

GREEN FLAG

The official magazine of Leinster GAA

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The new season is here!

New Leinster Chairman A first for Carlow



Jim Bolger is the new Leinster GAA Chairman – the first Carlow GAA man to hold the office and has just started his three-year term.

From the Clonmore club in Carlow, Jim was Vice Chairman to John Horan for the last three years and brings a wealth of experience to the role with a long held passion for coaching and games development.

Speaking at his inauguration in the Mount Wolesley Hotel in his native county earlier this year, Jim paid tribute to the family and club mentors who instilled a deep love of all things Gaelic games within him.

“All of these people helped to light a fire inside of me, a love of the GAA that is hard to explain or put into words but it is safe to say that the GAA is seared in my soul and will I believe remain so until I take my last breath.”

The new chairman has wasted no time in settling down to work and has a broad agenda of areas he is eager to address.

He stated: “In relation to the future there are always challenges. Areas of particular interest to me are player welfare including mental health, the threat to or plight of rural or smaller clubs given the diminishing player numbers, conversely the dearth of adequate facilities to cater for the larger numbers presenting at urban clubs. We cannot look at either end of the spectrum in isolation.

“Meaningful fixture programmes that are ‘fit for purpose’; for example the recent initiatives on cross-border games programmes allied to the continued roll out of our mandatory coaching standards should serve to address many of the issues presented.

“Refereeing always presents challenges, notwithstanding the positive position of Leinster Referees on the National stage at present - the worry is the difficulty of recruiting and then retaining new referees to fill the void after the current cohort have had their time and I feel we have to be inventive in this regard.

“Many of our volunteers, for example County and Club Chairmen, become preoccupied with finance and fundraising and this is an issue that can detract from their other roles and responsibilities. Many of our units throughout the province have had difficulty in filling officer positions in recent times. To help ensure the future of our units we will place a strong emphasis on club and county officer training and our support resources will be available as appropriate.”

Working alongside Leinster GAA CEO Michael Reynolds is a new management committee made up of Vice Chairman, Pat Teehan (Offaly); Treasurer, Pat Lynagh (Westmeath) and PRO, Martin O’Halloran (Meath).

Beko CLUB BUA



Exciting new €85,000 award scheme for Leinster GAA Clubs

Leinster GAA will shortly unveil an exciting new initiative called the **Beko CLUB BUA Award**.

This is a new club accreditation and health check run by Leinster GAA, sponsored by international electrical giants Beko, and aimed to promote best practice on and off the field in the 800 clubs of the Province.

Using a soon to be launched online application form and checklist on leinstergaa.ie, clubs will be invited to assess themselves against a set of criteria ranging from their number of Award 1 and Award 2 coaches through to health awareness, club governance and inclusiveness.

Leinster GAA Secretary Michael Reynolds says: “This new initiative is the result of several months’ work planning and is designed to be a road map for clubs to show them best practice and also acknowledge and recognise those clubs that are leading the way.

“Regardless of whether you are county champions or not and are a large urban or a small rural club, this initiative still applies – it is about encouraging clubs to do things the right way so that the BUA effect will apply on and off the field.”

BUA, the Gaelige for ‘Win’, will result in chosen clubs in each county in Leinster sharing in a significant prize fund of €85,000 in footballs, sliotars and other equipment.

In addition there will be a commemorative plaque for their clubhouse acknowledging them as a Beko CLUB BUA Award winner, a digital banner for their website, tickets for Leinster finals and entry into a draw to win All-Ireland final tickets and a draw to win a place for their Under 8 team at the Leinster GAA GoGames days playing in Croke Park.

Sign up and get the BUA effect!



With a wealth of experience competing at the top level in two codes, and qualifications to complement all he learned on the playing fields of Ireland and Australia, Colm Begley is enjoying a new role promoting Gaelic games in his native county.

COLM

BEGLEY

USING EXPERIENCE TO BOOST UNDERAGE DEVELOPMENT IN LAOIS

Since his appointment as a Games Development Administrator in Laois last November, Colm has been liaising with clubs, schools and underage squads as efforts continue to improve standards in the O'Moore County.

"I was offered the job by Leinster GAA last November, and was interested in helping the young players. I knew lads who were involved already, which was a help," he explained.

Colm's return to live in Laois came after an adventure in the AFL with Brisbane Lions and St Kilda, and a spell as a Games Promotion Officer with Parnell's GAA Club in Dublin, which he combined with studies in D.C.U.

He's also one of Ireland's most capped players in the International Rules series, having represented his country 14 times between 2006 and 2015.

"When I went out to Australia first, I was fresh to the game and the coaching they had was similar to here, starting with the basics and constant repetition of the skills and good habits. They had very much a large amount of resources available; I probably had my own individual coach for the first three or four months. But GAA coaching is getting more specific to individual needs here in Ireland now, which is good," he said.

After four and a half years 'down under', Colm returned to Ireland and transferred to Parnell's GAA Club in Dublin, both as a player and coach. "My main job was going to the schools, there were six or seven primary schools and two secondary schools in their catchment area, and I worked in conjunction with the main games manager. That was really my first introduction to coaching."

Tied in with that responsibility, he successfully completed a Sports Science and Health Degree in D.C.U. and now he's moved on to a Masters Degree in Strength and Conditioning at I.T. Carlow.

Colm's transfer back to line out with Stradbally last season was perfectly timed, as his home club ended Portlaoise's dominance with a sensational victory in the county final.

