

## **Round Towers Lusk Secretary's Report for 2020**

### **Introduction**

2020 has obviously been and continues to be a hugely challenging year for society on practically all levels. Within Round Towers Lusk we have faced a continuous sequence of novel and wide-ranging challenges on a weekly basis since mid-March.

The strong tradition and culture of volunteering within our club has enabled us to face up to and overcome many of these challenges. As we move towards 2021 we will continue to draw on this tradition and the established resources and capabilities within the club to ensure our short, medium and long-term success. However, we also need to recognise that we have to expand our volunteer base to effectively support and progress the many spheres of activity and projects that will define the club in future years.

### **COVID-19**

2020 will be remembered as the year of COVID-19. Each and every member of the club owes a huge debt of gratitude to Andy Barry who stepped up and excelled in the role of club supervisor. Andy's contribution permitted our teams to continue training and, when permitted, to continue playing matches in full compliance with regulations and guidelines. The nature of the role presented unique challenges as the situation and related communications evolved and, at times, contradicted each other on a weekly and sometimes daily basis. I am also happy to welcome Andy to the Executive Committee in the role of Assistant Secretary.

Sincere thanks to the COVID supervisors within each team who also played a crucial role in allowing training and matches to continue.

### **Adult Games**

Adult fixtures were disrupted enormously in 2020 and we should recognise the work put in by various committees at county board level to ensure that our adult teams had the opportunity to compete in football, ladies Gaelic football and hurling championships while leagues and other competitions remained unfinished.

At club level our thanks go to Colm O'Brien for representing adult hurling, Nuala O'Neill for representing Ladies Gaelic Football and Timmy Doyle for representing adult football at the Executive. It should also be noted that the Adult Games Committee, set up to administer adult level games within the club, was not required to meet in 2020.

It was a special year for our adult hurlers as they won back-to-back championships. Boosted by brilliant and hard-fought victories at quarter-final and semi-final stages, our hurlers overcame a gallant Commercial's team in another tight contest in O'Toole Park on a score line of 2.13 to 2.10 on 20 September. Thankfully, our supporters, while not able to be present at the match, were able to view the final on the club's Facebook page and enjoy the brilliant fielding, defending and scores on show. Quarter-final, semi-final and final were won by a combined total of 6 points and this gives a clear indication of the tremendous spirit and never-die attitude within the team. Congratulations to the players and management team of Colm O'Brien, Brendan Starling, Barry Griffin and David Power.

2020 will also be remembered for the significant fact that we had a second adult team competing in championship hurling. Our second team improved noticeably with each outing and concluded their Junior G championship group fixtures with a hard-earned and well-deserved victory over Kevins. Thanks to Mark Condren, Martin Doyle and David Power for driving this team forward. In terms of the revival of hurling in Lusk it is noteworthy that Round Towers Lusk had 2 adult teams competing in championship hurling on the same summer's evening on 30 July in Thomas Ashe Park. Our Ladies Gaelic footballers continued their upward progression and qualified for the final of the Junior E championship. A second successive championship agonisingly slipped away from their grasp as they lost a tight match in Broomfield to an experienced and physically powerful Saint Sylvesters team on a score of 3.12 to 2.10 on 9 September. Our thanks to Saint Sylvesters for making this match available to our supporters on their Facebook page. Many thanks to the management team of John Kiely, David Neary, Sarah O'Hara and Vivienne Teeling for the work they put in with this team.

Adult football continues to flourish within the club and 2020 saw the club's AFL 2 team compete in the Senior 1 championship. It is a remarkable achievement that our club, winners of the Junior A championship and AFL 5 in 2015, are now playing at the highest level of club football in the country. As Robert Naughton and Leo Neary step back from their management roles, club members should recognise their pivotal role in the success of the last two years. We should also thank the other members of the management team: Neil Hanlon, Pdraig Howley and Noel O'Brien. The club's first Senior 1 championship match was an away fixture on 25 July against Thomas Davis. Our thanks go to Thomas

Davis for the exemplary organization and the screening of the match on their Facebook page. We then welcomed eventual champions Ballymun Kickhams to Thomas Ashe Park on 25 August. Many thanks to the volunteers who ensured this historic occasion passed off smoothly as we faced up to a team back-boned by multiple All Ireland winners and All Stars. A limited number of spectators were also allowed attend our final championship match against Skerries Harps on 15 August in Garristown. Although results did not go our way, each and every match was a brilliant occasion and our players will come back stronger in 2021.

