

C.L.G. Laoise



Comhdháil Bhliantúil



Monday, 6th December, 2021
7.30 p.m.

Laois

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C.L.G. Laoise



Standing Orders

In order that the proceedings of the convention be carried out without delay the following Standing Orders will be observed: -

- 1. The Proposer of a Resolution, or Amendment thereto, may speak for 5 minutes but no longer.*
- 2. A Delegate speaking to a Resolution or Amendment shall not exceed 3 minutes.*
- 3. The Proposer of a Resolution, or Amendment, may speak a second time for 5 minutes, before a vote is taken, but no other Delegate may speak a second time to any Resolution or Amendment.*
- 4. The Chairman shall, at any time he considers a matter has been sufficiently discussed, call on the Proposer to reply, after which a vote will 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.*

An Clár

1. Adoption of Standing Orders
2. Minutes of 2020 Convention
3. Secretary's Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
5. Appointment of Tellers.
6. Election of Officers
7. Motions
8. Aon Ghnó Eile
9. Votes of Sympathy

The Annual Convention of Laois GAA was virtually via Microsoft Teams on Monday 14th. December 2020.

Cathaoirleach Peadar O'Néil presided at County Convention on 14/12/20. The following Coiste Bainistí members were also in attendance: Tomás O'Cleirigh, Mairtín O'Broin, Paschal Mac Fhiobhuí, Gearóid O'Caomhanach, PS O'Cealaigh, Risteard O Cinnéide, Fergal O'Beirn, Gearóid O Sleibhín, Pól O Deargáin, Moncha Ní Dhubhláinne, Labhras O'Faoláin, Ailéin O Langtúin agus Niall Mac Laitimh (Runaí).

Clubs were represented as follows:

N. O'Riain, Mainistir Laoise; M. Mac an Ghaill, Anach; SS. O'Conbhuí Ard Lios Cilchrúis; P. O'Doinn, Ard Lios Cilín; M. Ni Ghiolla Phadraig, Baile na Coille; M. O'Gabháin, Baile Fionn; W. Hovendon, Baile Uí Laigheanáin; M. Ní Fhaoláin, Baile Píocas; M. O'Scolaí, Mainistir Baile Ath Róin; S. O Faoláin, Teach an Bhearra; M. O Dubhláinne, Buiríos Mór Osraí; P. O Cuilleanáin, Buiríos Mór Osraí Cill Choitín; U. Ní Dhonnchaidh, Camros; S. Ozenbrook, Baile an Chaisleáin; L. O hAthírn, Cluain Fada; D. Ní Chonraoi, Cluain na Slí Naomh Meanmáin; U. Ní Mheachair, Cloch Balla Cholla; S. Ní Bhraonáin, Coillte; T. O Cearbhúill, Coillte Seanchua; R. O Danachair, Coill na Cúirte; M. Mac Pheadar, Crochta Ard; P. O Leathlobhair, Ioma; T. Brett, Graig Chuilinn; S. Mac Fhiobhuí, Cill Cabháin; G. Diring, Gleann Uiseann; S. Payne, Mointeach Mílic; S. O'Cearbhúill, Maighean Rátha; E. O Beacháin, Na Diomasaigh; B. O'Rannacháin, Páirc Raithín an Uisce; S. O Ceallaigh, Páirc Raithín an Uisce Tigh Mochua; C. Conléibhe, Cúil an tSudaire; M. O'Nialláin, Portlaoise; M. O'Leannáin, Ross Fhionnghlaise; P. Breatnach, Seanchua; R. O'Nualláin, Sliabh Bhladhma; D. Mac Dónaill, Sráidbahile; S. O'Duiginn, Ná Clairsigh; P. O'Céin, An Fraoch; S. O'Murchú, An Charraig; L. O'Rannacháin, Tigh Mochua; B. O'hAllúinn, Tromaire.

S. Laibheartaigh (Childrens Officer); S. O'Meachair (Cumann an mBunscol); O. O'hAilche (Post Primary Schools); S. O Braonáin (Handball); L. Ní Chonraoi (Health and Wellbeing) & B. Mac Braoin.

The meeting was facilitated online by C. O Seanáin & M. O hAonasa.

- 1. Standing Orders** were adopted on the proposition of Seán O Cearbhúill, seconded by Tomas O Cleirigh.
- 2. Minutes of 2019 Convention** was adopted on the proposition of Seán Payne, seconded by Ursula Ní Dhonnchaidh.
- 3. Chairperson's Address - P. O'Néil**
Cathaoirleach P. O'Néil outlined that a comprehensive address had been included in Convention Booklet and that he wished to acknowledge the work of our Clubs and

their members in their communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. He expressed his thanks to his fellow executive members for their work and commitment to Laois GAA; all our sponsors and in particular Mattie Walsh, MW Hire; our sub-committees and our volunteers; our Stewards and our Event Control team on Match Days; our groundsman Colm McEvoy and our FAS, TÚS and Community Employment Scheme personnel for their work in the grounds also acknowledging Bosco Ramsbottom for his catering services; our match officials; our Coaching and Games personnel and Games Manager Mike Henchy; our players and mentors in both codes for their commitment and dedication in what was a difficult year. He briefly outlined the development work in making MW Hire O'Moore Park a "green" stadium through the retro fitting of the stadium floodlights and planting the green areas in the grounds with wild flowers, and acknowledged the grant funding from Laois Partnership, SEIA and Central and Leinster Council to fund this project.. He concluded by asking for Club's cooperation and patience, stating that he wasn't infallible, but that he would work his hardest for the betterment of our Clubs and County in 2021

4. **Secretary's Report** was adopted on the proposition of Micheál O Scolaí, seconded by Gearóid O Caomhanach.
5. **Treasurer's Report** showing an operating surplus of €36,547 in County Committee A/c and loss of €40,483 in O'Moore Park A/c was adopted on the proposition of Pól O Deargáin, seconded by Briain O'hAllúinn.

An Cisteoir gave a detailed explanation of our financial accounts, explaining both Income and Expenditure Accounts and Schedules to accounts, and explained the constraints and pressure on our financial affairs during the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He stated that 2021 will be again a difficult year, outlining details of our new loan commitments, likelihood that attendances at games is likely to be limited until latter part of 2021 and the requirement to curb our expenditure on Inter-county teams. He acknowledged the co-operation and support of our Clubs in our main fundraiser, €130 All Club County Members Draw and appealed for their support again in 2021 and informed that an additional functionality has been added to our website to allow club members purchase tickets now online. He thanked his fellow Executive members for their support with our finances, our main sponsors and fundraising sponsors, our O'Moore Park stewards and gate staff and also his family for their understanding in allowing him the time to carry out this role.

6. **Election of Officers:** The following officers were elected –
 - Cathaoirleach (Chairman): Peadar O'Néil was elected, after defeating Ciaran O'Conléibhe in a vote.
 - Leas Chathaoirleach (Vice Chairman): Tomas O'Cléirigh was elected, after defeating Brian Mac Braoin in a vote.

- Cisteoir (Treasurer): Mairtín O’Broin was elected unopposed.
- Leas Cisteoir (Asst. Treasurer): Paschal Mac Fhiobhuí was elected unopposed.
- Ard Comhairle (Central Council) Delegate: Gearóid O’Caomhanaigh was elected unopposed.
- Comhairle Laighean (Leinster Council) Delegates (2): PS O’Ceallaigh & Risteard O’Cinnéide were elected after defeating Briain O hAllúinn.
- Oifigeach Oilíuna (Coaching): Ferghal O’Beirn was elected unopposed.
- Oifigeach Cultir agus Gaeilge (Cultural and Irish): Monncha Ní Dhubhsláinne was elected unopposed.
- Oifigeach Caidrimh Poibli (P.R.O.): Pól O’Deargáin was elected unopposed.
- Congress Delegates (5): Peadar O’Néil, Niall Mac Laitimh (both automatically elected); Mairtín O’Broin, Ciaran Conléibhe & Briain O hAllúinn.
- Leinster Convention Delegates (via Microsoft Teams): PS O’Ceallaigh; Risteard O’Cinnéide; Peadar O’Néil & Niall Mac Laitimh as decided by Leinster Council Management Committee.

All elected candidates returned thanks.

An Runaí thanked Returning Officer and Tellers – Seán O Conghaile, Micheal O Dubhsláinne & Seán de Brún, as appointed by Laois GAA Management Committee, for their help and support in overseeing the election counts earlier this evening.

7. Motions

An Runaí stated that Laois GAA Management Committee had decided to withdraw Motions to allow for more detailed debate at County Committee Meeting.

8. Aón Ghnó Eile:

- Courtwood GAA correspondence acknowledging and thanking Laois GAA for their support during the fundraising event “Do it for Dan” was noted.
- “Split Season” between Inter County and Club – An Runaí informed Clubs that decision would be taken next weekend by Central Council as to whether 2021 season would commence with Inter County or Club. He stated that our preference would be Inter County, but that in the event that they decided Club first, he put Clubs on notice that championships were likely to commence in early April.

- Closing Date for Affiliations and Competition Entry – An Runai informed Clubs that this closing date had been extended to 30 January for 2021 and that all Affiliations and Entries must be submitted by this date.
- Talent Academy Mentors - M. O hAonasa informed delegates that Coaching and Games were presently in the process of sourcing and recruiting mentors for academy squads in 2021 and appealed to Clubs to submit names of prospective suitable candidates. M. O Scolaí expressed disappointment that there was not a progression process for mentors involved with squads and particularly with Minor Management appointments in both codes in 2020, where mentors were “helicoptered” in. A. O Langtúin reiterated that both outgoing managers had come through the Talent Academy ranks.

Votes of Sympathy

Votes of Sympathy were extended to the following families:

- St. Lazerian's Abbeyleix: . . . Quinn, Hennessy, Burke, Lodge, Cass, Bonham, Carroll, O'Mahoney, Whelan and Dunican families;
- Annanough: Scully Family;
- Arles Kilcruise: Egan, Rowan, Warren, Bolton and Munnelly Families;
- Arles Killeen: Mahon, Dunne, Brennan, Farrell, Dunne and Doyle Families;
- Ballinakill: Walsh, Barry, Brennan, Lalor, Gorman, Brennan and Ryan Families;
- Ballyfin: Dunne, Brennan, O'Connor, McNamara, O'Rourke, Lanham and Ryan Families;
- Ballypickas: Carter, Dalton, Lalor, Fitzpatrick, Whelan, Irwin and McMenamin and Palmer Families;
- Ballyroan Abbey: Lawlor, Whelan, McDonald, Scully, Fennell, Dunne, Irwin, McMenamin and Carroll Families;
- Barrowhouse: Brennan Family;
- Borris in Ossory Kilcotton: Egan, Bergin (Sean), Bergin (Donal), Walsh, Keeshan, Kelly, O'Hara, Murphy, Connolly, Fitzgerald, Leahy, Sherlock, Daly, Abbott, Dunphy, Delaney, White, Costigan, Walsh, Ryan, Cronin, Connolly, McEvoy, Bergin (Mary) Families;
- Camross: Collier, Lalor (Fr John Club President), Fitzpatrick, Devaney, Thompson, Walsh, Delaney & Culleton Families;
- Clonad: O'Brien, Fitzpatrick, Major, Fennell and Sheeran Families;
- Clough Ballacolla: Shirley, Holohan, Ryan, Bergin, Cleere and Foley Families;
- Clonaslee St. Manmans: . . . Carroll Family;
- Colt: Kavanagh, Grant, Murray, Delaney, Maher, Doocey, Kelly, Doogue, Moffitt, Stackpool, Dalton, Sinnott, Rafter and Brennan Families;
- Courtwood: Gilnagh, Deegan, Flynn, O'Connor, Walsh (Fr Jack), Behan and Flynn Malone Families;
- Crettyard: Doyle, Walsh, Fitzsimon and Neale Families;
- Emo: Carroll, Sheridan, Walsh (Fr Jack) and Davis Families;

