

Round Towers Lusk Secretary's Report for 2018

Introduction

In what has been a remarkable year for the club our first act should be to acknowledge the generations of hard work that have provided the foundations for the success outlined in this report. We follow in the footsteps of people who continue to inspire us to develop our club into the future and we are part of an organization that offers communities all over Ireland and further afield a unique sporting and cultural outlet throughout their lives. The joys and aspirations we share were evident over three special weekends in October and November as, at one end of the spectrum, we celebrated as our adult footballers achieved senior status in league and championship and, in the same timeframe, we saw a new team of U7 boys and girls take the first steps on their own journey with a trip to Balbriggan.

Adult Games

2018 will go down as the most successful year in the history of the club on the playing field. In Parnell Park on Saturday 27th October we attained senior status in championship football for the first time after a thrilling 1.18 to 0.15 victory after extra-time over Naomh Barróg in the Intermediate Championship final. Three weeks later promotion in the league was confirmed with victory at home over the same opposition. This team also claimed the Loving Cup in June as Kilmacud Crokes disappointedly failed to field for the final of this competition. We completed an extraordinary championship double on the same weekend as our junior footballers claimed the Junior 4 All County Championship final in St Margarets on Sunday 28th October with victory over CLG Rath Éanna on a scoreline of 3.08 to 2.07. This championship victory was also followed by league promotion as second place in the final standings was confirmed with a resounding victory over Stars of Erin in Lusk on Sunday 11th November. The team also reached the Murphy Cup final which was won by Naomh Peregrine on a scoreline of 4.09 to 0.14. The achievements of both sets of management and players are remarkable and should be applauded. I wish to pause to thank manager Declan Patton and his management team of Lorcan Harford, John O'Neill, Pat Taafe, Declan Smith and Mark Grimes for their dedication and success with our newly promoted senior team. 2019 will bring senior football to Lusk and it is something that the entire club can look forward to. I also wish to congratulate Damian Hughes, Stephen White, David Neary, Neil Hanlon and Colm Fogarty for their success in 2018.

Of course, this success is the culmination of many years of hard work at underage, minor, U21 and adult level and we should recognise this. The nature of sport is that hard work, talent and effort more often than not go unrewarded in terms of trophies and medals. As such, we should thank the many club members who facilitated and helped these teams to success. In this context, I would like to recognise the work of Jer Doran who represented Adult Football on the Executive Committee. Our Minor football team competed in Division 2 of the league and finished in a very respectable fifth place as well as reaching the quarter-final of the C championship. We should focus on the simple fact that the team entered Division 2 and were competitive at this level. The benefits to the players and to the club from playing at a higher level will no doubt be evident in the long run and for this we should thank Noel O'Brien, Colm Fogarty, Neil Hanlon, Robert Naughton and Noel Shields. Our U21 team went into the championship as defending champions and just fell short in the quarter-final when an unfortunate clash of fixtures limited their selection options. Thanks to Richard Kelly and Pdraig Howley who were joined by Noel O'Brien, Colm Fogarty, Neil Hanlon, and Robert Naughton from the minor team management to manage the U21 team. I would like to return to the role of Jer Doran and thank him once again for his unenviable work in balancing and meeting the expectations and demands of four sets of highly ambitious management teams and players. In this regard the club has been a victim of its own success. The motion to form an Adult Games Committee is an important step in ensuring the future smooth running of adult games in the club as football, hurling and Ladies Football continue to grow.

Congratulations to Cormac Howley who represented the club in Dublin's run to the Leinster Under 20 football final and who was also joint winner of the AIG-Herald Player of the Month for October on the back of his brilliant performance in the Intermediate Championship final.

The promise and hard work of recent years also came to fruition for our Ladies Gaelic footballers as they claimed Adult Football League Division 8 honours and reached the championship final where they unfortunately fell just short of a remarkable double, losing to an experienced Wanderers team by two points on a final score of 3.06 to 1.10. Huge congratulations to mentors Linda Grimes, Linda Neary, David Neary, John Kiely and Kevin Doyle and the players on

their success. Many thanks to Nicola Dwyer for having capably promoted Ladies Gaelic Football at the Executive while also finding time to drive other projects within the club. Best wishes to her replacement Ashley Down. Congratulations go also to Davina Neary on her selection for the Junior Dub Stars, ensuring that the club is represented for the second year in a row after Rebecca Grimes's participation last year.

The adult hurling team consolidated two years of distinguished progress with a series of outstanding performances in Adult Hurling League Division 7, finishing just outside the promotion play-off spots in the modified league structures. Sincere thanks to the management team of David Power, Martin Doyle and Brendan Starling who continue to develop this team as it undergoes something of a transformation as further players from the club's juvenile structures join the set-up on an annual basis. Despite losing the Championship semi-final we can take comfort from the fact that the outstanding players on the team were all young lads. Congratulations to Pat Codd and Brendan Starling and the players who represented the club on the Ros-Lusca minor hurling team who won Minor Hurling League Division 3 in the last week. Thanks to our neighbours in Naomh Maur as we continue to work together to promote hurling in Dublin.

