

Cloigthishe Lusca **Secretary's Report for 2021**

Introduction

Ní neart go cur le chéile. Unity is strength. This is a key phrase for all GAA clubs and has never been more relevant. At our AGM last year, we had time to reflect on the many and varied challenges that our club faced and overcame in the previous year. Further challenges presented themselves in 2021 and will continue to do so in 2022. We will face them with the same tradition and culture of hard work and solidarity that enabled us to drive forward and grow in 2021. The key learning from 2021 and previous years is the resilience and strength that we collectively represent. The key lesson for 2022 and beyond is the necessity to increase our base of volunteers and members.

I would like to begin by registering our thanks to the many people in the Dublin GAA County Board, Dublin LGFA and the Dublin Camogie County Board who provide us with the platform, supports and opportunities to develop as a club and a community. Congratulations to our players and members who linked up with Dublin squads across all codes throughout the year.

I would also like to thank our many sponsors who provide the club and our teams with crucial support.

Covid-19

The organization and structures put in place in 2020 by club supervisor Andy Barry and the numerous Covid team supervisors stood to us in 2021 as the pandemic continued to evolve and present new and unanticipated challenges. We simply could not have functioned without the collective efforts of Andy and the team supervisors. Our thanks also go to our mentors and players who ensured that our Return to Play took place in a safe environment in compliance with Government requirements and GAA guidelines.

Adult Games

Sincere thanks to Nuala O'Neill for representing Ladies Gaelic Football, Eoghan O'Doherty for representing adult hurling and Timmy Doyle for representing adult football at the Executive in 2021. The Adult Games Committee, set up to administer adult level games within the club, did not meet in 2021.

The RTL girls/Ladies teams for football and Camogie had a late start to the playing season for 2021 due to Covid but that did not effect the growth in new players into all of our teams from Juvenile to Adult levels. We had two U10, two U12, one U14 football and Camogie teams, one U16's, one Minor and one Adult Ladies Football Team in 2021. In 2022, we will add a new U9's girls team and field 2 teams playing at U11's and U12's, one team at U13 and possibly 2 teams at U15. All these teams will play football and Camogie. We will also have one minor girls football team. It is a hugely significant step that we will also have a second Ladies Football Team competing in 2022.

We also had a lot of success with all our competitive teams in winning various competitions in 2021. Our U14's girls won their division 3 Shield Championship Final. The U16 girls won their Division 4 Single coded Championship Final. The Minor Girls made it to their Division 3 Shield Final but unfortunately lost on the day. Our Adult Ladies continue to reach new heights as they won the Division 5 League and Junior E Championship Final as well as reaching the final of the Division 5 Cup. Congratulations to the players and the management team of David Neary, John Kiely, Paul O'Hara, Stephen Harford, Ciara Smith, Sarah O'Hara and Vivienne Teeling. The success of the ladies has to be attributed to the players, parents and especially the hard work and dedication of all our coaches. The continuing growth and success of LGFA and Camogie is the result of many years of commitment and hard work. A massive thanks to you all.

We also continue to provide an important recreational and fitness outlet with our Gaelic for Mothers and Others group which continues to grow in numbers. Many thanks to Claire Myers, Eimear Clarke and Nuala O'Neill for supporting this initiative and we look forward to its continuing development.

I would like to thank the management team of Colm O'Brien, Graham Barrett, Brendan Starling, Ray O'Keeffe, David Power, Barry Griffin and Pat Codd for another memorable year for our first team adult hurlers. Due to the atypical structure of a very competitive league, the team's sole loss resulted in their failure to make the league final. They carried their good form into the Junior D hurling championship and were unfortunate to lose a tight semi final at home to the eventual winners of the championship.

Sincere thanks to Mark Condren, Mark Doyle and David Power for remaining at the helm of the second adult hurling team in 2021. This team marked its own progression by reaching the quarter final stage of the Junior G hurling championship where they also lost to the eventual winners of the championship.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Timmy Doyle for his work in putting together the management team of Damian Hughes, Neil Hanlon, Declan Smith, Noel O'Brien and Noel Shields with Alannah Harford providing first aid and physio. The putting together of the management team proved to be an extremely difficult task, but one that paid rich dividends in the end. Our senior footballers opened their Senior 1 championship campaign with a brilliant and unforgettable win over St Oliver Plunketts Eoghan Ruadh under lights in the Naul. The second match finished in a one point defeat to Lucan Sarsfields who went on to reach the semi final of the championship. Their final match also ended in defeat as they came up against a very strong Naomh Jude team who went so close to claiming the senior championship.

