guide make it clear that the active support of the Irish language and culture are central to the GAA's business. That means they have to be a part of our Club's business. They can also be among the most inclusive and enjoyable aspects of club activity, as you bring in new non-playing members and you can be creative in what you do.

Scór

Every GAA Club should take part in Scór. No other sporting or cultural body has anything like Scór, a framework which allows local people to take part in activity right across the cultural spectrum and within a clear community-based and amateur context. Participants have the added benefit of moving on to represent their Club and/or County and Province.

Scór is made up of eight competitions:

- **Rince Foirne:** céilí or figure dancing
- **Amhránaíocht Aonair:** solo singing
- **Ceol Uirlise:** instrumental music
- **Aithriseoireacht/scéalaíocht:** recitation/storytelling
- **Grúpa Bailéid:** ballad group
- **Tráth na gCeisteanna:** question time
- **Léiriú:** (dramatic presentation)
- **Rince Seit:** set dancing

Every Club should have local people capable of taking part in several Scór competitions.

Good practice tells us:

- Clubs should appoint a Cultural Officer whose key role will be to organise Scór in the Club.
- Clubs should liaise closely with the County GAA Cultural Officer.
- Other interested people from outside the Club, particularly parents, should be involved.
- Scór should be unashamedly promoted locally: modern TV successes show us how popular it has become for young people in particular to perform on stage.
- If starting from scratch, it is often best to begin by entering Scór na nÓg, i.e. for under-16s.
- Collaboration with local schools is vital.
- Strong partnerships should be developed with other local activities, e.g. dancing classes and drama Clubs.
- Local 'in-club' Scór heats can help create momentum and tend to be very popular locally.
- Scór performers representing the Club should be dressed in branded Club gear.
- Scór competitors should be cherished and celebrated, e.g. asked to provide entertainment at Club events.

An Ghaeilge

There are a number of simple ways in which GAA Clubs can help foster Irish at the local level:

- Ideally appoint an Oifigeach Gaeilge/ Language Officer.
- Use the Irish version of the Club name in prominent places, e.g. on letterheads, kitbags, playing gear, tickets, and scoreboards.
- Put up Irish/bilingual signs inside and outside Club premises.
- Use bilingual agendas at meetings.
- Make sure at least some Irish is used at Club events
- Host Irish language classes
- Offer Gaeltacht scholarships to local children.
- Host a children's summer camp which encompasses Gaelic sports, Irish and culture.



- Take part in Seachtain na Gaeilge / Irish language Week in early March each year.
- Encourage adult members to go to Cúrsa Shéamuis de Faoite, Comhairle Uladh's Irish course in Downings, Dún na nGall, each July in the week after the Ulster football final.
- Collaborate with other local Clubs and the county GAA committee in language initiatives.
- Develop partnerships with local language organisations.

Ceol, Amhránaíocht, Damhsa agus Dráma

Music, Song, Dance, Art and Drama

- Appoint a Club Cultural Officer
- Host at least one dedicated Irish cultural event each year, e.g. tied in with St Patrick's Day.
- Make sure all Club events have an Irish cultural dimension, e.g. appropriate rounds in quizzes and entertainment at Club functions (ideally using Club Scór participants)
- Include appropriate elements in the décor of Club premises.
- Build a Celtic art component into any Club new-build project.
- Work closely with local schools and teachers.
- Organise or facilitate others to organise Irish dancing and/or music classes.
- Collaborate with local GAA Clubs and the County Committee as appropriate.
- Work in partnership with other local cultural organisations

Stair agus Cartlanna an Chlub

Club History and Archives

- Research and promote the person/event/

- grouping after which the Club is named.
- Hold an annual 'founders' day', an event to celebrate the forming of the Club.
- Revisit past Club achievements in publications such as newsletters.
- Include a summary Club history on the Club website.
- Build up a safe, protected archive of Club minute-books, AGM reports, Club publications, etc.
- Make digital copies of old minute-books, documents and photographs and consider donating the originals to a local or provincial archive for safekeeping.
- Publish a new or update any previous Club history, ideally to mark a landmark Club or GAA event.
- Keep press cuttings of significant Club games and events.
- Record the experiences and motivation of Club founders and key personnel.
- Organise celebratory events or reunions to mark milestone achievements of your Club.
- Keep photographic records of Club teams, committees, projects and events.
- Retain Club jerseys and other merchandise.
- Contribute to similar County GAA initiatives.

Oidhreacht Áitiúil *Local Heritage*

- Be clear about the extent of the Club's catchment area.
- Promote and use local place-names, particularly townlands.
- Contribute to local histories.
- Organise, contribute to, and/or take part in talks/lectures/events focusing on local heritage.

The Inclusive GAA Club

An Club Cuimsitheach

Why this is Important

The first line of the GAA's Official Guide spells out how the GAA reaches into every corner of the land. That means it reaches out to every person in every corner of the land. In doing this, the GAA works as an anti-sectarian and anti-racist organisation and is fully committed to principles of inclusion and diversity at all levels. This is what the GAA believes in and expects its members to live up to: opting out of these responsibilities isn't an option.

Since the vast bulk of the GAA's work is done at Club level then it follows that we must bring life to these principles of inclusion and diversity at Club level too. They're not just something for our provincial or national leaders: they're something for us to work on and deliver on a daily basis at Club level. If the Clubs don't drive this work forward, then not much is going to happen.

What do we mean by all this?

The words "Inclusion" and "Diversity" tend to get bandied about a lot. To keep things simple, we should work to these definitions:

- Inclusion essentially means people having a sense of belonging, of being comfortable in being part of something they value.
- Diversity means being aware of, accommodating and celebrating difference.

Making people feel included is absolutely central to what the GAA does: we talk about "our" Club and "our" County, about "our" teams and "our" players. What's more, we actually mean it. But we need to take it to the next level and offer that wonderful sense of belonging to others out there. The great thing about belonging is that no matter how many people we offer it to, it's never watered down!

Inclusion and Diversity in many ways go hand-in-hand. Real Inclusion reflects Diversity, i.e. it's interested in offering that sense of belonging to everyone, irrespective of age, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation and/or disability.

One place where we still have a particular back-log of work is in bringing women, and women's gaelic games, fully on board within the GAA. This is maybe the best starting point for a lot of Clubs.

What this doesn't mean for the GAA Club

Some people worry that by focussing on Inclusion and Diversity we will water down the GAA, making it into something that caters for everything and stands for nothing. This is most definitely not what Inclusion and Diversity are about.

The GAA remains the Gaelic Athletic Association. That means we're proud of and celebrate our Irishness; that we focus on gaelic games and activities; that we're community-based; and that we cherish our amateur and volunteer bases. We don't compromise on those fundamentals. The GAA Club doesn't become a one-size-fits-all organisation. We remain and are proud of what we are: but in doing and remaining true to all that, we should be open and welcoming to others.

Taking Inclusion and Diversity forward in the GAA Club

Comhairle Uladh has been working to the statement below for some time now:

"Ulster GAA adheres to the principle that all gaelic games should be fun; fair; delivered in a safe environment; and accessible for

The term 'Inclusiveness' is included as one of the 6 core values in the Associations Strategic Vision and Action Plan.



all and that coaches, administrators and spectators should adhere to these principles in all areas of GAA activity."

Experience tells us that there are a number of straightforward, practical things we can do to take Inclusion and Diversity forward within our Clubs.

The first and most important is to give someone in the Club the role of overseeing this work. That Club Inclusion Co-ordinator should:

- Sit as a member of the Club Executive Committee.
- Establish an Inclusion/Integration Committee if appropriate, involving representatives of all the gaelic codes in the Club.
- Communicate and co-operate with County and Provincial Integration Officers.
- Actively promote and publicise, from the outset, the mutual benefits of working together in the development of gaelic games as a whole.
- Attend workshops and seminars relating to inclusion/integration.

- Begin to identify local groups or communities of people who historically haven't had much to do with the GAA.
- Make a connection with those groups and invite them to "taster" sessions/events run by the Club.
- Look at how the Club might contribute to the work of those groups, e.g. older person's Clubs; women's groups; local disability initiatives; and so on.
- Oversee the development and implementation of the Club inclusion or equality policy.

Once Inclusion and Diversity are on the Club's agenda, then among the things that we know have worked well elsewhere are:

Disability Games

All people with special needs and/or a disability should have an equal opportunity to partake in gaelic games to their full potential. A series of County-level events have been organised to encourage Clubs to run activities to cater for members with disabilities. Some of the activities that your Club can run are:



- Adapted FUNdamentals
- Wheelchair hurling and camogie
- Wheelchair football
- Adapted Rounders

The Ulster Council also organises specialist workshops to train coaches in dealing with participants with special needs and/or disabilities. For details see www.ulstergaa.ie

Have-a-Go Blitzes

In order to introduce community members who traditionally have not been involved in the GAA the Club can organise “have-a-go” events in conjunction with local schools or community groups. “Have-a-Go” events are fun/recreational games events and are usually followed by a social occasion hosted by the Club.

Health and Wellness Programme

The Ulster Council’s Health and Wellness programme is run out over a series of events across Counties in conjunction with the Ulster Cancer Society. Specific men’s and women’s health nights are run with a focus on those Club members who have retired from playing and are now focused on Club administration or maybe not actively involved in the Club

at all. Additionally, a Drugs and Alcohol programme has been run at County level and in schools providing information on drugs and alcohol-related issues.

Personal health and well-being is an increasing issue for most people. But often people don’t want to go to traditional health settings or events. In the past couple of years we’ve discovered that events run in/by GAA Clubs are much more appealing to many people. By running such events Clubs are being Inclusive and Diverse ... whilst contributing significantly to their local communities. And that was always core GAA business!

To organise a Health and Wellness night in your Club contact the Ulster Council at www.ulstergaa.ie

Being Good Neighbours

Our Official Guide clearly states that GAA Club grounds are solely for the promotion of gaelic games. This however does not prevent Clubs from allowing local community or youth groups to use GAA facilities at otherwise slack times. Such arrangements reflect the GAA Club’s role as the anchor in many of our communities and will only strengthen the Club’s place in its locality.

The GAA is open and welcoming to everyone. If you’re living here, no matter what your background, we’re interested in getting you involved in our Association.



Welcoming New Citizens

It’s estimated that by 2020, one-person-in-five in Ireland will have migrated here from somewhere else or have been born to migrant parents. As Irish people, we have the clearest understanding of what it’s like to have to go abroad to seek a better life. Even the smallest word or gesture of welcome is important to new members of our community. The GAA is open and welcoming to everyone. If you’re living here, no matter what your background, we’re interested in getting you involved in our Association. The minimum any GAA club should do to encourage new Citizens is:

- Find out how many migrants live and/or work in the local community.
- Get an idea of where they’re from.
- Make contact with them and invite them to a Club function/event/game.
- Run a “have-a-go” day to introduce them to the Club and the games.
- Run a cultural evening which mixes and-matches Irish culture/music/song/dance with theirs.
- Welcome them into the local community/the GAA.

A number of local migrant support groups and networks are now in place across Ulster. They can give GAA Clubs good advice on language/translation and cultural issues. For more details contact www.ulstergaa.ie

Contribute to the Community

Being Inclusive and Diverse isn’t just about being reactive to others’ needs. It’s also about being proactive. Most GAA Clubs, especially in rural areas, act as a constant community resource. Ways in which this can and should happen include:

- Providing personnel to steward at wakes and funerals.
- Doing the same for other community events, e.g. church or school-based.
- Making Club facilities available to local groups and for local events.
- Taking part in appropriate local campaigns, e.g. re school closures; health plans or planning policies.
- Club members sitting on local boards and committees, e.g. school governors or Credit Unions.
- Club members contributing to other more strategic structures such as Local Sports Partnerships.

Unionist Outreach

In our Province this is a fundamental issue yet is equally the one which can cause the most discomfort. The GAA is confident about its own place, ethos and values. In this, it also respects the place, values and ethos of others. But equally the GAA recognises that in terms of community relations we are where we are and are left with the legacies of several centuries of division and strife.

Recent practice has shown us that in terms of engaging with members of the wider Unionist community there is value in:

- Inviting Unionist politicians to Club events.
- Club personnel attending Council events.
- Clubs supporting EMU (Education for Mutual Understanding) events in local schools.
- Club personnel attending Ulster-Scots events.
- Joint cultural events with Ulster-Scots groups.
- Sharing of good practice in how to manage Clubs and run events with others.
- Clubs contributing to Councils’ Good Relations work.



- Clubs contributing to the work of the Peace III Cluster Partnerships.
- GAA people getting involved in local cross-community history and heritage groups and projects.

Above all, the engagement which works best is that which is quiet, low key, not in-your-face and which respects the other person's traditions and perspectives.

Six Steps to GAA Club Inclusion

STEP
01

Integrate! Merge the local ladies' and men's Clubs into one overall community Club with each code and gender having equal ownership.

STEP
02

Form links with other community groups. GAA Clubs have a key role to play in every community. It is therefore important to form links with other groups which are also interested in the overall development of your community.

STEP
03

Have your own "Have-a-Go" day! Run your own blitz for the local ethnic workers in the community.

STEP
04

Form links with a special school to facilitate and promote gaelic games for people with disabilities.

STEP
05

Organise a Club Health and Wellness day. Invite health promotion staff into the Club who will provide health checks and advice for members.

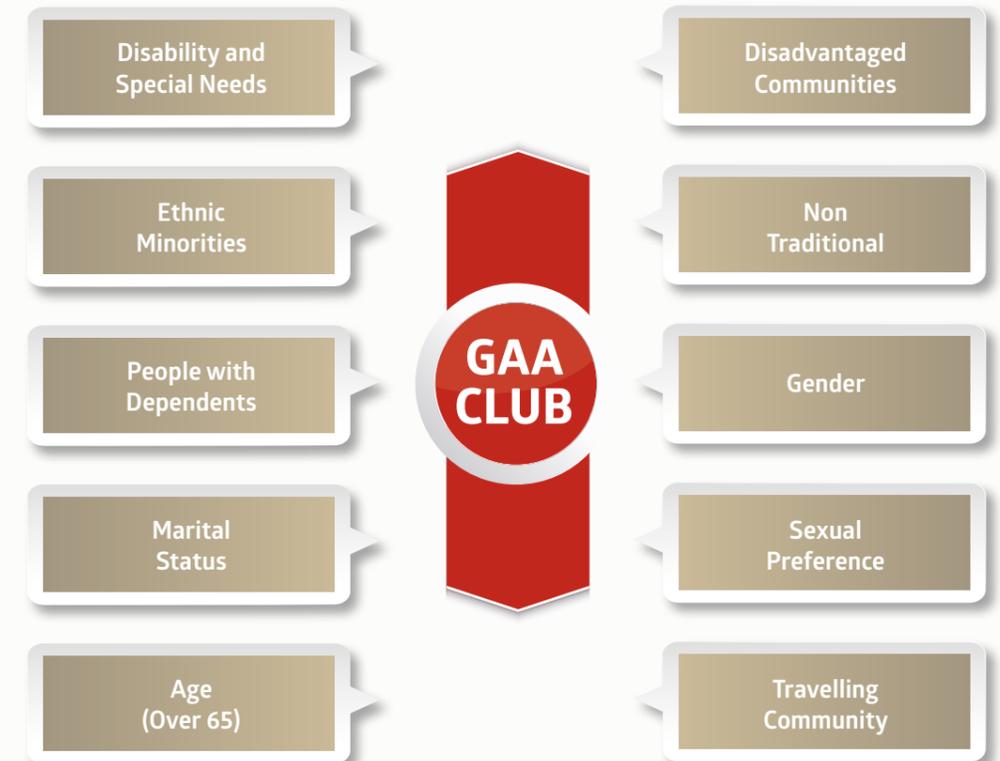
STEP
06

Run a Club "open day" so other community and sporting groups can see what the Club does.

Being Inclusive and Diverse isn't just about being reactive to others' needs. It's also about being proactive. Most GAA Clubs, act as a constant community resource.



Above all, never forget ... membership of the GAA is open to all!



The Healthy GAA Club

An Club Folláin

GAA Clubs pride themselves on being at the heart of their Communities, and as such are in an ideal position to positively impact upon the health of their members and wider community. As a sporting organisation the GAA club is already doing much to promote positive health; providing opportunities for physical activity, and promoting physical fitness of its players. Physical activity guidelines in promoting health for adults recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on 5 days, if not all days of the week. Recent data suggests that only 35% of adults on the island are meeting these physical activity guidelines; as a result the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, obesity and type II diabetes are on the increase. Unfortunately the foundations of this trend are being laid-down in young adults, and children also.

Physical activity is also good for our psychological well-being, and as such our mental health is positively affected by being physically active, being connected to a Club, playing in a team, and interacting with others. It is good to know that by just being there our GAA clubs are already contributing to better physical and mental health of its community.

The GAA takes it's responsibility in promoting the health of its members very seriously, and in recent times Ulster GAA has been working closely with statutory agencies in offering support and resources to Clubs. The Heads Up Mental Health Resource, ASAP Brochure, Adult Health Booklet, and Healthy Hamper for Schools are Ulster GAA resources which aim to increase a club's ability to improve its community's health.