- Errill: McKelvey, Wynne, Kelly, Cleere, O’Dea, Gaffney, Loughman and Dunne Families;
- Killeshin: Burke, Scully, Kehoe, Bolton and McHugh Families;
- Kyle: Quinlan and Carey Families;
- Mountmellick: Flanagan, Kirwan, Conroy, Dowling, Shortall, Gorman and O’Neill Families;
- O’Dempsey’s: Molloy and Brophy Families;
- Park Ratheniska: O’Connell, Brennan, Lalor, Deegan, Conroy, Fingleton, Rankins, Drennan and Bunyan Families;
- Portarlington: Smith Family;
- Portlaoise: Dalton, Bunyan, Brennan, Kehoe, Kealy, Delaney (Brenda), Ryan, Delaney (Danny), Fennell, Mullins, Breen, Aird, Larkin, Williams, Farrell, Lanham Families;
- Rathdowney: Whelan, Rafter, Brown, Feeley, Mockler and McKelvey Families;
- Rosenallis: Lalor, Conroy, McEvoy, Conroy, Wisely, Goulding, Lynam, Sinnott, Farrell, Murphy, Creagh, Duddy and Peake Families;
- Shanahoe: Lalor, Hiney, McDonnell, Malone and Carroll Families;
- Slieve Bloom: Delaney Family;
- Spink: Gorman (Fr Charlie), Fitzpatrick and Dayton Families;
- St Joseph’s: Brennan (Mary), George, Lynch, Wickie, Knowles, Shanahan and Nolan Families;
- St. Fintan’s Mountrath: . . . Doocey, Cuddy, Meade, Bergin, Thompson, Delaney, Bradley, Hetherington and Bergin Families;
- Stradbally: Delaney, Mulhare, Moore/Booth, Corcoran, Buggy, McCarthy, Lalor, Byrne, Brady, Buggie and Kearns Families;
- The Harps: Costigan, White, Henderson, Muldowney, Conroy, Kenna, Walsh, Munnely, Duune, Monahan, Moore, Scanlan and Shortall Families;
- The Rock: Wall, O’Neill, Kirwan, Gorman, Mooney, Flynn, Peake and White Families;
- Timahoe: Delaney, Lalor, McDonald, Breen, Dalton and Ramsbottom Families;
- Trumera: Doocey (Declan), Kirwan, Dowling, Doocey (Brendan) and Brophy Families;



2021 Laois Senior Football Panel



2021 Laois Senior Hurling Panel

Tuairisc an Runaí 2021

It is with pleasure I welcome you all to our annual Laois GAA Convention, whereby we all have the opportunity to analyse and reflect on Laois GAA affairs during the past year. It is perhaps an understatement to say that 2021 was a challenging year, as we attempted to exit the Covid-19 pandemic, but it appears we may have to live with it for the foreseeable future. We are however back to GAA activities and briefly my opinions and reflections on the year past -

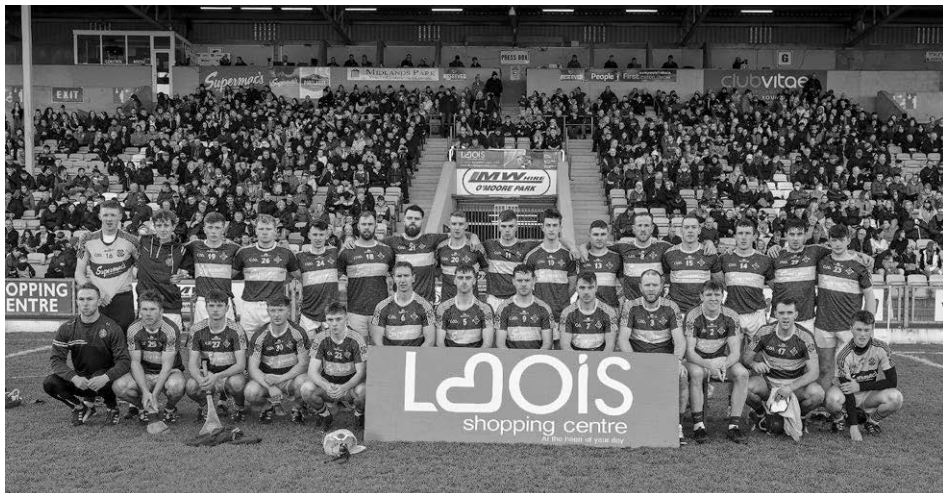
Senior Hurling

League – National CCCC conducted a survey of teams involved in the Allianz Hurling League Division 1, and by majority decision it was agreed to commence this competition a week earlier than intended, resulting in a full schedule with a minimum of five games. Our management team, only appointed in mid-December and enduring the height of Covid restrictions throughout the winter and spring had the unenviable task of preparing a panel for our Allianz League campaign. Whilst they inherited a substantial number of players with long term injury prognosis, it was a legacy the previous management suffered with as well, but the return of some players whom hadn't committed in previous years was encouraging. Naturally our ultimate goal was to maintain our Division 1 status, which without doubt was going to be more challenging as a result of the restructuring of the Division 1 format in 2020.

Unfortunately our league campaign was poor, performances not good enough and we suffered five consecutive defeats to Wexford, Dublin, Clare, Kilkenny and Antrim over a six week period, which drained confidence and allowed very little recovery time from the games which were played at a high intensity.

As a result, we qualified for a Relegation play-off against our old adversaries Westmeath, who suffered a similar faith in the other division. The powers that be in National CCCC somehow decided to schedule this game for the second week of August as an opening game to the All Ireland Senior Hurling semi-final, which without precedent would be on the conclusion of our championship campaign. I know their calendar was extremely tight for scheduling of games, but such planning was highly unusual and you certainly would not get away with it at club level in Laois. It had the potential to play havoc with our internal club calendar with 2020 championships to complete and 2021 championships to commence.

Thankfully, Westmeath were in a similar situation and further to dialogue early in the season, we reached agreement to play the game at the earliest opportunity to both counties, which was approved by National CCCC. The first available date for both parties was the 14th. July, whereby Westmeath fresh from their Joe McDonagh success travelled to MW Hire O'Moore Park and following an intense encounter, where the visitors were probably



*Clough Ballacolla - Laois Shopping Centre Senior Hurling Champions
2020 & 2021*



*Portarlinton - Laois Shopping Centre Senior Football Champions
2020*

the better team, our lads finished with a flourish to emerge three point victors and retain our Division 1 status for 2022.

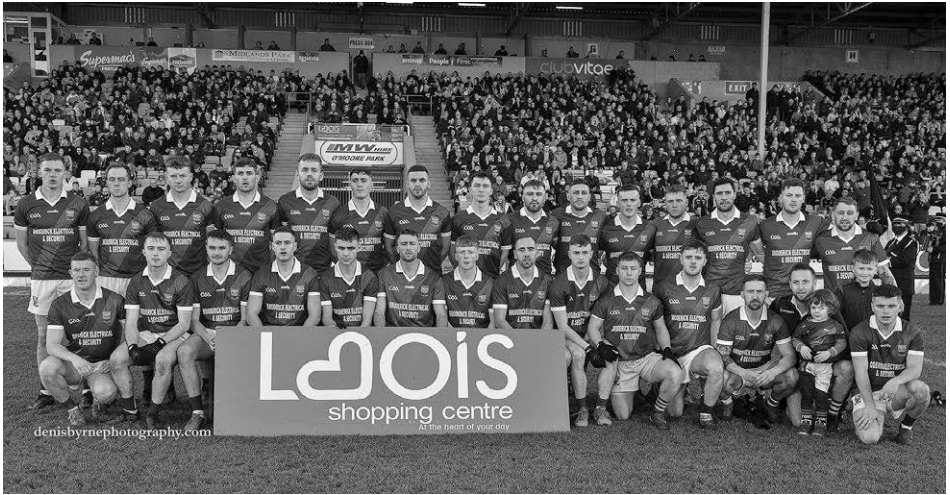
Whilst we find success hard to come by in Division 1, I believe it is imperative that we continue to participate and compete at this level if we have any ambition to challenge the hurling elite in the future. In 2022, we play Waterford, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Antrim and Dublin in our Division 1B of the league. Over the past number of years, we have proved that at times that we are capable of mixing it with these teams, but unfortunately we lack consistency in such performances. I hope with our players renewed commitment and a united front from our Clubs that we can progress and hopefully push for an Allianz League quarter-final position in 2022.

Championship – Due to Covid restrictions and a tight calendar, it was decided to retain the Leinster Senior Hurling Championship and All Ireland series in the format that was played in 2020, which seen our Leinster Hurling Championship revert to a straight knock out competition, with a backdoor in the All Ireland series for beaten provincial quarter and semi-finalists.

In our opening Leinster Senior Hurling Championship game, we were drawn against Davy Fitzgerald's Wexford in UPMC Nowlan Park. Despite a disappointing league campaign, there was a slight optimism, perhaps more so that our opponents hadn't been performing to the same levels of previous years and that we would at least be competitive in this encounter. However it turned out to be quite the opposite where tactically I believe we probably got it wrong on the day and we were completely overwhelmed by a dominant Wexford side.

In fairness to management and players, the post-mortem of the Wexford game seen us return to a style of hurling we were more accustomed to in recent years and a game our players were more comfortable in playing. In the preliminary round of the All Ireland series, we played Antrim in Parnell Park. Laois were dominant from the start in this game against a physical Antrim team and easily reversed the result of the league game a couple of weeks previously to emerge comfortable winners. Our next game in the qualifier series was against Waterford, defeated All Ireland finalists the previous December and unfortunately on the evening prior to the game, Covid struck, resulting in the loss of one of our most influential defenders.

I would state that preparing a team in the whole Covid-19 impacted scenario and environment is difficult and I wish to acknowledge our Covid Supervisor David O'Brien and particularly Dr John Paul Campion for their support and guidance in adherence and compliance to Covid protocols in their efforts to ensure our players and management preparations were carried out in as a safe an environment as possible.



*Portarlington - Laois Shopping Centre Senior Football Champions
2021*



*Ballinakill - Laois Shopping Centre Premier Intermediate Hurling
Champions 2021*

The Waterford game was again played in UPMC Nowlan Park Kilkenny, a straight knockout game with no reprieve for the loser. Laois again brought that same intensity as they did in the Antrim game and following a wonderful performance throughout, they were in contention to win this game as we entered additional time, where the more experienced Waterford side found that bit more to emerge as narrow winners. I have no doubt in saying that but for some silly errors on our behalf, the game was effectively there for the taking and with a little more belief, Laois could well have potentially won this game. Great credit to our players and management for the performance and it certainly proves we can be competitive at this grade.

At the moment, albeit in a time of uncertainty, the plan is for the Leinster Senior Hurling Championship to revert to the status quo of 2019, with Laois, Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Wexford, which will now also include Joe McDonagh Cup champions Westmeath, all competing on a Round Robin basis. In the new split season scenario, this will see our league likely commence the last week of January, concluding in late March, with Championship starting mid-April and Leinster Championship finishing in late May, with All Ireland Finals in July. This will certainly place pressure on counties like ourselves who don't have the same pool of quality players as some of our competitors at this level, so it is imperative that we have all our best hurlers on board and committed to the Laois cause. In saying that, I must compliment all those players who did commit to our county, and whose efforts to play and train in current circumstances indeed merit special thanks.

Our thanks to Seamas Plunkett and his backroom team for their work during the year and for their continued dedication to Laois Hurling, which include Francis Forde, Donagh O'Donnell and Michael Walsh (Selectors / Coaching), Dave Matthews and Leo Tiernan (Strength and Conditioning); John Sugrue and Conor Bolton (Physiotherapy); Arthur Dunne (Nutrition); Tony Bambrick, Colm Clear and Sean Conroy (Stats); Diarmuid O Gallchobair (Performance Analysis), John Paul Campion (Doctor), Pat Delaney and John Kealy (Kit), David O'Brien (Covid Officer & Servicing Secretary).

At the time of penning this report, "Cheddar" will again be at the helm, with the remainder of his backroom team to be confirmed. It would be my wish that we do have Laois personnel involved in our coaching and selectorial backroom team, but that is dictated by the manager. Our panel are still young, talented and with their renewed ambition, I believe if we can all unite, players, clubs, county board and management, we are more than capable of further progression in this grade in the next couple of years.

