

## Cumann Lúthchleas Gael - Coiste Átha Cliath

### Comhdháil Bhliantúil

**Páirc Parnell, Dé Déardaoin 12ú Nollaig 2019 ar 7.00 i.n.**

#### An Clár

1. Minutes of 2018 Convention.
2. Adoption of Standing Orders.
3. Auditor's Report and Financial Statement.
4. Secretary's Report.
5. Chairman's Address.
6. Appointment of Tellers & Election of Officers.
7. Fixture Planning & Competitions Control Committee Report.
8. Coiste Éisteachta Report.
9. Coaching & Games Development Report.
10. Appointment of Auditor.
11. Appointment of Delegates to Leinster Convention and Congress.

#### Standing Orders for Convention

1. The Proposer of a motion, or amendment thereto, may speak for no longer than five minutes.
2. A Delegate speaking to a resolution or an amendment must not exceed three minutes.
3. The proposer of a resolution or amendment may speak a second time for five minutes before a vote is taken, but no other delegate may speak a second time to any resolution or amendment.
4. The Chairman may at any time he considers a matter has been sufficiently discussed call on the proposer for a reply, after which a vote must be taken.
5. A Delegate may, with the consent of the Chairman, move 'that the question be now put' after which, when the proposer has spoken, a vote must be taken.
6. A speaker to the Annual Report or to any other general discussion shall not exceed three minutes.
7. Convention shall not be entitled to consider any matter not on the Agenda, except with the consent of a majority comprising two-thirds of the votes of those present, voting and entitled to vote.

## AINMNIUCHÁIN

### *Cathaoirleach*

Mícheál Ó Saomhar (Oileán na hÉireann)

### *Leas-Chathaoirleach*

Seosamh Ó Liatháin (Naomh Fionnbarra)

Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin (Cuala)

### *Leas-Rúnaí*

Séamus de Róiste (Fionnbhrú Colmcille)

### *Cisteoir*

Fionnbharr Ó Mathúna (Naomh Pádraig Baile Phámar) **Outgoing**

### *Oifigeach Forbartha*

### *Oifigeach Oiliúna*

Gearóid Ó Liatháin (Uí Duibhir) **Outgoing**

### *Oifigeach na Gaeilge*

Cóilín Ó Cearbhaill (Na Gaeil Óga) **Outgoing**

### *Oifigeach Caidreamh Poiblí*

Fiona Ní Thuairisc (Naomh Bríd) **Outgoing**

### *Oifigeach Leanaí*

### *Árd Chomhairle*

Risteárd de Buitléir (Na Tráchtálaí)

Séamus de Róiste (Fionnbhrú Colmcille)

### *Comhairle Laighean*

Seán Mac Niocláis (Gaeil N. Shéamais An Caisleán) **Outgoing**

Tomás Ó Sé (Naomh Marcais) **Outgoing**

## Tuarascáil An Rúnaí

Tá sé in am dom arís féachaint siar ar na príomh imeachtaí don bhliain atá imithe. Chomh maith le sin, seo an t-aon seans atá agam, mar Rúnaí Chontae, mo thuairim phearsanta a chur ós bhur gcomhair. Teastaíonn uaim mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le hOifigigh an Chontae agus na gClub as ucht a gcuid oibre i rith na bliana.

### **Minor Hurling**

Dublin's Leinster Minor Hurling Championship campaign ended in a disappointing manner with their provincial and national ambitions cut short after a relatively promising start to the year.

With Mike Connolly at the managerial helm once again, there was a continuity to Dublin's preparations and after winning the Leinster final in 2018, hopes were high that the Dubs could enjoy a similarly encouraging championship.

Their journey began in Nowlan Park on April 27 as they faced Kilkenny in Tier 1 and despite an encouraging display, they were eventually overtaken in the final moments, falling by 0-15 to 2-8.

With the wind at their backs, Dublin entered the break with a narrow 2-5 to 0-7 interval lead with their goals coming through Luke Swan and Ben McSweeney. However, despite some brave defensive displays by Eoin O'Connor, Conor Burke, Davy Crowe, Tommy O'Brien and Adam Waddick, the hosts finished on the front foot and claimed the victory through a late Andy Hickey point.

The following Saturday saw Dublin host Offaly in Parnell Park and a strong second-half showing saw them pull away to win by 1-23 to 1-10. The concession of an early goal failed to dampen Dublin's belief as the free-taking of Charlie Keher and some fine scores from centre-forward Dara Purcell saw Dublin lead 0-12 to 1-7 at the interval.

With Ben McSweeney, Luke Swan and Dara Purcell enjoying influential matches, the Dubs opened up a sizeable buffer with Luke Swan adding the gloss in the 60th minute with a fine, individual goal.

There was little respite as they travelled to Enniscorthy a week later to face Wexford and despite building up a significant lead, they had to content themselves with a share of the spoils, drawing 3-14 to 2-17.

Heading into the last ten minutes, Dublin looked well set for victory as they held a 3-14 to 0-14 lead but it was all Wexford to the end as they tallied an unanswered 2-3 in the last seven minutes plus added time to snatch a draw. Dublin were 2-10 to 0-8 clear at half-time after book-ending the opening period with goals, the first arriving through Brendan Scanlon while Ben McSweeney chipped in with a second approaching the break.

The hosts replied with a strong start to the second-half but a Charlie Keher goal appeared to have stalled their momentum until the dramatic conclusion to events. That draw ensured second-spot in the table and a home semi-final berth with Wexford once again the opponents as they faced-off in Parnell Park in mid-June as the visitors edged their hosts by 2-16 to 0-19.

It was Wexford that crucially made the brighter start on this occasion as goals from AJ Redmond and Dylan O'Neill eased them into a deserved 2-10 to 0-7 interval lead. The visitors were more defensive upon the restart as Dublin began belatedly to play on the front foot and the free-taking of Ben McSweeney saw the hosts reduce their arrears to three points by the 55th minute.

However, in a frantic closing period, a few spurned opportunities proved fatal with Wexford substitute Conor Foley scoring two points to secure his team's success, ending Dublin's year in the process.

### **Minor Football**

It proved an encouraging if ultimately trophy-less year for our minor footballers, who enjoyed a hectic summer before falling to Mayo in an incredible All-Ireland quarter-final.

In total, the team played seven matches, winning five, as they started off on 23<sup>rd</sup> April when hosting Meath in the Leinster Minor Football Championship round-robin stages in Parnell Park.

In terms of entertainment and endeavour, it was a wonderful start to the campaign as a late goal from Luke Swan eventually secured a deserved 4-10 to 2-10 win for Dublin. The sides were deadlocked at 2-6 a piece at the break, with Dublin's goals arriving in the first quarter through Seán Kinsella and Robbie Bolger.

A Ryan O'Dwyer goal at the end of the third quarter kept Dublin's noses in front but a strong impact from the bench and Luke Swan's 59th minute strike ensured a positive opening for Jim Lehane's charges.

A trip to Enniscorthy was next a fortnight later and a free-scoring Dublin did enough to overcome Wexford, 3-12 to 1-10. Dublin had to play for 50 minutes with 14 players after the sending off of Ryan O'Dwyer in the 12th minute but the hosts were never allowed make the numerical advantage count against a hard-working Dublin side.

A superb Robbie Bolger goal in the 28th minute gave Dublin a 1-7 to 0-3 interval lead and two goals early in the second half (32nd and 34th minutes) from Fionn Murray helped steer the Dubs to victory.

O'Connor Park, Tullamore was the venue the following week as Dublin completed their group stage with an 100 per cent record when overcoming a battling Offaly side by 2-13 to 0-13.

Once again, Robbie Bolger and Fionn Murray highlighted their goal-getting qualities to push Dublin 2-6 to 0-7 ahead by half-time and while the hosts improved after the break, two superb Hugh O'Sullivan saves, one from a penalty, ensured a six-point win.

Dublin were once again on their travels for their provincial quarter-final but the trip to Aughrim failed to faze them as they accounted for Wicklow by 0-20 to 1-9. The visitors held a 0-12 to 0-3 lead at the interval with Alex Rogers shining in attack and were leading by 12 points at one stage in the second half. While a goal from Joe Prendergast gave Wicklow hope, reducing the deficit to five points late in the game, Dublin pushed on for an eight-point win.

In their subsequent semi-final, Dublin were given a real scare in Mullingar, the visitors having to come from five points in arrears early in the second half before eventually defeating Westmeath by 0-18 to 1-11.

Despite Alex Rogers once again showing well up front, Dublin trailed by 0-9 to 0-7 at the break and the hosts looked set for a shock victory when Ben McGauran's well-taken goal put them 1-10 to 0-8 ahead in the 36th minute. However, Dublin completely took over at that juncture, outscoring their hosts by 0-10 to 0-1 in the time remaining, with half-time substitute Ross Keogh especially influential.

The Leinster final pitted them against Kildare with extra-time goals from Eoin Bagnall and Aaron Browne seeing the Lilies prevail by 2-21 to 1-19 in Páirc Tailteann, Navan. Dublin's cause was not helped by first-half injuries to central defensive pillars Ben Millist and Senan Forker but they dug deep to secure parity by full-time (1-11 to 0-14), with Luke Swan scoring Dublin's goal early in the second-half.

Dublin's season came to an end on the last weekend in July as Mayo scored goals at pivotal times to edge home by 5-12 to 2-19 in their thrilling All-Ireland quarter-final in Pearse Park, Longford.

Mayo were deserving of their 2-8 to 0-8 interval lead but with Fionn Murray kicking ten points over the hour, Dublin's comeback fell narrowly short, despite goals from Alex Rogers and Luke Curran, in what was a brave conclusion to their campaign.

### **Under-20 Hurling**

Unfortunately, it was a brief summer for our under-20 hurlers, with all their preparations and hard work over the spring coming to little as they exited the Leinster Championship at the first hurdle.

Hopes were high in the build-up to the campaign as manager Paul O'Brien had assembled a talented panel. But with no margin for error due to the knock-out nature of the championship, Dublin failed to hit the ground running, eventually falling to Offaly in an epic duel on 26<sup>th</sup> June at provincial quarter-final stage at Parnell Park.

The final score of 1-29 to 2-25 reflected a physical, gripping contest that enthralled until the very last seconds when Offaly's John Murphy sent over the winning point after extra-time when converting a free from half-way to finally settle the outcome.