From 2014 all counties have been tasked with setting-up a County Health & Well-being Committee to oversee this within their county.

Along with Ulster GAA your County Health & Well-being Committee is a point of contact for any queries a club may have in relation to these issues. Clubs are required to appoint a Club Health & Well-being Officer who is responsible for:

- Implementing and overseeing ASAP within the Club.
- Liaising with Ulster GAA and their County Health & Well-being Committee about health-related matters.
- Making Ulster GAA health resources available within the Club.
- Ensuring the club's defibrillator is checked weekly and there are members trained in its use.
- Exploring ways in which the Club can promote better health and well-being to club members and the wider community.
- Ensure the Club has adequate First Aid cover for all training and competitive sessions.

It is recommended that clubs devise a Club Health and Well-being Policy, with health-related matters having a place on monthly meeting agendas. It is likely that a small working group will be needed to implement all areas of health and well-being within clubs.

New health and well-being initiatives are emerging all the time, so clubs should use their intuition to reach-out to their Community. Some examples of what can be done are as follows:

- Think of ways in which your facilities can be used for physical activity for the wider Community, e.g. walking trails, exercise classes
- Host an annual Family Fun Day to promote healthy living

It is good to know that by just being there our GAA clubs are already contributing to better physical and mental health of its community.

“ ”

- Work with local service providers to host health education events, or use professionals from within your Club / Community. Such events may focus on; cancer awareness, smoking cessation, women's health, men's health, young people's health, dealing with stress and so on.

There are specific health issues which clubs can take pro-active approach in promoting health and well-being; for example:

Smoking

- All indoor areas should be non-smoking, with appropriate signage to promote this.
- Coaches of underage teams should not smoke during training or matches.
- Smoking should not be permitted on club grounds.

Screening

- All Club players from 14 years upwards should be cardiac-screened using the GAA cardiac-screening questionnaire.

Mental Health

- Club should use the Heads Up resource.
- Club should liaise with their County Health & Well-being Committee regarding attending training for club members in the area of mental health.

Health and well-being is a concern for us all. On the whole being involved in the GAA is good for our health, and good for our Communities. Although playing our games and promoting our culture are the aims of our Association we should make every effort to improve the quality of life for our members and wider community.



Club Coaching Structures

Struchthúir Oilíúna an Chlub

Club Coaching Structures

Every club's coaching structure will be unique to that individual club. The population base of players can vary, the number of volunteers available to get involved in coaching can vary and clubs can offer any combination of male football, hurling, ladies football, camogie, handball and rounders.

What is presented here, is an ideal situation where good policy and practice underpin a sound structure and systems to promote best practice, FUN, and a lifelong participation in Gaelic Games.

Practice and Policy

Outlined below are the fundamental things that are needed to underpin coaching in the GAA club.

Safeguarding Children in Sport and Best Practice

- All coaches, administrators and parents have an opportunity to take this programme.
- Definitive Codes of Best Practice are established for coaches, mentors, parents and players.

Access NI/Garda Clearance

- All coaches working with Children and Youths are processed through the Access NI / Garda vetting system to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable young people.

Coach Education

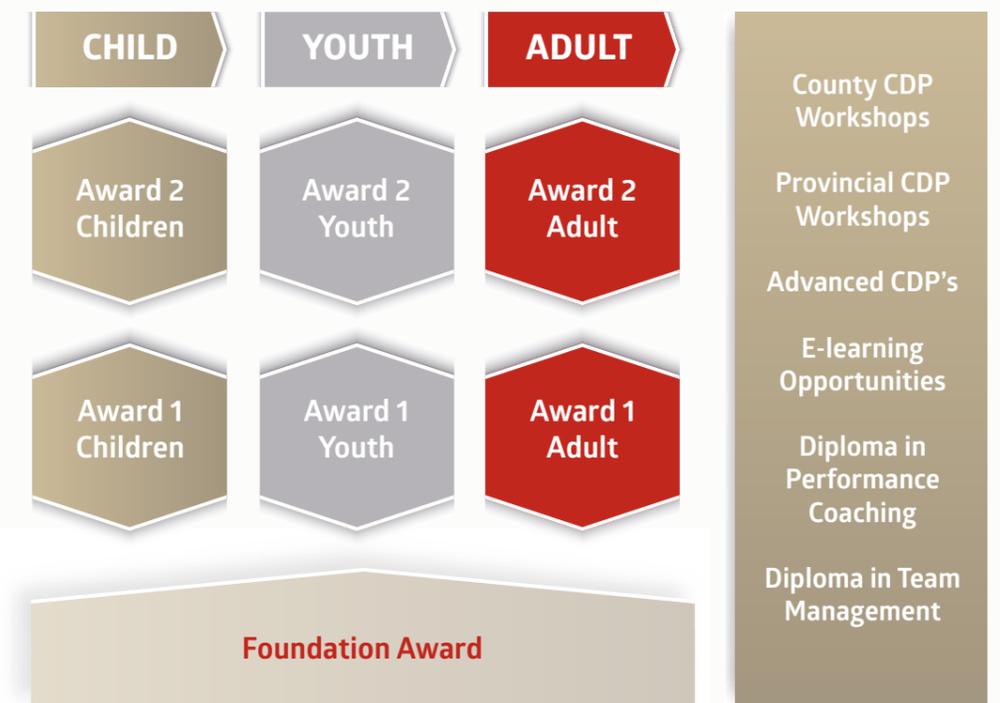
National Governing Body Awards

- All coaches should be suitably qualified to work with the specific age groups. The structure for National Governing Body coaching awards incorporates the Foundation coaching Award and then coaching pathways for Children, Youth and Adults.
- The GAA has developed a model of Coach Education to take account of the different playing capacities that exist between children (up to 12 years), youths 13-18) and adults (age 19+), and the competencies that a coach is required to display when working with each of the playing populations. These streams have been identified to cater for the diverse needs of children, of youths and of adults.
- To date courses have been developed at Foundation, Award 1 and Award 2. Award 3 programme is currently under development.

E-Learning and workshop accreditation

- It is now possible to do the Foundation Award via online learning (theoretical online assessment only). Log onto www.learning.gaa.ie to view available coach education workshops and coaching award opportunities.
- It is anticipated that more courses and workshops will eventually be assessed online with National GAA coaching credits available on completion.

The coach education programme focuses on continuing education, so that coaches can improve by means of a series of specifically designed courses & workshops.



The coach education programme focuses on continuing education, so that coaches can improve by means of a series of specifically designed courses, workshops and conferences incorporating internationally recognised principles of best practice.

Coach Education Workshops

- The role of the Club Coaching and Games Development Officer is to make club coaches aware of workshops delivered by Ulster GAA and County Coaching and Games Departments, and to encourage them to attend and implement best practice back in the club setting.

Ulster GAA Provincial Coaching Conference

- The Club Coaching and Games Development Officer and other club

representatives should attend annual Provincial coaching conference and bring best practice back to the club.

Qualifications in Coaching and Management

- Experienced coaches can gain further qualifications by completing the Diploma in Performance Coaching and / or the Diploma in Team Management, which are both accredited by the Open College Network.

Structures

The ideal club structure will have the following in place

Club Coaching and Games Development Officer

Duties to include:

- Establish a coaching and games committee representative of all codes.
- Appointment of underage coaching teams
- Devise, Implement and monitor club coaching plan (short term and long term goals).
- Manage and direct the content of all coaching programmes at all age groups
- Ensure that club coaches are up to date with coaching resources and coach education opportunities – promote best practice with regard to coaching.
- Promotion of integration and facility time of all codes within the club.
- Implementation of an effective club-school link.
- Promotion of Go Games and age appropriate coaching.
- Ensure that all age groups receive a meaningful programme of games.
- Promotion of Cul Camps and summer activities.
- Promote RESPECT initiative.

Volunteer Coaches

The club coaching officer should endeavour to ensure that all codes represented in the Club have a voice and access to facilities in the club. The establishment of a Coaching and Games committee will provide a forum to discuss best practice, issues, and debate club coaching policies.

- Each age group in each code should have a Head Coach who will have overall responsibility for that group.
- Each age group should also have sufficient Assistant Coaches to work with the Head Coach to create an effective coaching environment for the group.
- All coaches should endeavour to attain the GAA Foundation Coaching Award as a minimum, and as they gain experience

they should be encouraged to gain further coaching qualifications, in the Child, Youth and Adult pathways, at Award 1 and Award 2.

- Coaches should keep the welfare of the child or young player at the centre of all they do.

Coaching Administrator / Youth Officer

Duties to include:

- Administration of coaching and youth activity – schedule coaching committee meetings, coaching reports to executive committee.
- Registration of youth players and assistance to club Children's officer
- Facility bookings for each code/team.



Equipment Coordinator

Duties to include:

- Coordinates storage and management of all equipment for each code and age group.
- Responsible for ordering of equipment as required/approved.

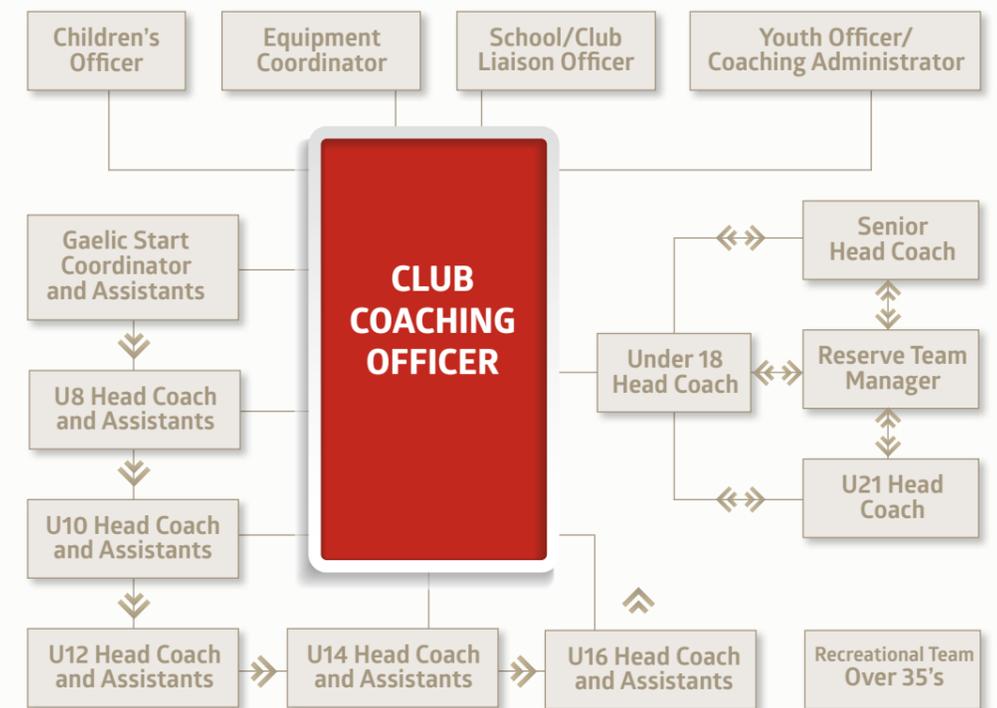
Retention of young people is a good indicator if things are going well in a club and as such coaches have a responsibility to make Gaelic Games FUN at all levels.



Coaching Committee

The coaching committee should consist of Club Coaching Officer, Youth Officer/Coach Administrator, Equipment Coordinator, Club Children's officer, Representatives from each code and age group.

Suggested Club Coaching & Games Structure



Finally

- An effective Club Coaching Structure requires a significant number of club members working together for the betterment of Gaelic Games within the club.
- The process requires planning, organisation, ambition and dedication to implement best practice so that children and young people can play Gaelic Games to the best of their ability.
- It is important that clubs are inclusive and welcoming and provide playing opportunities for people with disabilities
- and also for people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Recreational games can provide this opportunity.
- Retention of young people is a good indicator if things are going well in a club and as such coaches have a responsibility to make Gaelic Games FUN at all levels.
- Coaches have to get the balance right between participation and competition. The focus needs to shift from winning at all costs to improvement, development and progress of players and teams.

Duty of Care and Child Protection

Dualgas Cúraim agus Cosaint Leanaí

The Gaelic Athletic Association (Cumann Lúthchleas Gael) is a community based family orientated organisation and as such believes that a transparent youth centred approach should be adopted by all units involved in the promotion and development of Gaelic games, culture and other activities at underage levels. Under age is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

A philosophy that promotes the importance of fair play, participation, enjoyment and equality for young people where young people strive to achieve their full potential as they mature and develop and respect the value of discipline.

Policy

- GAA clubs should adopt the Child Protection Policy of Code of ethics and best practice for children/youth sport.
- All personnel working with children or young people must be vetted.
- All personnel working with children or young people should undertake the necessary GAA Child Protection in Sport Awareness training as appropriate.
- Clubs should have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint, including disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures.

These policies are taken in line with Rule 1.13 Safeguarding of Children/Young People in the Official Guide 2013.

Best Practice

- Clubs should have a Child Protection Policy.
- It is best practice that GAA clubs adopt and implement the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport as part of the clubs child protection policy.
- A Children's Officer should be selected as a

member of the club executive committee to look after the interests and wellbeing of children and young people within the club.

- Clubs should adopt and implement the GAA Anti Bullying Policy.
- Clubs should have a code of conduct for children and young people, parents, coaches, leaders and volunteers.
- Appoint a code of behaviour advisory committee to deal with alleged breaches of the code.
- GAA clubs should obtain parental consent forms for children and young people for trips away or overnight stays.
- Clubs should adopt and implement a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting coaches, sports leaders and mentors.
- A Clubs Management committee should ratify all appointments made within the club.
- Clubs should have a policy relating to the use of Photographic and Mobile equipment.
- Clubs should have a policy that deals with drug misuse and substance abuse.
- Clubs should have in place guidelines relating to special needs.
- Clubs should develop and implement effective procedures for recording all attendances, accidents and injuries.
- Ensure all club officers are aware of their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Maintain confidentiality in dealing with sensitive information and in dealing with issues in relation to child protection.
- Review policies and procedures regularly.

Some examples of how the policies and best practice can be implemented within clubs:

- Annual club registration night where children and young people, parents, coaches, leaders and volunteers would be informed as to the behaviour that is expected of them and they would sign,



alongside their parent/guardian, the relevant codes of conduct.

- At club management meetings any new appointments made within the club should be ratified by the management committee.
- Access NI/Garda vetting of all personnel within the club who will be working with children or young people. Checks can be carried out through the Ulster Council; the Ulster Council Children's Officer should be contacted for information on this.
- Select a children's officer within the club who would be responsible for looking after the needs of the children and young people within the club, be responsible for organising appropriate training for parents, coaches, mentors etc.
- GAA Child Protection in Sport Awareness training workshops run within the club for those who will be working with children and young people for the club.
- The children's officer should communicate with club members the club child protection policy and also how to deal with a concern or complaint. This could be communicated on an educational training night run by the club.
- Before all trips away permission slips should be completed by the parents or legal guardian for children and young

people who are going on the trip. The parents/legal guardian should be made aware of dates, times, venues and duration or trips e.g. if they are over night etc.

- Parents should be notified of all events or trips that their children would be involved in.
- If photographs are taken of children for promoting events that have taken place for publication in a newspaper, on a website or to be displayed in a club etc. permission should be obtained first from the parents. Permission slips should explain what the photographs would be used for and also ask for the consent of the child and their parents/legal guardian to allow the child to be involved in having the photographs taken.
- Clubs should actively promote non smoking, and provide relevant information on alcohol and substance prevention programmes.
- Display on a Notice board within the club the contact details of the children's officer and contact details of organisations where the children or young people may turn to for help/advice e.g. if they want to talk to someone about abuse, suicide, drugs etc.
- Relevant leaflets should be available within the club on these issues.

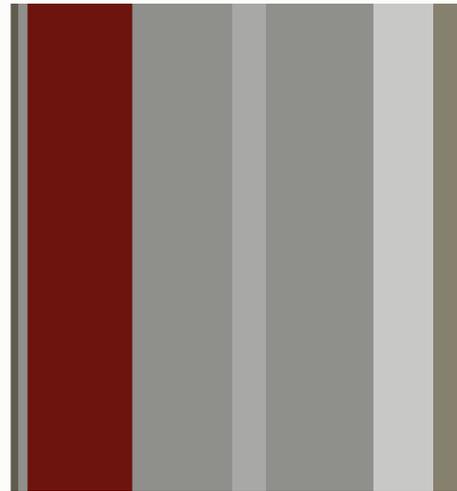
Where examples are used they are only samples and not exhaustive as a myriad of variations exist in everyday life and operations.

Working with Local Government

Ag Obair le Rialtas Áitiúil

Why is this important?

Local government plays a central role in life across Ulster. So too do the politicians who run it; County and District Councillors. What Councils do has an ongoing impact on GAA Clubs, Club Members, and local communities. They have a direct responsibility for a number of areas that are tied in with GAA Clubs' core business, Gaelic games and our associated activities. Every GAA Club should have a relationship and link with their local Council.



Who they are and what they do?