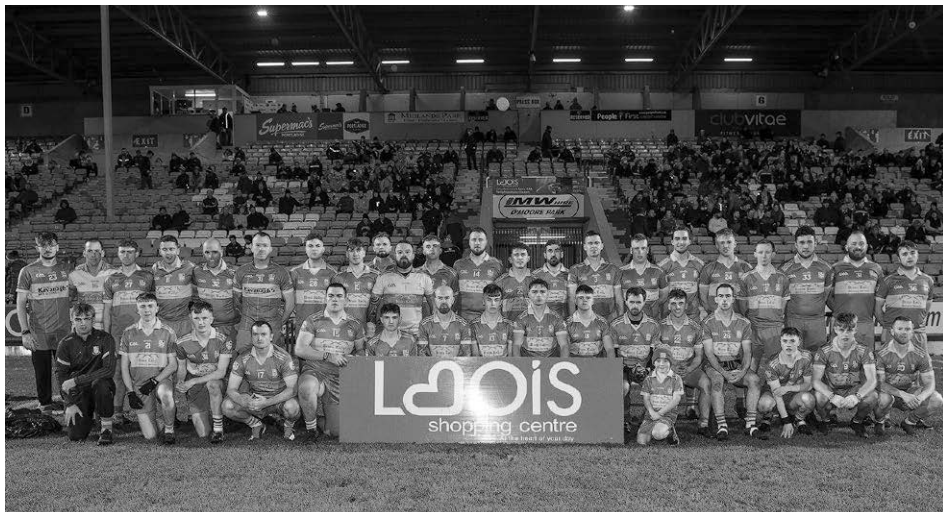
Allianz Hurling League Division 1B

Sunday, 9th. May, 2021 Round 1

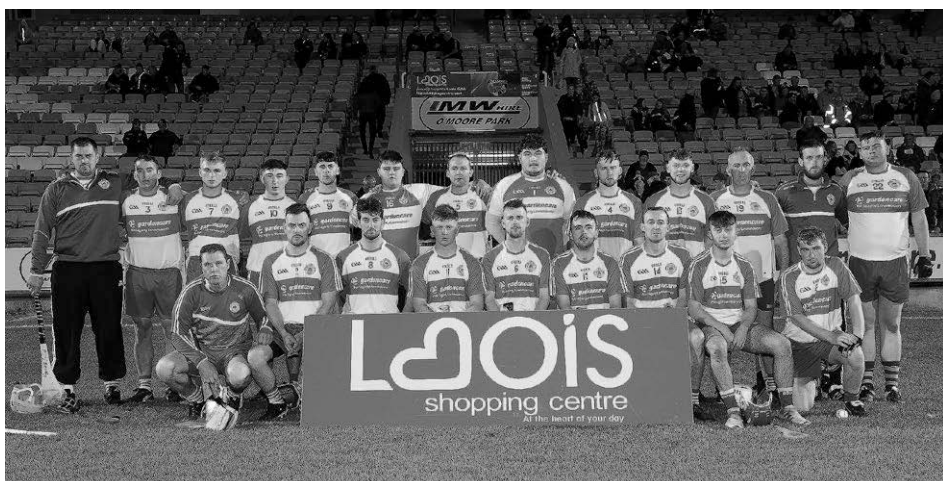
Chadwicks Wexford Park: Wexford 4-17, Laois 0-10

Saturday, 15th. May, 2021 Round 2

MW Hire O'Moore Park: Dublin 0-30, Laois 1-19



Park Ratheniska - Laois Shopping Centre Intermediate & Junior Football Champions 2020 & 2021



Trumera - Laois Shopping Centre Intermediate Hurling Champions 2021

Sunday, 23rd. May, 2021 Round 3
MW Hire O'Moore Park: Clare 2-27, Laois 1-17

Sunday, 6th. June, 2021 Round 4
UPMC Nowlan Park: Kilkenny 1-29, Laois 0-22

Saturday, 12th. June, 2021 Round 5
Corrigan Park: Antrim 2-23, Laois 1-22

Saturday, 14th. July, 2021 Relegation Playoff
MW Hire O'Moore Park: Laois 1-27, Westmeath 0-27

Leinster Senior Hurling Championship

Saturday, 26th. June, 2021 Quarter Final
UPMC Nowlan Park: Wexford 5-31, Laois 1-23

All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship

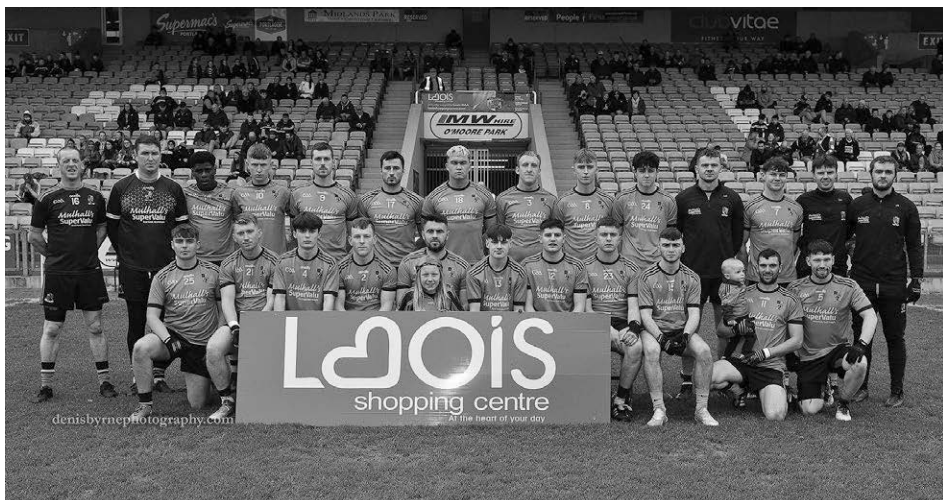
Saturday, 10th. July, 2021 Preliminary Round
Parnell Park: Laois 2-27, Antrim 2-21

Saturday, 17th. July, 2021 Round 1
UPMC Nowlan Park: Waterford 3-23, Laois 2-21

Under 20 Hurling

Our opening game in this championship was against Westmeath in MW Hire O'Moore Park on a lovely summer evening and what an amazing game it turned out to be. I am aware of supporters who left the game prior to half-time, such was the Laois dominance and lead, but a second half resurgence by Westmeath, resulted in Laois requiring to convert a "65" to bring the game to extra time. The period of extra time did not disappoint either, in one of the most exciting games played in the stadium in recent years, the home side emerging deserving but narrow winners.

Next up, Antrim in Navan, and a disappointing Antrim performance, seen Laois continue their scoring spree to record a facile victory. Our record in this grade has been disappointing in recent years, but the tiered nature of this competition was certainly beneficial to our team as we progressed to meet Kilkenny in UPMC Nowlan Park with plenty of confidence. This was an eagerly contested game, an extremely tight affair with Laois the better team for most of the game, however some missed scoring opportunities and debatable refereeing decisions, in particular a sending off in the closing minutes that was later overturned by Leinster Hearings Committee, resulted in Kilkenny emerging narrow winners at the final whistle. Certainly a performance you would be proud of from players and management. The quality of young players coming through is encouraging and hopefully they will continue to commit and be given the opportunity on future senior panels. I continue to be a



Ballyroan Abbey - Laois Shopping Centre Junior Football Champions 2021



Ballypickas - Laois Shopping Centre Junior Hurling Champions 2021

strong advocate of the fact that players should play at their own grade first and if considered to be good enough to be involved on a senior panel, then there is a responsibility and onus on that management team to allow them prepare and play at their own grade also.

Laois GAA, under the direction of our Coaching and Games team, commenced a new initiative in 2021, whereby a Sub-academy programme was set up to cater for our players from our underage panels, whom are in transition, insofar as they are not yet making their under 20 age grade or senior grade. The purpose of the sub-academy is to provide these players with an athlete development programme, which is monitored with regular testing and the “carrot” being that the players will be utilised by our senior management for trial games or should there be defections from senior panels due to injury, etc. to replace such personnel. The initiative is in its infancy, but is most certainly worthwhile and will require tweaking and the support of our Clubs, Team Management and most importantly Coiste Iomána and Peil. I would hope that players from this u20 panel, failing to make the senior panel in 2022 and ineligible for the u20 grade are afforded the opportunity to participate in this programme.

I want to thank Ollie Hally (Manager) along with his management team of Sean Conroy and Andrew Kavanagh (Selectors / Coaching), Liam Kelly (Strength and Conditioning), Ruairi Carroll (Physio) and Martina Henneberry (Team Secretary & Covid Supervisor) for their ongoing efforts with this panel. The majority of the team remain in place for 2022, where they will also be joined by Christy Coughlan as a Coach / Selector and Conor Shannon replacing Liam Kelly in the Strength and Conditioning sector. I also wish to acknowledge Enda Lyons input to this panel, and who was managing this panel for the past two years, prior to having to step away earlier this year due to changed work commitments.

Leinster Under-20 Hurling Championship

Tuesday 29th. June, 2021 Round 1

MW Hire O’Moore Park: Laois 4-33, Westmeath 4-27 AET

Tuesday 6th. July, 2021 Round 2

Páirc Tailteann Navan: Laois 4-27, Antrim 0-08

Tuesday 13th. July, 2021 Quarter Final

UPMC Nowlan Park: Kilkenny 1-18, Laois 1-15

Minor Hurling

Whilst there wasn’t the same expectation as the previous year for this team, there was a hope that we would be at least competitive. The commitment, preparation and training of the panel was excellent and results in a couple of challenge games encouraging.

Our opening championship game was against Kildare in Newbridge. This was a game one would normally expect to win, but hurling in Kildare is under a resurgence at present



*Slieve Bloom - Laois Shopping Centre Junior "B" Football Champions
2021*



*Borris-in-Ossory Kilcotton - Laois Shopping Centre Junior "B" Hurling
Champions 2021*

and with confidence high as a result of their U20 hurlers defeating Wexford the previous evening, and backboned by a large Naas contingent, whom had success at the highest level in Féile na nOg a number of years ago, we were entering a dangerous scenario. Kildare were a far more physically conditioned, skilful team and were deserving winners on the evening. Whilst competitive for periods of the game, Laois never fulfilled the promise that they are capable of and were wasteful in front of goals. It was a disappointing performance and a disappointing result. If lessons are to be learnt from this defeat, it is the requirement of necessary athlete development programmes in our academies, which in fairness has commenced under the tuition of our GDA Jason Coffey and secondly that our clubs must aspire to play in the highest grades available to them or possibly explore our participation in cross border club leagues. One can only hope that the experience gained here in defeat will go on to serve these lads so much better in the future as they progress to U20 and adult grades.

I wish to thank our management team for their endeavours with this panel – Declan Qualter (Manager), Damien Carter, Tadhg Doran and Derek McGrath (Selectors / Coach), Tomas Hassett (Strength and Conditioning), Laura Langton (Physio), Tom Brennan (Logistics and Planning); James Brennan (Stats) and Tim Bonham (Kit). The same management team remain in place for 2022 and I wish to thank Tom Brennan for his efforts in persuading Derek McGrath for his time in coaching this panel of players, which has also been extended to our hurling academies.

Leinster Minor Hurling Championship

Wednesday 7th. July, 2021 Round 2

Newbridge: Kildare 2-16, Laois 0-15

Senior Football

League – Due to the ongoing Covid restrictions, National CCCC decided to divide Division 2 into two regional groups and we found ourselves in Division 2 South with Clare, Kildare and Cork. Following on from the previous year's league, where we got out of jail and were perhaps lucky to survive and with the now more competitive nature of the league with just four teams, our management were under no illusions of the task that lay ahead. However the return of a couple of players whom had not committed the previous year and an excellent pre-season conditioning programme under the tuition of Tom Hargroves, preparations had been good and meant that confidence was high as we headed on the road to Ennis to play Clare in our opening league game.