There was very little between them from the outset but the visitors looked to carry a more physical edge and their half-back line was prominent in the aerial duels. Cathal Kiely, who was

to prove Offaly's hero on the night by scoring 0-20 (0-16f, 0-2 '65'), punished every indiscretion by Dublin but the hosts managed to settle thanks largely to a smartly-taken goal from Billy Ryan in the 11th minute.

Dublin added to their lead through a brace of points from play by Cian Derwin, but the longer the half continued, the more Offaly's greater physicality and aerial ability began to take hold, with the metronomic Kiely keeping his side in the hunt.

Dublin's forwards were struggling as a unit, with their scores coming through half-backs Kevin Burke and Iain Ó hEithir, while midfielder Michael Conroy also found the target after a surge down the middle. However, their advantage was whittled down to just two points by the break (1-11 to 0-12) with Kiely's excellence manifesting itself in nine first-half points.

The second half continued in a similar vein of equality with Kiely scoring five points in the third quarter while Kevin Desmond replied with a brace of scores to complement further efforts by Luke McDwyer, Billy Ryan, and Diarmuid Ó Floinn.

David Keogh's dismissal for Dublin in the 47th minute appeared to be a massive blow for the hosts. However, a Derwin free deep into injury-time ensured a 1-21 to 0-24 stalemate at full-time of normal time. A goal from Offaly sub Conor Quinn in the ninth minute of extra-time was followed by a free from Kiely which put the Faithful County 1-28 to 1-21 ahead approaching half-time in extra-time.

But two Cian Derwin points either side of half-time cut the deficit before substitute Matthew Dunne scored a superb goal when rifling to the net, following a quick free from Cian Derwin. Cian Derwin pointed to keep Dublin's momentum going following good work by Kevin Burke and when Cian Derwin slotted another free from 55 metres, the sides were level, 2-25 to 1-28.

It was Offaly, however, who had the last word with John Murphy becoming their late, late hero and his dramatic free prompted wild scenes of jubilation from their large contingent with their emotions contrasting hugely with the dejected Dublin panel.

### **Under-20 Football**

Our under-20 footballers gave us plenty of enjoyment as they regained the Leinster title before falling short to a talented Cork side in the All-Ireland final.

Their campaign began in early July and they hit the ground running in comfortably seeing off Longford by 4-21 to 0-7 in their provincial quarter-final at Pearse Park. Dublin set the tone from the start as full-forward Ciarán Archer slipped over three unanswered points inside the opening five minutes. Tom Gray's side continued to dominate the early exchanges with Ross McGarry and Ciarán Archer combining to extend the lead to six points.

Ciarán Archer's 12th minute goal, the first of many for the young St Maur's man, pushed Dublin 1-15 to 0-2 ahead by half-time and the procession continued after the break thanks to further goals from Harry Ladd, David Lacey and Ciarán Archer, who finished with a personal tally of 2-8.

Ciarán Archer was once again to the fore a week later as Dublin booked their place in the Leinster decider when easing past Wexford by 1-17 to 0-6 in Parnell Park. Dublin led 0-9 to 0-2 at half-time but that margin would have been far wider only for ten wides during a dominant opening period.

Ciarán Archer scored a goal within fifteen seconds of the restart as he capitalised on a powerful run through the middle from Donal Ryan before firing low to the net. Dublin moved on after that with Ross McGarry, Brian O'Leary, James Doran and Niall O'Leary all landing a brace of scores each to augment Ciarán Archer's haul of 1-8.

Dublin had enjoyed a similarly comfortable progression to the provincial decider 12 months previously before falling to Kildare and that experience, with many of the same players involved, served them well as they faced Laois in O'Connor Park, Tullamore on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Dublin delivered another attack-minded display when beating the midlanders by 4-18 to 0-17. In truth, the margin of defeat was slightly harsh on a Laois side that recovered well from falling four points behind inside six minutes to lead by 0-6 to 0-5 by the 16th minute.

However, a Ciarán Archer goal in the 24th minute following a defensive mishap allowed Dublin to enter the break with a healthy 1-11 to 0-8 interval lead and his second goal, within 12 minutes of the restart, helped nullify a promising period for their opponents.

Impressive wing-back Kieran Kennedy, was rewarded for a compelling display with Dublin's third goal seven minutes later and Ciarán Archer completed his hat-trick in the 56th minute, coolly despatching a penalty, following a foul on Peadar Ó Cofaigh Byrne.

Eight days later the U20s faced Connacht champions, Galway, but they showed few ill-effects of a hectic schedule when recording an impressive 2-14 to 1-10 in Pearse Park, Longford.

Ciarán Archer grabbed the headlines once again with his two goals inside the opening six minutes to hand his side a dream start. However, a Brian Harlowe goal stalled Dublin's momentum and with their lead trimmed to five points (2-6 to 1-4) at the break, all hope was not lost for Galway.

They resumed in a determined fashion and reeled off five points on the bounce to draw level by the 42nd minute before Dublin regained the initiative with David Lacey showing well when introduced from the bench.

His superb point and further scores from Brian O'Leary, Ciarán Archer, Ross McGarry, Niall O'Leary and James Doran saw Dublin finish on the front foot with Seán Lambe excelling during that vital final quarter.

O'Moore Park was the venue for the All-Ireland final and despite a whirlwind start, Dublin were chasing shadows by the final whistle as they succumbed by 3-16 to 1-14. The Dubs raced into a nine-point lead (1-6 to 0-0) after just 12 minutes, with Ciarán Archer netting once again. However, they were rocked by three goals in five minutes and by the break the Rebels were 3-6 to 1-10 ahead.

Dublin restarted the second half well and heading into the last 20 minutes there was just two points between the sides (3-8 to 1-12). However, disaster struck again for the Dubs when Ó Cofaigh Byrne was black-carded in the 42nd minute.

The momentum was already with the Rebels at that stage and, roared on by their large following, they stormed to a convincing victory, leaving a disappointing footnote to an otherwise encouraging summer.

When the award season began Ciarán Archer was named EirGrid U20 Footballer of the Year. Ciarán, who also named Leinster U20 Footballer of the Year, tallied 9-35 (0-26f, 2-0pen) over the course of the U20FC (five games) out of Dublin's combined tally of 12-84. He was Dublin's top marksman in all of their games - 2-8 (1-0pen, 0-3f) v Longford, 1-8 (0-7f) v Wexford, 3-8 (0-7f, 1-0pen) v Laois, 2-6 (0-4f) v Galway and 1-5 (0-3f) against Cork.

Four Dublin U20 footballers were selected on the 'EirGrid 20 U20' panel to honour the top 20 players of this year's U20FC - Kieran Kennedy, Peadar Ó Cofaigh Byrne, James Doran and Ciarán Archer.

### **Senior Hurling**

There were plenty of highs and, unfortunately, a number of lows for our senior hurlers in 2019 with their season culminating in a massively disappointing note with their All-Ireland qualifier defeat at the hands of Laois in July.

Up until that juncture, their year had been moving in the right direction, with incremental progress being made. However, the manner of their performance - when falling flat in O'Moore Park against an impressive Laois - brought the summer to a shuddering halt.

With a new manager at the helm in Mattie Kenny, there was a great deal of interest in how the former Cuala supremo would set up his team for a Walsh Cup that commenced last December with a 2-21 to 1-16 win over Carlow in Netwatch Cullen Park.

Subsequent victories arrived in Group 1 either side of Christmas, with Offaly beaten by 0-27 to 0-18 in Parnell Park before the Dubs ensured top spot in the group when edging out Laois by 1-18 to 1-16 on the first Sunday in January.

Those wins confirmed a semi-final clash against Galway and despite a late comeback that included a Seán Moran penalty, the Connacht side held on to win by 0-21 to 1-17, thanks to an injury-time point from a Joe Canning sideline.

Dublin's Division 1B campaign began at a rain-sodden Parnell Park on 26<sup>th</sup> January where they did just enough to prevail by 3-15 to 0-18 against Carlow in what was a mediocre display, the underfoot conditions a factor.

The Dubs trailed by 0-11 to 1-6 at the break, the goal coming from Darragh O'Connell. Goals after the break from Eamonn Dillon and inspired substitute Donal Burke ensured a winning league start.

Donal Burke was once again to the fore a week later with his six points and two goals from Oisín O'Rorke enough to get the better of Offaly by 2-19 to 0-12 in O'Connor Park, Tullamore. Their momentum stalled in Pearse Stadium, Salthill a fortnight later as Galway cruised home

(0-20 to 1-11) with Danny Sutcliffe scoring a well-taken goal. The injury suffered by Cian O'Callaghan was a bad portent.

The topsy-turvy nature of our displays was in evidence seven days later as Dublin's attack delivered an encouraging display when accounting for Waterford by 1-26 to 4-15 in Parnell Park.

The game concluded in great drama with Waterford awarded a penalty, that resulted in the dismissal of Darragh O'Connell, in the fifth minute of added time but Alan Nolan was the late hero when denying Stephen Bennett. Danny Sutcliffe and Eamonn Dillon were the pick of the attack, scoring four points from play a piece, with Liam Rushe's goal a deserved reward for an influential display.

Liam Rushe and Danny Sutcliffe were highly prominent in their concluding regulation Division 1B contest, with Dublin's 0-13 to 0-11 comeback win over Laois in Parnell Park helping to secure top spot in the table and an away quarter-final against Tipperary in Thurles.

What followed was one of the high points of the year as they showed great character to edge the future All-Ireland champions by 1-21 to 0-23, with Fergal Whitely scoring an early goal to help settle the team.

The Dubs looked to be in trouble early in the second-half when the Munster side drew level with a stiff breeze at their backs, but they dug in and pulled through by the narrowest of margins in a game in which they were never behind on the scoreboard.

Their subsequent semi-final against Limerick in Nowlan Park, Kilkenny was less encouraging with the Shannonsiders prevailing 1-19 to 1-16. However, Danny Sutcliffe, Seán Moran and Eoghan O'Donnell all put in impressive displays.

A six-week break followed before Dublin returned to Nowlan Park to open up their Leinster Championship campaign against hosts Kilkenny. There were few signs of rustiness initially as a Seán Moran penalty helped Dublin into a 1-13 to 0-12 interval lead. However, two TJ Reid goals after the break were enough to see the Cats prevail by 2-23 to 1-21.