COUNTY	COUNCILS
Antrim	- Mid Ulster - Belfast City Council - Causeway District Council - Antrim and Newtownabbey Council - Mid and East Antrim
Armagh	- Armagh, Banbridge and Craigabon District Council - Newry, Mourne and Down
Cavan	- Cavan County Council
Derry	- Derry & Strabane District Council - Mid Ulster Council - Causeway Council
Donegal	- Donegal County Council

COUNTY	COUNCILS
Down	- North Down and Ards Council - Belfast City Council - Lisburn and Castlereagh Council - Newry Mourne and Down Council - Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council
Fermanagh	- Omagh and Fermanagh District Council
Monaghan	- Monaghan County Council
Tyrone	- Omagh and Fermanagh District Council - Mid Ulster Council - Derry and Strabane Council

Councils work best and most effectively when others develop partnerships with them. If the GAA is serious about this part of our business then there is an obligation on us to play our part.



Council Responsibilities differ depending on the jurisdiction: However broadly Councils are responsible for the following:

COUNTIES: Armagh, Antrim, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone	COUNTIES: Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning and Development ■ Building Control ■ Roads and Transport ■ Urban Regeneration ■ Community ■ Housing ■ Local Economic Development ■ Local Tourism ■ Leisure Facilities and Amenity ■ Sports Development ■ Environmental Protection ■ Water Protection and Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leisure and Recreation ■ Culture, Arts and Community Services ■ Waste Collection and Management ■ Street Cleaning ■ Building Control ■ Environment Health ■ Tourism ■ Local Economic Development ■ Registration and Licensing ■ (Consulted on Planning, Roads, Water and Housing)

Local Government and Sport

County and District Area Councils have a statutory responsibility for supporting the development of sport and leisure. They tend to do this in three ways:

- Directly providing sporting and leisure facilities.
- By rolling out Sports Development programmes e.g. Coaching Schemes, Summer Camps, sports development workshops.
- By grant aiding local sports Clubs for capital projects and/or programmes.

Traditionally the GAA has not fully engaged with local government and it's important

that Clubs establish contact with the local Sports Development Officer and elected representatives. GAA Clubs should aim to achieve the following in their local government area:

- All appropriate, publicly funded facilities are fit for purpose in terms of Gaelic Games.
- Gaelic Games and associated needs are built into all local sports development strategies.
- Coaching programmes always include a Gaelic Games component.
- GAA Clubs are included in all Council sports related circulation lists and databases.
- Council funding programmes are "GAA proofed" and are circulated through the GAA Communities.

- GAA Clubs ensure that they become aware of what Councils do and help Councils achieve their targets through their work.

“Fit for Purpose” Means:

- All Council owned pitches have GAA facilities or multi-sport facilities that can accommodate the playing of Gaelic Games i.e. minimum GAA size.
- Floodlighting should be appropriate for Gaelic Games (essentially higher and brighter lights than may be needed to other sports).
- Changing rooms should accommodate teams based on 15 players.
- Shower facilities should meet female requirements.
- Indoor facilities should facilitate indoor Hurling/Camogie and basic football training.
- Outdoor pitches/space should be able to facilitate Rounders.
- Facility availability and maintenance schedules should reflect GAA playing seasons.
- Handball should be accommodated.
- Hurling Walls should be provided.
- Kick-about areas should accommodate the playing of the GAA “go-games”.
- Facilities should acknowledge Gaelic Games through their décor and branding.

Beyond Sport

Neither the GAA nor local government are concerned with sport or games alone. Both share a significant amount of shared territory, such as:

- Community support
- The Arts
- Cultural Activities
- Museums and Heritage
- Social Inclusion

There is also significant scope for joint working and partnerships between Clubs and Councils in these areas. Many Councils have Culture and/or Irish Language Officers in place. At a minimum these officers can support Clubs and their members by:

- Support Club-based Irish Language classes or providing classes which GAA members can attend.

- Providing advice on the use of Irish, including signage in a Club setting.
- Working jointly on Gaelic (Celtic) Art programmes and projects.
- Establishing and developing local heritage programmes around townlands or local place names.
- Developing and hosting local displays and exhibitions.
- Supporting local History GAA projects
- Helping access Council facilities and premises for GAA Club events.

Councils work best and most effectively when others develop partnerships with them. It's neither fair nor practical to expect Councils to develop these agenda's on their own. If the GAA is serious about this part of our business then there is an obligation on us to play our part.

In the 26 Counties, County Councils include a number of strategic policy committees (SPC)'s These are “matched up” against groups of Council services and provide advice and policy development support for them. They contribute to Council planning and help coordinate Council work. Most Councils will have four to six SPC's. Councilors take up two thirds of the places on the SPC but the other third are reserved for people from interested local organisations. It is important that there is a strong GAA voice in every SPC.

Local Sports Partnerships and Forums

Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan each have established a dedicated local company to promote and develop sport. They bring together Councils, VEC's, the HSE, FAS, Third Level Colleges and a range of community and volunteer groups. The key aims of the LSP's are to increase participation in sport and to ensure that local resources are used to best effect. The outcomes they seek to include are:

- Club Development
- Volunteer Training
- Enhanced planning of sport at local level
- School, Community, and National Governing Body links

- Increased levels of local participation, especially amongst specific target groups such as older people, girls & women. People with disabilities, unemployed people, and those who live in disadvantaged communities.

The LSP's take their advice from local Sports Forum in terms of developing their plans and setting their priorities. The three LSP's in Ulster are:

Donegal Sports Partnership- Active Donegal
<http://activedonegal.com>

Cavan Sports Partnership
<http://www.cavansportspartnership.ie>

Monaghan Sports Partnership
<http://www.monaghansports.ie>

It is important that GAA Clubs not only have a strong link with their LSP but also actively have influence. In Antrim, Armagh, Down, Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone there are no formal local government sports arrangements in place however most Councils will have a local advisory Sports Forum or partnership. These bodies bring together people representing the main local sports and they help Councils in their sports planning and lobbying work.

Don't forget about Planning

All Councils north and south have responsibility for planning. That means that they are responsible for preparing the local planning policy. Planning policy is vital and sets out the way ahead for the County in land-use terms. They decide on things such as where housing growth will be concentrated what community provision there will be and where; and how and where housing growth will be concentrated, what community provision there will be; where and how and where open space and recreation needs will be met. These are vitally important concerns for GAA Clubs. Each Club should be aware of what's in its County Development Plan and be prepared to make an input when it's up for review. The Plans must be reviewed every six years and Clubs should make sure they make

an input to the planning process- your future depends on it!

Know your Council and get your Council to know you

Too often Councils don't know the GAA, and in turn, the GAA doesn't know Councils. From a GAA Club perspective we should:

- Find out about your Council visit its website and read its plans.
- Invite local Councillors and Council officials to your Club Functions.
- Keep Councillors updated on your Club's plans and achievements.
- Ensure that representatives of the Club attend Council planning and consultation events to ensure that the Club's view point is included.
- Ask for an opportunity to do a presentation to the Council if/when the Club is planning a major project.
- Always acknowledge any help or support that the Club gives the Council, and vice versa.
- If appropriate, lend support to Council programmes.

Some tips for GAA and Local Council Collaboration:

Some joint GAA and Council initiatives that have worked well are:

- Block booking arrangements for Council facilities.
- Club/Community Groups taking over the management of Council facilities.
- Discounts at Council Leisure Centres/Gyms for GAA members.
- Use of Council theatres for Scor Events.
- Use of Council premises for GAA Club launches/Events.
- Councils hosting civic receptions for successful GAA teams or individuals.
- Joint working for major events such as St. Patrick's day.

IT/ICT and the GAA Club

TFC sa Chlub

IT (Information Technology) / ICT (Information Communications Technology) impacts on almost all aspects of everyday life and it can also deliver help and support for GAA clubs, helping them to do their business

much more efficiently while also easing the burden on GAA volunteers.

Two systems have been introduced from National level in order to facilitate this:

IT/ICT impacts on almost all aspects of everyday life helping them to do their business much more efficiently while also easing the burden on GAA volunteers



Microsoft Office365 Email System

The GAA and Microsoft announced a new strategic agreement between both organisations in November 2013 which seen the GAA migrate to the Microsoft Office365, which has enabled the Association to meet its growing technology and communication needs now and into the future.

It is essential that at least all Club Secretaries and PRO's use their official club email addresses as this will be the official communication channel for all correspondence from National, Provincial and County levels. It is recommended that Club Secretary's and PRO's generate their own club circulation lists in order to quickly and effectively communicate with their club members.

Some of the features of the Microsoft Office365 email system include:

- Considerable (50GB) storage capacity per email account.
- Comprehensive directory of all official GAA email addresses.
- Online shared calendars.
- Online document sharing .

For any queries or support on the GAA email system, contact the dedicated support team on mail.support@gaamail.ie

Online Registration System

As per Rule 2 of the Official Guide, all clubs are now obliged to submit a list of all their members and players via the electronic registration system by 31st March each year, along with the player's injury scheme registration for all club teams.

Only full members registered on system before April 1st will be eligible to vote at the club AGM later that year, and any players who are not registered on the system would not be legal to play in games.

Some of the features of the Online GAA Registration System include:

- Register Full and Youth Members.
- Register All Players.
- Register the Club Executive Committee.
- Register the Club Trustees.
- Affiliate to the GAA Injury Fund.
- Generate Team Lists in Irish and English with the Club Crest attached.
- Manage Club Committees.
- Communicate by bulk text message and email.
- Generate address labels.
- Manage the payment of fees in the club.
- Record payment of fees in the club.

Each Club Registrar and Secretary should have access to the GAA Registration system at people.gaa.ie

For any queries or support with the GAA Registration System, contact the support team on gaasupport@servasport.com

Club Websites & Social Media Channels

Club Websites and Social Media are essential elements in complementing the aforementioned online systems.

For further information, refer to **Advice Note 7: Public Relations and Communication.**

Developing and Sustaining Club-School Links

Nascanna an Chlub le Scoileanna

The phrase “Club-School links” is a term often used in strategic documents, grant applications and general discussion within Sports Development/PE and School Sport. It is also used in the both the Sport NI and Irish Sports Council and the National GAA. The phrase is becoming more common and there is a great need for schools and Clubs to work more closely together – if only just in communication!

Every child goes to school. The players the GAA will rely on over the next 20 years are all now at school. It's therefore absolutely vital that the GAA gets these children 'on board' as soon as possible ... and as effectively as possible!

Many young people take part in School sport, but there are fewer who take part in sporting activities outside of school. In addition, after they leave compulsory education most young people do not take part in any form of regular sport or physical activity at all. Establishing Club-School links gives young people the opportunity to continue participating in worthwhile sporting and physical activity throughout their lives. It allows youngsters to make the most of their experiences in both settings, to try out new sports and to feel comfortable in a Club setting. As a result it makes them more likely to continue participating once they leave school.

Why should Clubs link to Schools?

- Some Schools don't even know what GAA Clubs are in their area: personal contact is the best way to promote your Club. Posters are not enough!
- Children are more likely to get involved if they know what they're dealing with. If they have already seen Club coaches in the familiar surroundings of their School they

are more likely to attend the Club! They will also of course already know the coach.

- Unless young people know where opportunities exist to take part in different Gaelic sports, they will never engage in them.
- Schools and Clubs can work together to promote opportunities for participating in Gaelic Games much more effectively.

Who should be involved?

- Children
- Parents
- School Staff
- Physical Education Staff/PE Co-ordinators
- Club Coaches
- Club Coaching Officer
- Club School Liaison Officer
- Club Committee Members

What are the benefits of forming a Club School Link?

Creating partnerships between Schools and Clubs helps to create continuity between the promotion of Gaelic sports in both the School and the Club. Creating Club-School links can create the following benefits:

Club

- More young people involved in the Club.
- Increased participation levels in the Club.
- Opportunity to identify talent of the future.
- Potential access to School facilities and equipment.
- Raised profile of Gaelic Games in the community.
- Opening up Club access to wider community.
- Increase potential to recruit new volunteers for coaching, particularly parents.
- Pool of young leaders, coaches and officials of the future.
- A familiar, safe environment for the children.

The players the GAA will rely on over the next 20 years are all now at school. It's therefore absolutely vital that the GAA gets these children 'on board'.



School

- More active, and ultimately healthier, pupils.
- Raised profile within the community.
- Increased funding opportunities.
- Community Links: social benefits.
- Pathways for sport: easy exit routes for children into ongoing involvement.
- Higher standard in school teams due to better coaching received by pupils.
- Recognition as an institution that supports development beyond the School environment.
- Support and assistance with extra curricular teams/activities.
- Access to GAA facilities and resources.

Young People

- Improved opportunities to access Gaelic Games in their local community.
- Opportunity for their talent to be identified and nurtured.
- Move confidently between School and Club opportunities to develop coaching and leadership skills.
- Understand how their experiences in School and at the Club complement each other.
- Recognise how the GAA prepares them for their involvement in Clubs at junior age and beyond.
- Introduction to a healthy living agenda
- Choose a gaelic sport that is suited to them.

How can Club-School Links work?

What sort of things can you do to create a Club-School Link?

The following list highlights some of the things that you can do to create and develop a Club-School link.

Club

- Appoint someone to liaise with the school(s).
- Establish a GAA notice board in the School that promotes Club activities and events.
- Run a competition at the School or between local feeder Schools in the community.
- Run a Club open day/fun day at the Club grounds for the School.
- Provide people to assist with extra curricular activities.
- Link with the School's PE Co-ordinator.
- Run coaching sessions on the school site during term (with the Principals permission) encourage the children to get involved in Gaelic Games by promoting the time and venue of the Club youth programme.
- Tell the Schools about their pupils' achievements (e.g. in a School newsletter).
- Advise School of relevant events and activities that might attract children to the Club.
- Provide officials for School fixtures/tournaments.
- Make regular School visits.
- Actively promote the idea of a Club member becoming a member of the Board of Governors.
- Offer the school the use of Club facilities for sports day or events.
- Invite local School staff and governors to Club events.
- Help fund the School's GAA work.

School

- Promote the Club within the School by highlighting and promoting upcoming matches and events.
- Provide facilities by offering the School site for the Club to run sessions.
- Nominate a Club liaison representative to liaise with the Club's schools liaison officer.
- Distribute any promotional material that the Clubs may have.

- Invite Club coaches to speak about their Club in School assemblies/PTA meetings.
- Dedicate a notice board or other point of information to the Club.
- Provide advice to pupils about getting involved.
- Provide the Club with letters of support for funding applications.
- Regularly communicate local Club opportunities and information to parents.
- Encourage teachers to become qualified GAA Coaches.
- Help the Club in Scór and other cultural/heritage work.
- It would help initially if a meeting takes place between the School and Club to develop an understanding of the Club-School links programme and to provide a mutual commitment to the way forward and the development of the link.
- A programme of regular meetings between the School and Club is a good way to review the effectiveness of the link.
- Put the children at the centre of everything.
- Talk to each other regularly.
- Communicate well with young people and parents.
- Respect each other.
- Have a shared vision and approach.
- Agree expectations and goals.
- Find ways of enabling young people to take part in Club activities.
- Build on what young people learn in both settings.
- Recognise, share & celebrate achievements
- Share and develop teaching and coaching expertise.
- Share facilities, equipment and resources.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies that contribute to and support the Club-School link.
- Leave the children - and each other- better than they found them!

Who else can be involved/ assist with developing Club- School Links?

Other organisations in the community can also be of value to Clubs. Each Local Council has a Sports Development or Leisure Services Department, which houses a number of

What makes a Club-School Link effective and successful?

When a School and GAA Club are working well together, they:



Creating partnerships between Schools and Clubs helps to create continuity between the promotion of Gaelic sports in both the School and the Club.



Sports Development Officers. These Officers can support the Club in a number of ways:

- Keeping Clubs informed of wider sporting opportunities that are taking place locally.
- Providing training opportunities for coaches, administrators and other Club personnel.
- Helping with applications for funding
- Creating links with Schools.
- Sourcing facilities or accessing time in facilities.
- Linking with other sports and community programmes.
- Supporting Club promotions.
- Helping with the writing of development plans.

Each County Board has Games Promotion Officers and Games Development Managers who are available to advise and support schools and Clubs in forming new links and partnerships. The Ulster Council also has School Coaches located across the province working at KS1 level, who deliver physical literacy PE Lessons in the Primary Schools. They are also responsible for establishing nursery programmes within Clubs (Gaelic Start), delivering after School GAA coaching and the promotion of GAA Club School links. Ulster GAA Coaching and Games Department can provide support if required, particularly through the Provincial Club Coaching and Games Development Officer. For more information log on to www.ulster.gaa.ie

Five easy steps to establishing Strong Club-School Links

Step 1:

- Work out what the Club wants from, and can give to, a Club/School link.
- Talk to other Clubs which have taken this forward.

- Appoint a School Liaison Officer (SLO) and make formal contact with the School

Step 2:

- Meet the School Principal and teacher responsible for sport/games.
- Outline the Club's work; its aims and objectives; and the Go-Games model.
- Outline the Club's hopes and plans regarding its links with the School: support or encourage School involvement in Cumann na mBunscol/second-level schools' GAA activity.

Step 3:

- Formalise arrangements regarding mutual use of each other's facilities.
- Establish and keep updated, a Club notice-board in the School.
- Provide (financial and other) support for gaelic games in the School.
- Provide coaching in the School setting.