Congratulations to Luke Codd who created his own piece of history by bringing a Leinster Minor Hurling Championship medal back to Lusk.

Juvenile Games

Sincere thanks on behalf of the club to the Juvenile Chairperson Kevin Niall, Secretary Linda Boylan and Treasurer Gearóid Hennigan who stepped down at the recent Juvenile AGM after various years at the helm. Best wishes to their successors: Chairperson John McKenna, Secretary Donna Hayes and Treasurer Paul Ryan. The dedication of the various mentors and coaches was evident at the AGM and congratulations to those who enjoyed success. The AGM also highlighted the success of the football and hurling Street Leagues, the Easter and summer camps held in the club as well as the long-standing popularity of our weekly nursery for 4-7 year olds. Many thanks to our Referee Co-ordinator Darragh Sheppard for his hard work and congratulations for the continued personal success at inter-county level.

It also proved a historic year for juvenile hurling in the club as our U14 team, as well as winning their league without conceding a single point, claimed the first hurling Féile na nGael victory in the club's history with a resounding victory over Lucan Sarsfields in the atypical setting of Tallaght Stadium on Sunday 22nd April. Congratulations to manager David Power and his management team of Paul Barker, Mark Condren, Tom Farrell, Niall Johnston and Gordon McGrath. Further signs of future success may be taken from the successful Camaint team who won their final in Parnell Park on Friday 17th August.

On the same weekend that the U14 hurlers wrapped up the league, the U15 girls football team won the Division 2 Shield with a thrilling extra-time victory over Cláirseacha na Sceirí on a scoreline of 4.10 to 2.09. Congratulations to mentors Eimear Clarke, Nuala O'Neill, Bill Briody and all the players. Not to be outdone the U13 girls won the Division 4 Shield final by defeating CLG Tomás Dáibhís by 4.07 to 2.07. Congratulations to the U13 players and their mentors Colette Brady and Pdraig Tully. Commiserations to Vivienne Teeling and the U17 players who lost the Division 3 championship final which, inopportunately, took place on the same day as the U15 final. Congratulations to Grace Codd, Katie Lovely, Kate McKenna and Sophie O'Hara who represented the club on the inter-county scene.

Congratulations to Bernie Keogh Diaz, who has filled a multitude of roles within the club, and Alan Holland for victory in the U16 Football C Championship Shield after a great battle on 17 November against a combined team of Rush and Balbriggan. Congratulations to Gabriel Kelly, Gary Clooney and John Donovan and the U15 team for gaining promotion to Division 3 for 2019. These successes are vital to ensuring continued success at adult level. The fantastic success of Round Towers Lusk players with the county team continues as Eoghan Gallagher and Daniel Sutton lined out with the Dubs. Thanks to the coaches involved with the club's excellent Player Development Squad that proved highly successful once again.

Our Camogie section continues to thrive under the watchful guidance of U9 mentors Ashley Down, Derek Hayes and Donna Hayes and U11 mentors Stephen Fee and Linda Boylan. We look forward to the continued growth of camogie and we should recognise that, as the fledgling section within the club, it deserves extra support and attention.

Special thanks to the club's Children's Officer David Power who fulfilled his role and duties with integrity and skill. The club is extraordinarily fortunate to have a person of his calibre in this role. We should also acknowledge and applaud the structures put in place by the GAA.

Games Promotion Officer

The club owes a huge debt of gratitude to our former GPO James Costello who moved into a teaching career at the start of the school-year. Many of our rising stars benefitted from James' coaching and enthusiasm over the years. We wish him the very best in his new role and look forward to seeing him back in Lusk at the head of visiting school teams in the coming years. The club has since welcomed a new GPO in the person of David Stephenson from Louth and we look forward to further years of growth as he promotes the GAA within schools and assists in the formation of suitably qualified mentors and teams within the club. A Child Protection Course, a requisite for all juvenile mentors along with Garda Vetting, took place in June and another is organised for January 2019.

Health and Well-Being

Joan Ward assumed the role of Healthy Club Officer as part of the GAA aim to protect the health and wellbeing of its members and the wider community. Two mental health workshops delivered by Jigsaw North Fingal took place in the club in May. Thanks to Claire Myers and the volunteers who organised the club's participation in the "Ireland lights up with the GAA" project in Operation Transformation to encourage community-wide exercise. The club also hosted a Cardiac Screening Clinic in August aimed at reducing the incidents of Sudden Adult Death Syndrome (SADS) in Ireland and promoting a healthier lifestyle.

Facilities and Pitches

Massive thanks once again to Kevin O'Neill for the dedication and knowledge employed in the care and maintenance of the pitch. The excellent condition of the pitch was also acknowledged by the Leinster Council, competing teams and officials as we hosted two matches in the Leinster Junior Hurling Championship. Ably supported by Jer Doran the hard work of Kevin and our groundsmen ensures that our pitch is truly an exceptional asset.