"You couldn't have written the script," he remarked. "It was very, very fortunate for me. Martin Murphy came back as Stradbally manager, and the players have huge respect for him. Other players came back as well as me. We had a good draw in the first few rounds and progressed under the radar and it was fairytale stuff in the final with a last minute goal to win it. It was one of the best experiences I've had with football."

"We've designed and structured a *Strength & Conditioning Programme* for U-15, U-16 and U-17 upwards, with the plan of developing our players physically to improve strength, help with injury prevention, and ensure they are developing in the right manner..."

"I had actually won a county title with Stradbally before in 2005, a month before I left for Australia, when we also beat Portlaoise by a point, so it was lovely to get another medal."

Now he's aiming to use all the knowledge he's gained to benefit the next generation of GAA players in Laois.

"One of my main areas at the minute is promoting the games in schools, coaching myself and developing club/school links, trying to get a coach from the local area involved and ensure every school is getting coaching in GAA, both hurling and football, and that the coaching being done is at the level we want. Really the idea behind that is that we promote fun, promote games and enjoyment, and give them the basic skills and hopefully entice them down to the clubs and increase the numbers there."

"Along with that, we are promoting workshops for both players and coaches. The 'Player Pathway' is going on in both Leinster and Laois. It's a great thing, making out a progressive plan for the development of young players long term. It puts a plan in place for clubs to follow for U-8s, U-10s and upwards, what they should be learning, what level they should be at."

Colm and the other G.D.A.s in Laois also assist with the Development Squads in Laois. "Donie Brennan, James Kelly and I work with the football, and are

assigned with development squad teams – I'm with under 14 this year. Andrew Kavanagh and Ciaran Muldowney do the hurling. We work putting in place structures for the development squads and helping the mentors who are with the teams.

"Also this year, I've been working with Paul Miley and we've designed and structured a Strength and Conditioning programme for U-15, U-16 and U-17 upwards, with the plan of developing our players physically to improve strength, help with injury prevention, and ensure they are developing in the right manner. It's something we are happy with, there's been good results so far and the players seem to enjoy it. A lot of kids are playing so many games these days and training so much, that recovery is something else we are promoting and encouraging them to focus on."

"People say they should be playing football, and we totally agree with that. We did an eight week block (of strength and conditioning training) before Christmas and an eight week block after Christmas. It's only one night a week. What can happen sometimes is lads at 16 can start going to the gym on their own, and they might be doing exercises wrong or over-doing it, so we're trying to educate them more than anything else, to give them some knowledge and to keep developing them before they move onto U-21 and adult football and hurling," he concluded.



Healthy Clubs ethos embraced in Leinster



Tubber GAA a small club setting a big example

Tubber GAA Club in Offaly have reached out to the community where they are based on the border with Westmeath by engaging in various Healthy Club initiatives

GAA Clubs in Leinster who are enhancing their role in local communities by promoting health and well-being initiatives showcased their work at Croke Park on 11th March when examples of the wide-ranging projects being undertaken were highlighted in front of a packed attendance at the GAA Healthy Clubs Leinster Roadshow



Organised by the GAA's Community & Health Department, the event featured talks from well-known personalities including Mickey Harte, Michael Fennelly, Anna Geary and Alan Brogan.

Many of the club officers who attended from across the province have already expressed an interest in signing up for the GAA Healthy Clubs project when it is expanded further in 2018.

The scheme encompasses programmes in relation to physical activity; emotional well-being; health screening; healthy eating; drugs, alcohol and gambling education; anti-smoking; youth and community development; and activities for older members of the community.

Currently, the Healthy Club project is into its second phase which involves 60 clubs, including at least one in each county. The ultimate aim is to involve every GAA Club in the country, thus improving the long-term health of every community in the 32 counties and ensuring a brighter future for everyone.

The Roadshow emphasised how clubs who participate in the Healthy Clubs initiative quickly attract new volunteers who may not have been involved with the GAA previously.

Four clubs from Leinster detailed the progress they are making, some of whom have already earmarked their grounds as 'smoke free' zones and invited

people in their area to utilise walking tracks and gyms.

Clara GAA Club from Kilkenny, for example, have made huge strides with the promotion of healthy eating, which was detailed by their representatives, Caroline Clifford and Carmel Brennan. Cork legend Anna Geary joined with them to provide a healthy eating food demonstration.

Other GAA Clubs featured at the roadshow were Tubber GAA Club, Co. Offaly (represented by Chris Daly and Liz Moran), St Colmcille's GAA Club, Co. Meath (represented by Gwen Lannigan and Pat Kelly) and St John's Volunteers GAA Club, Co. Wexford (represented by Maeve Glover and Louise Duggan).

The Healthy Clubs project is backed by Irish Life and Healthy Ireland. As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility programme, Irish Life has committed €1 million to the scheme over an initial three year period.

Expressions of interest for Phase 3 will open up to interested clubs early next year. Clubs who would like to participate should begin the groundwork by appointing a Health & Wellbeing Officer and contact the County Health & Wellbeing Officer to avail of training module.

For more information, visit www.gaa.ie/community or email community.health@gaa.ie

With a small catchment area and only 200 members, Tubber is probably best known as home to former Offaly and Irish International Rules star, Ciaran McManus, while Bernard Allen currently lines out in the forward line for the Faithful County.

Since setting up a Health and Well Being sub-committee in the club, chaired by Chris Daly, they have seen a very positive reaction from both members and non-members.

Only last month they became the first Offaly GAA Club to go 'smoke free', and marked the occasion with an official launch at their grounds attended by Minister of State for Health Promotion, Deputy Marcella Corcoran-Kennedy.