Step 4:

- Host games/blitzes for School children.
- Seek School input to the Club's work regarding Scór and other aspects of culture and heritage.
- Seek a Club input to and presence at School prize-givings and award ceremonies: ensure the "gaelic ethos" is reflected in these.
- Ensure Gaelic games/activities are highlighted in the School prospectus.

Step 5:

- Seek a GAA presence on the Board of Governors.
- Actively support School plans; projects; and bids for funding.
- Support the School in its wider community activity.

Branding and Publications

Brandáil agus Soilseacháin CLG

Image, branding, design, communication and PR are all integral parts of the GAA and are playing their part in Club Development. The GAA has recognised the role a strong brand can play in its future, it is important that Clubs feed off this strength. The GAA is a unique organisation, on the first and third Sundays in September we see it in all its glory, but challenges lie ahead. Clubs are the core of the GAA and these challenges will affect them too. In today's unsettled economic climate, and with strong competition from other sports, the GAA and its Clubs must be prepared to develop a strong GAA Club identity to help meet these challenges.

The GAA Mark

In 2009 the GAA launched a new brand identity that centres around the Association's name itself. It captures our rich calligraphic heritage and is refined to represent youth and excitement in our games. Importantly, it allows us to communicate the name of the Association across GAA communications.



Please note that black and white tabs should only be used when printing in black and white (mono).

GAA clubs may use the GAA tabs (as shown above) on communications. Examples of the GAA tab in use are shown below. Please note the GAA Mark must only appear within the GAA Tab. Guidelines are available at www.brand.gaa.ie



Prepare for the meeting: this means at a minimum to have an agenda and ideally for the Chair/Officers to have identified specific issues they want discussed



To accompany the new Mark there is also a new Association Crest. It is based on the original GAA identity which drew its inspiration from the Irish High Cross. The history and heritage of the Association are enshrined in this new Crest.



As our new Association Crest represents our history and is a reminder of the values we stand for, it is the most precious visual asset we own. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that we use our Association Crest with respect and consideration. It should never be used on material containing sponsor logos or references to sponsors. It is not a branding advice.

Approved Applications:

- Annual reports
- Official addresses/messages (Presidential, Provincial Secretary, County Board Chairman etc)
- Official Ard Stiúrthóir and Presidential communications
- Official Stationery
- Internal Governance publications and communications
- Membership Cards
- Club, County, Provincial and Stadia signage - (entrance and plaques)
- Congress/Provincial & County conventions
- Officially approved ceremonial and celebration usage
- Certificates
- Official exceptions approved by GAA Marketing Department.



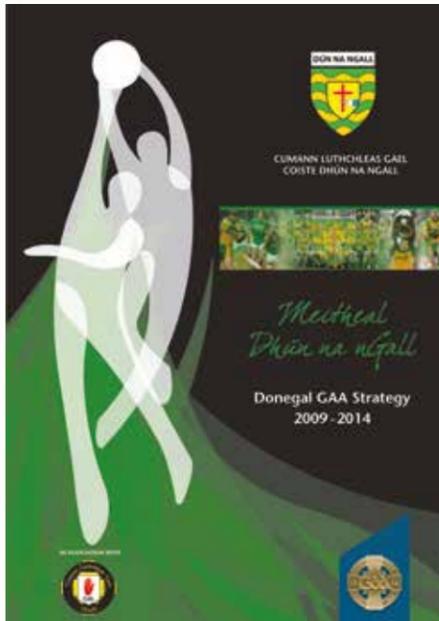
No other applications are approved for use with the Association Crest. If you are still unsure whether using the Association Crest on a publication is appropriate seek advice from the GAA Marketing Department or email: marketing@gaa.ie

The GAA Mark and the Club

The Association has produced a range of guidelines and tool-kits that will assist the Clubs/Counties in branding and promotion. These guidelines and tool-kits are not about Clubs/Counties losing their own individual identity but adding strength through association. Items that will be covered are such as jerseys, signage, programmes, tickets etc. To access the guidelines and templates, Club and County officers can register at brand.gaa.ie



The Ulster Council has already successfully adopted the new branding and through its own design and marketing team will be available to provide advice when necessary.



Design and promotion plays a key role and will continue to do so in the future. In Ulster we have learnt that communicating a strong simple message is critical. ✓

Over the past few years the Ulster Council has been working hard in developing its own brand as well as assisting Clubs and Counties. Currently it is no accident that our games are well attended at all levels and we buck the trend with our figures at our Championship games. Design and promotion plays a key role in helping make this happen and will continue to do so in the future.

In Ulster we have learnt that communicating a strong simple message is critical. Our programmes are now easier to read, our promotional material is consistent and these messages where possible we have passed down to Clubs and Counties. Here are a few examples of the work our design and marketing team have been involved in over the past couple of years and the transition to a clear simple message is evident.



Before & after logo designs for Rounders



Before & after logo designs for Drumragh Sarsfields, Co. Tyrone



Before & after design for Ulster Council Handbook



Before & after logo designs for Dulwich Harps GFC, London



Ulster Championship Programme



Ulster Council Calendar



Club Maith Infrastructure Guidance Contents

1: Ba é ab Fhearr a Dhéanamh ... the Importance of the Plan

- Introduction
- A GAA Club Master-Plan
- Property Ownership
- Appointment of Trustees and Vesting of Property
- Partnerships with Others

2: The GAA Pitch: The Core Club Building Block

- The GAA Pitch Development Template
- GAA Pitch Sizes
- Traditional Pitch Drainage
- The 'Sand Carpet' Pitch
- GAA Goal Posts
- GAA Ball Catch Nets
- Pitch Maintenance
- The 3G Pitch
 - What is It?
 - How Does 3G Work?
 - The Importance of Maintenance
 - Winter Use
- Rounders Pitches
- Pitch Fencing
- Dug-Outs
- Floodlighting and GAA Pitches
- Score-Boards

3. The GAA Pavilion

- Starting at the Beginning
- The GAA Pavilion Shopping List
- The Changing Zone

- Admin/Social Zones
- Logistics
- External Zone
- Putting a Gaelic Polish on Things

4. GAA Sports Halls

- Overall Planning Issues
- Size and Layout
- Floor Surfaces
- Changing Provision
- Toilets
- Multi-Use
- Gyms/Training Zones
- Putting a Gaelic Polish on Things

5. Creating Added Value

- Athletics Tracks
- Walking and Jogging Tracks
- Play Areas
- Handball
- Hurling Walls
- Spectator Accommodation

6. Making It Happen

- The Financials

Ba é ab Fhearr a Dhéanamh ... the Importance of the Plan

Introduction

All GAA Clubs should have a strategic plan that they're working to. This should not be a large, complicated document but should simply set out What the Club wants to achieve; When; and How in each of these areas of activity:

- How the Club is run – its governance, funding etc.
- Running and developing Gaelic Games – the Club's core business.
- Infrastructure – the facilities and places the Club needs to deliver its business ... and virtually always owned/controlled by the Club.
- Culture and heritage – developing the 'Gaelic' in GAA.
- Inclusion and community – relating to our wider communities.

These advice notes relate to Clubs' infrastructural developments. They were produced as part of the rolling out of Ulster GAA's strategic plan, "Teaglaigh agus Pobail: An Fabraic de CLG".

The advice notes are drawn up simply to inform and brief Clubs about the basics of various aspects of Club development ... to save them from "re-inventing the wheel" every time they consider taking forward any physical development. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the contents are accurate, they do not remove the need for Clubs to engage expert technical/professional help to design and oversee a project. The advice notes are a guide only and aim to leave Clubs in a better position to:

- initially scope out their project.
- brief their technical/professional advisors (rather than be briefed by them!).

Feed-back on the notes – and particularly additional advice and learning from Clubs which have gone through development – are welcome and should be sent to queries. ulster@gaa.ie

A GAA Club Master-Plan

GAA Clubs are busy places full of busy people. The last thing they need is more paperwork. But every Club should sit down and spend a little time scoping out a 'master-plan' which will set out (ideally in one A4 sheet of paper):

- Their existing infrastructure
- What could be added/developed and how

This exercise will get people thinking. When it's finished it can be professionally worked-up at little or no cost and act as the vision to inspire the Club and everybody in and around it.

These notes will help Clubs with the detail of facilities development. But the master-planning slots in before we go down to that level. A good Club master-plan will set out:

- What property/land the Club owns/controls
- Existing pitches; buildings; etc ... and a sense maybe of how they might be reconfigured
- Access and connectivity issues, including parking
- Services (water; electricity; internet; etc)
- Natural assets (water-ways; trees/flora; wildlife)
- Unused land/space ... and what it could be used for (new pitches; play areas; MUGAs (Multi-Use Games Area); pavilion; etc)
- Vulnerable areas (eg at risk of flooding; dangerous re slopes; hidden from view/supervision/underground services)

The advice notes are drawn up simply to inform and brief Clubs about the basics of various aspects of Club development



- Important links (eg to housing; schools; community buildings; etc).
- Constraints (limits to floodlight spillage; Planning issues; etc).



Property Ownership

Often GAA Clubs which are embarking on a new physical development project may have to acquire new or additional land. It is important that Clubs are fully aware of the legal requirements for land purchase or long-term lease. Clubs should consult with a Solicitor before acquiring land. If purchasing the land or leasing the land for more than 21 years Clubs must go through a legal process to ensure everything is above-board. Although the legal processes are similar in each jurisdiction, there are small differences. Because the GAA, its County Committees and its Clubs are legally recognised as unincorporated bodies, they are required to

appoint trustees to hold land for the unit and the Association under Rule 5.3 of the Official Guide 2012.

Six Counties Position

The Land and Property Services is the Agency responsible for the three registers (Registry of Deeds; Statutory Charges Register; and The Land Registry) which exist in the Six Counties. Historically each of the three registers had their own purpose, however, The Land Registry has become the official register moving forward. Since 2003 new land owners must complete a Compulsory First Registration.

If purchasing land or leasing land for more than 21 years, Clubs should register the agreement with The Land Registry within three months of the date of the Purchase Deed. Given that Trustees are in order, this requires the Club's Solicitor to make the application to the Land and Property Services and certify the title. On completion of the registration the land is allocated a folio number. The registered owners, (Trustees) hold a copy of the same in the form of a Land Certificate of that folio and a copy of the Land Registry map. The advantage of using The Land Registry is that legal title is guaranteed and an accurate plan of ownership is created. This was not necessarily the case with the other registries.

Clubs which have owned their land or have signed a 21 year lease before 2003 may not have registered their land through The Land Registry. This however can be done by a Voluntary Registration of Title, through the Club's Solicitor and Land and Property Services. On occasion the deeds of Club property may not be legally sound so it is worth checking that your Deeds are all in order before commencing any development work. Your Solicitor will be able to advise you on this.

Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan Position

An tÚdarás Clárúcháin Maoine, The Property Registration Authority is the agency responsible for land registry in the Twenty Six Counties. Similar to the six counties a Registry of Deeds has existed for decades, however, this system is now secondary to the preferred Land Registry system. The Land Registry system is more useful in that the title of land is guaranteed by the State and lands are demarked with a folio number using electronic mapping.

Again GAA Clubs acquiring new land should always consult with a Solicitor before entering into any purchase agreement or lease extension. The Club's Solicitor will be responsible for going through the process of registering property with the Property Registration Authority. GAA Clubs need to

be aware that since 1 January 2010 it has become compulsory for all landowners in Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan to register their property with the Authority.

Appointment of Trustees and Vesting of Property

All property belonging to or controlled by a GAA club should be vested in Trustees to hold for the Club and the Association. This is as determined by Rule 5.3 of the 2012 Official Guide and the Club Constitution (with specific reference to Article 10 dealing with Assets and Trustees). Property including grounds; Club houses; halls; dressing rooms; and handball alleys owned or controlled by units of the Association shall be used only for the purpose of or in connection with the playing of games controlled by the Association and for such other purposes not in conflict with the aims of the Association, that may from time to time be sanctioned by the Central Council as per Rule 5.1 of the 2012 Official Guide.

In order to become vested a Club must appoint Trustees. A Trustee is someone who is given legal authority to manage assets, including property on behalf of someone else. A Trustee holds no beneficial interest in the property. It is generally expected that Trustees should, in their role as a Trustee, use such due diligence and care as an ordinary prudent person would use in the management of his/her own affairs.

Real property of a Club is vested, in accordance with Rule 5.3 (2012) of the Official Guide, in five Trustees, three of whom shall be appointed for and on behalf of the Club; one on behalf of the County Committee; and one on behalf of the Provincial Committee.

The three Club Trustees are selected by the Club Executive Committee, ensuring they are full Club members and are appointed by the Club Chairperson. The Chairperson of the County Committee and Provincial Committee shall each appoint one other Trustee, who is responsible to their respective Executive Committee.



Trustees shall confirm their acceptance of the role by signing a 'Declaration of Trust' as approved by the Central Council of the GAA. These template forms conform to the necessary conditions relating to provisions for appointment, removal and replacement of Trustees, as well as regulating the conduct of the Trustees in performing their duties and exercising their powers under the Trust. It is the duty of the Trustees to ensure that the property is used in accordance with the terms of the Declaration of Trust.

Trustees must be registered as the joint owners of the property, recorded on the land folio through the Land Registry in either, the Land and Property Services (Six Counties), or The Property Registration Authority (Twenty Six Counties). The folio will contain the name and address of the trustees as the registered owners.

The reasons for vesting property in the Association are to ensure that the land will remain in permanent control of the GAA Club and will be used for GAA purposes in line with rationale for their initial procurement by the Club. Club land being properly vested will ensure legal ownership and proper protection for the Club, its officers and members. Vesting is accomplished by Trustees signing a Declaration of Trust. Standard forms can be obtained from Ulster GAA, approved by GAA Headquarters. The form is signed in triplicate by the Trustees to vest the property. One copy is kept by Central Council, one by the County Committee and one by the Club. It is also useful to send documents to Ulster GAA for information.

Should a Trustee die; be unwilling to continue; or is too infirm to continue as a Trustee a new Trustee can be appointed by a Declaration of Appointment which shall be signed by the appointers who are the respective Chairmen of the Club, County Committee and the Provincial Council. This should be recorded with the

relevant Land Registry authority. Any changes to Trustees will mean a new Declaration of Trust must be completed and registered with the relevant Land Registry authority.

Should any reason arise whereby a Trustee must be removed but refuses or is unable to do so, then this must be concluded through the High Court within the Six Counties. Clubs should seek legal advice from their Solicitor where this occurs. Trustees can be removed in line with the Declaration of Trust within the Twenty Six Counties subject to the terms of removal being fully adhered to by the existing Trustees.

Clubs should hold all documents relating to land ownership in a safe place. It is common for documents to be held in the Club's Bank and a record of their place of custody put in the Club Minute Book. They may also be held by the Club's Solicitor and this too needs to be recorded in the Club Minute Book.

Should Clubs wish to lease-out their land, transfer their land, dispose of their land or create a charge, for any reason, they must get the approval from each of the Trustees after consulting with the relevant GAA units and were necessary obtain the Approval of the Central Council. The Club should also involve their Solicitor in this process. It also needs to be understood that a registered charge may create a priority of charge while an equitable charge is always solely with the body holding the title deeds.

NOTE: Many Clubs will have owned or controlled their property for some time. However, it is important to review the situation regularly to avoid problems down the line. The Annual General Meeting is possibly a good time to review the Club's position. Should Clubs have queries about issues relating to land ownership they should contact their County Committee or Ulster GAA.

Any Club considering 'doing business' with a non-GAA organisation, should contact their County Development Officer at the outset for advice and guidance.



Partnerships with Others

GAA Clubs are now often involved in partnerships with other organisations, projects and programmes. These partnerships and some of their consequences can be as follows:

PARTNER	WHAT THEY MAY REQUIRE
Funders of Club Developments or Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charges to be placed on the Club's property against their grant or loan Specific conditions re the governance of the Club Access to/use of Club facilities by others Meeting standards set and/or beliefs held by the funder Particular forms of reporting, for example presenting the Club's Annual Accounts in certain ways
Service Deliverers Using Club Premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very specific insurance cover Dedicated/private use of the Club's facilities at certain times Possible shifts and changes in the Gaelic ethos of the Club Implications for the Club's Rates status Leases on the Club's property and associated conditions

Most partnership arrangements are straightforward and to the benefit of Clubs and their communities. They can however be complex areas and can sometimes have very significant consequences for Clubs and their members.

Any Club considering 'doing business' with a non-GAA organisation, be it a funder or someone wishing to work jointly with the Club, should contact their County

Development Officer at the outset for advice and guidance. A very effective regime re Clubs' bank borrowings is already in place and works to everyone's benefit.

Clubs are urged to always seek the advice of County Development Officers before entering into any partnership; before applying for any significant funding; and, certainly, before signing any Letter of Offer.

The GAA Pitch: The Core Club Building Block

Do the Maths!

Grass pitches should not be expected to take more than 300 hours of use a year ... that's six hours a week year-round or about eight hours a week from February to October, a typical GAA 'season'.