Our second team continued to progress in 2021 under the guidance of Brendan Walsh, Stephen White, Declan Moore, Andre Berg and Eoin Gaffney. They had an unfortunate championship draw in 2021 but will come back stronger in 2022.

Our third adult football team also continued to progress in 2021. Many thanks to John Herity and Edel Bonner for their work with this team that reached the semi final of the Junior 6 North championship. The ground work laid in recent years by Sligo and Edel, ably assisted by Jer Doran and Stephen Hynes, has built a platform for future success as our younger players transition from minor to adult football.

Our minor team had a busy year as the 2020 squad finished the 2020 Minor D Championship in September 2021 when they battled bravely before falling short in the final. The 2021 minor team claimed the Minor C Championship shield in November 2021. Congratulations and thanks to the 2021 minor management team of Eoin Gaffney, Gabriel Kelly, Bernie Keogh Diaz, Richard Kelly and John Donovan for all the hard work put in with these players.

Commiserations to our U21 footballers who lost the final of the U21 E championship after extra time by the smallest of margins. Many thanks to the management team of Noel O'Brien, Noel Shields, Jack Hussey, Liam Bohan, Declan Moore, Eoin Gaffney, and Neil Hanlon for providing these footballers, some current and many future senior footballers, with the opportunity to train and play at this most special and enjoyable grade. Thanks again to Alannah Harford who provided first aid and physio at the final.

I believe that we can look forward with optimism and confidence to 2022 and that this confidence should be shared across all codes.

Juvenile Games

Our sincere thanks go to Juvenile Chairperson John McKenna, Secretary Pdraig Sheerin and Treasurer Paul Ryan who continued to fill the Officer roles in the club's Juvenile Section.

Many thanks to our referee coordinator Ciara Kerrigan who has stepped down from this crucial role after three years. I would also encourage former and current juvenile and adult players to consider taking on the role of referee. The requirement for more referees grows year after year as clubs enter more teams in more competitions, but the supply of referees has not grown at the same pace.

Many thanks to juvenile and adult coaches who made our Cúl camps such a success. Our advanced hurling and football camps for older children also proved another success in the busy juvenile calendar.

Congratulations to our players and mentors on the Ros-Lusca U15 team who claimed the Division 5 Féile and to the players and mentors on the Ros-Lusca U14 team who won the Division 3 Cup. Special mention to our U13 hurlers and footballers who topped both their leagues. The final fixture of the year in Thomas Ashe Park featured our U16 footballers in the final of the U16 E Championship. The result did not go our way, but the team displayed very welcome skill and grit that will stand to them.

Special thanks to David Power and Selena Kavanagh for continuing to fill the role of Children's Officers.

Games Promotion Officer

We wished our GPO Gavin King every success and best wish as he embarked on a new adventure at the end of October 2021. Gavin played a key role in promoting Gaelic games in local schools, managing our nursery and assisting our juvenile teams and coaches whenever possible. We look forward to filling this key role in 2022.

Our final nursery of the year featured two important events. The first was a universally acclaimed visit from Daidí na Nollag. The second was a presentation to Alannah Harford to celebrate ten years of involvement in the nursery. Our best wishes also go with Alannah who has made such a positive contribution to an entire generation of juvenile teams.

Our thanks go to Kevin Niall and the wider team of juvenile coaches who provide the organization and fun for our youngest members on Saturday mornings.

We should also thank club PRO Claire Myers and her team in offering coffee and refreshments to grateful parents and children at the nursery.

Health and Well-Being

As Covid continues to impact on all our lives, awareness around the importance of health and well-being grows. As a club we are in a privileged position to support our members. I would like to thank our Healthy Club Officer Joan Ward for her work in this area in 2021.

Facilities and Pitches

There is massive commitment within the club in terms of the maintenance and improvement of our facilities and pitches. We are all aware and very thankful of the many volunteers who give up their time and energy to develop and improve our pitches and facilities. The work is so extensive and varied that it is close to impossible to keep track of all the people involved. With that in mind, I would like to pay special tribute to the names of those members and volunteers who do not appear in this report.