Wexford came to Parnell Park eight days later with Dublin once again starting on the front foot before Wexford reeled us back to ensure parity, 0-11 a piece by half-time. The third quarter

was dominated by Dublin as they opened up a four-point lead but the concession of two goals in quick succession appeared fatal to their ambitions before Seán Moran fired home an injury-time penalty to leave the sides deadlocked at 1-22 to 2-19 at full-time.

It was far less dramatic in Netwatch Cullen Park on 2<sup>nd</sup> June as two Eamonn Dillon goals propelled Dublin to a routine 2-22 to 1-13 victory against Carlow. Those strikes allowed the Dubs to enter the break 2-10 to 0-8 ahead and, despite Shane Barrett being dismissed late in the half, Paul Ryan added nine points over the duration to keep their qualification hopes alive.

With so many permutations surrounding the final group games, the sense of anticipation could not have been greater as Dublin hosted Galway 13 days later. What followed was a contest that will live long in the memory.

Dublin trailed by 0-12 to 1-8 at the break despite Eamonn Dillon once again finding the net but another Seán Moran penalty, his third of the campaign, adding momentum to the challenge early in the second-half.

With Conal Keaney rolling back the years with another masterful display, Chris Crummey added a third Dublin goal in the 67th minute to complete a memorable 3-19 to 0-24 for Mattie Kenny's men.

Sadly, we failed to build on that heroic display. We were punished for a lacklustre performance in the All-Ireland qualifier against a very well organised and improving Laois who were full value for their victory in O'Moore Park, Portlaoise.

The O'Moore County men, with former Dublin hurler Niall Corcoran among their management team, won most of individual battles and their long-range striking was superior to Dublin's as the dream of an All-Ireland quarter-final appearance disappeared.

Oisín O'Rorke scored a dozen points on the day but their failure to convert a number of chances proved costly as their summer ended with a 1-22 to 0-23 defeat.

At summer's end Chris Crummey and Eoghan O'Donnell were shortlisted for the All-Star nominations with, Paddy Smyth arguably unlucky not to have joined his team-mates among the nominations.

## **Senior Football**

What a year - and indeed what a decade - it has been for the capital's senior footballers.

The Dublin senior footballers of this era achieved immortality by becoming the first men's senior team to win five All-Irelands in-a-row. That incredible milestone was achieved in terrific fashion also by defeating Kerry after two incredible All-Ireland SFC deciders.

Dublin's footballers have provided a glorious release for their supporters, not just by their achievements but also with the style of football they play and how they conduct themselves.

In an era where Gaelic football has been the target of adverse criticism, at times of the over-the-top variety, this year's showpieces were an expression of everything that's good about our game.

Dublin's replayed final victory, our 29<sup>th</sup> All-Ireland senior success, means that Jim Gavin's incredible men are now unbeaten in 37 championship games since losing the 2014 All-Ireland semi-final to Donegal - winning 34 and drawing three of those contests.

This year's final and replay were certainly magnificent show-pieces for our national game. In the previous decade we were often on the losing side of some timeless classics but this decade, thankfully, we've taken up residency in the winner's enclosure.

Dublin's second half display in the final replay against the Kingdom was immense with Eoin Murchan's incredible goal from the throw-in in the second half giving us a dream start.

Dublin had heroes all over the park paving the way for Stephen Cluxton to lift the Sam Maguire for the sixth time as captain. What a remarkable inspiration the Parnell's man has been and he finished the season off by being deservedly selected as 'Footballer of the Year' by his peers.

On both a collective and individual level it was the season of seasons for this team. Our captain etched his name even deeper into the record books by making his 100<sup>th</sup> senior football championship appearance this summer in the Leinster semi-final victory over Kildare, having made his championship debut on May 27, 2001 against Longford in the provincial championship.

Forwards Ciarán Kilkenny, Con O'Callaghan and Paul Mannion all kicked four points from play on the night of the replayed final when all but one of Dublin's scores came from play, that being a late successfully converted Dean Rock '45'.

From the drawn game there was significant improvements on all lines of the pitch with James McCarthy, Jonny Cooper and Michael Fitzsimons covering massive yardage in the second half, both on and off the ball, as they inspired their team-mates to rise to the challenge.

The sides were level 0-10 to 0-10 at the break, having led by four points early on. Dublin had started at great speed but were reeled in by Kerry as the half progressed. Dublin lost two key defenders to injury - Eoin Murchan and Jack McCaffrey - but they didn't blink and showed the temperament of champions to drive on to glory.

The drawn game (1-16 each) was another of the modern great Dublin versus Kerry championship games in terms of tension, drama and excitement.

The game had everything - goals, sending off, a clearance off the line, a penalty save, a shot off the crossbar, Hawkeye cancelling out a point which had been signalled as a score by an umpire, a late equaliser by the Dubs, an even later chance for Dublin to win it (despite being down a man for over half the match) and then almost nine minutes of added time before it was over.

The tension was unreal down the closing stretch with Kerry reeling in Dublin, thanks to sub Killian Spillane's 56<sup>th</sup> minute goal, and then edging in front with the finishing line in sight.

But Dublin did not buckle, despite losing Jonny Cooper towards the close of the first half to a second yellow card, and Jim Gavin's side had the better of the late scoring opportunities with Dean Rock hitting the equaliser before missing a very difficult free, from practically on the Cusack Stand sideline, which would have seen his side to victory.

"That performance wasn't good enough to get the result," said Jim Gavin in the immediate aftermath. "We have the opportunity now to try to rectify that the next day."

In many ways, Dublin's display late on in the drawn encounter typified their will to win, they sensed their title was slipping and to a man upped their game. Remarkable.

And they certainly did that.

In Leinster, Dublin made history when becoming the first county to win nine provincial senior championship titles in-a-row when defeating Meath in their provincial decider.

This year three legends of Dublin football retired - Paul Flynn, Bernard Brogan and Eoghan O'Gara - three men who contributed massively in the best of times, and the worst of times.

Jim Gavin and his management team decided to step down at the end of November after an incredible tenure in charge. Words, to a large degree, are inadequate when trying to describe what they achieved and what joy they brought to Gaelic games fans in the capital. We know the statistics in terms of the achievements since taking over the reins in advance of the 2013 season. Will we ever see the likes of it again?

Six All-Ireland titles, seven Leinster Championships, five League Division 1 titles. His teams play in a brilliant fashion that is true to the best aspects of Gaelic football. Jim occasionally referenced the heroes past who wore the blue jersey. His respect for those who have gone before was very genuine and he felt it was the job of the incumbent to 'pass the jersey on' having done his utmost to improve it.

Jim and his management team most certainly achieved that and so much more. When Jim would reference previous Dublin greats he often used the aphorism of "standing on the shoulders of giants". Without doubt after a playing, coaching and managing career dating back to when he represented the county at minor grade, he is an absolute titan of Dublin GAA.

On behalf of Dublin GAA, I wish to express my great gratitude to the management and support team and I wish them all every success in the future.

## **Results**

The following is a record of the performances of our various teams in official competitions during the past 12 months:

### **Allianz Hurling League**

26/01/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	3 - 15	Carlow	0 - 18
03/02/2019	Tullamore	Dublin	2 - 19	Offaly	0 - 12
17/02/2019	Salthill	Dublin	1 - 11	Galway	0 - 20

### **Allianz Hurling League**

24/02/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	1 - 26	Waterford	4 - 15
03/03/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	0 - 13	Laois	0 - 11
16/03/2019	Thurles	Dublin	1 - 21	Tipperary	0 - 23
24/03/2019	Kilkenny	Dublin	1 - 16	Limerick	1 - 19

### **Leinster Senior Hurling Championship**

11/05/2019	Kilkenny	Dublin	1 - 21	Kilkenny	2 - 23
19/05/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	1 - 22	Wexford	2 - 19
02/06/2019	Carlow	Dublin	2 - 22	Carlow	1 - 13
15/06/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	3 - 19	Galway	0 - 24

### **All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship**

07/07/2019	Portlaoise	Dublin	0 - 23	Laois	1 - 22
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### **Walsh Cup Senior Hurling**

11/12/2018	Carlow	Dublin	2 - 21	Carlow	1 - 16
16/12/2018	Parnell Park	Dublin	0 - 27	Offaly	0 - 18
06/01/2019	Portlaoise	Dublin	1 - 18	Laois	1 - 16
13/01/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	1 - 17	Galway	0 - 21

### **Leinster U20 Hurling Championship**

26/06/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	2 - 25	Offaly	1 - 29 AET
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### **Leinster Minor Hurling Championship**

27/04/2019	Kilkenny	Dublin	2 - 8	Kilkenny	0 - 15
04/05/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	1 - 23	Offaly	1 - 10
11/05/2019	Enniscorthy	Dublin	3 - 14	Wexford	2 - 17
15/06/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	0 - 19	Wexford	2 - 16

### **Allianz Football League**

27/01/2019	Clones	Dublin	1 - 13	Monaghan	2 - 13
02/02/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	1 - 15	Galway	0 - 7
09/02/2019	Tralee	Dublin	2 - 14	Kerry	1 - 18

### **Allianz Football League**

23/02/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	1 - 12	Mayo	0 - 7
03/03/2019	Roscommon	Dublin	2 - 14	Roscommon	1 - 12
16/03/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	1 - 11	Tyrone	1 - 14
24/03/2019	Cavan	Dublin	1 - 16	Cavan	1 - 10

### **Leinster Senior Football Championship**

25/05/2019	Portlaoise	Dublin	5 - 21	Louth	0 - 10
09/06/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	0 - 26	Kildare	0 - 11
23/06/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	1 - 17	Meath	0 - 4

### **All-Ireland Senior Football Championship**

13/07/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	5 - 18	Cork	1 - 17
20/07/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	2 - 26	Roscommon	0 - 14
04/08/2019	Omagh	Dublin	1 - 16	Tyrone	0 - 13
10/08/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	3 - 14	Mayo	1 - 10
01/09/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	1 - 16	Kerry	1 - 16
14/09/2019	Croke Park	Dublin	1 - 18	Kerry	0 - 15 R

### **O'Byrne Cup Senior Football**

12/01/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	1 - 12	Meath	1 - 12
(Dublin won 3 - 1 on penalties)					
18/01/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	0 - 10	Westmeath	1 - 12

### **Leinster U20 Football Championship**

02/07/2019	Longford	Dublin	4 - 21	Longford	0 - 7
09/07/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	1 - 17	Wexford	0 - 6
19/07/2019	Tullamore	Dublin	4 - 18	Laois	0 - 17

### **All-Ireland U20 Football Championship**

27/07/2019	Longford	Dublin	2 - 14	Galway	1 - 10
03/08/2019	Portlaoise	Dublin	1 - 14	Cork	3 - 16

### **Leinster Minor Football Championship**

23/04/2019	Parnell Park	Dublin	4 - 10	Meath	2 - 10
08/05/2019	Enniscorthy	Dublin	3 - 12	Wexford	1 - 10
15/05/2019	Tullamore	Dublin	2 - 13	Offaly	0 - 13
01/06/2019	Aughrim	Dublin	0 - 20	Wicklow	1 - 9
22/06/2019	Mullingar	Dublin	0 - 18	Westmeath	1 - 11
06/07/2019	Navan	Dublin	1 - 19	Kildare	2 - 21 AET

### **All-Ireland Minor Football Championship**

27/07/2019	Longford	Dublin	2 - 19	Mayo	5 - 12
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### **Key Role of Volunteers**

Among the themes of our Blue Wave strategy were maximising participation in Gaelic Games in Dublin and resourcing our volunteers. One could not happen without the other. I am delighted that the Blue Wave has seen a marked increase in participation rates. I am delighted that more young people in our city have been introduced to our games and afforded an opportunity to play them.