"Croke Park supplied us with 'smoke free' signs that we put at the entrance gate and we have another big sign on our clubhouse, to let people know. Any match that we have, we are going to hand out a leaflet to people as they pay on the way in informing them that we are a 'smoke free' club and asking them to respect our policies," said Chris.

"That was our most recent project, but we have been working on other stuff as well," he added. "We did a six week programme in the school in relation to mindfulness, and we have classes for the older people in the community."

Chris and Liz Moran were invited to speak on behalf of

Tubber GAA Club at the Leinster Healthy Clubs Roadshow at Croke Park recently, which was a resounding success.

"We wanted to do things to get the whole community involved, from the youngest to the oldest," Chris said. "We needed to get more social interaction in the club."

Fitness classes which started in January of this year was one of their first projects, utilising their gym facilities. After using a Facebook page to help drum up interest, they ended up with 62 people signed up for 'Operation Tubberation', a six week programme which culminated in a 5k run/walk.

"Everybody was behind it from the start," said Chris. "We had a personal trainer, who did a beginners' class. And the good thing too was a lot of them weren't members of our club, they were outside the club but living in the community."

"We have 11 people on our Health and Well Being committee and I think only two of them were actually involved in GAA beforehand. They are great people and they want to make a difference in the community and that's key to the success of it."

Tubber GAA Club have also completed a 'Recipe for Success' project with teenagers in the area and hosted a day-long Mental Health workshop, which 30 people attended. Other plans are in the pipeline as they show how a small club can set the example for others to follow.

Mammoth programme of games in Top Oil PP Schools season



A mammoth programme of games in the Top Oil Leinster Post Primary Schools' GAA season is finally drawing to a close.

With 220 schools participating in approximately 1,500 games between hurling and football, the action has been progressing at a relentless pace since September.

Up to 90 separate competitions and blitzes have been held at South Leinster, North Leinster, Dublin and Provincial levels, requiring a massive amount of co-operation and support from teachers, referees, officials, and clubs and county boards who provide venues, often during inclement weather.

The cups for the main championships are resting in Wexford and Kilkenny, with St Peter's College claiming the Senior 'A' Football title for only the second time ever, and St Kieran's College winning the corresponding hurling final for the third year in a row.

Unpredictable is an appropriate word to describe the SF 'A' Championship, considering the high number of contenders and the fact that schools from eight different counties have lifted the trophy at least once since the start of the new millennium.

St Peter's College emerged from the pack this season and produced an outstanding performance to defeat Moate Community School in the final by 2-13 to 0-7.

The Wexford side bridged a 25 year gap since their only previous success, and did so with a power-packed display against their fancied opponents from Westmeath.

Having progressed through some closely-fought encounters to reach the final, St Peter's College cut loose when they cup was in sight. Dominant in most sectors, they emphasised their superiority with goals from Cathal Devereux and man-of-the-match Barry O'Connor.

St Kieran's College captain Adrian Mullen receives the cup, with Leinster P.P. Schools Chairman, Larry Curtain; and Charlie Carter and James Fitzgerald of sponsors, Top Oil.



St Peter's College players celebrate after their victory in the Top Oil Leinster PP Schools SF 'A' Final.

St Kieran's College and CBS Kilkenny contested the Senior 'A' Hurling final again, with the reigning champions triumphing after a superb contest, by 1-14 to 0-13.

The sides were level on eight occasions and extra-time looked a distinct possibility, but St Kieran's College just got the better of local rivals, who had defeated them in league final before Christmas.

A four point winning margin came only after a somewhat fortuitous Sean Ryan goal deep in injury-time, but St Kieran's College had scorer-in-chief Adrian Mullen to thank for another top-class display. The corner forward and captain struck for ten points (five from play), including two crucial scores which came before the goal.

St Kieran's College also retained the Leinster and All-Ireland Junior 'A' Hurling titles, while the Junior 'A' Football competition was won by St Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry.



COMPETITION

WINNERS

RUNNERS-UP

Senior Football 'A'

St Peter's College, Wexford

Moate Community School

Senior Football 'B'

St Mary's CBS, Carlow

Clonkeen College

Senior Football 'C'

Pres. DLS, Bagenalstown

St Joseph's SS, Rush

Senior Football 'D'

Oaklands CC, Edenderry

Marian College, Ballsbridge

Junior Football 'A'

St Mary's SS, Edenderry

Naas CBS

Senior Hurling 'A'

St Kieran's College, Kilkenny

CBS Kilkenny

Senior Hurling 'B'

Naas CBS

Colaiste Eoin, Stillorgan

Senior Hurling 'C'

St Fintan's HS, Sutton

Boyne CS

Junior Hurling 'A'

St Kieran's College, Kilkenny

Castlecomer CS



Over 3,000 U-8 Players take centre stage at Croke Park



What a great couple of days at Croke Park!

The annual Leinster GAA 'Go Games' for Under 8 players took place at GAA HQ on April 10th and 11th, and once again proved to be a resounding success.

Supported this year by Littlewoods Ireland, the 'Go Games' featured over 3,000 players and nearly 130 GAA Clubs from across all 12 counties in the province.

The excitement wasn't just confined to the players - parents, grandparents, siblings and team mentors all joined in the fun.

Six games took place each hour from 9am to 4pm on the pitch both days - so we played 96 matches in total.

There were no blanket defences, no black cards and everyone went home a winner!

We're already looking forward to next year!