Unfortunately this game proved to be a real eye opener and really set the trend for the remainder of our year, as a far more determined Clare team ran out deserving and impressive winners. Whilst we were competitive in the opening halves of all our remaining games against Cork and Kildare, we were well beaten in both games in the final quarter and now faced Down in a relegation play-off in Newry. Here we again had chances and in a game



Ballyfin - Laois Shopping Centre Junior "C" Football Champions 2021



*Castletown - Laois Shopping Centre Junior "C" Hurling Champions
2021*

we could possibly have won, but for a few crucial errors, allowing Down back into the game that sentenced us to Division 3 for 2022.

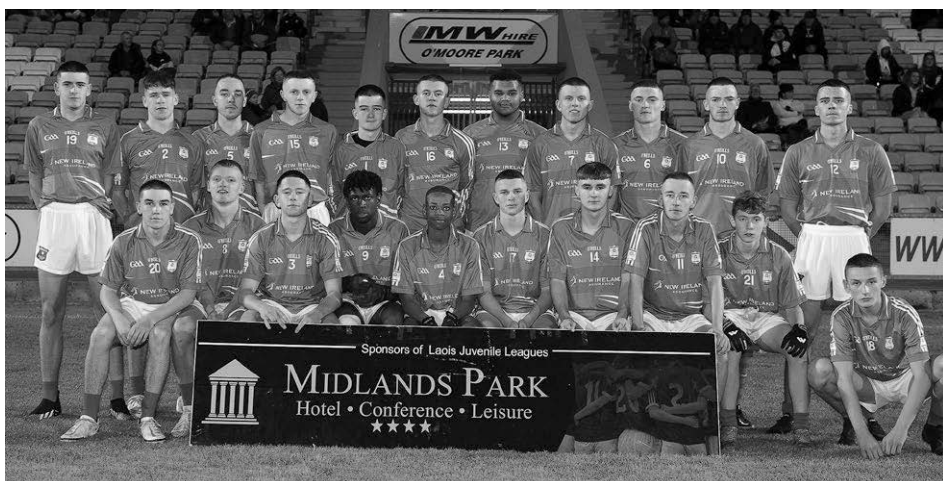
Championship – In our opening game in the Leinster Championship, we played Westmeath in O’Connor Park in Tullamore. In a normal year, one would always be confident in playing Westmeath on neutral territory, however this was no normal year and after a dreadful league campaign, our team was devoid of confidence. In the game, we were well on terms at half-time, but a poor second half performance seen us well beaten by a far superior Westmeath team.

Normally I would use this report to express my disappointment with National CCC in the number of league and championship games afforded to Senior Football in 2021 and particularly that there was no second opportunity or backdoor, similar to hurling, but 2021 was such an *annus horribilis* for our senior footballers, that I don’t have the heart to go down that route. The disappointment in our performances and results remains, and I don’t have the answers, I am not one to apportion blame on our management, I believe the panel were as well prepared as any team that have gone onto represent Laois, whilst many “experts” offer the opinion that players fitness levels were not up to standard, our fitness testing results state otherwise. Our players have also come under criticism, for one that was in attendance at almost all training sessions, their commitment cannot be questioned, which was unfortunately not reflected in their performances on the field. Our Management Committee commissioned a Football Review Report as a result of our 2021 performances, this report didn’t have the answers either, but it will hopefully be the blueprint for the way forward.

In 2022, we play in Allianz Football League Division 3 alongside Antrim, Fermanagh, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Westmeath and Wicklow. As a result of decisions at recent Special Congress, unless we gain promotion from Division 3 or reach a Leinster Senior Football Final, we will play our championship football in Tailteann Cup in 2022, rather than the normal All Ireland Qualifier series. The motions referred to Special Congress in regard to All Ireland Football Championship and in particular Motion “B” was certainly worthy of debate, our players are looking for change and I agree that change is needed, but we must try and get the format right for everyone. Leinster Council GAA has been good for the GAA and has also been very good to Laois and I would be fully supportive of their status being preserved and incorporated in whatever change comes. Having experienced a couple of seasons in the Joe McDonagh Cup, there definitely is different tiers within the GAA system, particularly in relation to media exposure, which without doubt reflects on sponsorship and also Central and Provincial funding. This must also be reflected in any change and I think if the GAA were to adopt and commit to the funding model they used for distribution of funding this year, which was fair to all counties, it will help in influencing any future proposals for change. I am disappointed that GAA hierarchy haven’t acted swiftly to progress potential changes to the All Ireland Football series and I would sincerely



Camross - Midlands Park Hotel Minor Hurling Champions 2021



Graiguecullen - Midlands Park Hotel Minor Football Champions 2021

hope our Uachtaráin Larry McCarthy and Ard Stiurthoir Tom Ryan act quickly and bring forward a compromise proposal to Congress in February.

I wish to take this opportunity to compliment all our players who committed to our county during the year, and whose efforts to play and train in current circumstances indeed merit special thanks. I wish to acknowledge our Covid Supervisor Brian Breen, Dr Simon Honan and the backroom team for their efforts in adherence and compliance to Covid-19 protocols in order to ensure all our players and management preparations were carried out in a safe environment.

At the time of writing this article, I am unaware of the composition of our 2022 senior football panel, I believe there is a number of retirements, many of whom owe the county nothing having served with distinction from the time of their minor success in 2003 and I thank them for the commitment and dedication since and wish them well in their retirement. I believe more have committed to travel in 2022 and are unavailable. It is fair to say that there will be change, which is probably necessary and our incoming panel will be in transition, with many of the younger brigade progressing from our relatively successful Under 20 teams in 2019 and 2020. Our incoming manager Billy Sheehan, who amazingly is still referred to as a Kerryman, having played for our county for in excess of 10 years, and who will be assisted by two other great stalwarts Chris Conway and Brian Beano McDonald and of course Gerry McGill, are under no illusions of the task ahead and I appeal for the support of our clubs that they be afforded the opportunity and the time to build a new team. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge our appointments committee Kieran Kehoe, Greg Ramsbottom, Joe Cunningham and Tom Byrne for their endeavours in the appointment process.

Thanks - Our outgoing management and backroom team are also deserving of our thanks – Mike Quirke (Manager); Paul Lawlor, Maurice Browne and Maurice Horan (Selectors / Coach); Daniel Nelligan (Goalkeeping Coach); Tom Hargroves (Strength and Conditioning Coach); Brian Breen (Liaison Officer); Liam Delaney, Niall Creery and Richard Dunne (Stats / Performance Analysis); Dr Simon Honan; Sean Gaffney (Physiotherapist) and of course Servicing Secretary Ollie Byrne, who was again ably assisted by Martin Kelly and Pat O’Sullivan.

Allianz Football League Division 2 South

Sunday, 16th. May, 2021 Round 1

Cusack Park Ennis: Clare 1-16, Laois 0-10

Saturday, 22nd. May, 2021 Round 2

MW Hire O’Moore Park: Cork 2-12, Laois 0-10

Sunday, 30th. May, 2021 Round 3

MW Hire O’Moore Park: Kildare 2-18, Laois 1-08



Dempsey Family - Gradaim an Uachtaráin Winners 2021



Paddy Purcell - PwC GAA / GPA All Star Nominee

Saturday, 12th. June, 2021 Relegation Playoff
Páirc Esler Newry: Down 2-19, Laois 2-12

Leinster Senior Football Championship

Sunday, 4th. July, 2021 Quarter Final
Bord na Mona O'Connor Park Tullamore: Westmeath 3-20, Laois 1-10

Under 20 Football

Our championship campaign commenced against a much vaunted Wicklow team in Aughrim. It is a game where we seemed to be in full control and if anything in the second half perhaps sat back and invited them on to us. Whilst I am loathe to criticise referees, in understanding the difficulties they endure, but certainly a couple of debatable refereeing decisions in the final minutes of the game favoured the home team, resulting in two goals, which ended our championship dreams in Aughrim once again.

I wish to thank all players who committed to this grade during the last year. There is a significant number of those players eligible for this grade again in 2022 and from viewing our local club championships, there seems to be a number of exciting young players putting their hands up for inclusion at this grade in 2022. As stated previously, I would be an advocate of players playing at their own grade first and whilst a number are likely to be on senior management's radar, the commencement of U20 grade in March will hopefully allow this happen.

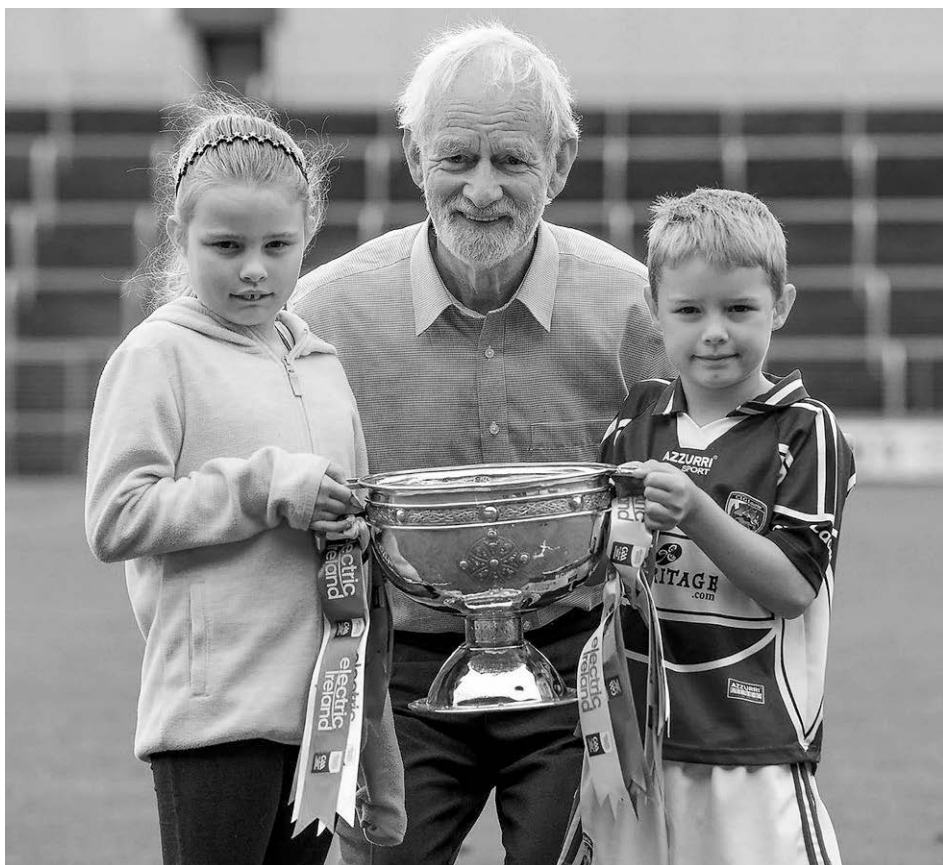
I wish to take this opportunity to thank Eddie Kinsella (Manager); Tom Byrne, Padraig McMahan, Fergal Byron and Seamus Lawlor (Selectors / Coach); Pauraic McEvoy (Strength and Condition under tuition of Tom Hargroves); Eoghan Mealey (Physio); Liam Delaney (Performance Analysis) and Johnny Ramsbottom (Kit). The outgoing management will continue with this squad with the exception of Sean O'Shea replacing Padraig McMahan for 2022.

Eirgrid Leinster Under-20 Football Championship

Thursday 1st. July, 2021 Round 1
Aughrim: Wicklow 2-11, Laois 2-08

Minor Football

Our minor campaign commenced on a Saturday afternoon in July against Wexford in MW Hire O'Moore Park. In a disappointing performance that ended in a draw at full time and again the sides could not be separated in extra time, resulting in a penalty shoot-out, with Laois emerging successful. I am aware of the many reasons for this means to determine games, but it is extremely harsh on the losers. Next game was Louth in Stabannon Parnells ground, and whilst competitive for periods of the game, the home side were better and deserving winners.