There is still a way to go but the light of the GAA shines into corners of the city where it didn't previously. The distractions are manifold and the competition for young hearts and minds is fierce, as is the constant battle to provide facilities. More schools than ever are participating in Gaelic Games but keeping our games alive and vibrant in Dublin is a constant and daunting challenge.

Our network of Games Promotion Officers are key players in this challenge. They are sometimes the first point of GAA contact for schoolchildren in the city. But they are merely skimming the surface, lighting the fuse, opening the door.

Our clubs are where the interest is developed and intensified. Our clubs are where an identity and loyalty to the GAA is fused. Our clubs are the starting point for a (hopefully) lifelong love affair with Dublin GAA. In this regard, the involvement of parents and adult members and their selfless volunteering is essential - and is something that constantly staggers me. What is going on in our nurseries is phenomenal. What is going on at juvenile level is equally phenomenal. I think it would be an impossible task to cost the volunteer hours that go into making all levels

of Dublin GAA function so efficiently and successfully. And maybe it is right that it is impossible to cost this ..... because it is, in fact, priceless. It is absolutely priceless.

For every Brian Fenton there are ten maybe twenty or more volunteers who have helped shape him into the player he is. For every Eoghan O'Donnell, the same. For every Ciarán Archer, Luke Swan and right down through our panels, in every code and each and every year, it is all about the club coaches and the volunteers.

The GAA is built on volunteerism and would not exist without it. In every club, in every county, into every corner of Ireland. I am, forever, indebted to the army of volunteers in Dublin GAA and I want to acknowledge and salute the thousands of volunteers nationwide who make the GAA the wonderful organisation that it is today.

Of course many of our club members are our loyal fans. Those who follow our teams through thick and thin. Those who follow the small ball had a difficult year but our footballers, of course, had greater success as outlined elsewhere. It was pointed out to me recently that in the Championship alone the attendances at our football games were in excess of 426,000 people. That is a huge amount of spectators and is very healthy for the organisation in terms of interest in our games and, of course, in terms of GAA finances. With an estimate of 80 percent re-invested in the organisation for every euro taken in, these numbers are good news for clubs all over the country.

Speaking of this, I commend Croke Park and, indeed, the Government for the extensive funding they have provided for clubs all over the country over the last number of years. I travel quite a bit throughout the country and am lucky to have visited many of our clubs in many counties across the four provinces. In most rural parishes throughout Ireland, the GAA club is the beating heart of the community. It is the community centre, the soul of the parish. I often marvel at the magnificent facilities.

Many clubs have all weather training areas, floodlights, meeting rooms, viewing facilities and more. And usually all in the one location. I am sometimes a little envious to be honest. Many of our clubs are ubiquitous through necessity. A club pitch here, a school pitch there, a public park pitch yonder. It is difficult for our clubs not least logistically, but also in terms of imbuing that club spirit that comes from having all activities based in the one place – that [GAA] family home.

As I have regularly said in past reports, the difficulties in procuring facilities in the capital are enormous and, in truth, the situation is worsening every year. There is literally no land left for potential development of GAA infrastructure and what little land there may be is simply too expensive for our clubs to procure. I worry about this situation and would dearly love to see it addressed seriously at Government level.

We cannot continue to build houses and apartments and not set aside adequate amenity space for the people who live in those places. And adequate should not mean minimal. Greater value and consideration has to be given to green space. Land cannot be solely seen as space to build houses - nor just for industry either. Equal importance must be given to green space, playing areas and leisure facilities. And such areas - and attendant facilities - should not be viewed as social 'luxuries'. Green space, sports facilities and public amenities are the most essential components of social infrastructure - they are not luxuries.

I think the very least that can be done in this regard is that the Government and City Councils should ensure that any existing amenity space is kept as amenity space. We should surely at least hold on to the little we have. This could be enshrined in law or a bye-law and this would then prevent the type of development speculation that goes on when any such land comes on the market. This speculation and intention or expectation to build drives prices to exorbitant levels. The prices are affordable only to developers who seek to develop high density housing and apartments on the land.

St. Anne's Park is an iconic Dublin amenity. The last thing a growing club like Clontarf needs is to lose playing pitches. The last thing the community needs is to lose more green space to apartments which will bring more people to an area that would now have reduced amenity space. Legal intervention, as outlined above, would stop the speculation and safeguard the precious facilities we have. What we have we should hold!

I can also assure the Government that any investment in GAA facilities will produce a massive return. Fifteen to One is not just a Channel 4 quiz show - it is the estimated return for every euro invested in the GAA. That was the finding of the Whitebarn Consulting report into Na Fianna which I have referred to elsewhere in my Report. This return includes a range of beneficial outcomes in terms of health, welfare and a wide range of social benefits. It has been proven consistently and conclusively over many years that investment in the GAA is a win-win situation for all.

As the focus increasingly turns to the global climate crisis, the Government can also be assured that any investment in the GAA will also have huge value in ecological terms. We need to reduce emissions and investment in green space and sporting activity will assist the achievement of the ambitious targets that have been set.

I would welcome the establishment of a cross-Government working committee or task force, on an ongoing and permanent basis, to examine the challenges facing our sporting organisations, especially in our urban areas. This group could consider a number of key issues, such as the difficulties in acquiring land, the pressure on providing facilities, the socio-economic challenges, the need to better encourage and enable volunteering and how we can assist the 'green' agenda, etc. A partnership approach to these challenges would be hugely beneficial and would, I feel, find solutions. Perhaps the Minister for Sport would consider this suggestion. I would be delighted to discuss it further with any of our elected representatives and would encourage all of our members to raise these issues with their local representatives.

### **Super 8s**

The not-so-new format has its critics, whose number may well have increased following this year's 'dead rubber' in Omagh where Tyrone (all 15) and Dublin (13) made 28 team changes from their previous matches. What followed was, it's fair to say, not quite the Healy Park cauldron we have previously experienced!

But hear me out - both teams had already qualified for the last-four so were perfectly entitled to give game-time to squad players who have worked just as diligently as their colleagues. More to the point, both managers knew they would face must-win semi-finals either six or seven days later, so were duty-bound not to take unnecessary risks.

The chief problem here, of course, was one of scheduling: a fortnight to the semis would make more sense, but finding that extra week is not easy given the congested summer calendar.

As for the big picture ... this year's Super 8s had lots of high-quality football best highlighted by Group 1's thrilling three-way tussle between Kerry, Mayo and Donegal. This group remained in the balance until the last few minutes of a nerve-shredding Mayo/Donegal clash in Castlebar.

So, as we approach the final chapter of this three-year trial, we shouldn't give up on the Super 8s just yet. Already, one further sensible tweak has been confirmed, whereby the winners of Phase 1 will now face each other in Phase 2 so that only one team per group can go into the final weekend on two wins.

There is another proposed change with obvious ramifications for Dublin. Regarding the round of 'Croke Park' games, the Central Competitions Control Committee (CCCC) will have the power to fix those games for alternative venues deemed appropriate by the CCCC – but this amendment requires the approval of 2020 Congress in February.

From our perspective, hosting a Dublin senior football championship match in Parnell Park will lock out thousands of supporters from both counties. Is this the best way of promoting our games?

### **Let's Make Tier 2 Work**

Twelve months ago I suggested that a second-tier football championship was the “next logical step” - and now it has come to pass.

The sixty-four-million-dollar question is of course will it actually work, or will it wither on the same vine of indifference that strangled the Tommy Murphy Cup?

In my previous report, I was keen to stress that while we could try and sell the benefits of a Tier 2 championship, we cannot impose one. Since then, I accepted an invitation to join the Fixtures Calendar Review Task Force. That partially explains why I have stayed out of the recent public debate, raging back and forth ... but there is another, equally compelling, reason.

Quite simply, the voices that should be heard most loudly are the players, management and county board officers from the counties that this will affect in the immediate future. Here lies a nagging concern: the fact that the counties in Divisions 3 and 4 have expressed very mixed views on the merits of a second-tier competition is not the most positive augury for the success of the venture.

For that very reason, Croke Park must do all in its power to bring the doubters on board. We've heard all the talk about what needs to be done to ensure Tier 2 works – innovative marketing,

a high-profile date in the calendar for the final, a separate All Stars scheme and a team holiday for the winners, etc.

All very valid points. Suffice to say, this cannot be organised as an after-thought, it must get all the promotional bells-and-whistles that go hand in hand with a competition worth winning. But therein lies the key: for the players themselves, it must feel like a real championship prize.

And beyond that? Perhaps this will be but the first step on the road to a more revolutionary Senior Football Championship - one that moves away from the provincial system towards a 'conference' style format - a restructuring that could combine the best elements of a league competition that culminates in a championship format.

### **Advanced Mark May Not 'Rule' Okay**

Croke Park recently announced the return of International Rules to our shores in November of next year. A welcome sporting diversion, some of you might agree, as winter sets in. But here's the thing: will we be watching a lot more 'International Rules' in the months preceding? During the football championship itself?