Leinster GAA Club Coaching Officer Training



Leinster GAA have developed and rolled out a training course for all club coaching officers in the province. This is a key role in clubs and this training provides the knowledge, resources and confidence to carry out the role in both an effective and efficient manner.

So far, over 200 club coaching officers have participated in the course in seven counties and a couple more counties will be completing it shortly.

The training involves two modules, delivered over two evenings, and here's what's covered...

Module One

- Mission, Vision & Values
- The Player Pathway
- Games Programmes
- Games Development Initiatives
- Roles & Responsibilities of a Club Coaching Officer
- Skills & Qualities Of A Club Coaching Officer

Module Two

- Planning
- Implementation of Key Initiatives
- Resources & Supports
- Summary
- Conclusion

Feedback From Participants

"Great course, coaching co-ordinator is an important job that needs this support"

"To improve we must implement best practice in our clubs. This workshop is the first step on that journey"

"Great workshop that got us all thinking about where our own clubs are at present and it helped us to formulate a structure for games development by providing the information and links to some great resources"



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Leinster GAA Supporting Club Development Plans

LEINSTER

More than €760,000 was recently paid out to 91 Clubs in Leinster as part of the GAA's Club Development Grant programme.

The funding programme run by Leinster GAA and Croke Park is providing vital financial assistance to clubs involved in ground development works.

A presentation of cheques was made in Áras Laighean earlier this year by 2016 Leinster GAA Chairman John Horan and the GAA's National Finance Manager in Croke Park, Kathy Slattery.

Mr Horan said: "This night recognises the scale of the pride and ambition that exists within the GAA Clubs in Leinster who are committed to developing and upgrading their facilities. Travel throughout the Province and it is so obvious that our Clubs and their facilities are the hub of not just the sporting life but also the community life of their localities."

Kathy Slattery added: "The GAA has a proud tradition of investing in our Clubs and in supporting their developments where we can. The growth and popularity of our Games places a demand on pitches and facilities.

"There has been in excess of €2m spent nationally every year specifically on assisting

development and I would congratulate the Clubs in Leinster who have been selected to receive financial support."

In all, €761,850 was paid out to GAA Clubs in Leinster as part of the 2016 Grant Allocations. In addition to this, €74,500 was spent on GAA development projects in 11 schools around the province.

Clubs seeking a GAA grant from Leinster GAA in 2018 must complete an application form and submit it via their County Development Officer (or County Secretary in Dublin) on or before 1st May 2017. Clubs should not undertake any preparatory work for the proposed development prior to an application for grant assistance from Leinster GAA.

DUBLIN Ballyboughal €20,000; O'Tooles €2,000; St Maur's €2,000; Whitehall Colmcilles €10,000.

KILDARE Athy €1,000; Cappagh €11,000; Clogherinkoe €4,000; Johnstownbridge €2,000; St Kevin's €4,000.

KILKENNY Clara €1,000; Danesfort €8,500; Dicksboro €2,000; Dunnamaggain €2,500; Erin's Own €4,000; Emeralds €6,000; Galmoy €1,000; James Stephens €5,000; John Lockes €4,000; Lisdowney €1,500; Piltown €750; St Patrick's Ballyragget €3,000; Thomastown €8,000; Young Irelands €20,000.

LAOIS Borris In Ossory €10,000; Crettyard €1,000; Kilcavan €5,000; Portlaoise €5,000; Rathdowney €30,000; Rosenallis €10,000; Stradbally €10,000; St Fintan's Mountrath €15,000; Timahoe €4,000; The Harps €15,000; The Heath €500.

LOUTH Hunterstown €7,000; Naomh Fionnbarra €10,000; Na Piarasaigh €15,000.

LONGFORD Kenagh €9,000.

MEATH Ballivor €3,000; Bective €12,000; Castletown €6,500; Clonard €18,000; Drumconrath GFC €700; Dunshaughlin €9,000; Killmessan HC €500; Meath Hill €1,700; Na Fianna €17,000; St Colmcilles €1,000; St Mary's GFC €10,000; Seneschalstown GFC €24,000; Simonstown €3,000; Skyrne €14,000; Summerhill €1,500; Trim €1,000; Wolfe Tones €6,500.

OFFALY Coolderry €2,000; Edenderry €9,000; Gracefield €10,000; Kilcormac/Killoughey €3,000; Rhode €2,000; Tullamore €10,000.

WESTMEATH Ballinagore €3,000; Ballynacargy €5,500; Caulry €6,000; Castlepollard €2,500; Kilbeggan €1,000; Maryland €2,000; Moate €1,000; Southern Gaels €1,500; St Mary's Rochfortbridge €18,000; The Downs €1,500.

WEXFORD Ballyhogue €2,000; Davidstown Curtnacuddy €25,000; Ferns €4,200; Gusserane O'Rahillys €10,000; Horeswood €32,500; Kilmore €2,500; Kilrush Askamore €10,000; Rathgarogue Cushinstown €40,000; Oulart The Ballagh €20,000; Rapparees Starlights €10,000; Shelmaliers €10,000; St Joseph's €25,000; St Patrick's Camolin €4,000; Tara Rocks €10,000.

WICKLOW An Tochar €22,000; Arklow Geraldines Ballymoney €18,000; Ashford €24,500; Dunlavin €1,000; Kilmananogue €3,000; Rathnew €11,000.



A view of the impressive development plans being undertaken by Clonard GAA Club, Co Meath.