I also wish to thank the managers of the various teams for their cooperation and understanding in the management of the pitch. We are all aware that it is simply not possible to accommodate so many teams on a single pitch and we depend on the flexibility and sensibility of all mentors to ensure that our pitch is utilised to the maximum without damaging its long-term health. I will call upon this flexibility and sensibility once again in 2019 as various new playing facilities will gradually come online. Our new pitch should be available for matches from the middle of the year and this will relieve a lot of the pressure on our main pitch. It is appropriate at this time to thank once again the many people, most recently Frank Kiernan, who contributed to this project over the twelve years since its inception.

Off the pitch we face a continuous catalogue of maintenance issues which must be addressed as they arise. The club does not possess the financial means to address all these issues in a meaningful way and we depend upon the generosity and hard work of our volunteers to tackle many of them. In this respect we need to recognise the contribution made to the club by the likes of Declan Cruise, Martin Doyle, Jer Doran, Pat Fitzgerald, Thomas Hand, Neil Hanlon and David Neary. They are building on the work of similar-minded volunteers who helped build the club since its inception.

Our thanks also go to Fingal County Council for their work in offering playing facilities to our teams. These will be key to the continued success of the club. Thanks also to our partner organizations in the Lusk 2020 group for their work in ensuring that sports facilities and cooperation are to the fore in the development of Lusk.

Public Relations

There has been a huge amount of activity and success in the club in 2018. Our members and the entire community are more aware of this activity and success than ever thanks to the tireless and inspired work of our PRO Claire Myers. The PRO role is crucial to the relationship of the club with the entire community in Lusk and to the relationship of the entire community with the club. The work of the PRO, however, extends well beyond the boundaries of Lusk and allows members of the club and community keep in the touch with the club literally from all over the planet. Over 1,800 people like and follow our Facebook page while posts on our activities can reach up to 10,000 people per week.

The numbers speak for themselves and we owe a huge debt to Claire for offering so many people the chance to maintain a link with the club when their direct links to a team may no longer be active.

The club also unveiled its new website in 2018. Supported by the GAA the website contains direct links to GAA news and events. The GAA's involvement also offers us assurance that the website will adapt to future advances in technology and social media trends.

Supporters near and far are similarly grateful for the informed updates provided by the Towers Match Tracker.

Finance and Fundraising

As the club continues to grow our need for facilities continues to grow as do our financial pressures. The New Year will soon be here and our focus will turn to the GAA National Club Draw. This is an exceptional fundraising opportunity as 100% of ticket sales go directly to the club. Many thanks to Tom Farrell and Karen Harford for their work in driving this draw among our teams last year. I would call on everybody to make a special effort to support the draw this year as we work to eliminate the deficit on the second pitch development.

One of the first tasks of the Finance and Fundraising Committee was to establish a fixed calendar of fundraising activities. The club's long-running Golf Classic is one such annual event and this year's edition was another great success and our thanks go to the committee responsible for this very enjoyable event.

Thanks to Nicola Dwyer and Pauline Murphy for the great work done in promoting the club lotto. Thanks also to our weekly sellers who help drive sales. The annual lotto ticket has also proved to be a great success as a direct contribution to the second pitch costs.

Huge thanks to the Ladies Gaelic Football section for the magnificent Abba spectacle in aid of the new pitch that proved such a success. We are also grateful for the many other fundraisers organised by different teams and individuals throughout the year which provide the means to keep the club afloat.

Thanks to our many sponsors for their generous support of our teams and our events. I wish also to thank Fingal County Council for their grant support.

Many thanks to our members for their support of our fundraising initiatives in 2018. This support will similarly be needed in 2019 as facilities come on line and other projects take shape.

The club's Treasurer Cathal Clarke is stepping down after two years dedicated to bringing order, structure and clarity to the club's finances and myriad of financial processes. The members of the Executive have often been left speechless by Cathal's precision and the sheer volume of work completed. We are very thankful that Cathal has indicated his willingness to remain part of the club's Finance and Fundraising Committee.

Executive Committee

Thanks to the Dublin County Board for their support and assistance in a multitude of matters.

The Executive Committee met 19 times in 2018. I wish to thank all the members of the committee for the contributions made to the successful running of the club. Each person on the committee is charged with a particular task for which they are responsible. In this regard the club owes a huge debt to Karen O'Brien who is stepping down from the role of Registrar. She leaves the club in the significant position of having achieved 100% compliance in membership. The afore-mentioned Cathal Clarke, Nicola Dwyer and Kevin Niall are also stepping down after having offered outstanding service to the club. Our club Chairperson Pat Codd will speak in more detail about the contributions made by these and other members of the club. In relation to Pat himself I would like to thank him most sincerely on behalf of all our members for the massive and unrivalled contribution made to practically every facet of the club.

All in all we have enjoyed an extraordinary year. Nollaig shona daoibh!

Is mise,

Naoise Mac Fheorais

Rúnaí