Billy Phelan with Walter Hanrahan Cup

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our management team for their endeavours over the past two years - Mark Bates (Manager), PJ Dempsey, Martin Kelly and Paddy Travers (Selectors / Coach); Niall Walsh and Mark Delaney (Strength and Conditioning under tuition of Tom Hargroves); Joseph Walsh (Goalkeeping Coach); Padraig McGuigan (Physio); Eddie Mulligan (Stats); Donna Byrne (Liaison). For 2022, Conor Gorman will take the hot seat, with his management team not fully finalised as I prepare this report.

Leinster Minor Football Championship

Saturday 26th. June, 2021, Round 1

MW Hire O'Moore Park: Laois 1-12, Wexford 0-15 AET – Laois win on penalties

Saturday 10th. July, 2021, Round Q/final

Stabannon Parnells: Louth 4-07, Laois 1-07.

Football Review Committee Report

As previously stated this report was commissioned by our Management Committee arising from our dismal performances at football grades in 2021 and indeed previous years. Prior to commenting on report I wish to take this opportunity to thank Ger Slevin, who chaired the sub-committee and who was ably assisted by Michael Dempsey, Fergal Byron, Chris Conway and Niall Collins. When published it was agreed in general, that the recommendations in the report should apply to hurling as well. The report has been well received and our Management committee have committed to addressing the recommendations raised in the review.

The report made a number of key recommendations, which I will list and provide my views and an update on where we actually are –

1. A Laois GAA development pathway should be created by the end of 2021. This should be aligned with the new 'Gaelic Games Player Pathway' with a well-resourced administration who is fully supportive of the pathway. Action: The Turas Player Pathway is in place and is being rolled out to our Clubs by our Coaching and Games personnel at present. This will be further enhanced with the appointment of Club GPO's in 2022. Our Games Manager is preparing a document of all visits and interaction between Club and GDA's for Coaching and Games activities within last 12 months.
2. A Head of Athletic Development should be appointed by the end of 2021. This role should oversee the sports science elements of the preparation necessary for readying players for the rigors of the intercounty game. Action: A job description and terms of reference has been drawn up for this position, with the intention of making an appointment in 2022 to oversee all athlete development programmes, including Senior Football and Hurling.

3. More competitive games are required at all levels of football within the county. As a result, the Review Group see significant merit in divisional competitions to both increase the number of games and to expose the players to higher standards. Action: This recommendation is being explored. Adult Divisional Competitions in football were successful in 2018, as means of finalising an intercounty senior football panel and less successful in 2019. Underage Divisional Competitions were well organised this year at U14 and U15 football and hurling grades, but there were insufficient player numbers submitted to play at U16 grades. Unlike Kerry, where there are traditional divisional boundaries, we don't really have defined divisional catchment areas, which I think is required to make such competitions a success. The difficulties in providing more games is further exasperated insofar as there are so many dual Clubs and Players and that in rural Clubs there is a crossover of players both grades and that as a result it is the players in the critical U15 and U17 grades that are suffering. The shortage of referees for an increased games schedule is also an issue. It is an area that must be explored by or Fixture Review and CCC, and whilst may not be resolved for 2022 calendar, should be reviewed for 2022 calendar, should be reviewed for 2023.
4. The Review Group recommend that more high-quality coaches are required at underage and development squad level and that available resources should be devoted to making this happen. Action: This is acknowledged and has been a long term problem in attracting suitable mentors to our academies. At present our Coaching and Games staff are filling this void, which is using up a lot of their time and resources, which may be better served in Clubs and Schools. This must be prioritised but we do need the support of our Clubs in sourcing such mentors.
5. Competition structures and game programmes at all levels should be reviewed and discussed as a matter of priority. It is noted that the composition of the Senior Football Championship is currently a matter of concern for many of the stakeholders and an open frank discussion on the reduction of teams is recommended. Action: It is an issue that has been discussed on numerous occasions, but with little appetite for change from Clubs, who seem happy to prioritise winning SFC round 1 and be safe for that year. It is interesting that it was the unanimous view of those interviewed that 16 teams in our SFC is too many. A draft proposal has been forwarded to our Fixture Review committee to reduce the number of teams in our Senior Football Championship to 12 teams, based on a points ranking system over a two year period. So let's see where that takes us!!
6. A fully functioning project management team should be created. This group should be comprised of personnel who possess the knowledge, expertise and understanding of what is required to develop players to the required standard for intercounty football. Action: It has been agreed that Coiste Peil will now become the Football Project Management Team and that this sub-committee should be

a fully functioning committee and would be responsible for bringing forward a number of the aforementioned recommendations and sourcing suitable personnel for mentoring etc. It should be noted that the Chairperson of this Football Project Management Team is the remit of the County Chairperson and is a very important appointment.

7. The project management team, in collaboration with coaching and games staff and other designated personnel as required, should complete an audit of coaching and games in all football clubs within the county to identify areas of weakness and to provide supports as necessary going forward. Action: Club audit being processed by Games Manager.
8. It is recommended that the Laois GAA Management Committee should have a subcommittee to identify commercial opportunities for Laois GAA. Action: At present the Finance sub-committee is the also the responsibility of Laois GAA Management committee and that there is merit in the appointment of a suitable and progressive independent chairperson to this committee for the future, which will also be the remit of the incoming Chairperson and his management committee.
9. Mentoring should continue to be provided to all underage club coaches in line with the Leinster Turas initiative. Action: Coaching and Games provide this initiative to every Club on annual basis.
10. A significant 'red flag' was raised in relation to numbers playing in certain age groups in urban areas. This should be investigated further, and Laois GAA should make supports available to address these concerns. Action: This is a huge area of concern that was also raised in the last Strategic Review report. The appointment of Club GPO's in Portlaoise, Portarlinton and Graiguecullen is critical in addressing these concerns. This process is expected to commence in coming weeks.
11. It is recommended that the COE High Performance gym could certainly benefit from the addition of more technical equipment to help raise current S&C standards. Action: Additional gym equipment, with the support in funding from Laois Gaels, has been purchased in recent weeks, which will hopefully address this concern.

Local Championships

In 2021, CCC experienced one of their most difficult years, where extended Covid restrictions did not allow any games activities for the spring, which was exasperated with a back log of adult and underage championships to conclude from 2020 and a league and championship schedule to be played in 2021. Thankfully as I write this article we are on target to complete our entire schedule and I want to take this opportunity to thank all

Club Officers for their patience and co-operation in completing this mammoth fixture programme.

I want to congratulate all our competition winners, whom are listed in the roll of honour at the end of this report and I wish those advancing to Leinster Club championship the very best of luck in their endeavours.

The following are some of my observations and opinion on our club competitions –

“Split Season” will be in operation in 2022, which will see our Intercounty season commence in January and conclude with All Ireland Finals scheduled for the final two weekends in July. This will likely allow our Senior Club Championships commence in late July, with finals in late September / early October, with Leinster Club Championships starting mid-October. Our present internal fixture making calendar is formulated around our senior football and hurling grades, which take twelve rounds to complete using the alternative weekend rota. In the new normal and as a dual county, and using our estimated exit time from our Intercounty activities and short recovery period for Intercounty players, we will have fourteen weeks to complete both championships, prior to the commencement of Leinster Club championship, and that includes consideration to no games on Electric Picnic weekend and a further free weekend’s grace prior to Leinster Club. I think it is important that this timeline is known with a number of ideas being floated recently in relation to extending championship campaigns in either or both codes. I know a lot of Clubs were satisfied with the mini-Club leagues we operated in 2021, which was basically down to calendar restrictions imposed on us by Covid, This however does not provide anywhere near sufficient games for our players and I would anticipate that Club leagues will revert to status quo and be played without intercounty players during the Intercounty season, with the possible exception that those outside the Inter County match day panel of 26, being released to play with their clubs on those weekends.

Senior Football Championship – I think my thoughts for change in this competition are well known, although results in recent years probably don’t justify it and any time it has been mentioned it has been met with resistance by our Senior Football Clubs. The recently published Football Review Report strongly advocates a reduction in the number of teams participating in our highest grade and that opinion emanates from a vast sector of personnel, including previous managers, players and coaches in all grades, who were all interviewed in compiling this report. Surely as a result it merits debate and at least a trial period. The current format has served us well, but one of the faults I probably have with the present system is the pressure to win your first game, which means you avoid the relegation process. Now I know we all want to win, but I think it has become “unhealthy” in recent times in comparison to the remaining rounds of the competition. As a result of the Football Review Report, I was requested by Management to bring forward a proposal to reduce the number of teams in Senior to twelve teams, which I have forwarded to Fixture Review Committee. This proposal is for this process to be carried out over a two year period, based on a points

results system over the two years, culminating at the conclusion of this period with the 12 teams with the highest number of points in Senior, next 8 teams in Intermediate and next 12 teams in Junior.

Senior Hurling Championship – There has been rumours in recent weeks of moves to extend the number of teams in the Senior Hurling Championship. In my opinion, such a move would only further dilute the competitiveness of this competition, but more importantly to find the weekends in the calendar to accommodate additional rounds in our Senior Hurling Championship would be difficult, that is of course if we wish to accommodate the dual club and player.

Junior Football Championship – The disregard with which some hurling clubs are treating Junior Football championships is selfish and completely unacceptable. This year we had five predominantly hurling Clubs concede games in junior championships, which made a complete mockery of the Junior Football Championship in particular. Our championships were changed many moons ago to accommodate our dual clubs and players and we were all in agreement that alternative weekends were fair and provided sufficient time for each code. This no longer seems to be the case, I was recently chastised in O’Moore Park stand, that I had no respect for football being played in hurling clubs because a request to postpone their football game a full week prior to the hurling was refused. There have been suggestions that these Clubs should play in their own exclusive “football” championship and re-enter Junior Football Championship at quarter or semi-final stage, which is sheer lunacy, as reality is that they do not wish to play football until their hurling activities have concluded, so effectively the championship would never be concluded in time for Leinster Junior Club and again the real Junior Football Club will continue to suffer. Some of these Clubs use Football Championship as a means of holding their Club name. In the past Laois GAA has been sympathetic to Clubs amalgamating for certain codes and as a result they have been accommodated by only paying one levy in our €130 Draw, I would propose that all affiliated Clubs be subject to this levy and it might help focus priorities. I would also introduce a minimum fine of €1,000 into our Rules and Regulations for Clubs who concede games in this manner.

Underage – The grading of Clubs in underage grades, particularly at u13 and u15 grades provokes much controversy and resentment with our Clubs, with a remarkable reluctance to play in the higher grade of championship. Coiste na nOg introduced a “self-grading” type of competition this year and whilst not perfect, it did grade teams on performance and should be retained. I think we have to provide more games for our underage grades, the u15 age grade is a conundrum with some rural and not so rural clubs requiring u13’s to field teams at this grade and a number of u17 teams require u15’s to field teams. There is reluctance from some dual clubs to play both U13 and U17 football and hurling games in the one week. As a result, it will be difficult to provide additional games and clubs may have to make hard decisions. Coaching and Games initiative in providing Divisional competitions at u14 and u15 grades on the conclusion of the underage championships was welcome and

extended the playing season until November. Coiste na nOg organised a Minor Football and Hurling Development League during the period of Intercounty Minor activity, which also helped fill a void and should be retained.

Extra Time / Winner on the Day –This regulation was introduced at Intercounty level in an effort to streamline the fixture schedule and as a result of the adoption of the “spilt season”, it is now a standing order in all Intercounty games, with exception of All Ireland Senior finals. It was introduced into our game regulations this year and whilst we didn’t have to resort to the penalty shoot-out, it did work well and with our alternative weekend structure, it is hugely beneficial to dual clubs and players and should be continued.

Referees and Disciplinary Issues

I wish to take this opportunity to thank our Referees and our Match Officials once again for their assistance and co-operation in completing our Fixture programme to date. As I have stated in previous reports, our referees have a thankless job, but without them, we simply wouldn’t have any games. In 2021 they again stood up to the mantle, with many doubling up on games and other official duties in the same day, just simply to get the games played.