TAP1 continues to provide an exceptional playing surface. I would like to thank our mentors and players for their cooperation in ensuring that it is not over used or used in unsuitable conditions. Gradual improvements in the playing surface of TAP2 may be attributed to top-dressing with sand, fertiliser and shock-waving of the pitch that have taken place in 2021. I would like to mention Kevin O'Neill and Neil Hanlon for their crucial role in these improvements. We should also thank the team of volunteers of John Flood, John Bohan, Dermot Clarke, Frank Kiernan, Joe Sullivan, Gerry O'Connor and Séamus Murphy who line our pitches and maintain the grounds in such good order, ensuring that our teams have such fine playing facilities. The value of this hard work was evident on 1 September as we hosted adult ladies and minor boys football championship finals in Páirc Thomáis Ághais.

Many thanks also to all who contributed to the on-going renovations and improvements within our club house.

Thanks to Andy Barry who managed both the club's application for a Sports Capital Grant for works connected with the astro turf facility and an application to Fingal Leader to improve the energy efficiency of the club premises. One application would have been considered an enormous task and achievement in itself, so we should recognise the huge commitment and work required in preparing and submitting two.

Sincere thanks to Gym Procurement Team of Rob Naughton, Joe Sullivan, Chris Tonge and Aoife de Burca for their work in development of our club gym. Thanks to the many volunteers who contributed to the extensive works that prepared the club hall for its brilliant transformation. The collective work of our members and volunteers has produced a fantastic facility that is available to individuals and teams and will make a significant contribution to the progression of our teams in future years.

Looking ahead, I would like to thank the many members who submitted observations, suggestions and recommendations on the future development of the club's facilities. There was a clear emphasis on playing and training facilities in this feedback. The Executive Committee agreed to prioritise the following four playing and training facilities: gym; floodlighting on the training area and/or the new pitch; ball wall; re-surfacing and associated works of the astro-turf facility.

We have a development plan and will continue to work towards its full achievement. Fund raising, hard work and volunteers will be central to all developments.

Membership

Once again we need to acknowledge the massive role played by our club Registrar Audrey Starling in the progression of our club's ambitions. Our hope is that our membership will continue to grow in coming years and the role of the Registrar will similarly grow in terms of work and responsibility. It stopped being a one-person role at least five years ago. In 2022, each section within the club will be required to supply Assistant Registrars who will work closely under the supervision of Audrey.

As in previous years, each member has a very real responsibility to pay their annual subscription as quickly as possible.

Public Relations

2021 has seen huge growth on our Social Media pages. We currently have 1,153 Instagram followers, this is almost double what we had last year and this is thanks to the hard work of our Assistant PRO Chroidhia Myers. We currently

have 2,853 followers on our Facebook page and 2,450 followers on our Twitter page. Social Media has allowed us to stay in contact with everyone during another difficult year and we hope to utilise our Club Website more next year with regular updates. There have been over 1400 memories captured since we recommenced our training and matches post Covid restrictions and we would like to thank all the photographers who contributed to our club social media pages this year.

Special General Meeting

A special General Meeting was held on 21 March 2021. The SGM was called to seek approval from the members to agree to the proposed settlement in the long-running engagement with local landowners. The motion to approve the proposed settlement was overwhelmingly supported. Sincere thanks to the many members who represented the club in this engagement over an extended period.

Finance

Many thanks to our Treasurer Pat Brady for his excellent work in this crucial role over a period of two years. Picking up on the work of previous Treasurers, Pat brought further structure, transparency and balance to our finances. The importance of this work cannot be underestimated and is only visible when absent.

I would also like to recognise the role of Stephen Mulhall as Assistant Treasurer in 2020 and the first months of 2021. Like Pat, Stephen came forward to take on this role in January 2020. This followed our 2019 AGM which concluded without anybody in the Treasurer role. As mentioned in the 2019 AGM minutes, the club could not continue to function without a Treasurer.

Sincere thanks to Pat and Stephen for their selfless work in managing and guiding our finances over the past two years.

Fundraising

Fund raising is an important part of club life. The club needs to fund raise so that it meet its day-to-day financial commitments. Fund raising will also be a central part of any future capital development. I would like to thank Liam Fitzgerald for his diligent work in this area and to call on our members to support Liam and future fund raising events. While members pay membership and subscriptions it is important to remember the membership and subscriptions go towards registration and insurance for the members. The club still needs to find money to keep the lights on, maintain the grounds, and secure and enhance the facilities.

As fund raising is an important part of club life, fund raising is important for the members of the club. However, the members of the club are even more important for fund raising.

The club's 2021 fund raising has been impacted by Covid. That said, the club has been able to run the National Club Draw and the club Lotto thanks to the commitment and dedication of club members. Many thanks to all involved in these areas. It is essential that more volunteers come forward to assist with these initiatives.