Our AFL 6 team, All County 4 and 3 champions in 2018 and 2019 respectively, reached the semi-final of the Junior 2 All County championship before succumbing to St Annes in Bohernabreena on 13 September on a score of 2.15 to 1.10. We should note that this team, despite moving rapidly up the ranks in 3 years, continued to perform exceptionally under the guidance of Brendan Walsh, Colm Fogarty and Stephen White.

2020 was the second year that we fielded a third adult football team. The commitment of John Sligo, Edel Bonner and Jer Doran is deserving of much greater respect from some of our players. The pieces are in place for this team to achieve its own success in 2021, but this is dependent upon the commitment of the players.

2020 Minor championship fixtures will hopefully resume in January 2021. Our minor team has progressed well through-out the year and our hope is that they will hit the ground running in 2021. Thanks to the minor management team of Eoin Gaffney, Dermot Bollard, Gabriel Kelly, Bernie Keogh Diaz and Richard Kelly.

### **Juvenile Games**

There has been a general increase in awareness across society of the importance of physical exercise and sport in the lives of young people. Like all organizations working with young people we have faced unforeseen difficulties in the past 9 months. I would like to lay special emphasis on the role played by our juvenile mentors throughout this crisis. They have gone above and beyond what could be expected of them to continue to offer our children healthy, fun and enjoyable times in an otherwise dark period. The importance of our Cúl camps is one example that should not be under-estimated in allowing children enjoy a relatively normal week. Thanks to Juvenile Chairperson John McKenna, Secretary Pdraig Sheerin and Treasurer Paul Ryan for their enormous work as mentors as well as in their officer roles of the club's Juvenile Section. Many thanks to our referee coordinator Ciara Kerrigan. Thanks to David Power and Selena Kavanagh for continuing to fill the role of Children's Officers within the club.

### **Games Promotion Officer**

Our GPO Gavin King has worked hard throughout the COVID period to make a positive contribution to the juvenile section of our club. Our nursery has prospered under Gavin's direction and remains a wonderful sight of fun and energy to behold. In this context we should also acknowledge the key role played by Alannah Harford, Kevin Niall and the wider team of juvenile coaches.

### **Health and Well-Being**

I have already mentioned the increased awareness of the role played by sport in terms of individual and collective well-being. We were fortunate that we already had a Healthy Club Officer in place at the start of this crisis and our thanks go to Joan Ward for keeping this topic to the fore at meetings of the Executive.

### **Facilities and Pitches**

Our pitches have been christened TAP 1 and TAP 2. The quality of the surface on TAP 1 remains exceptional while TAP 2 continues to improve as it matures. Kevin O'Neill has been key to ensuring that our teams enjoy excellent playing facilities. Jer Doran and Neil Hanlon have also provided crucial support and our thanks go to John Bohan who stepped up in 2020 to take on responsibility for the marking of the pitches. It is vital that other members also step up to make contributions to the maintenance and improvement of our facilities. Martin Doyle and Tom Farrell were, as always, key to all our efforts and led the work to remove the smoking shelter. Thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to this task. Liam Fitzgerald, Tom Farrell, Gordon McGrath, James Cunningham, and Norma Harford all contributed to fantastic renovations within our club house which we have not been able to fully appreciate to date. I would like to thank Liam Fitzgerald and Kevin O'Neill for the management of the scheme workers throughout 2020 who made a significant contribution to the maintenance of Thomas Ashe Park. Members should be aware that there are no scheme workers in place at the moment and that maintenance of our grounds is our shared responsibility.

I would like to thank Derek Hickey, Triona Murphy and the staff in our clubhouse for the warm welcome that typically greeted patrons. I would like to acknowledge the huge efforts made to adapt to COVID-19 regulations and to keep the clubhouse open for as long as possible.