FOCUS ON CLONARD GAA

The small Meath club with BIG AMBITIONS

The small Meath GAA Club of Clonard recently received €18,000 from Comhaire Laighean as they continue with admirable plans to develop new facilities.

Located within a few miles of the county borders of Westmeath, Kildare and Offaly, it was one of the few remaining clubs in Leinster without its own modern facility. With many homes over their 120 year history, for the past 50 years Clonard GAA Club have resided on a rented field at the rear of the local public house.

With the assistance of Leinster GAA the local committee pursued many options to purchase a site for development, but for a variety of reasons none came to fruition. That changed in 2014 when nine acres were purchased in the village, adjacent to the local shop and service station. The Leinster GAA land purchase grant of €26,000 was a crucial factor in the progress of the project, and within 18 months the club received planning permission and commenced development works on the site.

Phase one of the development included full size grass playing pitch with spectator fencing, training area, floodlight walking track, and car park. The additional Leinster Council grant of €18,000 has played an important part in funding the impressive facility.

A sod turning was held in 2016, at which then Leinster GAA Chairman, John Horan attended and gave his and Leinster Council's full support to the project.

Works were completed late last year and will be a significant benefit to the community, particularly the growing underage membership base in the club.

As the club continues to expand, the development committee now plan to commence phase two which includes a second playing pitch and mini all-weather pitch, and finally phase three which completes the overall project with a clubhouse and dressing rooms.

In addition to receiving grant aid, the club organised fund-raising ventures over the past couple of years, which have been hugely supported by the local community. These included a pre-development draw and the sale

of club and pitch-side sponsorship signs which was a massive success.

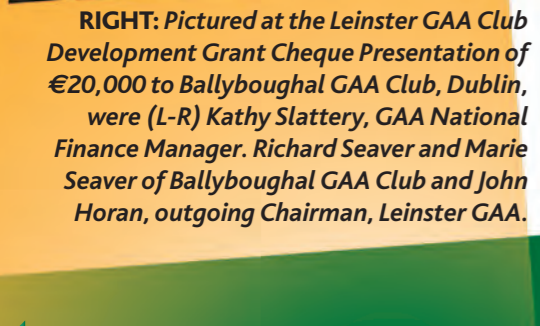
Another imaginative plan which made a €6,000 profit involved the purchase of lambs which were reared by local farmers until fit for sale, while a 'buy a brick' and 'buy a tree' venture brought in €45,000.

Officers would recommend any club with similar plans to meet and take advice from the Leinster Infrastructure committee to establish best practices.

The club expressed thanks to Leinster GAA C.E.O. Micheal Reynolds and PJ Murphy from the Infrastructure Committee who visited Clonard to advise on land before it was purchased, and to Richard Hayden (Haydenturfcare), who prepared the design and tender process and brought the project in on time and budget.



LEFT: Pictured at the Leinster GAA Club Development Grant Cheque Presentation of €15,000 to Athgarvan GAA Club, Kildare, were (L-R) Syl Merrins, outgoing Treasurer, Leinster GAA. Kathy Slattery, GAA National Finance Manager. Sharon Butler, Derek Gallagher, and Diana Kavanagh of Athgarvan GAA Club. Colm Farrell, Development Officer, Kildare GAA and John Horan, outgoing Chairman, Leinster GAA.



RIGHT: Pictured at the Leinster GAA Club Development Grant Cheque Presentation of €20,000 to Ballyboughal GAA Club, Dublin, were (L-R) Kathy Slattery, GAA National Finance Manager. Richard Seaver and Marie Seaver of Ballyboughal GAA Club and John Horan, outgoing Chairman, Leinster GAA.



Pictured at the recent Leinster GAA Club Development grant cheque presentation of €18,000 to Clonard GAA Club, Co. Meath, were (L-R) Kathy Slattery, GAA National Finance Manager, Jason Plunkett, Development Officer, Meath GAA. Joe Gannon, Chairman, Clonard GAA Club and John Horan, outgoing Chairman, Leinster GAA.



Positive Response

to First Cross-County U13 & U15 Leagues



NAAS



KILDALKEY

Clubs across Leinster jumped at the chance to take part in new Cross-County football and hurling leagues for under 13 and under 15 age groups.

Group games were held in both codes since the end of January with finals taking place in recent weeks at the GAA Centre of Excellence at Abbotstown

This initiative was the brainchild of a Leinster GAA focus group chaired by Iar-Uachtarán Liam

O'Neill, which researched the start and end dates of competitions run in each county in the province and presented these findings at a meeting of County Coaching Steering Committees.

A major gap in the majority of county's games programmes was identified, showing that many competitions were not starting until in or around early April. This situation, in conjunction with the identification of in some cases large margins

of victory in games, led Leinster GAA to the conclusion that there is a need for cross-county activity to provide more games of a similar standard for teams and also to lengthen the playing season around the province, so players are getting more exposure to GAA for longer each year.

The response from clubs was positive, with over 200 teams entered. Leinster GAA Games Manager, Alan Mulhall thanked all those who contributed to the successful running of the Cross-County Leagues. "Without the mentors, players and

referees committing to the process, we would not have been able provide as many games as have been played," he said.

The feedback from those involved regarding the relationships built and games played has been very positive and it's hoped that, next year, even more teams will be involved, allowing Leinster GAA to provide even more variety for clubs and players.



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GAA Coaches receive 'Nursery Packs' from Leinster GAA



Boys and girls from 25 areas across Leinster received a special treat recently when their mentors arrived with a new 'Nursery Pack' to help with coaching sessions.