If one Club adult team plays 12 home games and undertakes two one-and-a-half hour training sessions a week for 30 weeks, that's over 100 hours usage in a year. Reserves/seconds could add 25 hours to that total. A Ladies team will easily add the same again, bringing the total to 150 hours.

If an underage team plays ten home games and undertakes one one-and-a-half hour training session a week for 10 weeks, that's 25 hours usage in a year. Ranged across U6s; U8s; U10s; U12s; U13s; U14s; U16s; Minors; and U21s that can gross up to well over 200 hours in a year.

Add in Schools; Rounders; Hurling; Camogie; County needs; and other games and training sessions and many Ulster GAA Clubs now need to accommodate well over 400 hours of pitch usage a year.

Cramming that all onto one pitch is not the answer!



The GAA Pitch Development Template

Developing a GAA pitch is one of the major projects any generation of GAA Club members is likely to undertake. It should not be done lightly and certainly no part of it should be left to chance. Good analysis and planning should underpin any such project ... starting with the master-planning mentioned above. Clubs should find the template below useful:

ISSUE	WHICH MEANS
Need for the pitch	<p>Plan, plan, plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is the pitch needed? Would less than full-size do? Who will benefit from it? Are there other options available, now or soon? How often will it need to be available? Does it need floodlights? <p>Above all go and talk to GAA colleagues who have been-there/done-that and where possible, visit their facilities. You'll find they'll be only too glad to help and share experiences with you. Contact queries.ulster@gaa.ie for guidance re Clubs which have recently completed similar projects.</p>
Assess your site	<p>Look closely at your pitch site in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size: is it big enough? Expansion potential: 'think in terms of a hundred years rather than ten' Access by people and vehicles Previous uses: filled or contaminated land bring their own development difficulties Wildlife issues Planning issues Flooding issues: look at these very carefully indeed! Services: water and electricity Relationship with the Club's other activities and facilities (eg changing rooms) Its location relative to other potential users such as local schools Potential for athletics provision/a walking-track Equipment and materials storage needs (including cones etc for training) What the neighbours think: talk to them and share your thoughts with them <p>A lot of this work overlaps with the master-planning we mentioned earlier.</p>
Specify what you want	<p>Scope out exactly what you want (pitch type; size; floodlights; fencing; etc) based on current and prospective needs: look too at 'added value' ... provision for athletics and/or a walking-track or maybe a play area associated with it.</p>
Approvals	<p>You will almost certainly need Planning Permission and, if drainage is involved, consent to discharge drain-water: start following these up as early as possible.</p>

ISSUE	WHICH MEANS
Cost	Get a reasonably accurate cost of the project and start to look at a fund-raising strategy. Remember that grants inevitably come with their own conditions. The Club needs to have a clear view of (a) what the project will cost and (b) where the money will come from. Be sure to factor in the ongoing running costs of the new pitch once it's open.
Plan the work	Get expert advice in: if you're seeking grant aid you'll be required to do this anyway. It will cost money but it will be money very well spent. This support should ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The work is properly tendered ■ You appoint a qualified, experienced contractor ■ The work will be properly timed
Manage the contract	Traditionally Clubs did this work themselves. It's now a false economy not to employ a qualified project manager to oversee all the work on your behalf. Funders in any case will almost certainly insist on this.
Completion and sign-off	Most pitch jobs aren't over when you think they're over. There will be snagging lists; contract retention sums; maintenance requirements (for example, sand carpet pitches have to be maintained for a year after completion before they can be played on); and so on. This is technical business and is therefore best placed in the hands of a qualified project manager.
Maintenance	The work doesn't stop when the pitch opens. As highlighted elsewhere in this Note, proper pitch maintenance is essential. Make sure this is programmed and carried out.

GAA Pitch Sizes

There is no set constant size for a GAA pitch but for all official games at above U15 level GAA pitches should be between:

- 130m and 145m long
- 80m and 90m wide

Rule 1.1, Rules of Specification, of the GAA's Official Guide allows Counties to reduce, via their Bye-Laws, the dimensions of pitches used for Under 15s and younger age groups.

(Contrary to common opinion that it is 'beyond normal size', the Croke Park pitch, at

144.5m x 88m, fits within these standards) [is there a need for this? and if so we would need a date for these measurements]

There should also be at least a further 4m between the pitch side-line/end-line and any surrounding fence. That means that to provide minimum and maximum GAA pitches the following land takes are needed:

- Maximum size pitch: 155m x 100m ... or 15,500 sq m ... or 1.55 hectares or 3.70 acres
- Minimum size pitch: 140m x 90m ... or 12,600 sq m ... or 1.26 hectares ... or 3.11 acres

GAA pitches are ideally oriented NW/SE or NE/SW. This allows best use of the sun for growing grass and drying the surface whilst minimising the impact of the setting sun on players, coaches and spectators. ✓

It goes without saying that these land takes are the rectangular areas that are needed: when securing land for a GAA pitch significantly more than the 3.11/3.70 acres of playing area may be involved. Similarly, it can often be useful to provide a pitch area that is wider than the maximum 90m: this extra space can be used to set out meaningful playing/training areas across the pitch.

For GAA Go-Games the following pitch sizes are recommended:

CATEGORY	FOOTBALL	HURLING
First Touch	45m x 30m	45m x 40m
Quick Touch	65m x 40m	65m x 40m
Smart Touch	90m x 40/50m	90m x 40/50m

In the Six Counties, to be eligible for grant aid a pitch (in any sport) has to be two-thirds minimum size: that means that to be eligible for Sport NI grant aid a GAA 'training pitch' has to be at least 92.4m x 60m ... or 5,544 sq m ... or 0.55 hectares or 1.4 acres.

GAA pitches are ideally oriented NW/SE or NE/SW. This allows best use of the sun for growing grass and drying the surface whilst minimising the impact of the setting sun on players, coaches and spectators.

Best practice is that pitches should be cambered, ie sloped gently from the centre towards each endline and towards each sideline. They should aim for a maximum centre-to-endline slope of 1:80/100 and a maximum centre-to-sideline slope of 1:40/50. These cambers will produce a maximum fall of 0.87m along the length of the pitch and one of 0.56m across its breadth. The slope

helps to get rid of surface water after heavy rain but is not noticeable to the naked eye nor to players using the pitch. Also remember that surfaces sloping down towards your pitch will throw water down onto it.

The Basics

Grass, like most plants needs light and heat from the sun, carbon dioxide and oxygen from the atmosphere and structure, water, oxygen and nutrients from the soil. When any of these is compromised the grass will suffer ... the pitch will deteriorate ... and the Club's activities will be limited.

Traditional Pitch Drainage

Whilst different soil types require different drainage solutions, traditional pitch drainage usually takes this form:

- Drains running across the pitch, between 5m and 10m apart and at a fall of no more than 1:200
- Main drains running along the side of the pitch but outside the playing surface and including man-hole inspection chambers
- Drains/main drains should always empty out into a good, effective outfall
- Pitch drain trenches are usually 450/650mm deep with a 100mm perforated pipe at the bottom.
- The trenches are filled with 6/10mm aggregate to within 150/200mm of the top.

- A 50mm cap of blinding (rough sand/grit) placed on top of the aggregate fill.
- The trenches are topped out with soil: 150mm is usually needed to promote and sustain a healthy grass sward.
- Installing a drainage system as described above.
- Adding a top layer of up to 300mm of 'dead sand': in Ulster that's usually Lough Neagh sand.

Many pitches complement their basic drains with a slit drains system. This involves:

- Cutting a series of slits at right angles to the drains and running through the drains' backfilled sections.
- Slits about 0.5/2.0m apart; 250/300mm deep; and 50mm wide.
- 6/8mm aggregate fill put into the slits.
- Heavy top dressings of sand (100+ tonnes) are needed on the pitch after the slit drains are put in.

The aim should be to produce a surface that can drain away at least 100mm of water an hour.

The 'Sand Carpet' Pitch

Sand Carpet pitches include the traditional drainage lay-out described above but have a particular construction method. Essentially this involves:

- Stripping off the top-soil.
- Levelling out the sub-soil/strata lying under the top-soil.
- Putting back the top-soil evenly over the levelled out sub-soil/strata.

The grass-seed is sown in the sand layer. To allow time for roots to form and to penetrate down to the layer of top-soil beneath, sand carpet pitches normally sit for a full year after sowing before they can be played on. During that time the grass is cut and fertilised; weeds/infestations are controlled; and bare patches are re-seeded as required.

Sand carpet pitches:

- Drain very well and are usually playable when traditional pitches are waterlogged.
- Can therefore accommodate more usage and be available in the autumn/winter/early spring.
- Can get hard in times of drought and will need watering/irrigation.
- Require high levels and standards of maintenance.
- Because sand is lower in nutrients than soil will need higher levels of fertilising.

Generally sand carpet pitches are more hard-wearing than normal or 'traditional' soil pitches and can therefore, with the correct maintenance, deliver much higher levels of usage.



Grass Pitches: Do's ... Don'ts ... and Things to be Aware Of

- Avoid having trees near your pitch: leaves have to be swept up or else they create humus which damages the grass
- As a rule of thumb, an Under 15 player is reckoned to do half the damage to a pitch that an adult does: in GAA we should take that with a pinch of salt given the numbers we typically have involved in blitzes; Go-Games; etc and the fact that we can have up to 72 Go-Games players using one of our full-size pitches at the same time
- Avoid stockpiling top-soil for long periods and if you have to, limit the height to 2m and firm its surface so rain-water runs off
- A pitch should be rested for two weeks after it is scarified
- Sand soils lack the nutrient retention properties of clay soils. This means that nutrients are washed from the soil, away from the grass and therefore have to be replenished more frequently: that means fertilising.
- Grass cuttings can no longer just be 'dumped' but need to be disposed of properly
- Don't use weed-killer or creosote for lining a pitch: they burn the grass and encourage holes to appear in the soil/sand beneath
- In the same way guard carefully against fuel spills
- Do not use a frosted pitch: walking on frozen grass breaks the blades of grass and they can take a long time to recover. Driving a vehicle on a frosted pitch can do serious damage to the grass.

GAA Goal Posts

By Rule GAA goal posts must be at least 12m high and 6.5m apart, with the underside of the cross-bar 2.5m from the ground. It is not just stating the obvious to remind ourselves that heavily worn goal-mouths can result in the cross-bar being too far from the ground level.

Stanchions to hold goal-nets should slope downwards and extend at least 1.6m back from the main goal post at ground level.

Goal posts must be fit for purpose and manufactured from suitable materials. Virtually all GAA goal posts are now made of metal and should:

- Be of a circular hollow section of 114mm diameter for the first 5m, then reducing equally to an 89mm diameter and further reducing to a 76mm diameter if appropriate
- Have a 5mm wall thickness where the diameter is 114mm and a 3.2mm wall thickness where the diameter is 89mm or 76mm.

- Include a cross bar of an 89mm diameter with a 4mm wall thickness

All edges should be rounded and free of sharpness and materials used should conform to EN 10219 S275J2H or EN 10219 S355J2H.

A strong anchorage at the base of the goal posts is essential and should involve:

- A base construction of 1.2m x 0.75m x 1.0m deep or ground sockets of 1.2m deep.
- The top of the base or the ground sockets stopping at least 100mm below ground level.

Because ground conditions can vary greatly from pitch to pitch, a Structural Engineer's advice/approval on the anchorage needed is recommended.

Goal posts should be painted with three coats of an external paint, with a built up of 300 micron thickness. Galvanising to comply with BS EN ISO 1461: 2009 is an alternative to the paint system.

Not least because goal posts are almost always the most exposed part of any GAA Club's infrastructure, good maintenance is essential and regular inspections and recommended maintenance should be carried out.

GAA Ball Catch Nets

Ball catch nets are now an established part of almost every GAA pitch. They are virtually always found behind the goals but also, increasingly, are needed to prevent balls from landing on other properties; on roads; and/or in waterways. A catch net's height and width will vary depending on the net's purpose and its surroundings.

A catch net 12m high and 25m long will provide good prevention from ball spillage behind the goals. Nets should be located at least 5m from the end line (the same as fencing, see below), and should be centred on the goals/scoring space.

The ball catch net should be constructed from suitable materials, firmly anchored in the ground and fit for purpose in all aspects. A 12m high x 25m long catch net will require:

- A main structure comprising two made-up galvanised circular hollow section posts of 168mm diameter (reducing to 139mm diameter at 7m high) and with a constant wall thickness of 5mm.
- Support provided to these posts in two directions, ie a diagonal support of 114mm x 3.6mm circular hollow section fixed to the back of the main post will form the support in one direction.
- This diagonal support should be fixed to a base plate 2.5m from the main post and at 7 metres from ground level.
- A 12mm thick galvanised wire rope fixed to the top of the main post and secured to a concrete base 6m from the main post in the direction of the pitch corner flag will form the support in the other direction.

- Eight x 6mm galvanised, tensioned wire ropes at 1.5m centres running the full 25m length will support the net in the wind: the wires should alternate on each side of the net (to combat changes in wind direction).
- The main net should be strapped to a tensioned 12mm galvanised wire rope, forming a rectangle to match the size of the net.
- Nets should be manufactured from 3mm diameter polypropylene water-resistant material, in 50mm x 50mm squares and with a border rope.
- The net material should comply to: 209-045-04 high tenacity UV stabilised polypropylene (Weight: 150 grams per m/sq with a burst strength per mesh : 1.25KN).

All circular hollow section members used should conform to EN 10219 S275J2H or EN 10219 S355J2H whilst galvanising should comply with BS EN ISO 1461: 2009.

The two main bases should be 2.6m x 1.2m x 1.5m deep approximately, with two reinforcing mesh panels.

The two secondary bases (to withstand the pull on the diagonal wire ropes) should be 750mm x 750mm x 600mm deep.

Again, because ground conditions can vary greatly from pitch to pitch, a Structural Engineer's advice/approval on the base sizes needed is recommended.

Pitch Maintenance

Good maintenance is fundamental to the quality; use; and longevity of a GAA pitch. A notional annual maintenance calendar is set out below:

Ball catch nets are now an established part of almost every GAA pitch. They are virtually always found behind the goals but also, increasingly, are needed to prevent balls from landing on other properties; on roads; and/or in waterways.



ACTIVITY	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Mowing (to 40mm or 1/1.25" for hurling and 75mm or 2/3" for football)				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Scarifying				Y								
Fertilising			Y	Y			Y	Y				
Re-seeding				Y	Y			Y	Y	Y		
Top-dressing									Y	Y		
Weed/disease/pest control		Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y
Irrigation					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			
Sanding (100 tons per pitch)					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			

A pitch maintenance Log Book (What has been done by Who; How; and When) should be maintained.

“What Do They Mean By That?” Some Basic Terms

- Aeration increases the availability of air to soil and roots. Surface aeration involves the removal of thatch and debris at the base of the grass plant. Sub-surface aeration involves the creation of air-filled pathways between the surface and the soil below.
- Scarification involves the mechanical raking of the pitch surface to remove underlying thatch or moss material.
- Verti-draining involves machines opening holes or slits about 25mm wide and 300mm deep across the pitch surface. It de-compacts the soil and breaks any pans that may have formed in it. Verti-draining improves drainage (but is not a long-term solution); gets rid of surface water; and promotes grass growth. It is carried out once or twice a year only.

The 3G Pitch

What Is It?

The 3G pitch is an increasingly common artificial playing surface which its promoters believe “feels like grass, looks like grass and plays like grass”. It provides a more natural bounce of the ball than previous artificial surfaces and gives players a good underfoot grip. Friction burns to the skin are much less likely and the consistent impact absorbency of the surface is believed to reduce stress-related injuries.

Pushing off; jumping; running; stopping; and tackling – all central to gaelic games - are all possible without additional risk of injury.

The key benefit of 3G is its usability. Whilst a grass pitch can accommodate about 300 hours of use a year a properly-maintained 3G pitch could readily accommodate 1,500

hours. Unlike a grass pitch, especially in wet weather, one game/session can be scheduled after another on a 3G pitch. In the same way whilst summer heat/drought will harden a grass pitch, 3G will retain its impact absorbency ... though it will attract and retain heat more than grass will.

In practical terms of course, significant year-round use of a 3G pitch will require floodlighting.

One important capacity that a 3G pitch brings to GAA Clubs is its ability to earn an income through hire out to users. This is something that needs to be carefully considered as 3G is expensive to install (around £0.75m/€0.90m for a full-size GAA pitch) and to maintain.

How Does 3G ‘Work’?

The 3G pitch is laid down in a number of layers as follows:

	LAYER	WHAT IT IS
Top	Surface	Polyethylene fibre pile, 50/75mm long with a lower-level quartz sand layer added in and then topped with loose rubber granules: contrary to common opinion the ‘carpet’ is not stuck down but is held in place by the weight of the sand and granules.
	Shock-pad	Rubber shock-pad providing ‘give’ underfoot
	Porous macadam	Receiving course of open-textured macadam which allows surface water to soak through quickly
	Membrane	
	Bottom	Base

Because it replicates so many aspects of a natural, grass playing surface it’s important to remember that a 3G pitch needs to equally replicate all the safety requirements of grass pitches such as a 5m run-off strip beyond the sideline/endline.