### **Membership**

We owe a huge debt to our Registrar, Audrey Starling, who managed the registration of over 680 members in 2020 despite a variety of obstacles posed by COVID. The number of members reflects the success and growth of the club, but it also poses huge problems as the actual membership task is a mammoth one. In 2021 we will be able to provide more support in this area, but each member has a very real responsibility to engage with the system and to pay their membership as early as possible.

### **Public Relations**

Events in 2020 led to a massive void in terms of club games, training and activities. For long periods we were unable to play matches, train or even meet in the clubhouse for any reason. Our bar was closed and social interaction was reduced to a minimum. In these circumstances our PRO Claire Myers played a crucial role in maintaining our strong club and personal connections through social media. Just like membership Public Relations is a huge area for the club simply in terms of the number of teams competing in different codes and age groups. In 2021 teams need to understand the extent of the work of the PRO and to facilitate that work.

### **Finance and Fundraising**

We face enormous financial challenges in 2021 and beyond. All members of the club should be aware that we can only overcome these challenges by working harder and working together. Our main sources of income have dried up but our operating costs are still largely with us. Our Chairperson will speak about our fundraising necessities and a specific meeting will be organised to address this topic. We are in the fortunate position that our accounts and structures are relatively well-organised, but significant improvements can be made in this area too. All club members should recognise the work of our treasurers, Pat Brady and Stephen Mulhall, in maintaining and improving the club's financial and accounting systems. This process has been on-going for many years and we are grateful to everybody who contributed in this area.

Sponsorship will prove to be an increasingly important element in our activities and sincere thanks to the personal and corporate sponsors who allow the club to operate.

### **An Ghaeilge**

Ní raibh muid in ann an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn i 2020 mar a bhí súil agam. Mar sin féin, tá an structúr ann agus tá súil agam go mbeidh muid in ann níos mó a dhéanamh sa réimse seo i 2021.

### **Fingal County Council**

We are indebted to Fingal County for their support throughout 2020. Their support is crucial in providing facilities for our many teams. Similarly, we continue to work with partner organizations in the Lusk 2020 group in the development of community sports facilities at Lusk Recreational Hub. 2020 saw the opening of a full-sized GAA pitch at the "Hub" which will also be of crucial importance to the promotion of Gaelic games in Lusk Community College.

We are also grateful to Fingal County Council for Sports Equipment Funding received under the Community Funding Scheme that allowed us to purchase new juvenile goalposts and nets.

I also wish to thank Fingal County Council, the Local Community Development Committee and the Department of Rural and Community Development for funding received under the Community Enhancement Programme 2020 that will allow us to build the much-needed compound for juvenile goals.

Our gratitude to Fingal County Council also extends to the Restart Plus Grant that provided badly needed support when it was needed.

### **Executive Committee**

The meetings and functions of the Executive Committee have been impeded to a certain degree in 2020. Virtual meetings simply do not permit the same level of discussion, interaction and debate that is crucial to well-balanced and thought-out discussions and decisions. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the members of the Executive Committee

continue to put in long hours and huge efforts to facilitate and direct positive growth within the club. I wish to thank them all for their incredible commitment to make Round Towers Lusk GAA Club a very special club.

The leadership of Pat Codd has been extremely important to the Executive and to the entire club throughout this crisis. I would like to thank him for his commitment and determination to continue as many of our core activities as possible. We are entering a key period in the development of the club and these qualities will be more important than ever. I would also like to sincerely thank vice Chairperson Jer Doran who is stepping down from the Executive. He has been an integral part of the club's growth and success for many years and a constant source of experience, sound advice and knowledge for the Executive Committee. I would like to wish Eoghan O'Doherty best wishes as he takes on the vice chairperson role in 2021.

I wish to thank the Dublin GAA County Board, Dublin LGFA and the Dublin Camogie County Board for their support and assistance in this difficult year.

Míle buíochas le gach duine a thug tacaíocht dúinn i 2020.

Naoise Mac Fheorais  
Rúnaí