Three new rules were passed by Special Congress last October, all three receiving majorities ranging from healthy to overwhelming – namely a ten-minute sin bin for players for 'black card' offences (73.8 %), all kickouts to be taken from the 20-metre line (83.1 %) and the advanced mark (68.9 %).

Of the three changes, the one I am most unsure of is the 'advanced mark' – “the awarding of a mark to players who cleanly catch a ball kicked from on or outside the opposition's 45m line, that travels at least 20m without touching the ground.”

Research from this year's league stated that the 'advanced mark' resulted in a 24% increase in the number of kick passes and also brought a reduction from 3.5 to 2.9 in the handpassing to kicking ratio by comparison with the 2018 championship.

However, I don't think comparing league and championship is a like-for-like scenario, especially as not all counties embraced them fully as the rules were not to be implemented for last summer's championship.

My concern is also predicated on the imposition of yet another layer of decision-making for our overworked referees – although you can already imagine what he or she might be thinking at times: “God, was he inside or outside? Did that go 20 metres or just 19?”

At issue is what it will mean for the direction of Gaelic football. Is this another step closer to International Rules on home turf? Moreover, given the healthy 2019 signals that more teams were re-embracing a genuine attacking philosophy, suggesting the blanket defence era is on the wane, is there really any requirement for such a fundamental rule shift?

Have these new rules been the outcome of a process that was mooted a few years back, then set in train and now are trying to rectify and issue that is not as much of a concern any more?

I’ll quote two men with more playing experience than most, both defenders with an eye for an attacking move, both the type of players people travelled/travel to watch.

First, Tomás Ó Sé, who told his many Twitter followers: “I think the introduction of the forward mark is an absolute disaster. No need whatsoever for it the way the game is changing and being played.”

Secondly, Jack McCaffrey said in an interview in October: "I think the attacking mark is awful and I think that’s probably a bit selfish personally from me in that it’ll make my job significantly more difficult as a defender. But I do think it’s a little step towards a much more stop-start game. “One of my favourite players to watch at the moment is Con O’Callaghan, every time he gets the ball, he just turns and goes straight at you and it would be a travesty if he was to turn into a player who just catches the ball and kicks over the bar, which he can do and will do because it’s a no-brainer.”

With regard to the other changes while issues may arise over time-wasting during the sin-bin period, I think it could have a positive impact. Research conducted during the league stated that teams with an extra player for a ten-minute sin-bin scored, on average, almost two points more than the 14-man opposition did during that period.

As for the 20-metre line kickout rule, is it the latest move to slow down the game and curb the influence of goalkeepers who are skilled in quick, short kickouts? In an era when the role of the goalkeeper has never been more positive are we trying to lessen their influence? What's

next? Goalkeepers must wear the old blackthorn style boot or steel toe-capped boot to just drive the ball out to the middle of the field?

### **Six Is The Magic Number**

If Dublin weren't acutely aware already of the developing health of Leinster hurling, the point was hammered home with a vengeance on 7<sup>th</sup> July last in O'Moore Park.

What was a crushing anti-climax for Mattie Kenny and his squad was also, by extension, a day of history for Laois.

But even before that All-Ireland preliminary quarter-final ambush, I was of the belief that there should be a six-team Leinster senior hurling championship.

My thinking is partly predicated on fairness and, even more so, on the obvious benefits for ambitious middle-tier counties battling to emerge from the Joe McDonagh Cup – and then stay there among the big boys of the Liam MacCarthy.

For a start, how can it be even-handed that Carlow finish bottom of the Leinster round-robin group (zero points, minus 47 scoring difference) and are relegated whereas Waterford finish last in Munster for the second summer running (zero points this time, minus 52 scoring difference) and their top-tier status is protected?

Okay, you might argue, Waterford were an All-Ireland finalist as recently as 2017, still laden with marquee talent, who have hit some sudden and dramatic turbulence. Wouldn't the championship be lesser for their demotion?

But that doesn't negate the unfairness of Carlow's plight, the displays of their county champions, St. Mullin's, in Leinster adding to the argument. At times they were very competitive last summer – most tellingly when running Galway to six points in Salthill. But it's still a huge ask for a newly promoted team to hit the summer ground running against long-established members of the elite.

As their manager, Colm Bonnar, rightly argued back in June: "You can't learn from these games until you play them. When you do, you learn very fast. We played four games in five weeks so you're not getting too much time to cope."

It's only when you sit back afterwards, Bonnar pointed out, that you absorb the lessons of what is required to compete the following year ... "whereas if they drop down, where do you put your learnings?"

We'll leave the last word to a man who will surely never have to worry about the McDonagh Cup. What would really stand to Carlow, said Brian Cody, "is to be there again next year. Then Laois obviously come along and win the McDonagh. I'm very acutely aware of the potential that has been in Laois. They're in the Leinster championship next year but Carlow are not and that's a shame."

### **Stop The Clock!**

Tick-tick, tick-tock ... the problem hasn't gone away.

The abandoned history of the GAA hooter-clock makes for strange reading. There was a Wexford motion passed at Congress in 2010, but that was subsequently stopped in its tracks by prohibitive costs.

Then we had another successful Congress motion, from the Football Review Committee, in 2013 ... and a follow-up proposal in 2014 to green-light the introduction of a hooter-clock for the senior hurling, as well as football championship.

Yet, within a month, that too was parked by Central Council because of fears over time-wasting after the new system was trialled at the Sigerson and Fitzgibbon finals weekends.

Then a year later, at Congress 2015, the clock rule was repealed. Talk about going back in time!

All this might seem funny (in the funny-peculiar sense) were it not for the fact that questionable time-keeping remains a 'live' issue in the GAA – at high-profile championship games as well as club matches.

Consider the Senior Football Championship qualifier between Mayo and Armagh in Castlebar. It finished in a one-point victory for the hosts and with the losing manager in a state of high dudgeon. And with good cause, we reckon, after just four minutes of injury-time were signalled at the end of a very stop-start second half.

To quote Kieran McGeeney: “There were at least ten head injuries in that second half and nobody was taken off. It’s very hard to take. We have played in games this year with six or seven minutes added with no head injuries.”

Kevin McStay subsequently conducted a time-keeping audit of that second half for The Sunday Game – and argued that over ten additional minutes should have been played!

For the purposes of clarity, while four minutes added time were called, an extra-time of 5:25 minutes was actually played. And McStay identified six (not ten) Mayo injury hold-ups; but these accounted for 7:48 ... and that’s before you even factor more add-ons for substitutions.

In summary, McGeeney had just cause to cry foul as his team crashed out of the championship. A hooter-clock – one that’s already used successfully in ladies football – could potentially negate such complaints in a second.

### **Time For Two Referees?**

Here’s a familiar rhetorical question: "Who in their right mind would want to be a referee?"

Before this is misinterpreted as me questioning the very sanity of those whistlers who bravely carry on, let me be clear: without our fabulous army of referees throughout the country, there would be no games in the first place. Forget the flagship inter-county fare for a minute: how would those countless juvenile and adult club games, or those multitude of schools matches, happen at all without them?

So, we should cherish our referees while making sure that our training and assessment programmes deliver a consistently higher standard each year.

Consistency, of course, is that elusive state of refereeing nirvana that we never seem to achieve. But could our match officials be helped by a radical policy shift? Is it time to bite the bullet and have two referees?

For obvious reasons, this would surely be impossible at club level, where there are ongoing recruitment challenges. But why not inter-county, and more especially in hurling where the sliotar is now moving up and down the pitch at a super-sonic rate?

There were refereeing controversies in both All-Ireland hurling semi-finals this year. Now, it's debatable whether a second referee would have spotted the sideline deflection that could have earned Limerick an equalising '65' against Kilkenny; or whether his presence would have ensured that at least one of Tipperary's three disallowed goals against Wexford stood.

But watching those admittedly thrilling matches, you couldn't help but wonder are we asking far too much of one referee? Refs are being pulled all over the place at a speed that frequently defies logical processing of what they are meant to have seen. Presuming, of course, they are close enough in the first place to even see it.

### **Think Before You Type**

Here are a few media clippings and quotes from the year just gone that should make everyone pause before heedlessly transforming into the next 'keyboard warrior' ...

Irish Independent, November 9: *"Clare County Board have asked the Gardaí to investigate a complaint lodged by secretary Pat Fitzgerald arising from the abuse he has received on social media over a prolonged period."*

Brian Carroll, Offaly hurling coach under Joachim Kelly's interim management, speaking on RTÉ GAA Podcast last June: *"I was the only one named (in a tweet from a former Offaly player) and it was directed at me almost in a personal attack. It's the timing of it which was most disappointing; in the days before what was the biggest game of the hurling year from the Offaly perspective. That was coupled with online abuse and abuse coming in from the terraces."*

*"People will tell me, that are longer in this game, that it's just par for the course. I got a rude awakening and it's something I wouldn't be too quick to get involved in again after seeing that side of things."*

Seamus 'Cheddar' Plunkett, former Laois hurling boss speaking on SportsJoe's last June, arguing that pundits (mostly former players and managers) need to be more responsible in their choice of language: *"Aware is the organisation that looks after depression in Ireland. And they know more about that than anybody else. Their statistics on this is that one in ten people suffer from depression in a regular basis. If we take it that there are 50 people in the dressing-*

*room, we can take it that there are five people at any given time who may suffer some form of depression...*

*"You're calling your own people as being gutless when you know that you could have people in a situation like that that drives them even further to despair and makes them more anxious than they are. I think it's very irresponsible."*

The testimony above speaks more eloquently than anything I can add to this debate. Except to reiterate this: while freedom of speech is a cherished right, with that comes responsibility. If we want our volunteers to stay involved in the games we love, we need to think before we type.

### **RTE's Prime Time**

Dublin football teams have 'raised the passions' of supporters, commentators and viewers for a long time. There is just something about that jersey that creates lively debate! The success of the team of the 1970s brought with it some derision. The more things change ....

During the lull years post-1995 until 2011 the footballers of the capital were often held up for ridicule. Pre-championship debate would compare them to the English soccer team and the fans likewise. Basically Dublin were 'fair game'. Sometimes things don't stay the same ....

We are, unfortunately, becoming familiar with the increasingly twisted manner of public discourse and I genuinely believe that a large part of the contorted debate about funding for Dublin falls into this category.