The Importance of Maintenance

Again contrary to common opinion, 3G pitches are not maintenance-free but

The 3G pitch is an increasingly common artificial playing surface which its promoters believe “feels like grass, looks like grass and plays like grass”.



actually require substantial structured and regular maintenance. Some estimates suggest that whilst a 3G pitch can deliver 35 hours of use a week it can also require eight hours of maintenance a week.

It usually takes 2/3 months for a new pitch to reach its optimum level of performance. During this time it should be lightly groomed using soft/medium bristle brushes. Sand and granules should be added as needed. The pitch should not be heavily brushed.

After that, a 3G pitch maintenance programme is likely to involve:

WHAT	HOW OFTEN
Cleaning (leaves; litter; chewing gum; mud; etc) so as not to allow debris to infiltrate the surface pile and infill	Daily if possible
Brushing (to straighten the pile; keep infill loose; help drainage; and inhibit moss/algae): brush it lightly after every 8/10 hours of play and aggressively after every 40 hours	Weekly
Grooming and distribution of infill (which over time moves away from high usage parts of the pitch): apply algacide and moss-killer	As required, usually 2/3 times a year
De-compaction of the infill	Annually
Rejuvenation (ie to compensate for the fact that the pile will have worn down to 30/40mm and the sand/granules will have become compacted and polluted)	After 5/6 years
Replacement of the surface pile	Every ten years

A maintenance log book should always be kept for the pitch.

Because 3G pitches can accommodate plenty of playing use people often think they can take whatever is thrown at them. This is not the case. Even a simple thing like people walking onto 3G with muddy shoes will pollute the pile and infill and encourage algae and moss to grow which in turn make the pitch slippery and dangerous. Entrances to the pitch (ideally there should be one only) should be controlled and be fitted with walk on/off mats; footwear brushes; and litter bins. If at all possible 3G pitches should be accessed via properly-surfaced paths and not via muddy areas.

Signs banning the following should be clearly visible:

- Smoking
- Chewing gum
- Cans; bottles; and glasses
- Taking food/drinks onto the pitch
- Dirty/muddy footwear
- Footwear with metal blades or studs
- Vehicles (unless to do with maintenance) and bicycles
- Dogs (or any animal)

Winter Use

A capacity for winter use is another benefit of 3G. Snow and ice won't harm it and whilst it's not recommended to use a pitch when it's freezing, if absolutely necessary the pitch can be salted using vacuum-dried salt (but not rock salt). 3G can be played on if there is a light cover of snow but studded footwear should be worn. Heavy snow should be removed using wooden (not metal) snow shovels or scrapers but care is needed not to pull out the pile fibres.

Finally, because it's essentially a 'big mat' a 3G pitch can literally be lifted off the ground by flood water. Clubs therefore need to be very careful about where they might locate such a pitch.

Dug-Outs

Team dug-outs are now an essential part of any GAA pitch, including pitches that are used for training only.

Traditionally built from masonry, dug-outs are now made from a range of materials, including modern transparent substances. Before proceeding with installing dug-outs, Clubs should look carefully at what would be the best location for them. Issues to consider are:

- The direction of the prevailing winds and the setting sun.
- Whether 'Home' and 'Away' dug-outs should be physically separated.
- How a water and electricity supply might be provided.
- What space is available and where.

A GAA team dug-out should aim to accommodate (at least) 12 people sitting down: as in a changing room, there should be 500mm (by 450mm deep) of bench-space per person. A 12-person dug-out will therefore be 6 metres long; should be 2 metres high (to allow people to stand up and to avoid players colliding with them: and 1 metre deep (to provide reasonable protection and shelter).

For pitches which are heavily used for underage games and training, Clubs might want to consider providing even larger dug-outs (to accommodate 'inactive' players during blitzes etc).

Two 12-person dug-outs plus accommodation for six match officials/others will require a dug-out area of 15 metres by 1 metre, parallel with the field of play.

Other guidance re dug-outs includes:

- The front of the dugout should be at least 5m back from the pitch sideline.
- Floor levels should be slightly above ground level to avoid drainage/water problems.
- Floors should be non-slip.
- Perspex/similar material dugouts don't totally block the views of people behind them.
- Dug-out roofs and walls throw off rain-water: this needs to be drained away.
- A 'private, closed-off corner' should be considered for women players who may have to change playing gear.
- It can be appropriate to include a locker in the dug-out to store cones and training gear

Rounders Pitches

For GAA Rounders a square 70m x 70m pitch is required. The focus of the game, pitching and batting, takes place at one corner of this 75m square. This point forms the Home Base and three other bases, in a square and each 25m apart from each other (20m for Under 16 games), are laid out from this point.

A 12m wide 'foul ground' (into which the batter is not allowed to hit the ball) is also required, and runs fully along the two sides



of the playing pitch running away from the Home Base.

This means an effective area of 82m x 82m is needed to play Rounders ... an area that most GAA pitches (130/145m by 80/90m) can readily accommodate.

In virtually all GAA pitches the dug-outs can act as the batting team's bench that Rounders' rules require.

Pitch Fencing

The core purpose of pitch fencing is to demarcate the boundaries between players and spectators. It is not there to fence people in or out. Walls should never be used to provide GAA pitch boundaries. The basic principles for good fencing are:

- Site the fence at least 4m back from the pitch side-line or end-line.
- Leave another 5m between the fence and any spectator terracing or stand.
- Set the fence height at 1.5m.
- Use metal fencing (usually a metal frame with chain-link wire or mesh) if at all possible (Ireland's climate does not take kindly to wood).
- Do not have any sharp edges or points in it
- Make sure the metal is galvanised and/or well-painted/powder-coated.
- Set the fence in a concrete base at least 500mm wide and 150mm deep.

- Work out where gates should be placed (to provide access for players/mentors; maintenance equipment; and emergency vehicles).
- For 3G pitches, gates are the key means of controlling/reducing the amount of 'pollution' that can unknowingly be carried onto the pitch surface.
- Because of their greater levels of more intensive use, 3G pitches sometimes need higher fencing: many 3G pitches use a 3.5m fence, rising to 5m behind the goals.

Floodlighting and GAA Pitches

In recent years floodlights have become a growing part of the GAA Club physical fabric. Some of the basic considerations Clubs should be aware of here are:

- Floodlights inevitably increase the usage of pitches ... and at the more difficult times of the year: as a rule of thumb, always floodlight your second/training pitch before considering it for your main pitch.
- Basically, the higher the floodlighting columns, the better the lighting on the pitch: the more the lamps point straight down onto the pitch, the less light is lost.
- Poor lighting presents a risk as players then struggle to judge distances and the whereabouts of other players etc.
- Clubs should aim for columns of at least 21m in height.

- GAA pitches usually require eight such columns, four along each side.
- The columns should be sited beyond the 5m run-off around the pitch.
- Lamps require maintenance; replacement; and re-focusing (each lamp targets a particular area of the pitch): access to the top of the columns is therefore a requirement
- 'Self-lowering' columns are therefore to be preferred.

Floodlights require Planning Approval ... and Roads Authorities will be concerned to ensure that light does not spill onto adjacent roads, blinding drivers.

Clubs should aim for a floodlit illumination level of 250/350 Lux. This will allow the safe playing of 'proper' GAA games ... though hurling ideally requires at least 500 Lux. Most floodlit GAA County grounds provide 850 Lux, the level needed for colour TV coverage.

Power can be provided through the mains supply or via a generator. Mains supply should ideally be via a '3 Phase' supply as this prevents dimming of the lights if there are local surges in demand from the grid.

Scoreboards

Once a luxury and found only at major GAA grounds, scoreboards are now an established feature of nearly every GAA Club pitch. Traditionally they were manually-operated, with numbered boards being changed every time the score changed. These types of scoreboards almost always involve health and safety issues for their operators (largely to do with the use of ladders) and have been almost totally replaced by electronic versions.

Clubs should not use scoreboards that involve unsecured/unguarded ladders.

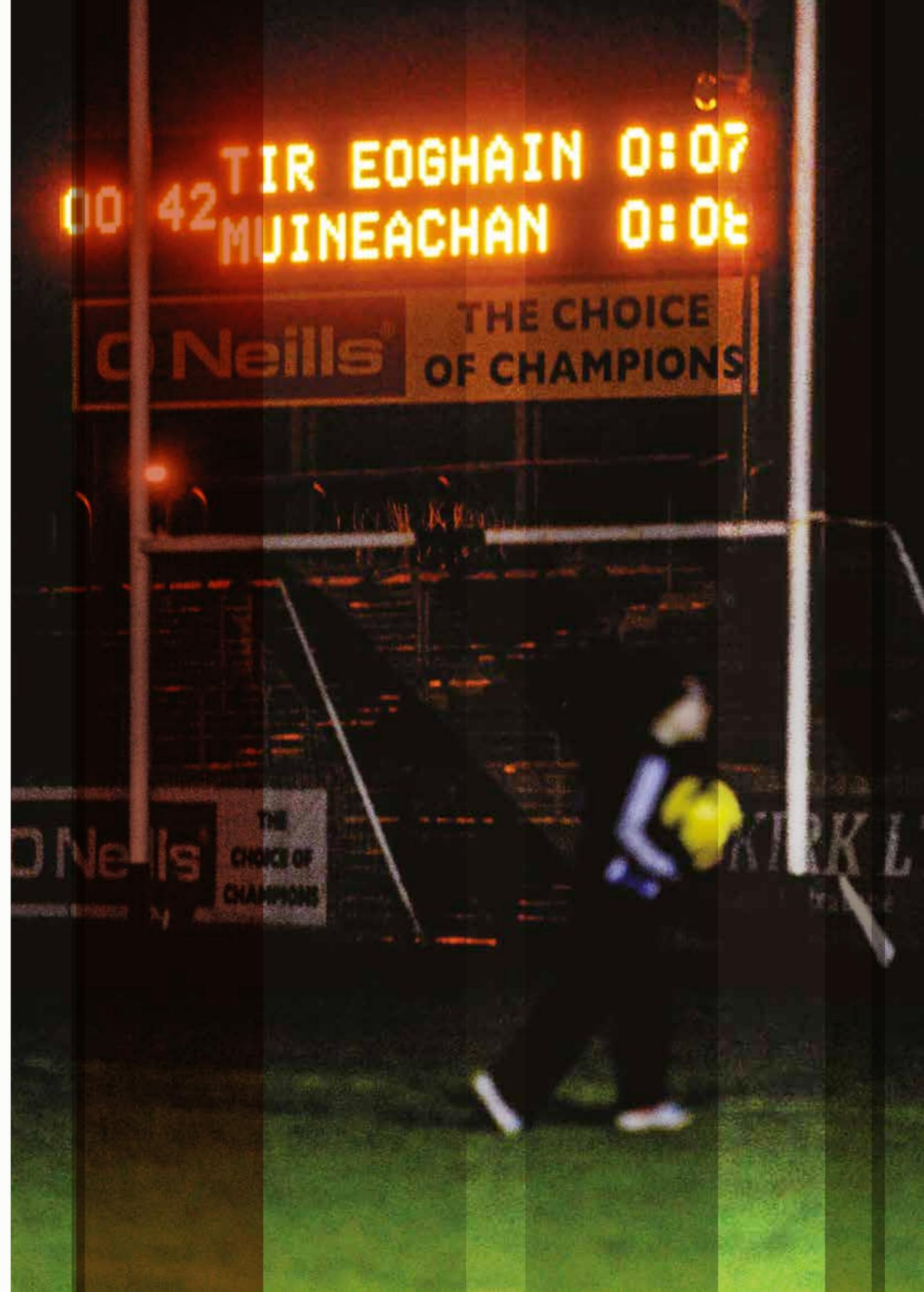
Various types of electronic score-boards are available. They range from a basic '2 x 3-digits' to show the scores with 'manually-lettered' boards showing the teams' names to full '16+ digit' fully-electronic boards; these will not only show the teams' names and their scores but can also be used to display messages (including advertising) to spectators.

An added advantage of electronic score-boards is that their digits/letters can be lit up and will therefore be much clearer and more visible.

Electronic score-boards are operated by remote control hand-held radio devices, mostly with an operating range of up to 150m. A lap-top is needed to operate those versions which carry messages.

There are no 'hard-and-fast' rules about GAA score-boards but good practice suggests:

- The score-board should always be placed where it has maximum visibility for most people: this is usually – but not always – at one corner of the ground.
- It should be at least 2m above ground level (to avoid being blocked by spectators).
- Digits and letters 30cm high are normally visible up to 170m away (25m further than a full-size GAA pitch).
- 45cm high digits should be visible 250m away.
- A 240 v electricity supply is usually required to run an electronic score-board.
- Score-boards usually take up at least 2.5m x 1m x 100 mm of space ... and should be sited accordingly.
- For obvious reasons they should not be placed behind or close to goals: pitch corners are usually the best location ... but not at an western end where the sun will set behind it.
- Electronic score-boards can typically weigh over 100 kg and need to be supported accordingly.
- Many score-boards are also used to host fixed advertising (often of the person/business who sponsored the score-board itself): this needs to be reflected in its siting; its height above ground; and in the way it is supported above ground level.
- Most electronic score-board manufacturers recommend a brief monthly use/testing of their score-boards during the closed season.
- Most manufacturers also offer vandal-proof covers.



The GAA Pavilion

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 1 and applying its principles to the planning of their pavilion.

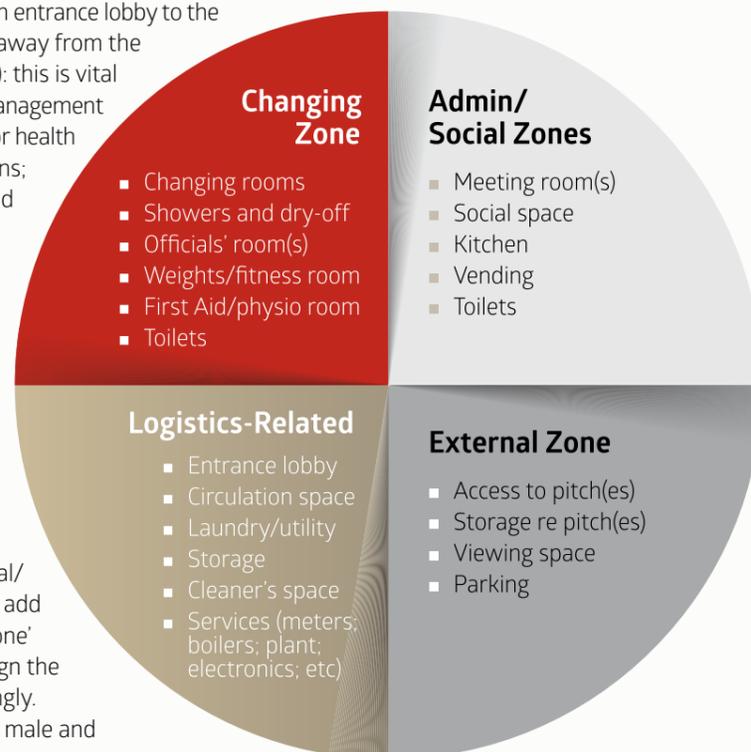
Whether you're designing a pavilion from scratch or renovating/improving an existing building, good practice also tells us to:

- 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:



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. !

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.