The prizes were presented in March to coaches who had signed up for the 'Have A Ball' programme and were chosen randomly in a draw organised by Leinster GAA.

The lucky winners were: Liam Casey (Éire Óg, Carlow); Martin Doyle (Burrin Rangers, Carlow); Cathal Cole (St Andrew's, Carlow); Liam Sherlock (Naomh Mearnóg, Dublin); Tom Quinn (St Jude's, Dublin); Aidan Minnock (Maynooth, Kildare); Simon Clarke (Celbridge, Kildare); Ruaidhri Jacob (Ballykelly, Kildare); Matty Flynn (Tullagher Rosbercon, Kilkenny); Paul O'Shea (Ballylinan, Laois); Christopher Knowles (Stradbally, Laois); Carmel Hilliard (Camross, Laois); Colm Mulholland (St Fechin's, Louth); Shane Flannery (Navan O'Mahony's, Meath); Mark Gallagher (St Colmcille's, Meath); Conor McCoy (Seneschalstown, Meath); Colm Cummins (Edenderry, Offaly); James Condrón (Na Fianna, Offaly); Richie Fitzsimons (Birr, Offaly); Mark Keogh (St Vincent's, Dublin); Kara Kavanagh (Lough Lene Gaels, Westmeath); Mick Dee (Askamore-Kilrush, Wexford); James Morrissey (Rathnure, Wexford); Ronan Lally (Ashford, Wicklow); Gary McGillycuddy (An Togher, Wicklow).

Leinster GAA, in association with Emma and Louise Byrne, have been providing a resource for all coaches in Leinster currently involved in the delivery of the Have A Ball initiatives for boys and girls aged five to six.

Both Louise and Emma are graduates of the B.A in Sport & Exercise (GAA) in IT Carlow and have developed significant experience both in Ireland and abroad in the delivery of fundamental programmes for creche and early school year children.

The nursery at Edenderry GAA, Offaly are delighted to receive their pack from Leinster GAA



How to register to access the resource:

- 1 Open up www.learning.gaa.ie website
- 2 Click the 'Register' button in top right hand corner (If you have not previously registered)
- 3 Fill in required information and check your email for confirmation email (occasionally this can be sent to clutter/spam etc)
- 4 Click on the link in your emails
- 5 Fill in the relevant/ required information - you will then be redirected to the homepage
- 6 Once registered and logged in click on the link that will direct you to the course login page
- 7 When you have access to the programme, you can download the PDF's provided, view the weekly blog, view the videos of the activities and access to the forum of other like-minded coaches



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DUBLINER HORAN TO BRIDGE NEAR 100 YEAR GAP TO PRESIDENCY

After a successful three year stint as Leinster GAA Chairman, John Horan from Dublin is the GAA's new Uachtarán Tofa.

He was elected by a massive majority of 144 out of a possible 278 votes at GAA Congress 2017 and will succeed Aogán Ó Fearghail in 12 months' time.

A life-long member as a player, coach and administrator with the Na Fianna club, the 58 year-old is Principal of St Vincent's CBS in Glasnevin.

The last Dublin based representative to be President was Clare native Dr JJ Stewart from 1958-61. It means that Mr Horan will be the first native Dub to be Uachtarán Chumann Luthchleas Gael since Daniel McCarthy 97 years ago.

Like McCarthy, Mr Horan was also Chairman of the Leinster Council – a post he held for a three year term that ended last January.

Thanking his supporters, he paid tribute to the other four distinguished men who courageously put themselves forward and contested the Presidency (Sean Walsh, Frank Burke, Martin Skelly and Robert Frost) and he vowed to work closely alongside and supporting Uachtarán Ó Fearghail over the next 12 months before taking office.

Two young Gaelic footballers from Dublin have been given a taste of Australian life in a new student exchange launched by St Patrick's College in Ballarat, Victoria.

Conor Donoghue and Leon Young are spending almost four weeks with the St Pat's football program in the first of three annual exchanges organised in conjunction with the GAA.

St Pat's senior football coach Howard Clark initiated the scholarship program in response to leading triennial St Pat's football tours of Ireland since 2007. Clark said he saw it as an opportunity to give something back for the hospitality the GAA had shown to the Ballarat school.

The stay has seen Donoghue, of the Erins Isle GAA Club, and Young from Ballymun Kickhams, joining a nine-day St Pat's football trip to Darwin, and get a chance to play in at least one of three matches of Aussie Rules. The Irish duo also got to attend the Richmond v Collingwood AFL encounter.

St Pat's will host boys from Northern Ireland next year and Cork in Ireland in 2019.



DUBLIN DUO ENJOYING AUSSIE EXPERIENCE



SCÓR SCORES AGAIN!



entertainment and saw representatives from six of the 12 counties take to the stage.

The most successful county was Longford whose representatives came away with three provincial titles, all from the St Patrick's, Ardagh, club followed by Westmeath with two titles and one each for Kildare and Wexford.

Leinster Council Chairman, Jim Bolger presented the prizes to the winning teams and complimented the clubs and counties for their continued dedication to Scór.

The finals marked the changing of Officers at Leinster Scór level with Catherine Daly (Westmeath) and Aine Kennedy (Wexford) taking the reins from Aidan Walsh (Westmeath) and Donal Hickey (Dublin), who were the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Runai of Scór Laighean.

The winners from Sunday's final will represent the province at the All Ireland Scór final at the Waterfront Hall Belfast, on Saturday 6th May 2017.