I don’t think any Club Official understands the difficulties incurred and time spent in trying to ensure there is a Referee in attendance at every Fixture we schedule, which is further exacerbated when the Club comes looking to change the fixture, after the Referee has been appointed. It is a fact that we continue to increase our fixture schedule with additional games, but we still work from the same pool of Referees. In working from a pool of less than 45 referees, it is not rocket science to understand the problems we have. Until we have a sufficient pool of Referees to appoint from, it will also be difficult to raise the standards, so rather than continuously complain at meetings about appointments and the quality of refereeing in our Club games, I am requesting each Club in the coming year to provide at least one Referee, who they believe to be both competent and suitable for training next January. There are quite a lot of Clubs whom have no active referee at present and the time is fast approaching where some penalty will have to be imposed on such Clubs.

Unfortunately 2021 again saw an increasing level of reports of verbal abuse towards our match officials from players, mentors, club officials and supporters during the year. This conduct certainly does not help Referee recruitment. CCC imposed suspensions for all reported infractions, both in general and towards our match officials. I’m afraid however that continued reports of this behaviour seem to be in the ascendancy and to be honest the penalties outlined in the Official Guide need to be reviewed if we are to eradicate such behaviour. From my own point of view, the bigger issue is where the culprits refuse to accept the penalties imposed and it is most disappointing to state that both the player and their Club Officials will use any means available to try and get their players and mentors off. I accept referees are human and mistakes are made, and to be honest there are some genuine

cases, but as our Hearings Secretary outlines in her report, there is an urgent educational process or seminar required for our Club Officials in this area.

Our Referee Administrator Tom Clear and his Committee consisting of Vincent Dowling, Danny Gorman, Laurence Phelan, Brian Allen, Alan Langton, Sean Connolly and Mattie Collier are also deserving of our thanks for their efforts and I have no hesitation in admitting that this is the most difficult and thankless position in Laois GAA administration.

“MW Hire” O’Moore Park and “LOETB” Centre of Excellence

As I have previously stated “MW Hire” O’Moore Park is one of our main sources of revenue via our internal club gate receipts and from rental income received from Leinster and Central Council games. In 2021, our venue was again chosen to host numerous inter-county games and with our floodlighting facilities it is now regarded as one of the leading venues in Leinster, with the exception of Croke Park of course. We are thankful to Central and Leinster Councils for placing their trust in us to host such games and the stadiums exposure for such matches certainly supports MW Hires sponsorship input and also that of our other pitch-side advertisers

With the pending development of other stadium in the province, it is imperative that we continue to upgrade our facilities in the grounds to ensure that we can continue to provide spectator friendly facilities. As a result of our financial surplus this year, it has been agreed to replace and install in excess of 2,000 new seats in our stand, at a cost of approximately €100k in the coming months. Fibre optic cable has also been installed in the stadium and Centre of Excellence building this year, which further enhances the communication network in the grounds for press and ticketing systems. Our stand is now over 20 years old and other future project developments required in coming years will include finish replacement and installation of remaining stand seats; upgrading and reviewing disability area, essential maintenance works on our stand roof and erection of a tv gantry on the main terrace. As you are all well aware, we have had extensive problems with our playing surface in O’Moore Park over the past two years, from nematodes to anthracnose foliar disease to nitrogen toxicity, all of which are under an intensive maintenance programme, which will hopefully have the surface back to pristine condition for our opening Allianz League fixtures in 2022.

Our “LOETB” Centre of Excellence continues to be used on a daily basis by our Intercounty teams, our Academies, our Clubs, our Primary and Post Primary schools and for internal Club games, with all pitches standing up to the hardship they endure and this development is without doubt one of the wisest and shrewdest investments Laois GAA has made in recent years. The facilities are further enhanced by a state of the art gym, dressing rooms and team meeting rooms. The installation of a scoreboard kindly sponsored by Colm McEvoy Pitch Maintenance and a recording gantry for videoing games kindly sponsored by Jody Conway Scaffolding have all added to our facilities here in the past year. We have also

received planning permission to erect a Ball Wall on site and await the announcement on Sports Capital funding with anticipation as to when this development may progress. It has been agreed in recent weeks to install a paladin fence on the “SDS” side of “Mick Holohan” Pitch and also develop a pathway, which will dramatically increase viewing space around this pitch for games.

I wish to acknowledge the support of our local Gardai when required on match days, our Event Controller Tom Jones, Safety Officer PJ Kelly, Chief Steward Jody Conway, Frontline Stewards Connie Dunne, Andrew Broderick, Danny Gorman, John Burke, Mick Holohan, Billy Behan, Ann Churchouse, Jim Morrin, Mick Kelly, Ollie Byrne and our numerous other voluntary stewards, without whose co-operation and support we wouldn't be able to host such games.

I must pay tribute to our Groundsman Colm McEvoy for his continued upkeep of our pitches in both the stadium and training centre. It has been a difficult year with the issues with the pitch surface in the stadium, but Colm has spent countless hours prior to every game preparing it for the next day and the next game.

Our Caretakers are deserving of our recognition and thanks, Willie Stackpool for ensuring both OMP and CoE grounds are opened and closed for games and training, whilst Mick Glynn supervises the organisation of meetings and cleaning of CoE on a daily basis. I wish to acknowledge the work of our TUS and PCE Group Scheme team, consisting Dan Sinnott, Eddie Kinsella, Roger McEvoy, Adam and Caoimhe for their continued upkeep of the stadium during the year. Our Development Officer Ger Slevin is “hands on” in his role and ensures a daily work plan is in place for the entire facility.

Finance

At the time of writing this report, I am not quite sure of our exact present financial position, but I am pleased to say it will show a significant surplus for the year. It is perhaps a little embarrassing really as when we sat down to prepare our budgets for the year last March, our finances were in a precarious state and applications for any type of expenditure were treated in an extremely cautious manner. In fact, back then, had we been in a position to clear our creditors, we would have had a considerable bank deficit. Basically the turnaround in our finances can be attributed to increased gate receipts, greater financial support from Croke Park and the Government wage subsidy. Our Cisteoir Martin Byrne will outline in more detail our income and expenditure in our Financial Accounts in his presentation to Convention.

Our present financial position allows us progress a number of developments like the replacement and installation of seats in the stand and erecting a fence on the “Mick Holohan” pitch. However we must continue to be prudent in our expenditure also, with our new loan repayments requiring an annual surplus of €110,000 to meet AIB repayments. The “split season” will also help in some way in reducing Intercounty Team expenditure. The recently

published Football Review report outlines the necessity for a separate committee to explore other potential commercial opportunities in the county and it is something the incoming management committee will no doubt explore, along with reviewing previous fundraisers such as our annual Race Day in Punchestown, our Golf Classic and our “Night at the Dogs & Buster Draw”.

Again our Club County Board Draw continues to be our primary fundraising activity and is essential to both our County and Clubs wellbeing. In 2021 Clubs benefitted to the tune of €828,000, while the County profited to almost €130,000. This Draw continues for 2022, and we have again incorporated a functionality to allow club members or supporters to purchase these tickets online, via www.laoisgaa.ie. Tickets are being distributed here this evening and I would again appeal for your co-operation in making this your Clubs primary fundraiser for 2022.

Our “Club Laois” fundraising initiative was revitalised earlier in the year and rebranded “Laois Gaels”, with the responsibility for same transferred to “Laois Gaels” Chairperson Bryan Breen. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Bryan and his committee consisting of Leo Turley, Seamus Dooley, Michael J Tierney, Paul Dargan and Oonagh Maher for their endeavours with this fundraising initiative and acknowledge the huge work they put into building the platform for “Laois Gaels”. In 2021, the membership returned in excess of €17k profit. This is a very basic fundraising effort, where for a principle payment of €50 membership sees you become a “Laois Gaels” member, whereby you receive a token receipt of a “Laois Gaels” beanie hat, snood and membership card and qualify for a number of different promotional draws during the year. All funds raised go towards providing additional resources for our intercounty panels and to date that includes additional gym equipment, dexa scans for senior panels and an allowance for gear for our academy players. It should also be noted that 10% of all funds raised is transferred into a hardship fund which will be used for such applications and by agreement of both Laois GAA Officers and Laois Gaels committee. I know Bryan and his committee have great ideas to expand “Laois Gaels” in 2022 and I would again appeal for your support by means of at least becoming a member.

National GAA changed their Ticket provider late last year and Ticketmaster are now our new provider for Intercounty games, with their software “Universe”, allowing us to use and manage a ticketing system for Club events. During restrictions earlier this year where we had limited capacities, this again provided additional workloads for our Club Officials in deciding and distribution of tickets for Club games and I again wish to acknowledge their co-operation with this. The new normal has seen the continued use of the Universe Ticketing system for all our main tier championship games, whereby it is intended that all such games in 2022 will be entirely all ticket games, with pre-purchased online tickets the only means of admittance. This will mean cash will no longer be accepted on admittance and will eliminate all the associated risks with cash collections and will also provide a full accountability and transparency on ticket sales for all our club fixtures. This will also apply to all future club and intercounty games under the auspices of Leinster and Central GAA.

To facilitate our Senior Citizens, we will now be operating annual 2022 Senior Citizen Pass and for those patrons whom attend our championship games on a regular basis, we will have annual 2022 Club Championship Pass.

Financial Governance is an issue which has arisen in some Clubs and in other Counties and indeed other sports and is an area our treasurer is very conscious of, particularly from his membership of the National Finance Committee. Special Congress in recent weeks passed the requirement of an Audit and Risk Committee in every county. The objective of this committee is to support the County Treasurer and County Management Committee in all financial matters and its role is primarily one of oversight, whereby it's remit will include the promotion and monitoring of good corporate governance and risk management practices by Laois GAA and all its subsidiaries, which may include anybody that raises funds in the name of Laois GAA. Whilst on this topic, I would remind clubs the importance of submitting their annual financial year end accounts to Laois GAA, in accordance with their Club Constitution.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our Treasurer Martin Byrne for his continued expertise and professionalism in this area and also for his commitment and dedication to Laois GAA, all I must state on a volunteer basis.

“Foireann”

The GAA Games Management System or Servasport, as it is probably more referred to, was replaced with a new system called Foireann (which is the Irish word for Team) during the year and to be honest it was the bane of every Club Secretary's life, including my own, for a number of months. It is my belief that this system was introduced nationally without any consultation with grass roots and perhaps the most frustrating aspect of its launch and introduction was the absence of a working helpdesk, to answer the many queries associated with the new system. Fortunately all Clubs are now operating the system and when all the functionalities are operational on this new system, it will certainly reduce the administrations duties of our Club Secretaries and Registrars, by providing better technology and simpler processes that have compliance, best practice and efficiency built in. It is intended additional functionality such as Affiliations, Competition Entry, Challenge Game Approvals, Electronic records of Teams, Substitutions and Electronic Match Reports will be delivered on this system in time.

Corporate Trusteeship

One of the more regular topics that I get calls on throughout the year is Trustees and that there is now a requirement for all Clubs to update their trustees. Note it is imperative that any Club with a deceased Trustee should update their Club Trusteeship as a matter of urgency, as this information will be required in grant applications etc. The Corporate Trusteeship is now a genuine option for Clubs when considering appointment of Trustees to Clubs.

The Corporate Trustee is a separate legal entity, a Trust Company, called “Iontaobhas Corparáideach Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Teoranta”, set up by the GAA. The Trust Company holds the property for and on behalf of the Club. Clubs can now opt to hold property through the Corporate Trustee. Holding property through the Corporate Trustee does not affect the ownership in any way but can have advantages in the way of continuous amendments to the title is avoided when trustees die or retire. This will save on Legal costs to the Club. This also takes the pressure off individual Trustees and avoids the publishing of names should court proceedings take place. The Corporate Trustee is optional.

Our new Training Centre is held in this Trust Company and as part of compliance with our A.I.B. loan, O’Moore Park trusteeship is also being transferred into this Trust Company. In future where there is a requirement for change to Club Declaration of Trusts, Provincial and County representation will also be through this Corporate Trust Company.

There are three options available to clubs:

OPTION 1- Clubs may elect to do nothing and to continue to hold Club property through personal Trustees.