Conflating different elements and ignoring other aspects of how Gaelic games in the county are promoted and developed through the club network has shaped the subtext for those who wish to discredit and diminish the achievements of the county senior football squad and management.

However, though the issue of funding for games development in Dublin was discussed in detail on the Sunday Game during the summer, I was somewhat shocked when, with the dust not even settled on our historic All-Ireland football success, RTÉ's flagship investigative programme Prime Time included the debate as an 'issue' worth covering.

Without moderation, what happens on social media where attention and populist outrage are craved is largely beyond our control and unworthy in many instances of rational debate. However, one would – and should - expect different and higher standards to apply to our national broadcaster and to a programme of the calibre of Prime Time. Perhaps not. By any reasonable and objective assessment, it was a strange editorial choice so quick after the historic five in-a-row victory.

Most of those approached by the programme to discuss the issue – many of whom were still celebrating the five-in-a-row success - were unhappy with Prime Time contriving to make a cause célèbre of Dublin's success.

Let's be clear when perhaps their editorial team were not so clear. Prime Time essentially used how the GAA funds a team of Games Promotion Officers to encourage, coach and support young children to play Gaelic games through their primary schools and GAA club nurseries, in the most densely populated region in the country to raise questions with regard to the achievements of our senior football team.

As they say you're entitled to your own opinion but not your own facts.

### **Social Value of Na Fianna**

In May of this year, Na Fianna published the ground-breaking report 'The social value of CLG Na Fianna'. The study and report were jointly commissioned by the club and the Dublin County Board and followed eight months of extensive research and consultation by Sandra Velthuis of Whitebarn Consulting. The study was carried out following the threat to the club from the construction of Metro North, hopefully now passed, which would have seen the Mobhi Road GAA facilities put out of commission for up to a decade.

The study was an attempt to put a figure on the social return from the investment in the club. The findings were eye-opening but at the same time no huge surprise to people who have been involved in the GAA in Dublin over time.

It was found that Na Fianna generated in the order of €50 million of social value in the club year. For every €1 equivalent invested into Na Fianna, in the region of €15 of social value was created. If we extrapolated these results to all 91 clubs under the remit of our County Board, the amount of social value generated each year is around €1 billion. A staggering €1 billion.

I have already touched on some of the issues facing our clubs earlier. The benefit of the GAA to our communities is not in doubt and touches every parish in Ireland. Now there is a value put on it. I am extremely proud of our organisation and its value. As previously mentioned any investment that gives a 15 to 1 return is surely worthy of further investment. Our clubs are providing many services in their areas. Initiatives concerning health, mental health, services for disadvantaged people and much more. I congratulate Na Fianna and every other club in Dublin for what they do for - and in - their communities.

### **Moving Well Being Well**

The Moving Well-Being Well (MWBW) project has taken place over the last three years, coordinated by Stephen Behan, in conjunction with the School of Health and Human Performance and the Insight Centre for Data Analytics in Dublin City University.

Irish Physical Activity Guidelines for Health currently state that all children and young people, from two to eighteen years of age, should have at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day (Department of Health and Children, 2009). The ‘Children’s Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study’ (Woods et al., 2018) found that only 17% of primary school children - and just 10% of post primary school children - in Ireland were meeting these requirements. While investigating the factors that motivate children to partake in physical activity, the MWBW project emphasises the importance of developing physical literacy in children, of which the fundamental movement skills (FMS) are a key component. FMS are the basic foundational movement skills upon which any complex or sport specific skill is built on. The MWBW team has measured FMS in children across the country (Behan et al., 2019), and found low levels of FMS mastery. This is alarming, considering that FMS mastery can be developed by the age of 6. If a child cannot move well, then he/she will tend to move less, and a negative spiral of disengagement in activity and sport can begin at an early age.

Based on the results collated in the first phase, the MWBW team have recently completed a pilot intervention in several Dublin schools with over 1500 first- and second-class children participating across 30 schools. Our Games Promotion Officers (GPOs) underwent rigorous training in DCU and delivered the intervention across the city. The program included a GPO led FMS-based class, a teacher training element, in-class activities for the teacher to follow, and home activities for the children to include their parents. The initial results are extremely promising, with an increase of over 25% in the children’s fundamental movement skills in just 8 short weeks. Feedback from GPOs has been excellent, with all reporting an uptake in

engagement from the delivery of the FMS-based classes. Teachers have reported increased confidence in delivering PE, thanks to the guidance of the GPOs, and principals are very happy with the scheme due to the on-site nature of the training. The next phase will seek to further refine the programme for deployment across a range of ages, as well as tailoring the programme towards club nursery programs.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Stephen and the research team and the GPOs for their engagement in the training and intervention deployment and finally, to the participating teachers and children from the various schools across Dublin.

### **Club Championships**

Cuala won their seventh Dublin Senior Hurling Championship by defeating St. Brigid's by 1-18 to 1-14. It was the Dalkey clubs fourth title in five years while St. Brigid's were appearing in their second senior county hurling final.

Cuala, All-Ireland club championship winners in 2017 and 2018, travelled to Carlow to play St Mullins in the Leinster Championship. Cuala led 0 - 9 to 0 - 8 at half-time, but St Mullins hit two crucial second-half goals for a memorable 2 - 13 to 0 - 18 victory.

The Senior Football Championship Final was a local southside derby featuring Ballyboden St. Enda's and Thomas Davis who both qualified for the final by defeating St. Jude's and Kilmacud Crokes respectively in the semi-finals. Thomas Davis, winners of the Senior 2 title in 2018, did not reproduce the form displayed in earlier rounds and Ballyboden St. Enda's, the 2016 All-Ireland champions, won comfortably 0 - 15 to 0 - 9.

Ballyboden St. Enda's have qualified for the Leinster Club Championship final after victories against Newtown Blues (1 - 11 to 0 - 5) and Garrycastle (3 - 14 to 0 - 12).

Round Tower Lusk, Ballyboughal and Craobh Chiaráin won the Senior 2, Intermediate and Junior 1 football championships respectively. Scoil Uí Chonaill, Round Tower Clondalkin and Fingallians won the Senior 'B', Intermediate and Junior 'A' hurling championships respectively.

## **Format of Dublin Club Championships**

The format of our club football championships is an issue that I have highlighted for many years in my Convention reports. I suggested that the one chance knockout system of football championship was not best suited to the needs of our players or clubs. There was also a view, among smaller clubs especially, that they were not getting a fair chance, by having to compete against second or third teams from larger clubs, in their efforts to achieve championship success or representing Dublin in provincial competitions.

Our new football championships arguably worked well for the most part. I have written in the past about the number of totally one-sided games and the new format incorporated a very competitive round-robin stage which culminated in some fine contests during the knock-out phase. The competition was tweaked this year to promote two teams in every championship with two heading in the opposite direction. The new proposals give the club player more meaningful games against opposing teams of a similar standard.

In the senior hurling 'A' championship there are a number of one-sided matches where damage limitation is the name of the game. Mismatches are inevitable with the current format as we do not have sixteen clubs capable of playing at that level. A quick glance at the results makes for grim reading with winning margins of 44, 42, 34, 29 and 25 points recorded in games.

In my opinion, 16 teams is too many in the 'A' championship and serious consideration should be given to reducing the number of participating teams to 12. Two groups of six with the top team qualifying for the semi-finals and the second and third placed teams contesting two quarter-finals would make the championship seriously competitive. The fifth and sixth placed teams in each group could play-off to decide the two clubs to be relegated.

## **Ladies Football**

The Dublin ladies footballers continue to create their own history. This year they won the Brendan Martin Cup for the third time in succession, a marvellous achievement. Earlier in the decade they suffered some crushing defeats in Croke Park on All-Ireland final day but are now the dominant force in the country. Congratulations to the management team and panel. They continue to raise the bar for the game and set new standards with their exciting, skillful brand of football.

## **Refereeing**

Coiste na Réiteoirí are responsible for the recruitment and training of referees in the county and have been very successful in enrolling new recruits to officiate at games. They are also responsible for the administration and development of refereeing in the county, including the assessment and classification of referees.

The main work of Coiste na Riteoirí over the last year included: -

- Running an In service Course for existing Referees;
- Organising a Foundation Course for new Referees;
- Ensuring that Referees attended mandatory Child Protection Courses;
- Holding an Annual Forum, where all Referees can give feedback on any points of concern etc.;
- Running an Advisor Seminar for Referee Advisors/Assessors in March;
- Very importantly, running what is undoubtedly the most comprehensive Referee Advisor/Assessment Programme at Club level in the Country, with well over 120 assessments done on Dublin Club Refs so far in 2019;
- Holding Fitness and Rules Tests for the Grade A and A2 Referees;
- A Seminar for the Umpires of all Dublin's inter-county Referees was held in Parnell Park during the year;
- Sean Stack and John Rutherford undertook Referee Tutor training in Croke Park, which will now enable them to deliver Foundation and In service Courses at Club level in Dublin, and
- Circulars are issued regularly to all Referees, in an effort to improve report-writing etc.

While Barry Tiernan continues to represent the County on the National Panel of Football Referees, the principal successes for our inter-county referees in 2019 were in Hurling. Sean Stack was appointed to referee the Christy Ring Hurling Final and the Leinster Senior Club Hurling Final. Chris Mooney took charge of the Leinster Minor Hurling Final and the Leinster Intermediate Club Hurling Final. Numerous Dublin referees also continue to handle games with distinction at Provincial Level in Leinster. I wish them all the very best for the future.

I also wish to sincerely thank Noel O'Donoghue, Tom Quigley, Eamon Morris, Frank Brady and Aidan Shiells and the members of Coiste na Réiteoirí for their exceptional commitment to refereeing matters.

## **Club Leadership Development Programme**

The Club Leadership Development Programme (CLDP) provides learning opportunities to new and existing Club Officers, to help them gain the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil their roles.

During the year two formal Workshops under the CLDP were held. The modules covered were:-

1. Club Governance, and
2. Running a Successful Club AGM.

Eighty-six club officers attended the workshops. Feedback on the relevance and application of the content was very positive, with participants highlighting in particular the benefits of group discussions and the sharing of best practices between clubs.

During the year Croke Park launched a series of Online Support which are available to all clubs on the GAA Learning Portal at GAA.ie. Online supports include; Club Officer Training, Club Planning, Club Resources and IT Helpdesk.