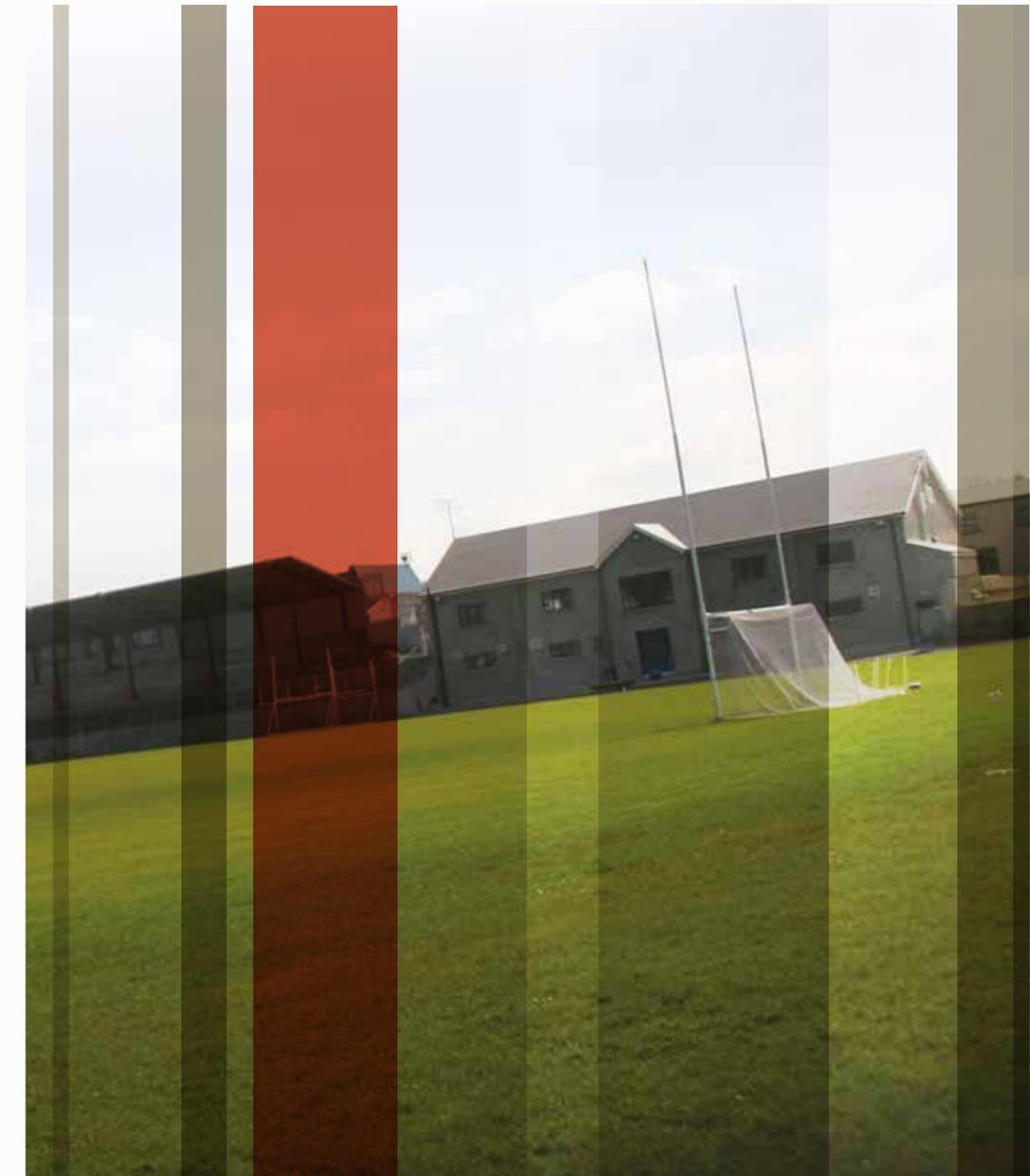
Planning Approval for the pavilion may come with car-parking requirements attached. In terms of provision, car spaces should each measure 4.8m x 2.4m whilst coach spaces each take up 14m x 3.5m.

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.



GAA Sports Halls

A sports hall is not appropriate for every Club. It should only be built in response to clearly-identified needs. Unlike GAA pitches and associated changing facilities, GAA sports halls also tend to be used for non-GAA activities. This 'mixed use' is usually central to their sustainability.

Again Clubs should begin by working through the pitch development template set out above and applying its principles to the planning of their sports hall.

Overall Design Issues

Where possible a GAA Club sports hall should be integrated with the Club's pavilion and pitch(es). This not only improves the delivery of the Club's business but provides economies of scale through the use of shared spaces and facilities. Assuming this is the case, good practice tells us:

- Entry should be via a common lobby; sports halls also tend to require significant reception space to facilitate the coming and going of individuals and small groups of people and the 'cross-over' between various users.
- The sports hall itself should provide a 'fourth zone' to the complex.
- It should connect into and make full use of the 'changing zone' discussed above.
- It should also relate to and connect into the 'admin and social zones'.

Sports halls are essentially large sheds; are built accordingly; and thus often appear like just a shed; an industrial building; or a warehouse. They tend to have few windows and thus the use of materials; colour; insulated cladding; and surrounds are particularly important here. Even a little thought given to design can have a major positive impact in terms of how an otherwise-bland sports hall can look.

Sports halls tend not to have windows: any

that are included should be north-facing to eliminate glare.

They should have a capacity to maintain an in-hall temperature of 12/16C.

Acoustics are a key concern in many sports halls and tend to be poor due to the hard surfaces involved. Unless tackled through design, poor acoustics will lead to:

- Poor speech intelligibility
- High background noise levels
- Increased stress for users
- Management/control difficulties.

Finally design and layouts need to facilitate:

- Good supervision of the hall
- The potential to break it down via screens or netting into smaller zones
- Wheelchair users
- Parents/carers with prams and buggies
- Cafeteria/vending provision.

Size and Layout

The 'Four-Court Hall' has become the standard most aspired to. The four courts referred to are badminton courts (each court is 13.4m x 6.1m and needs height of 7.1m): this classic hall has overall dimensions of 33m x 18m x 7.6m and covers 594 sq m of floor-space.

The four-court hall is also able to accommodate the following sports/activities (but not at the same time):

SPORT/ACTIVITY	AREA REQUIRED
Basketball	24/28m x 13/15m plus a 1m margin
Netball	30.5m x 15.25m plus a 3m margin
'Five-a-side'	25/50m x 16.5/35m
Volleyball	18m x 9m plus 3m margins

Where possible a GAA Club sports hall should be integrated with the Club's pavilion and pitch(es). This improves the delivery of the Club's business.



A GAA sports hall should include as a matter of course facilities for One-Wall Handball. This requires a 'wall-space' 20 ft wide and 16 ft high and a 'floor-space' 20 ft wide and 34 ft long.

There is a view that a sports hall such as this requires a further 12.5% of storage space: that means another 70/75 sq m.

Floor Surfaces

In broad terms Clubs are faced with three choices in terms of the surface of the main hall area. They and what they involve are summarised below:

FLOOR TYPE	COMMENTS	HOW IT'S INSTALLED
Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional and hard-wearing Multi-uses, eg dancing Requires regular cleaning Wood absorbs moisture so damp must be avoided 	Hardwood strips or sections (these may be veneered) laid on battens or plywood sheeting which in turn are set on rubber pads fixed to the floor.
Synthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vinyl; linoleum; rubber; or composites Easily-cleaned Provides consistent bounce Minimises risk of skin burns Uses are largely sports-related 	Surface can be laid down as rolls or sections, often with a foam or rubber backing, and stuck to the floor surface beneath. This may be a timber support floor (as above) which will absorb users' impact energy. Alternatively the final surface can be 'painted' on, usually between 1-4mm thick.
Textiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woven fabric; felt; flock; velour; fibre-bonded, needle-punched and fine pile carpet; or knitted, woven or tufted carpet Warm and give good acoustics 	Material is laid/stuck down on a sub-floor which may be tarmac or concrete.
3G	See Pitches Section above	See Pitches Section above

A matt floor finish is preferred to a gloss one and its Light Reflective Value (the % of light reflected from a surface) should be 40/50%. There should always be a visual colour contrast between sports hall floors and walls.



Changing Provision

A GAA sports hall should capitalise on the Club's GAA-related changing provision. However we need to be aware that:

- The hall will probably generate many users and the Club needs to be confident the 140-odd changing room spaces (and associated shower provision) described above will meet demand.
- Sports halls have many individual/small groups of users: changing provision thus needs to include lockers.
- Lockers typically measure 900mm x 300mm x 450mm.
- They also typically come in double rows, 1.8m high.
- Normally lockers are provided at a rate of 2/3 per 'changing room bench space'.

- 140 bench spaces as described above could support 280/420 lockers which could cater for 280/420 users and take up 39/57 sq m of floor-space: sometimes this can be provided to good effect in corridors.

Toilets

As a rule of thumb the following levels of toilet provision are needed:

- Men: one WC; one urinal; and one wash-hand basin per 15/20 users.
- Women: one WC per 7/10 users and one wash-hand basin per 15 users.

If the hall is part of or linked to a Club pavilion some sort of common access arrangements to toilets may be possible.

A gym is no longer something with 'a few weights' in it but is a complex place where complex activity takes place. Their aesthetics are increasingly important.



Multi-Use

The points made above multi-use spaces in GAA pavilions also apply here. Many Clubs will want or need to use their hall for various activities. Points to consider here are:

- A moveable stage will be a requirement for many events (eg Scór).
- Look at the possibility of moveable bleacher seating: a floor-level seat 25/30m (80/90ft) back from a stage is not very appealing.
- Acoustics (see above) are also a critical issue here: poor acoustics severely constrains the uses the hall can be put to

cardio-vascular; circuit-related; and/or relating to particular parts of the body.

Other points to consider are:

- A minimum of 25 sq m of floor-space will be needed and a height of 3.5m/4m
- Many gyms/training areas take up 80/100 sq m of space
- 'Warm up and 'cool down' areas may be needed
- Changing/shower facilities need to be tied into the provision
- Many users also expect a cafeteria/relaxation area
- Machines are expensive and need to be replaced/updated as required ... which can be as much on the basis of fashion/fad as on whether they are actually worn out
- Multi-provision of TV screens is also now an expectation of gym users

Gyms/Training Zones

These are now seen as part of the sports hall package but before investing here Clubs need to be confident that **(a)** a demand exists; **(b)** there are no dominant local competitors (eg Council or hotel leisure centres ... or even other GAA Clubs!); and **(c)** they know exactly what they'll put in their gym and why.

A gym is no longer something with 'a few weights' in it but is a complex place where complex activity takes place. Apart from what gyms do or offer, their aesthetics are increasingly important: how the place 'looks and feels' is a big part of it.

Clubs need to first decide who their market for the gym will be. If it's adult GAA players then that will determine what should be in the gym. If the target is wider then that will increase what should be in the gym. Just to give a sense of what can be involved, gyms can:

- Be for individuals and/or groups.
- Focus on basic fitness through to high-level strength and conditioning.
- Include a wide range of equipment including

Putting the Gaelic Polish on Things

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- Inclusion of gaelic art.
- Use of local place-names and/or deceased individuals to name parts of/rooms in the hall.

Adding Value to the GAA Complex

Athletics Tracks

The GAA has a proud athletics tradition although it is one that has slipped well down its current list of priorities. For those thinking of re-invigorating athletics within the GAA through infrastructure development there's one big problem ... full-size athletics tracks and GAA pitches don't go together. At best a full-size athletics track providing a 400m circuit has available within it a rectangular area of 105m x 68m ... enough to accommodate a soccer pitch but well short of the GAA's minimum pitch requirements of 130m x 80m.

If full-size tracks are out, there's still potential to provide some athletics facilities. Some pointers that Clubs may find useful are:

- For reasonably formal athletics an area of some 130m x 10m is needed: this conveniently matches the minimum length of a GAA pitch.
- This will provide an eight-lane (each running lane should be 1.22m wide), 110m running track with a 5m circulation space at the 'starting end' and a 15m 'running off' space at the finishing end.
- For long-jumping and triple-jumping, a run-up of 40/45m (again 1.22m wide) is the competition standard provision.
- The landing pit should be at least 9.0m long and 2.75/3.0m wide with at least 30cm of sand in it.

If we're reasonably serious about our athletics provision then our track should be:

- Dimensionally accurate
- Soundly-constructed
- Finished with a surface that can withstand 8mm shoe spikes and that has an allowance for wear and weathering
- Durable; slip-resistant; and impact-resistant

A grass running track should meet all 'athletics requirements' of a GAA Club and can be constructed in the same way as a GAA pitch.

If a Club is taking athletics seriously, then an artificial surface might be considered. The construction of this type of track is similar to that of a 3G pitch and follows these stages:

- Remove top-soil and excavate to a reasonable, firm load-bearing strata.
- Install drains at this level drainage installation to sub-soil/sub-base.
- Lay and compact 200mm of crushed, frost-resisting stone.
- Blind the stone with a finer graded, crushed stone.
- Lay and compact a second 200mm layer of crushed, frost-resisting stone.
- Blind this layer (as with the first layer) with a finer graded, crushed stone.
- Lay and compact a bitumen-bound base and wearing course.
- Apply the final surface layer.

There are a variety of artificial track surfaces available but they tend to fall into two groups:

- Latex-bound rubber, built up in layers.
- Sprayed-on coats of polyurethane and synthetic rubber (the 'standard' red track).

Any Club thinking of going down this route should seek detailed professional advice.

Clubs thinking of developing some athletics-related provision need to also give some thought to:

- Drainage: artificial (and other) surfaces can create a significant water run-off.
- Changing and shower provision for users.
- Access to/relationship with other indoor facilities (eg a sports hall).
- Floodlighting issues.

Walkways and jogging tracks at GAA Clubs should not be designed as endurance tests but should be inclusive of people of all ages and abilities.



Walkways and Jogging Tracks

Many GAA complexes now include walking/jogging tracks which are put there for (largely) low-level physical activity by their members and others. When planning a new pitch Clubs should consider the feasibility of including a perimeter walkway round it. Although they rarely attract grant aid (even if the rest of the project is grant-aided) they are easily added in ... as long as the space is there.

Walkways and jogging tracks at GAA Clubs should not be designed as endurance tests but should be inclusive of people of all ages and abilities. They can however readily double-up with 'outdoor gyms', where pieces of high or low-tech fitness equipment are located periodically along the path.

Again there are no hard-and-fast rules about walkways and jogging tracks but good practice tells us:



Path Surfaces

- Paths should be well lit with an even, firm, well-drained surface and be non-slip in both wet and dry weather
- Cracks, fissures and loose or soft material (such as loose gravel) should be avoided as they cause problems for people who are infirm on their feet and/or who use walking sticks; wheelchairs; and/or buggies.
- Paviours or setts/cobbles can cause similar problems.
- Design/layout should always reflect doors and gates that open outwards.
- The surface colour should contrast with its surroundings and should be 'non-glare'.
- 25mm kerbs can act as 'tapping rails' for cane users.

Widths and Gradients

- Paths should be at least 1.8m (and ideally 2m) wide (to accommodate two wheelchairs or buggies meeting).
- On well-used paths, passing places are particularly important: these can also be used to provide seating.
- The maximum British Standards gradient for paths and ramps is 1:12 but in practice this is too steep for many people, particularly older people and wheelchair users with limited upper body strength.
- Sustained gradients of more than 1:20 should be interrupted by level resting platforms (approximately 1.8m x 1.8m) at least every 30m.
- Where the gradient is above 1:20, handrails 1m above the ground should be provided.
- Path cambers (or sideways slopes) should be no more than 1:50 and ideally no more than 1:100.

Paths should have some basic lighting, usually low-level and for personal safety reasons avoid having hidden/secluded areas. Good

signage, ideally including distance markers, should be included. Paths and walkways are good locations for information; interpretation; and notice-boards. They also need to be regularly maintained and refurbished.

Finally, it is preferable to separate out pedestrians' and cyclists' use of such tracks.

Play Areas

GAA Clubs should be places for children. Whilst the core business is the delivery of enjoyable gaelic games for children, many Clubs broaden out the 'offer' to children – and their parents/carers – by providing play areas.

As with most parts of GAA infrastructure development, there can be a lot more to this than meets the eye.

Many children's play areas have been developed on what has become known as the 'KFC basis' ... ie 'kit; fencing; and carpet'. This delivers a ready-made package ... but all too often it's one that isn't really attractive to great numbers of children. Typically play areas are targeted at 4-10 year-olds but a properly thought-out play area can also offer something to older children and teenagers. In a whole-family, inclusive GAA this is a very important concept.

The primary aim of designing a play space must be to offer children a rich play environment where they can have a wide variety of play experiences and, where possible, learn about the natural environment. Successful play areas therefore:

- Offer movement and physical activity with space and features that allow a range of energetic and strength-building play experiences.
- Stimulate the five senses, maybe providing access to music and sound, and different smells made by plants and leaves.
- Are good places for social interaction, allowing children to choose whether and when to play alone or with others, to negotiate, cooperate, compete and resolve conflicts.
- Allow children to manipulate natural and fabricated materials, use tools, and have access to bits and pieces of all kinds.
- Offer children challenge and activities that test the limits of their capabilities, including rough-and-tumble, climbing and informal sports and games.

These all complement the GAA ethos.

Sector experience (well articulated in Play England's "Design for Play" publication) shows that:

SUCCESSFUL PLAY SPACES ...	SO GAA CLUB PLAY AREAS SHOULD...
Are bespoke	Be designed to enhance their setting and reflect the 'spirit of the place': that should be grist to the mill for any GAA Club ... a chance to emphasise the local and its heritage .
Are well-located	Sit where children would play naturally and are away from danger (including traffic), balancing pleasant seclusion with the need for supervision. It should relate to other Club facilities and activities: for example a play area far-removed from the pitch will split up family groups.
Make use of natural elements	Bring nature and life centre-stage and help deliver the GAA's heritage agenda: the use of logs, boulders and planting will help achieve this.

SUCCESSFUL PLAY SPACES ...	SO GAA CLUB PLAY AREAS SHOULD...
Provide a wide range of play experiences.	Be non-prescriptive and encourage the interaction of parents ... quite often simply by including sheltered seating for them (though ideally at the core of the play area rather than on its edge)
Are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children.	Be seen as an important part of the Club's inclusion and integration agendas.
Meet community needs and 'are loved by all'.	Be designed to work as a community hub and are a place where people of all ages just like being; that means going to look at other play-areas elsewhere and talking to the most important people involved here – children; parents; youth coaches; and local teachers.
Allow children of different ages to play together.	Aim to accommodate GAA Clubs' age groups from Under 6s through to teenagers: good design will avoid segregation of children by either age or ability.
Build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge.	Provide more of exactly what gaelic games are supposed to provide ... challenge; excitement; and enjoyment, where risk is minimised but never totally removed.
Are sustainable and appropriately-maintained.	Use recycled and sustainable materials (including natural ones) and minimise the use of energy and water: perfect tidiness is not always the sign of a 'good' play area.
Allow for change and evolution.	Build in 'slack space' at the design stage so that children can develop their own informal activities and additions can be made later.