OPTION 2- Clubs may elect to introduce a partial change in that case property is held by a combination of personal trustees and the Corporate Trustee.

OPTION 3- Clubs may elect to have property held only through the Corporate Trustee.

Should Clubs want to know more information or wish to appoint the Corporate Trustee, they should contact either myself or John Browne or Michael Reynolds in Leinster Council, prior to making any arrangements with solicitors.

Local Media

All our games in the county got more than their fair share of coverage during the year and for this I thank the local GAA correspondents in our local editions of Laois Today, Laois Nationalist and Leinster Express. Although I may not always be in favour of everything they put on ink, I think once it has been researched and is accurate, that we are indeed fortunate to have press personnel, who are passionate about Gaelic games and play a role in spreading our message and promoting our games. Denis Byrne does a magnificent job on photographs and enhance the work of our scribes while our PRO Paul Dargan further compliments this with his match day photo albums which too are very well received.

Laois GAA TV was an initiative from Michael Egan and endorsed by Laois GAA, which Paul Dargan and his committee use as the platform for the live streaming of our championship games. I want to take this opportunity to thank Paul Dargan, our principle commentators Pat O’Sullivan and Tomas Moore and their array of co-commentators for their contribution to the live streaming of our games. This was complimented by our videographer John Moynihan All Rounder Sport whom also provides the payroll for all this to happen. I think the service and production has been excellent and while we ceased

operating streaming for a period prior to our senior semi-finals, there is a demand for the service and it continues to be financially viable, even with the return of stadium capacities. It is probably debatable as to its effect on attendances at our County finals, particularly with some public house establishments actively promoting that the streaming will be shown live on their premises. At the moment it appears as if live streaming will be here to stay, unless of course future National broadcasting deals due to be negotiated in 2022 actively impact on this practice.

We continue to embrace social media with 31,900 Twitter Followers, 13,400 Facebook Fans and 9,353 on Instagram. Almost all our Inter County and local Senior Championship games are carried live on Twitter. Social Media is a powerful communication tool and when used in the appropriate manner to deliver the message to our vast audience, unfortunately however it continues to provide a platform for those keyboard warriors to insult our players, mentors and officials, all of whom are amateurs representing their counties to the best of their ability.

Eoin Culleton continues his compilation of the detailed record analysis of all Laois GAA Intercounty teams and is deserving of mention and you will regularly see snippets of his work appearing on twitter during the Intercounty season. All our website and social media work is a tribute to the tremendous work of our PRO Paul Dargan and his PR Committee.

Coaching and Games

Coaching and Games will be dealt with more comprehensively later in this report, but I would like to pay tribute and acknowledge the work of our Games Manager Mike Henchy and his GDA team consisting of Donie Brennan, Jason Coffey, Conor Shannon and also Tadhg Doran who joined us from Leinster Council GAA for periods of the year. Since Mike took on this role, he has worked tirelessly on issues arising from the Strategic Review report and comprehensively engages with Clubs in their Underage sectors. Our biggest difficulty in this sector is that we are totally under resourced with our Coaching and Games personnel engaged in Coach Education, delivery of Turas Club support programmes, Primary School coaching, Post Primary School athlete development programme and Talent Academy coaching and athlete development programmes.

It is anticipated that the new GPO model will be operational from early 2022. This initiative is a follow on from the East Leinster project incorporating Wexford, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath and Louth, and is presently being rolled out to the remaining Leinster Counties. The purpose of the project is to offer our Clubs an improved service. At present Leinster Council are employing 42 GPO's throughout 91 Clubs in the province. The cost of a GPO is €33,000, which is operated on a shared basis between Club, County and Leinster GAA, with the GPO being managed by our Games Manager on a daily basis. The focus of the GPO within the Club will be Primary School Coaching, with the purpose to recruit players for the Club; establish "After School" Coaching initiatives in your

Club ground; establish Club Nurseries (U4 –U6); assist Club through formal and informal Coach Education; assist in organisation and running of Club Camps and Cúl Camps; providing additional and extra games opportunities for young players; develop Club Player pathway and assist with Athletic Development program for teenage players. At present we have expressions of interest from 26 of our Clubs, which would require the employment of 10 GPO's to cover this demand. These positions are currently being advertised. This project has the potential to revolutionise coaching and games within the county and will be a welcome addition to the clubs whom engage in the process.

The schools of Laois both Primary and Post Primary have also suffered with games activities due to Covid restriction, but thankfully this has now resumed and they deserve our thanks for the work they do to promote our games within their jurisdictions. We have developed an excellent relationship with Cumann na mBunscol who do tremendous work in our primary schools.

I also want to acknowledge Laois County Council for their generous financial contribution towards the employment of our GDA's.

Sponsors

I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Matty Walsh and his company MW Hire Group for their generous sponsorship of all our County teams. MW Hire has been part and parcel of Laois GAA now since 2010 and was renewed in 2020 to include the naming rights for O'Moore Park stadium until 2022. I sincerely hope his company will get the exposure they deserve and desire from our association with them.

Our thanks to Ted Berry and his company The Magni Group for their continued support as our associate jersey sponsor.

Our Championships and Leagues are kindly sponsored by Laois Shopping Centre and again we are entirely appreciative of Kevin Doyle and his company for their generous sponsorship.

Midland Park Hotel is sponsor of all our Juvenile Championship and Leagues and our thanks are extended to Colm Neville and Dara Cruise for this sponsorship.

Our appreciation and thanks are also extended to –

- O'Neill's, our official gear sponsors, and my thanks to Tony Towell and Carol Carr for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the year;
- LOETB (Laois Offaly Educational Training Board), sponsors of our Centre of Excellence;
- Downey's Autostop, suppliers of our kit vans in both Football and Hurling and hurling courtesy car and will continue for 2022;

- Joe Mallon Motors, suppliers of our football courtesy car;
- ENVVA, local company who will carry their brand on our Talent Academies and Underage Divisional Competitions and I wish to acknowledge Richard Kennedy for his support in sourcing this sponsorship;
- GAIN / Glanbia, Training Pitch Sponsorship;
- Tom Brennan, Trivium Vet / Q1 Scientific, Training Pitch Sponsorship;
- Cathal Jackson, Training Pitch Sponsorship;
- Dwyer Transport for their “Man of the Match” sponsorship and our appreciation to PJ and Elva Kelly for this sponsorship;
- Gerry Browne Jewellers and Colm McEvoy Pitch Maintenance for their respective Scoreboard sponsorship in O’Moore Park stadium and Centre of Excellence.

and finally to all companies and persons who contributed to Laois GAA in some type of sponsorship during the past year.

I would appeal to all our GAA patrons to support our various sponsors in whatever means they can and hopefully their faith in Laois GAA will be justifiably rewarded with the success their investment deserves.

Strategic Review 2018-2020

Our Strategic Review was launched in January 2018 and covered the period up to and including 2020 County Convention. I was a strong advocate of this Strategic Review and in acknowledging that there is a lot of good about the GAA in Laois, I believed the review was necessary in that there are a lot of areas which must be improved, particularly in view of the many challenges being encountered by the Association in the County and especially in our Clubs.

The Chairperson of that review Nickey Brennan and his committee have conducted an intensive review of the recommended priority actions highlighted in the Strategic Review in recent weeks and will present these findings to County Committee or Convention in the coming weeks.

I would suggest that a further Strategic Review process be considered to focus our direction on achievable goals and objectives to address the fundamental strategic challenges we are likely to face in the coming years.

Amendments to Byelaws

There is a number of Motions on the Clár this evening to amend our Byelaws, which have been brought forward by Laois GAA on behalf of a sub-committee including Hearings

Chairperson John Hanniffy and Secretary Adrainne McCarthy and our Chairperson Peter O'Neill and myself, that need to be addressed. Briefly I will offer an explanation as to the reasons for their inclusion and the reason change is required;

Byelaw 1 and 2 (reference Rule 3.11 (a), TO 2021) is amended to reflect the changes made at Special Congress to the Development Officer role, which has been renamed and divided into two different roles – County Safety and Facilities Officer (who will continue to be an appointed member of Management and County Committee) and Planning and Training Officer (who will also be an appointed member of County Committee).

Byelaw 3 - (reference Rule 3.18 (b) & 3.20, TO 2021) is amended for the inclusion of sub-committees to reflect the changes to the Development Officer role, i.e. Safety and Facilities Committee and a Planning and Training Committee. There is also an additional sub-committee, Audit and Risk Committee, which was also passed at Special Congress.

Byelaw 6 - (reference Rule 6.4 (a) & (b), TO 2021) deals with Transfers within the County in accordance with Rule and whilst basically tidying up the wording of the Byelaw, the real change is the removal of “Proximity to Club Base” from the criteria used by the CCC in consideration of Transfer applications.

Byelaw 7 - (reference Rule 6.8 (c) & (d), TO 2021) which effectively deals with “Permission to Play” or “Playing Restrictions” as it is now referred to in Rule. This rule effectively deals with allowing permissions for players from an exclusive football club play with a dual club, or vice versa, subject to restrictions in County Byelaws and also deals with “isolated” players, which is effectively dealing with underage players without a club in any particular code or grade. This Rule was amended at Congress in 2019 and as a county we didn't update our Byelaws accordingly. This was further highlighted in a DRA decision in 2020 where we were effectively told to put our house in order. I think the revised text is explanatory and fair.

Byelaw 5 - (reference Rule 6.4 (a) & (b), TO 2021) which effectively deals with “Attachment to First Club” and has arisen as a result of a case taken to the DRA by parents on behalf of their children earlier this year. Whilst only a summary decision on the case has been released by the DRA, it is our interpretation that CCC can no longer adjudicate on applications for Attachment to First Club, to as they do with Transfers and in this case we are proposing that a child playing in the u13 grade may attach to a club within his catchment area or where he has attended primary school for at least one term. In the past Primary School and Parentage Rule applications for attachment to first club were adjudicated on by CCC.

It is a source of extreme frustration that the DRA have not released a written decision for DRA 09/2021 at the time of writing this article. The DRA was initiated many years ago as an arbitration tribunal to deal with all disputed GAA matters and effectively end the practice of Players and Clubs seeking High Court injunctions to overturn suspensions or other related matters. I have to admit that while it can be an intimidating process and

whilst their decisions at times are unpredictable and are normally based on common law in association with GAA rules. The fact that this tribunal convened on 13 July 2021, a summary decision circulated on 11 August 2021 and that no party has received a full written decision since will certainly not enhance the arbitration process. Our interpretation of the summary decision is that whilst we are of the belief that CCC can no longer adjudicate on applications for Attachment to First Club, it is also our interpretation that players can only Attach themselves to Clubs within their Catchment Area, otherwise they are leaving both themselves open to objection, along with the Club Officers of the Club that has played them outside their Catchment Area.

Camogie and Ladies Football

I want to acknowledge the role of our sister organisations in their promotion of our games, Ladies Football and Camogie. Our Ladies Football team advanced to the All Ireland LGFA Intermediate Championship semi-final, losing narrowly to Wexford, whilst our Laois Camogie team acquitted themselves well in the All Ireland Intermediate Camogie series. In recent years there has been a greater level of co-operation with both associations, with both afforded the opportunity to play their respective adult county finals in “MW Hire” O’Moore Park in recent years and I want to congratulate their respective champions St Conleth’s in LGFA, whilst we await the outcome of the Camogie final between Camross and St Brigid’s.