Clubs continue to place a strong emphasis on planning and the resources of Coiste Átha Cliath are available to support the development and implementation of the Club Plan. A sincere thank you to Development Officer, Ken O'Sullivan for his commitment to the Club Leadership Development Programme and for promoting best practice in our clubs.

## **Centenary of Bloody Sunday**

A sub-committee will be appointed to mark the centenary of Bloody Sunday in November 2020. Dublin will play Tipperary in a senior football challenge ahead of an Ireland v Australia international Rules game on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November in Croke Park. A meeting has been held with Dublin City Libraries and further meetings are planned with the Departments of the Taoiseach, Foreign Affairs and Trade and Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Glasnevin Trust.

## **Oifigeach na Gaeilge**

Thug Oifigeach na Gaeilge, Coilín Ó Cearbhaill, roinnt tionscnaimh nua don teanga na Gaeilge i mbliana ar nós an Post Match Gaeltacht, imeacht ina mbuaileann cainteoirí Gaeilge le chéile tar éis cluichí sraithe Átha Cliath ar oícheanta Shathairn i bPáirc an Chrócaigh.

I mí an Mheithimh bhí an chéad Fhéile Péile na Gael i bPáirc Parnell. Comórtas peile do bhuaichillí agus cailíní ó Ghaelscoileanna sa chontae. Ghlac 24 foireann páirt i mbliana le breis agus 400 páiste ar an bpáirc ar an lá. Sa chluichí ceannais is foireann chailíní Scoil Neasan ó Bhaile Hearmann a bhuaigh ar Scoil Lorcan ó Bhaile na Manach agus b'iad buaichillí Gaelscoil Cholmcille, Seantrabh a bhfuair an cheann is fearr ar Ghaelscoil Eiskir Riada ó Leamhcán.

Tar éis sos cúpla bliain cuireadh tús le Scór na nÓg arís agus is iad CLG Naomh Fine Ghallain a rinneadh óstáil ar an bhféile. D'imigh buaiteoirí Scór na nÓg Átha Cliath ar aghaidh chun ionadaíocht a dhéanamh thar ceann an chontae i Scór Laighean.

I gcomórtas náisiúnta eile tá comhghairdeas le déanamh freisin le Na Fianna CLG ar éirigh leo bonn óir i gcomórtas Ghradam Sheosamh Mac Donncha a bhaint amach mar atheantais ar an obair leanúnach atá ar bun acu an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa chlub agus mholfaimis do gach club páirt a ghlacadh sa chomórtas fiúntach seo.

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le Cólín as ucht a thiomantas sa ról in Oifigeach na Gaeilge.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

The County Health and Wellbeing Committee have been very active during the past year and when challenging times arise, as they inevitably do from time to time, they rally to support those affected. Our website is a source of information for clubs and individuals containing important contacts and health and wellbeing information and resources. A number of high profile initiatives were undertaken during the year. The key projects for 2020 are: -

- Teen talks collaboration with Jigsaw;
- Dubs Health Week - Clubs register online what events they are running in their club. Online platform similar to AIG Heart Safety training;
- Critical incidents plan adopted by club executives and communicated to all club member in all Dublin GAA clubs;

- Continue Healthy Club officer training series;
- Gambling awareness training, and
- New ASAP programme being rolled out in 2020.

Dublin GAA is committed to promoting health and wellbeing within our membership, our clubs, and our communities. We aim to achieve this through the provision of information, initiatives and campaigns to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Our sincere thanks to Chairperson Ger McTavish and the committee for their excellent work in this area. This is a service for all the clubs and the committee volunteers are selfless and their immense contribution is done quietly and confidentially.

### **Sponsorship**

Under the management of Tomás Quinn, Commercial and Marketing Manager, our sponsorship portfolio continues to develop and the outstanding performance from our teams make us an attractive marketing platform for brands and organisations. I wish to thank Tomás for his outstanding work in the area of sponsorship and marketing.

Our thanks to AIG CEO - Declan O'Rourke - and all of his colleagues for their sponsorship and friendship as we regard AIG as real team players, integral to our development. In addition to the commitment that AIG bring to Dublin GAA, they continue to be a central part to growing our participation rates across the county through their support for a number of initiatives.

I would like to welcome our new partners - Intersport Elvery's -who, along with AIB, Britvic, Subaru and our family of partners, provide valuable support to Dublin GAA. Our playing gear sponsorship was renewed last year with O'Neills and our thanks to Tony Towell and his team for their support over the years. We value our partnerships with the corporate sector and look forward to another year working to our mutual benefit.

### **Club AGMs**

The AGM is the most important meeting of the year in any club. This meeting should take place before the end of November (Rule 8.3 Club Constitution) so that it has taken place before the County Convention. It must be organised in accordance with the rules, as outlined in the Official Guide and the Club Constitution.

Annually, I receive emails and phone calls from clubs enquiring about the procedures to be followed and the eligibility of members to contest various positions. In brief, club members are entitled to receive at least 28 days' notice of the meeting and, at the same time, be advised that they may submit nominations for election to the Executive Committee and motions for consideration at the AGM. This communication must be in writing but emails are acceptable.

The agenda, reports and nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be circulated ten days in advance of the meeting. Only full members, whose membership fees are paid before 31<sup>st</sup> March (or earlier if stated in the individual Club Constitution) can vote at the AGM and be eligible for election to the Executive Committee.

### **Club Constitution**

The Club Constitution is the single most important document in the club and every club must adopt this, in accordance with rule 3.5 of the GAA's Official Guide.

The Club Constitution provides a means whereby the GAA Club can be operated and managed by the Executive Committee of the club. The Constitution provides for control of the assets of the Club and the operation of activities within the Club regarding membership, management structure, sub-committee structure, club property and AGM etc. A club can make certain alterations to the Constitution at their AGM, but these must be passed by the County Committee. Any amendments cannot be contrary to a rule in the Official Guide.

### **GAA National Club Draw 2020**

The GAA National Club Draw is now an annual event following its success over the past four years, in which over €7 million has been raised by clubs throughout the country. The sole purpose of the GAA National Club Draw is to assist clubs in their drive to raise much needed funds to help with the development and the promotion of our games.

This is an opportunity for clubs to earn €20,000 by selling their full allocation of 2,000 tickets. Each club retains all the proceeds and the prizes are provided by Croke Park. Since the draw was established in 2014, Dublin clubs have sold tickets to the value of almost €1m. The next draw will take place in March 2020 and sincere thanks to our Treasurer, Finbarr O'Mahony, for co-ordinating the distribution and reconciliation of ticket sales.

## **All Ticket Matches**

This year we were involved in all-ticket games commencing with the Spring Series and concluding on 14<sup>th</sup> September with the replay of All-Ireland Senior Football Final. The demand for tickets during the summer months places a heavy burden on the staff, particularly when games are scheduled for consecutive weeks. The end of August and the beginning of September was a particularly difficult period as we had extraordinary demand for the All-Ireland Football Semi-Final against Mayo and both games against Kerry. The collection and reconciliation of payments are also very time-consuming. The co-operation of all the clubs was appreciated, especially the individual club co-ordinators who have the unenviable task of satisfying their members' requests. A special word of thanks to Operations Manager Fiona Waters and Alan Doody for their exemplary commitment and assistance for the duration of the ticket season.

## **Garda Vetting**

The GAA has a long established principle of vetting any person who, on our behalf, works with children or vulnerable adults in our Association. This principle is enshrined in rules through our Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport and has become part of the overall recruitment and selection process for those who wish to work with us in the GAA, in a voluntary or paid role.

In the GAA any person who carries out a role of responsibility such as coaching, managing or training underage teams, or indeed adult teams that contain any player under 18 years of age must be vetted. It also applies to organising underage activities or refereeing underage games. Thereafter, each club shall decide if other roles merit a person being vetted.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 - 2016 commenced on 29th April 2016 and, from that date, a statutory obligation was placed upon the GAA to ensure that all persons who on our behalf undertook 'relevant work' with children has been vetted prior to taking up that role in Ireland. The Act also established the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) to oversee the e-vetting services previously administered by the Garda Central Vetting Unit.

It is a criminal offence, for a person, acting on behalf of the GAA, or for the GAA as an Association to permit any person to commence working with children on behalf of the Association without that person first obtaining a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of the role for which they have been recruited. It is also a breach of GAA

rule if you are working with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of the Association and have not been vetted.

GAA vetting services are available to any person over 16 yrs. of age fulfilling a role of responsibility with children or vulnerable adults. A parental consent form (NVB Parent/Guardian Consent Form) must be completed for applicants between 16 and 18 years of age.

### **Press and Communications**

I wish to thank The Herald for their continued coverage of Dublin GAA. Local community newspapers also give excellent coverage and analysis of our games. It is important that juvenile games are covered prominently in these newspapers as it will help to retain the interest of our young members. Our thanks to the members of the press and radio for their co-operation during the year.

We continue to focus on our website and social media channels as key components of communicating with Dublin clubs and supporters. Our social media numbers are increasing steadily and we now have over 250,000 combined followers over our four main platforms – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. I would like to extend my thanks to Derek Ryan for managing our social media accounts.

Our DubZone database continues to provide regular newsletters with exclusive content, behind the scenes footage and commercial partner competitions. A priority for this year has been to increase the volume and quality of our video content which has seen our social media video views increase to over 5.5 million across our Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube platforms.

Another positive development this year was the extensive live coverage of our club championships. A number of games were covered live by RTE and TG4 and when live TV wasn't an option then we streamed them on our DubsTV YouTube page. We will continue to look to improve this coverage as we go into 2020 and ensure we promote the quality of our club championships on free to air platforms and not behind a paywall.

Mick Hanley and Fergus Carroll from Dublin City FM (103.2) and Near FM (90.3) respectively, give wide coverage to our games with live broadcasts from both inter-county and club games.

### **Friends of Dublin Hurling**

The Friends of Dublin Hurling continue with their excellent work including arranging transport for supporters to games around the country. Their 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration Dinner was held recently and, at this function, the Friends of Dublin Hurling recognised the achievements of our hurlers. Eoghan O'Donnell won the 'Senior Hurler of the Year Award', Cian Derwin won the 'Young Hurler of the Year' and Jerry Grogan from Cumann na mBunscol and the "Voice of Croke Park" received the 'Hall of Fame Award'.