Whatever the play area, equipment will be central to it. Some tips which Clubs might find useful here are:

- Locate equipment carefully as the right setting will enhance it considerably.
- Each piece of static or fixed equipment should be 2.5m apart from each other piece.
- When locating equipment, remember that children's 'desire lines' tend to run in straight lines ... so, for example, don't place swings in a 'desire line' between two fixed/static pieces.
- Include some equipment which can be used flexibly and is 'non-prescriptive' in its use.
- Choose equipment which helps make the play space inclusive: hammock swings; 'accessible roundabouts'; and equipment which accommodates companion or helper, such as wide slides or big circulation platforms.
- Use a mix of manufacturers to create variety.
- Check there are no entrapment spaces within or between pieces of equipment.

There are arguments for-and-against fencing around playgrounds. Typically it's put there to prevent vandalism or to provide safety or to keep dogs out. But equally it can look unnatural and give a 'Keep Out' rather than a 'Come In' message. Some useful pointers here are:

- Play area location and design and the ability of parents/carers to comfortably

- supervise it will determine if it's safe.
- The most effective play areas tend to have 'fuzzy' rather than fenced-in edges.
 - If a fence is needed, the further back it is located from the play area core the less intrusive it will look ... though the more expensive it will become.
 - Gates in fences should open outwards (to keep out animals) and be at least 1.1m wide.
 - Hedging and changes in level can provide boundaries which are effective yet pleasing-to-the-eye.

Plants (whether for hedging or not) in and around a play area add value to it. Clubs should choose plants which are:

- Fast growing.
- Easy to maintain.
- Resilient.
- Native species (to reflect local heritage and to encourage wildlife).

Equally they should avoid plants which:

- Are uncomfortable to the touch, ie with thorns or leaves with sharp edges.
- Contain substances that could irritate the skin.
- Are poisonous.

The surface of the play area also needs some thought and whilst there's no one-size-fits-all solution, most play areas usually involve one or more of the following:

SURFACE	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
Grass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very cheap ■ Vandal-resistant ■ Can help drainage ■ Environmentally-friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vulnerable to wear ■ Needs regular maintenance
Bark or wood chips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Absorbs impacts/falls ■ Vandal resistant ■ Good for drainage ■ Sustainable product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Needs topping up ■ Poor for wheelchairs ■ Needs membrane underneath ■ Needs edging

SURFACE	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
Sand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Absorbs impacts/falls ■ Vandal resistant ■ Good for drainage ■ Can act as a play resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hardens in wet or frost ■ Prone to being carried away ■ Poor for wheelchairs ■ Needs membrane underneath ■ Needs edging
Grit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As sand ■ Less likely to be carried away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As sand ■ Can sometimes form into a solid mass
Pea-gravel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As grit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As grit ■ Can be thrown by children
Wet-pour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low maintenance ■ Longevity and resistance to wear ■ Can be used on mounds and slopes ■ Good for wheelchairs and buggies ■ Can add colour ■ Can be marked out for games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very expensive ■ Can create water run-off ■ Can cause friction burns ■ Less absorbent for impacts/falls
Rubber tiles or mats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Absorbs impacts/falls ■ Good for wheelchairs and buggies ■ Good for drainage ■ Can add colour ■ May be portable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be expensive

Many well-used, popular play areas include a variety of surfaces.

Finally, inter-generational work is central to the GAA. A children's play area complemented by an outdoor gym can help take this work forward.

Outdoor gyms are equipped with low impact, resistance-based equipment including exercise bikes, cross-trainers and stretch

stations. They are typically designed to offer a workout for all the family from children to pensioners and can be colour-coded to indicate whether they are for toning, cardio or chill-out exercises. Outdoor gyms can also be very low-tech, for example using locally-sourced timber to create basic exercise stations. Whatever their content, they should always include readable instructions re how to use equipment/features.

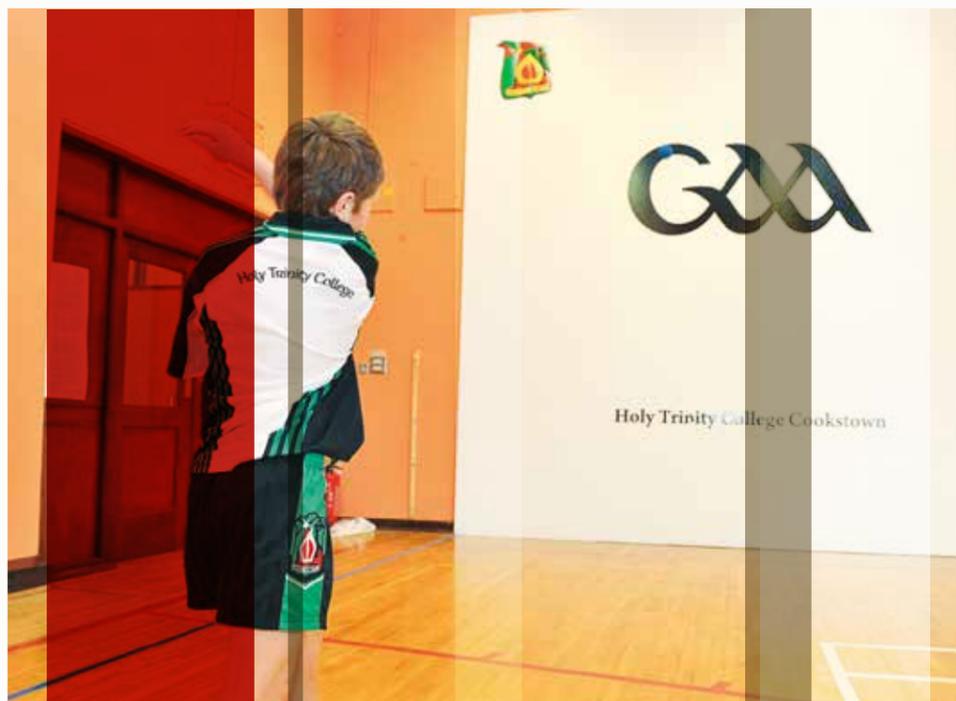
Handball

A standard four-wall GAA handball court is 20 feet (6.1m) wide; 20 feet high (with the back wall at least 14 feet high); and 40 feet (12m) long.

Walls are usually a smooth-rendered block wall whilst floors tend to be a sprung hardwood. The walls should be painted white and the floor should be a non-slip sports surface. Access to the alley is through a door in the back wall – which may be made of glass to facilitate spectators. Top quality lighting is essential as is well-controlled heating and ventilation.

Dedicated handball alleys are expensive to build and tend to be useable for handball only and very little else. When considering building a handball alley, Clubs need to look at:

- The likely demand for and use of the facility.
- Whether a joint project with someone else/ somewhere else might be better.
- Whether a 'one wall' solution might be more appropriate.
- How the alley will relate to/link in with other Club facilities, especially changing and showers.



'One-wall' handball is an increasing feature of sports halls and even appropriate outdoor spaces. A wall area 20 feet wide by 15 feet high is required, with a floor area 20 feet wide and 34 feet long running away from it. A standard 'four court' sports hall could easily accommodate four 'one wall alleys'.

Hurling Walls

These are now seen as an important means of allowing hurlers of all ages and all levels improve their skills, almost regardless of the time of year or weather conditions. Previous generations of hurlers used gable ends; building walls; and handball alleys for this purpose so the hurling wall just builds on traditional good practice.

It is estimated that a dominant player in a match will be on the ball 15 times: a night's session using a hurling wall will allow him/her to be on the ball up to 300 times. The benefits for handling; striking; and skills development are obvious.

The ideal hurling wall will:

From being seen historically as a luxury, fit-for-purpose spectator accommodation is now seen as a necessary part of the GAA Club offer.



- Be 40m long and 5m high, with a playing area of 40m running away from it: this will facilitate its use by a full panel of players.
- Be topped with a catch-net a further 2m high and angled back into the playing area.
- Have two 6m long 'wing walls' at either end of it, running at right angles from the main wall back in the direction of the playing area.
- Be made of seamless poured concrete or prefabricated concrete slabs (the surface of a rendered block wall will crack under sustained use and the mortar-joints in an uncovered block wall will cause the ball to behave inconsistently).
- Have a 3G playing surface 40m x 40m: grit is an alternative surface followed by tarmacadam and lastly, concrete (these latter two surfaces are dangerous in frost).
- Include floodlighting to at least 250/350: the wall/playing area should be floodlit from the sides.
- Incorporate good drainage.
- Be appropriately linked into changing facilities.
- Take account of prevailing winds.
- Include some dug-out provision.

Some walls have goals and/or other targets painted onto them.

Hurling walls are essentially an outdoor facility but sports buildings can also accommodate hurling walls ... provided the space is available; the walls are fit-for-purpose; and the floor surface is suitable.

Spectator Accommodation

The spectator and/or non-playing Club member is the life-blood of any Club but all too often their needs have been low on the list of GAA infrastructure priorities. However as with many other things, from being seen historically as a luxury, fit-for-purpose

spectator accommodation is now seen as a necessary part of the GAA Club offer.

The most important fact for clubs to be aware of regarding spectators is the fundamentally obvious one: they come to watch the games. That basic fact should underpin all planning of spectator accommodation. Spectators should therefore be offered accommodation which:

- Offers good sightlines, ie a clear, unrestricted view of the whole playing area.
- Provides some measure of comfort; shelter; and/or cover.
- Is easily accessible.
- Relates meaningfully to the Club's other facilities (and especially to toilets).

A good rule-of-thumb is that spectators should be able to see all of the touchline closest to them ... so roof supports; scoreboards; dug-outs; walls; barriers; fencing; and (a common feature of most Club pitches) advertising hoardings should not get in the way.

The quality of sightlines is simply determined by the ability to see over the head of spectators in front. This is usually expressed as a 'C' value, which is the distance between the centre of the eye and the top of the head in front of the viewer. A 'C' value of 120mm gives a good sightline and one of 150mm an excellent one. New GAA stands should achieve a minimum 'C' value of 90mm for all seats.

Calculating 'C' values is a technical process that should be undertaken by professionals.

The 'C' value will determine the rake or slope of the stand and essentially the steeper the rake/slope, the better the sightlines. Health and safety now comes into play however: a

seated row gradient should not exceed 34 degrees and a terrace or standing gradient should not go above 25 degrees.

Seated stands, even at Club level, should be what the GAA aspires to. Some basic pointers re seated accommodation are:

- Seats should be 500mm wide (minimum is 460mm) ... the same as we provide re 'bench space' for players in changing rooms and in dug-outs.
- A 'seating row depth' (ie the distance between the back of one row of seats to the back of the row in front of it ... or from the seated spectator's back to the front of his/her knees) of at least 760mm should be aimed for the maximum number.
- There should be 400mm of space available between the front edge of a tipped-up seat and the back of the seat in front of it.
- There should be no more than 14 seats in any row that has a gangway at one end of it only: if there are gangways at both ends the row can take 28 seats.
- Gangways should be 1.2m wide.
- The step risers in gangways should not be more than 190mm and should be uniform: the step goings should not be less than 280mm.
- No seat should be more than 30m from an exit.

Terracing remains a core feature of GAA grounds at all levels. Standing spectators should be offered the same quality of view as seated spectators. The 'C' value again applies but on terracing it is calculated for every second tread.

Terracing tread or steps should measure:

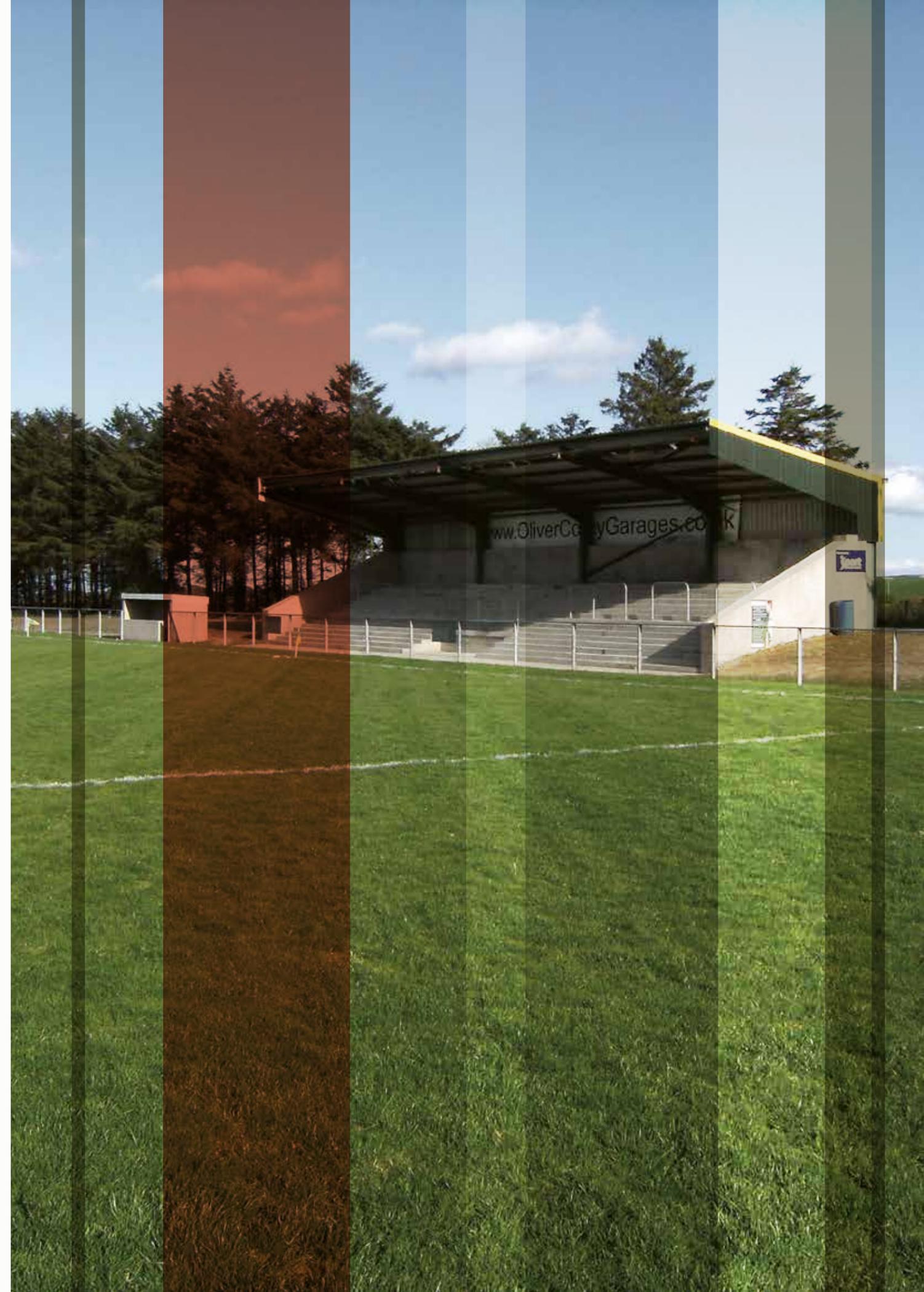
- 350-400mm from front to back
- 75-180mm in height

Current best practice says that terrace crush barriers should run uninterrupted from gangway to gangway. No standing spectator should be within 12m of a gangway ... which should be 1.2m wide and marked in conspicuous non-slip paint.

Viewing slopes are now discouraged but where they exist they should be:

- Well-drained.
- Sound underfoot.
- At an angle of no more than 10 degrees.

The ability of people to move quickly and safely is central to spectator safety. This includes movement into the ground; movement within it; and movement back out again. Many Clubs now use turnstiles to control movement into their grounds: it's important to remember that one turnstile is reckoned to be able to process a maximum of 660 people an hour.



Making it Happen

GAA Club physical development costs money. It costs money to put it there and it costs money to run/maintain it once it is there. Planning the financials is just as important as planning the physical side of the project.

Good practice suggests we look at the financials in three ways:

- What does it cost to run our Club and how will we source that money?
- What will it cost to do our planned development and how will we source that money?
- What will it cost to run our Club once the new development is in place and how will we source that money?

We should structure our analyses as follows:

1. Costs of currently running the Club

COSTS	YEARS:				
	1	2	3	4	5
Affiliation etc					
Playing Gear					
Travel					
HLP					
Maintenance					
Etc					
TOTAL					
INCOME					
Membership Fees					
Lotto					
Gates					
Sponsorship					
Etc					
TOTAL					
SURPLUS/DEFICIT					

Planning the financials is just as important as planning the physical side of the project.



2. Costs of Putting our Development in Place

COSTS	YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Fees												
Contractor Payments												
Other												
TOTAL												
SOURCES OF FUNDS												
Club reserves												
GAA Grants												
Other Grants												
Loans												
Other												
TOTAL												
SURPLUS/DEFICIT												

3. Costs of running the Club with the new development in place (eg added maintenance costs; floodlighting costs; bank loan repayments; etc)

Ulster GAA will provide Clubs with a simple spread-sheet to do the calculations.





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The Ulster GAA Club Maith Tool-Kit is endorsed as a best practice guidance manual by the Ulster GAA Integration partners:



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