We are also extremely grateful to Stephen Harford and Adam Caul who organised a very well supported club jersey fundraiser and to Ayleen Sweeny who took the lead role in a very successful clothes collection. Both initiatives made significant contributions to the club's finances in 2020. It is never easy to run a fund-raising event. Fund raising events start with an idea and sometimes it can be difficult to come up with that idea. When somebody does come up with an idea, it can be even more difficult to execute that idea. Fund raising can be difficult to execute because it requires the effort of the club members.

Over the years the club has taken different approaches to fund raising. The approaches varied from centralised fund raising so that the fund raising rested on the shoulders of a few to a decentralising fund-raising system so that it was open to all comers. While there was a view that a decentralised system of fund-raising lead to an overlap and an unfair or unnecessary drain on resources it was still better than no fund raising. Also decentralised fund raising never showed itself to actually be an unfair drain because those who could give gave and those who could not did not

With regard to the centralised model of fund raising this caused not only a few individuals to come up with and execute the fund-raising events, it also required those individuals to manage other people. It should not be forgotten that the people who put themselves forward to assist with fund raising are volunteers and those volunteers put themselves forward for the good of the club.

Over the years it has emerged that different people have a natural affinity for different events and when those people are left to use their own talents, they achieve great results. It is sufficient to look at the success of various fund raising events run in the past to realise this. The important message to be taken form this piece is that it is the people of the club who make fund raising a success for the people of the club.

An Ghaeilge

Tá mé sásta a roinnt libh go mbeidh Ruairí de Stanlaigh ar an coiste feidhmiúchain mar Oifigeach Cultúir agus Teanga i 2022. Tá súil agam go mbeidh muid in ann ár gcaidreamh leis an Fondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Dhonncha a fhorbairt.

Fingal County Council

Our cooperation with Fingal County Council is long-established and has brought many benefits to our club. Fingal County Council offers us crucial support in terms of playing facilities and grant support. We will continue to work with Fingal County Council to develop first-class sporting and recreational facilities for the community of Lusk.

We will similarly continue to work with our partner organizations in the Lusk 2020 Sporting Committee in the development of shared sporting and recreational facilities that benefit multiple sporting organizations as well as the wider community.

The building of a compound to hold juvenile goals and equipment for TAP 2 was recently completed. Our sincere thanks go to Fingal County Council, the Local Community Development Committee and the Department of Rural and Community Development for the funding received under the Community Enhancement Programme 2020 that enabled us to build this facility with the assistance of community-based companies.

Our thanks also go to Fingal County Council for vital funding received under the 2021 Sports Equipment Funding scheme that allowed us to acquire additional equipment for our club gym.

The painting of our clubhouse has been facilitated by a grant received from Fingal County Council under the Town and Village Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2021. Many thanks to James Cunningham who completed this task and, once again, went well beyond the agreed spec. It is now up to the members to maintain the premises to these standards.

Our gratitude goes to Fingal County Council, the Local Community Development Committee and the Department of Rural and Community Development once again for the support received to enable our club come through another phase of the Covid pandemic with badly needed support through the Community Enhancement Programme 2021.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met 16 times in 2021. Only one of these meetings was in person as we braved the elements on a July evening on the tables beside the astro. All other meetings were virtual meetings. I would like to sincerely thank each and every member of the Executive Committee for their dedication and hard work in 2021. Many are fulfilling multiple roles within the club – without even mentioning the multiple roles they fulfil outside of the club. A number of members of the Executive are stepping down this year while a number of others are taking on different roles.

I might add that our members not only need to recognise the work of the Executive, but we also need to recognise that there are limits as to what a volunteer or a group of volunteers can be expected to take on.

Our achievements and progress as a club have been made possible thanks to the collective work of generations of members and volunteers. I firmly believe in the power of the collective and draw inspiration from the people who built this club and other GAA clubs throughout the country. It is within this context that I would like to pause to recognise the fundamental part played by Pat Codd in the role of Chairperson for the past five years and as Vice Chairperson and Secretary prior to that. He has been central to every minor and major step taken by the club for over 10 years. I know I speak on our behalf of our members when I express my utmost gratitude to Pat and his family for the selfless and unstinting work and leadership that he has given to our club.

The extent of his contribution to Round Towers Lusk GAA Club is beyond compare in this era and I can safely say that Pat has played a unique role in the modern history of the club.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with a simple, sincere and profound thank you to all the members, volunteers and friends of the club who contributed to its continuing growth and successes in 2021.

Nollaig shona faoi shéán is faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.

Naoise Mac Fheorais
Rúnaí