In addition, the work being done by clubs for the development of hurling in Dublin is recognised through the 'Club of the Year' awards at Senior (Naomh Barróg) and Juvenile (Geraldine Patrick Moran) levels and also the School of the Year Second Level (St. Declan's College, Cabra) and Primary (Balgaddy Senior National School). I wish to acknowledge the commitment of Humphrey Kelleher and the committee to the promotion of hurling in the county.

### **Players Injury Benefit Fund**

The GAA has operated an injury fund in one way or another, since 1929. Through a process of constant review and frequent improvement, the Association continues to exercise concern for the welfare of members involved in our national games in various capacities.

The mandatory fund provides benefits to members playing hurling and football whose clubs are registered with the fund and, also, to accredited club personnel performing designated duties in connection with the activities of clubs registered in the Scheme. The Injury Benefit Fund is funded entirely from Club and GAA funds with no outside (e.g. insurance) involvement. There is no legal obligation on the GAA to provide such a Scheme.

Risk is an inherent factor in sport, as in life. When members voluntarily take part in club activities, they accept the risks that such participation may bring. The Injury Benefit Fund does not seek to compensate fully for injury but to supplement other schemes such as Personal Accident or Health Insurance. The Fund only provides cover for unrecoverable losses up to the

limit specified under the scheme. Ultimately, the responsibility to ensure that adequate cover is in place lies with the individual member, commensurate with his/her specific needs.

DWF Claims have been appointed as the new claims administrators for the GAA Injury Benefit Fund with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019. DWF Claims will take over all queries, the reporting of all new claims and the handling of existing claims from that date. The new administrators will offer a full IT end-to-end solution for claims from notification until settlement. All documentation can be uploaded on the portal and there will be no requirement for postal applications. Injury Fund benefits will be paid directly to the affiliated club. No Injury Fund queries or correspondence will be dealt with from a personal email address, owing to GDPR requirements.

Extensive correspondence will issue shortly in relation to this change and therefore, it is important that all clubs read this correspondence and share it with your executive. This is a major change in terms of the operation of the Fund. The change has been made in the best interests of the Fund and is aimed at alleviating the burden of work on our volunteers that the Injury Fund can create.

### **Grounds**

Requests for the use of our county grounds continue to increase. Apart from our local competitions at adult and juvenile level, our grounds are utilised by Central and Leinster Council, Dublin and Leinster Colleges, Third Level institutions, Camogie and Ladies Football Organisations, Cumann na mBunscol and Fingal Primary Schools.

The majority of championship games were played after our involvement in the All-Ireland championships and our county grounds were in excellent condition throughout, considering the volume of activity. I am indebted to our groundsman, Noel Brady, for his efforts. Everyone wants to have the pitch in pristine condition for their game but no natural playing surface can cope with this schedule without damage to the pitch. Accordingly, at certain times of the year, it is necessary to close Parnell Park in particular. While it is understandable that the majority of clubs wish to play important games in Parnell Park, it is not possible to host all adult finals there, although every effort is made to host juvenile finals. I wish to thank Luke Lawlor and Paddy O'Toole for their work in O'Toole Park.

A special word of gratitude goes to Charlie Canavan for his commitment and attention to Parnell Park. His willingness to cater for the games programme, training sessions and all committee meetings are very much appreciated. Charlie also assists with the Coffee Morning in aid of St. Francis Hospice and a Mass for Deceased Members in Parnell Park annually. A sum of €22,500 was collected and donated to St. Francis Hospice this year. Included in this sum are the voluntary donations from patrons to our games in return for a team sheet and I acknowledge the support of the members of O'Tooles with this initiative. We are very grateful also to Paddy Moloney for the trojan work he undertakes in Parnell Park.

The numerous games programmes staged in Parnell Park entail a significant amount of time for the essential preparation and planning. This involves communicating with all the statutory agencies to ensure the safety of all our patrons. I am also indebted to the very small team of regular stewards for their assistance, their attention to their different duties and their courtesy to our patrons, all of which adds to the presentation of our games. I would appeal to clubs to provide additional stewards for Parnell Park and to co-operate with requests from stewards.

### **Alfie Byrne Park**

Alfie Byrne Park is a full-sized, floodlit all-weather facility situated beside Clontarf DART Station. The facility opened in September 2010 and Dublin County Board, in partnership with Dublin City Council, have full access to the facility. Over 12 clubs use the facility regularly along with both primary and second-level schools. In addition to this, many of our Inter County Teams and Development Squads have used the facility for training and matches. It has been an invaluable asset to clubs, schools and county teams, particularly during inclement weather when grass pitches are often unavailable.

### **Cuimhne na Marbh**

Sadly, during the past year, a number of our colleagues were called to their eternal reward. I know I will be excused if I refer to a number of people that I knew personally - Andy McManus (Ballymun Kickhams), Jerome Twomey (Garda), Hugh Smith (St. Margaret's), Eugene McGee (U.C.D.), Denis O'Shea (Raheny), Andrew O'Donnell (Thomas Davis), Billy Maloney (Crumlin), Harry Lambe (Parnells), Matt Palmer (Crumlin) and Wally Prizeman (Craobh Chiaráin). To all our members who suffered bereavements, I want to convey my sincere sympathy.

John Bailey was Chairman of the Dublin County Board for ten years serving two five year terms. At various times, he was also Dublin's representative on the Leinster and Central Councils. During his period in office John instigated the redevelopment of Parnell Park and introduced the employment of the GPOs in clubs throughout Dublin. A prominent inter-county referee he officiated at the 1986 All-Ireland Senior Hurling final between Cork and Galway and mentored many teams in Cuala.

Cathal O'Leary won a Leinster Minor Football championship with Dublin in 1949, 3 National Football League medals and was half-back on the 1958 All-Ireland winning team. Cathal won nine senior football championships with St. Vincent's and was never on the losing side in 49 county championship matches.

Liam Hyland, a native of Lanesborough, was construction manager for the redevelopment of Parnell Park. Liam was highly professional and accommodating and when issues arose he always arrived at solutions.

Anton O'Toole, or the Blue Panther as he was affectionately known, won a Leinster Junior Championship with Dublin in 1971 and made his senior league debut the following year. He played his first senior championship game with Dublin in 1974 against Wexford. He won eight Leinster Senior Football Championship medals, and four All-Ireland titles from seven final appearances. He was also honoured as an All-Star on three occasions in 1975, 1976 and 1977.

Cyril Freaney played Minor Football with Dublin in 1947 and in 1948 when he won a Leinster title but they were subsequently defeated by Tyrone in the All-Ireland Final. He won two National Football League medals and made his senior championship debut in 1950 against Kildare. He won a Leinster senior championship title in 1955. Cyril won seven senior football championships with St. Vincent's.

Johnny Joyce holds the record as the highest scorer in a senior championship game with 5 - 3 for Dublin against Longford in 1960, notwithstanding having another goal disallowed as an own goal. He won a Minor All-Ireland title in 1955, National Football League and All-Ireland Senior championship titles in 1958, four provincial titles and eight County Championships with St. Vincent's.

It is heartening to witness the community solidarity and support by GAA clubs at funerals and I'm sure that anyone who has had a bereavement appreciates this support.

### **Buíochas**

Seán Shanley completes his five-year term as County Chairperson and Central Council delegate at Convention. And what a five years! Seán has worked tirelessly over this period and was always available to attend any operational, sponsorship, business, strategic, provincial or central committee meetings. He was never afraid to shirk from any contentious issues. I wish to thank Seán for his leadership, assistance and support to me during his term of office.

Thanks also to Mick Seavers and Jim Roche for their help and assistance and their willingness to attend fixtures or meetings, as required. I would like to pay a personal word of thanks to all the office staff - Alan, Anne, Carol, Derek, Fiona, Gabrielle, Kathleen and Sharon - for their continued support and loyalty. They work diligently to ensure the efficient running of our organisation.

The work of Gerard O'Connor, Games Manager, and the Coaching & Games Development Staff, RDOs and the GPOs is appreciated, as they face the challenges of increasing our participation rates and establishing new clubs.

Our colleague, Aileen Byrne, announced last month that she was moving to a new role in Cycling Ireland. Aileen was an invaluable employee for almost fifteen years and I would like to extend my appreciation for her outstanding work and commitment to Dublin GAA. She was diligent, self-motivated, thoughtful and obliging and her presence will be missed by all in Parnell Park. I wish Aileen every success and happiness in her new career.

I am indebted to Finbarr O'Mahony for the ongoing outstanding commitment he gives as Board Treasurer, resulting in another operating surplus this year in a very challenging environment. All financial matters are handled smoothly and efficiently by Finbarr.

I wish to thank John McNicholas and Tom O'Shea for representing us diligently during the year at Leinster Council. It is important to have individuals of experience on these provincial committees.

Special thanks to the members of our Blue Clusters Board - Sean Benton, Michael Hand, Brendan Waters and also to Jim Brogan and Gerry McGreevy. Their encouragement and advice have been invaluable.

I wish to acknowledge the support that I received during the year from the Árd Stiúrthóir, Tom Ryan and his staff. Michael Reynolds and his colleagues at Áras Laighean are always on hand to give assistance when called upon.

A special word of thanks to Ken O'Sullivan, Colm Crowley, John McNicholas, Carol Monahan and the members of the CCC for their work in scheduling and implementing a games programme for our players. Ken and Colm went well beyond the call of duty in administering the CCC during John's recent illness. Also to Michael Errity and Tom O'Shea and the members of Coiste Éisteachta for the huge volume of work undertaken during the year. Thanks also to the members of our various sub-committees for their commitment.

I wish to acknowledge the efficiency of Bernie MacLaughlin, Damian Murphy, Kathleen McPoland, Declan O'Leary and Anne O'Dea of Coiste na nÓg. A special word of thanks also to all the board officers, delegates and club officials for their dedication and co-operation with me during the past year.

I must again express appreciation on behalf of all involved in our game for the commitment of time and expertise by the many voluntary administrators at club and county level. Our games cannot function without them. I think that we can look back on a successful year for the Dublin GAA as we strive to be even better and face head-on the many challenges ahead.

A busy year indeed! Finally, I would like to finish by paying tribute to the legions of team mentors who, week in and week out, perform minor miracles to keep our games healthy and growing in Dublin.

**Seán Mac Coisdealbha**

**Rúnaí**