The Leinster Scór season came to a conclusion at Ballymore, Co Westmeath, with the provincial Senior Final on Sunday, 2nd April. A large and enthusiastic crowd attended the final which provided great

Figure Dancing

Solo Singing

Recitation/Storytelling

Ballad Group

Léiriú

Instrumental Music

Set Dancing

Maynooth (Kildare)

Paddy Hanley, St Patrick's Ardagh (Longford)

Riona Lynch, St Patrick's Ardagh (Longford)

St Patrick's Ardagh (Longford)

St Joseph's (Westmeath)

Bannow/Ballymitty (Wexford)

Bunbrosna (Westmeath)



Top: Paddy Hanley of the St. Patrick's Ardagh club in Co. Longford.

Right: Maynooth of Co. Kildare, winners of the Figure Dancing.

EXCITEMENT BUILDING AHEAD OF FÉILE NA nGAEL IN CARLOW, KILKENNY & WEXFORD



Excitement is building ahead of the 2017 'John West' Féile na nGael tournament which takes place in Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford in June.

Over 8,000 Under 14 hurling, camogie and handball players will descend on the three counties with their coaches, families and supporters for what promises to be another memorable weekend.

All the draws for each of the competitions have already been announced and clubs in each of the host counties are getting ready to welcome their visitors from across the country, and London.

The National Féile tournaments in the past have provided GAA Clubs with a wonderful opportunity to foster long lasting relationships, and many clubs that have hosted Féile have highlighted the positive impact on the atmosphere in their club. The organisers are hopeful to see this across the region during and after Féile 2017.

All the games will take place on 16th/ 17th and 18th June and all the necessary information is available in the Games Development section of www.leinstergaa.ie

(The football equivalent, Féile Peile na nÓg will take place between 23rd and 25th June in Monaghan, Cavan and Fermanagh).

Here are some of the main statistics in relation to Féile na nGael 2017

- 8,000 players under 14 years participating
- 1,000 coaches and mentors guiding teams.
- 40 finals played in three counties on Sunday.
- 150 referees required at the Féile
- 500 officials as umpires and linesmen.
- 100,000 visitors to the area.
- All accommodation in Wexford, Kilkenny and Carlow will be booked to capacity.
- 25,000 will attend the finals.
- 175 busses will be used for the weekend.





U9 'Shed Blitz' Go Games kick off Wexford GAA's Participation Plan for 2017

The project aims to offer games opportunities for both hurling and football to U9's around the county while also taking advantage of the fantastic GAA clubs indoor arenas. The games began on the last weekend in February and finished on 15th of April. To date, over 1,200 children have taken part right throughout the county.

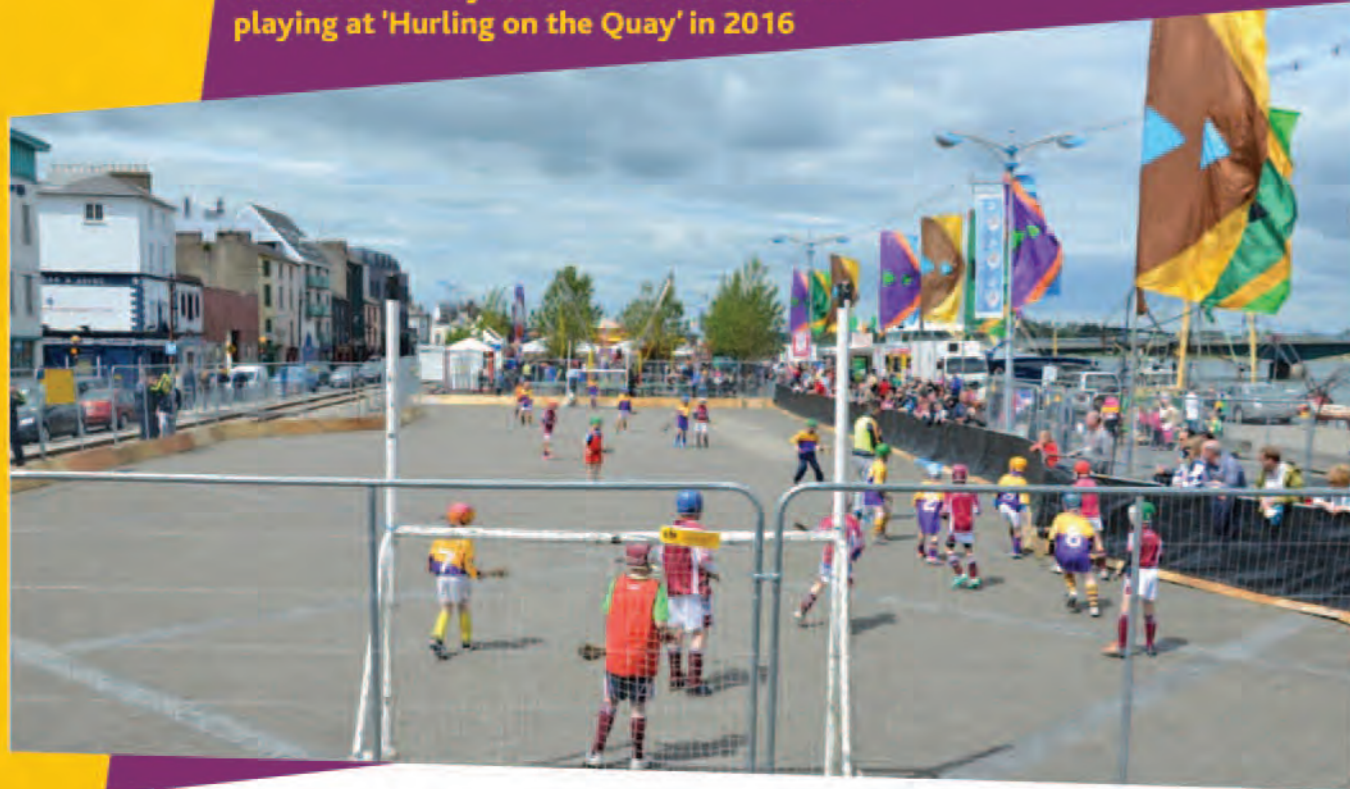
Speaking about the programme, Wexford GAA and Participation Officer, Diarmuid Byrne is delighted at how they are being received; "It was important to us to try and spread out the playing season a little longer. A number of clubs are running blitzes at different ages but not all clubs get to enter them. By having it at this age grade, children who maybe in bigger clubs get the opportunity to play at their own age grade and clubs can have multiple teams in blitzes throughout the county. We are now looking at maintaining the blitz model and the possibility of running a number of blitzes in Innovate Wexford Park throughout the year"

On the lead up to the National Go Games week it was important to highlight the key values associated with these type of games.

Other events throughout the year such as Games on the Quay and our community events throughout the urban towns will hopefully continue to spread the message of the importance of Go Games."



Children from Faythe Harriers and St Martins playing at 'Hurling on the Quay' in 2016



For information on Games Development Projects in Wexford contact us by email: coaching.wexford@gaa.ie or speak to a member of the team here: <http://www.wexfordgaa.ie/coaching/meet-the-coaches>



Westmeath Conditioning Sessions through Post Primary Schools



Participants at a Resistance Training session in Mercy SS Kilbeggan

At the start of the current academic year, Westmeath set about putting a programme in place whereby underage players could attend resistance training sessions through their post primary school.

A primary reason for this was to reduce the need for collective academy sessions – rather, getting players to work with the programme as part of their school day. This eases the workload on parents in terms of providing transport and also eases the workload of the players involved.

Initially First and Second years were to be the target age-group. The sessions also compliment skills training which is ongoing in this sector.

Castlepollard CC, Columba College Killucan, Colaiste Mhuire Mullingar, St. Finians College, Mullingar CC, St. Josephs Rochfortbridge, Mercy SS Kilbeggan, Moate CS, Marist College Athlone and Athlone CC were/are all involved with the sessions targeting players on underage county squads but also facilitating players on school teams. Some schools run at lunchtime, some after school and in some cases early morning sessions are put on.

The initiative is still a 'work in progress' and coordinating time slots that suit schools, players and personnel delivering the sessions creates challenges but to date the feedback has been very positive.

With the continued help and cooperation of post primary teachers, it is hoped the programme can be further developed for 2017/2018 to include additional players. This will further develop standards at school and club level leading to better standards at underage academy level.



Games Development Administrator James Heffernan coordinating this Resistance Training session for students in Mercy SS Kilbeggan



Leinster GAA Championships 2017

LEINSTER

Leinster Senior Hurling Championship 2017

Round 1 (Round Robin)

1	Meath	v	Kerry	23.04.2017	Pairc Tailteann, Navan	3.00 pm
2	Laois	v	Westmeath	23.04.2017	O'Moore Park, Portlaoise	3.00 pm

Round 2 (Round Robin)

1	Westmeath	v	Kerry	30.04.2017	TEG Cusack Park, Mullingar	3.00 pm
2	Meath	v	Laois	30.04.2017	Pairc Tailteann, Navan	3.00 pm

Round 3 (Round Robin)

1	Westmeath	v	Meath	14.05.2017	TEG Cusack Park, Mullingar	3.00 pm
2	Kerry	v	Laois	14.05.2017	Austin Stack Park, Tralee	3.00 pm

QUARTER-FINALS

A	Galway	v	Dublin	28.05.2017	O'Connor Park, Tullamore	4.00 pm
B	Round Robin Team	v	Offaly	27.05.2017	t.b.c.	7.00 pm
C	Round Robin Team	v	Wexford	27/28.05.2017	t.b.c.	t.b.c.

SEMI-FINALS

D	Kilkenny	v	Round Robin / Wexford	10.06.2017	Round Robin/Wexford Venue	7.00 pm
E	Galway/Dublin	v	Round Robin / Offaly	18.06.2017	t.b.c.	2.00 pm

FINAL	D	v	E	02.07.2017	Croke Park	4.00 pm
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Leinster Senior Football Championship 2017

1	Louth	v	Wicklow	21.05.2017	Parnell Park	3.00 pm
2	Laois	v	Longford	21.05.2017	Portlaoise	3.00 pm
3	Carlow	v	Wexford	21.05.2017	Carlow	3.00 pm

QUARTER-FINALS

4	Louth/Wicklow	v	Meath	04.06.2017	Parnell Park/Joule Park, Aughrim	3.00 pm
5	Laois/Longford	v	Kildare	04.06.2017	Tullamore	3.00 pm
6	Carlow/Wexford	v	Dublin	03.06.2017	Portlaoise/Wexford	7.00 pm
7	Offaly	v	Westmeath	11.06.2017	Tullamore	3.00 pm

SEMI-FINALS

8	4	v	5	17.06.2017	t.b.c.	7.00 pm
9	6	v	7	25.06.2017	t.b.c.	4.00 pm

FINAL	8	v	9	16.07.2017	Croke Park	4.00 pm
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