Na Mairbh

Every year sees the passing of some great GAA people and this year has been no exception. On behalf of Laois GAA I would like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest sympathy to the following families that contributed so much to our association at both club and county and readily come to mind –

Terry O’Connell and Joe O’Toole, Annanough; Jimmy Farrell, Ballylinan; Jack Murphy, Ballyroan Abbey; Joe Dooley (former long serving Steward in O’Moore Park), Jim Fahy and Joe Phelan, Borris in Ossory; Lar Cuddy, Camross; Sean O’Sullivan, Castletown; Tom Flynn, Clonaslee St Manmans; Liam Carroll, Courtwood; Conor Montague, Emo; Jerry Dowling, Errill; Sinead Nolan, Graiguecullen; Arnold Mahon and Tom Brennan, Killeshin; Mick Keogh, O’Dempsey’s; Peter Carroll (former O’Moore Park Groundsman & Vice Chairperson of Laois Coiste na nOg); PJ Nealon, Martin “Bunny” Carroll, John Duggan, Tom Lalor and Billy Dargan, Portlaoise; Tony Kennedy, Shanahoe; Danny Owens and Seamus Fleming, St Joseph’s; Des Mulhare and Teddy Delaney, Stradbally; Jim Fogarty and Larry Mahony The Harps; Paddy Dowling, The Heath; John Dalton (former Laois GAA Vice Chairperson and Leinster Council representative), Timahoe and also to the families of the wider GAA community whom have been bereaved during the year by the loss of those dear to them.

Go ndeanfaidh Dia trocaire ar a nanamacha.

Congratulations

I wish to acknowledge some outstanding achievements by our members in other sectors of the association during the year:

- Kilcavan Instrumental group comprising of Brian Ryan, Sophia Ryan, Alain Carroll, Senan Moore and Noel Stapleton on their success in the Leinster Scór Ceol Uirlise Ghrúpa competition in Gibbstown in October 2021 and we wish them the very best of luck in the All Ireland series in Claremorris on 20th. November;
- Dempsey Family from St Joseph's Club on being the recipients of Gradaim an Uachtaráin 2021. A very well deserved award to a family steeped in GAA tradition whom have contributed significantly to both their Club and County throughout the years. A hearty congratulations to Martin, Michael, PJ, Sean, Betty (Moore), Margaret (Farrelly) and Ann (Smith).
- Paddy Purcell Rathdowney Errill on his PWC GAA/GPA All Star nomination, another worthy recipient for his displays in the County jersey in 2021 and we wish him the very best of luck at the All Stars Banquet in Convention Centre Dublin on Friday 10th. December.
- Ronan Coffey Portarlinton who was named last January as Eirgrid U20 Top 20 Performer for his performances in the 2020 Leinster U20 Football Championships, where Laois were defeated by Dublin in the Leinster Final.
- Billy Phelan St Lazarian's Abbeyleix clubman who finally getting got his hands on the Walter Hanrahan Cup last Saturday in O'Moore Park, after captaining the Laois minor hurlers to their last Leinster title in 1964, but there was no presentation in the aftermath of the provincial final for reasons that are still unclear. This was put right when it was presented to him at half-time of the delayed 2020 Leinster MHC final between Kilkenny and Offaly by Leinster GAA Chairman Pat Teehan having waited 57 years to do so.

Cathaoirleach Peter O'Neill

I wish to thank my Cathaoirleach Peter O'Neill for his leadership and continued support during the past four years and acknowledge the huge commitment and dedication he has given to the Association in our County during that term and indeed in previous Officer roles which included Coiste na nOg, Coiste Peil and Coaching and Games. He has also served at National level as Cathaoirleach of National Feile committees on two occasions. During his term he has overseen our Senior Hurlers winning the Joe McDonagh Cup, our Senior Footballers going from Division Four to Two and holding that status until our relegation this year, our U20 Footballers reach back to back Leinster finals, defeated by two excellent Dublin teams. Off the pitch he was instrumental in finishing the work started by Gerry Kavanagh in completing our Centre of Excellence, which is undoubtedly one of

the best in the country. In 2019, he was responsible for the upgrade and retro fitting of our O'Moore Park floodlighting system to LED lighting and embracing biodiversity with the plantation of wild flowers and native trees, which will result in significant energy savings and which was achieved at little cost to Laois GAA. Unlike previous Chairperson, Peter is not seeking further election to any other management position and I just want to say thanks again and wish him and his family the very best of good fortune in whatever other route he pursues.

I wish to pay tribute to Paul Dargan, our PRO, whom has also decided not to seek re-election to this position for 2022, due to work and personal circumstances. Paul in his short term in this role has contributed massively to the promotion of our games in the county and in particular his match day albums were always something to look forward after games. He was also instrumental in developing the production of our live streaming platforms in the last two years, which have proved to be a huge success. Again I want to thank him for his huge service to Laois GAA.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge and thank Laurence Phelan, whom resigned earlier this year and who made a huge contribution to Laois GAA affairs during his term as Cathaoirleach Coiste Peil. Whilst committed to his appointed role, Laurence also took a very active role in successfully developing the commercial opportunities within our County and was largely responsible for sourcing new sponsorship deals and significantly increasing our commercial revenue during this time.

I would state that a number of other members of our Management Committee were also considering in stepping down from their positions at this Convention, but thankfully have reconsidered for at least another year. I want to put on record that all members of our Management and indeed our sub-committees give their time and travel on a voluntary basis and take up these positions as a result of their passion for Laois GAA and in an effort to progress the fortunes of Laois GAA and its Clubs. We have been lucky in our County, that many of the people in some of these positions are more than qualified through their professional careers to carry out their elected or appointed roles. Yet at times during the year, they are subject to vile online abuse from the keyboard warrior fraternity and even at our County Committee meetings, we have certain delegates pursue their own personal agendas. In my opinion County Committee meetings are no longer constructive and if we continue the same road, we will continue to lose more good people and we will find it far more difficult to attract the calibre of personnel required to fill these important Management positions.

Buíochas

As I conclude my review of 2021 and my observations about the state and structures of our games, I want thank all Club Officers, Players and Voluntary workers who have assisted Laois GAA during the year and who continue to keep our organisation in the County on sound footing through their hard work, co-operation and goodwill during this pandemic.

I wish thank my fellow Executive Members, CCC, Hearings and our other sub Committees for their advice, help and co-operation during the year, each in their own right through their tireless effort and work ethic greatly contribute to the smooth running of the Association within the County. All sub Committee reports are outlined later in this booklet.

Our Office Administrator, Síle Burbage, joined us during the summer and deserves special praise for the efficient manner she carries out her duties. She has an excellent relationship with our Club Secretaries, and her administration and routine work in dealing with Referee appointments and reports, handling Ticket Sales, and her many other administrative duties greatly reduces the work of yours truly.

Our sincerest thanks go to Michael Reynolds and his staff in Comhairle Laighean CLG for their constant courtesy, support and accessibility. Similarly, Tom Ryan and his staff in Croke Park headquarters are also deserving of our thanks.

In conclusion, I wish you all an enjoyable and successful 2021.

Le meas

Niall Mac Laitimh

Runaí CLG Laoise Nollaig 2021

Roll of Honour 2020 & 2021

2020 Adult Championship

Laois Shopping Centre Senior Hurling Championship Final (14/08/2021):

Clough Ballacolla 1-22
Borris in Ossory Kilcotton 1-17

Laois Shopping Centre Premier Intermediate Hurling Championship Final (13/08/2021):

The Harps 1-18; Portlaoise 2-12

Laois Shopping Centre Intermediate Hurling Championship Final (18/06/2021):

Rathdowney Errill 2-26; Trumera 0-13

Laois Shopping Centre Junior Hurling Championship Final (20/06/2021):

The Harps 1-16; Portlaoise 1-12

Laois Shopping Centre Junior “B” Hurling Championship Final (20/06/2021):

Camross 3-20; Portlaoise 1-10

Laois Shopping Centre Senior Football Championship Final (15/08/2021):

Portarlington 1-15; Graiguecullen 0-07

Laois Shopping Centre Junior Football Championship Final (25/06/2021):

Park Ratheniska 1-08; Portlaoise 0-09

Laois Shopping Centre Junior “B” Football Championship Final (08/08/2021):

Spink 1-14; Graiguecullen 0-13

Laois Shopping Centre Junior “C” Football Championship Final (18/06/2021):

Kilcotton 3-08; Colt 1-03

2020 Underage

Midlands Park Hotel U13 Hurling Championship (20/06/2021):

Castletown 3-12; Clough Ballacolla 0-11

Midlands Park Hotel U13 “B” Hurling Championship (21/06/2021)

St Fintan’s Mountrath 6-04
Park Ratheniska Timahoe 0-16

Midlands Park Hotel U13 “C” Hurling Championship (17/07/2021):

Portarlington 4-14; St Pauls 1-07

Midlands Park Hotel U15 Hurling Championship (13/06/2021):

Camross 5-16; Clough Ballacolla 0-15

Midlands Park Hotel U15 “B” Hurling Championship (19/06/2021):

St Fintan’s Mountrath 2-15
Park Ratheniska Timahoe 1-11

Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football Championship:

Portlaoise 2-08; Portarlington 1-05

Midlands Park Hotel U13 “B” Football Championship:

Mountmellick 8-09; Ballylinan 1-09

Midlands Park Hotel U13 “C” Football Championship:

Crettyard 3-10; Clough Ballacolla 1-03

Midlands Park Hotel U15 Football Championship (16/06/2021):

St Joseph’s 5-11; Ballylinan 3-04

Midlands Park Hotel U15 “B” Football Championship (16/06/2021):

Ballyroan Abbey 3-13; Killeshin 3.07

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football
Shield Final (22/06/2021):**

St Joseph's 1-13; Killeshin 0-05

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 "C" Hurling
Shield Final (16/06/2021):**

Na Fianna 3-08; Raithin Og 1-11

2021 Adult Championship

**Laois Shopping Centre Senior Hurling
Championship Final (07/11/2021):**

Clough Ballacolla 1-25

Borris in Ossory Kilcotton 2-21

**Laois Shopping Centre Premier
Intermediate Hurling Championship
Final (07/11/2021):**

Ballinakill 2-14; Ballyfin 1-14

**Laois Shopping Centre Intermediate
Hurling Championship Final
(22/10/2021):**

Trumera 1-19; Clough Ballacolla 1-16

**Laois Shopping Centre Junior Hurling
Championship Final (23/10/2021):**

Ballypickas 3-11; St Lazerian's Abbeyleix 2-09

**Laois Shopping Centre Junior
"B" Hurling Championship Final
(09/09/2021):**

Borris in Ossory Kilcotton 0-15

Rosenallis 1-07

**Laois Shopping Centre Junior
"C" Hurling Championship Final
(08/09/2021):**

Castletown 0-12

Clonaslee St Manmans 0-08

**Laois Shopping Centre Senior Football
Championship Final (14/11/2021):**

Portarlinton 4-09;

Portlaoise 0-06

**Laois Shopping Centre Intermediate
Football Championship Final**

(29/10/2021):

Park Ratheniska 1-15; Mountmellick 0-12

**Laois Shopping Centre Junior Football
Championship Final (14/11/2021): AET**

Ballyroan Abbey 2-18

Barrowhouse 1-10

**Laois Shopping Centre Junior
"B" Football Championship Final
(08/08/2021):**

Slieve Bloom 2-08; Stradbally 1-07

**Laois Shopping Centre Junior
"C" Football Championship Final
(14/09/2021):**

Ballyfin 0-11; Park Ratheniska 0-09

2021 Adult League

**Laois Shopping Centre ACHL Div 1A
Final (01/08/2021):**

Rathdowney Errrill 2-26

Borris in Ossory Kilcotton 1-20

**Laois Shopping Centre ACHL Div 1B
Final (30/07/2021):**

Rathdowney Errill 3-17

Clough Ballacolla 2-14

**Laois Shopping Centre ACHL Div 2
Final (31/07/2021):**

The Harps 1-22; Trumera 0-21

**Laois Shopping Centre ACHL Div 3
Final (29/07/2021):**

St Lazerians Abbeyleix 2-19; Portlaoise 0-14

**Laois Shopping Centre ACHL Div 4
Final (29/07/2021):**

Camross 4-21; Ballinakill 0-19

**Laois Shopping Centre ACHL Div 5
Final (31/07/2021):**
Castletown 2-14; Colt Shanahoe 0-01

**Laois Shopping Centre ACFL Div 1A
Final (24/08/2021):**
Portarlinton 2-09; Portlaoise 2-08

**Laois Shopping Centre ACFL Div 1B
Final (20/08/2021):**
Emo 3-14; Arles Killeen 2-09

**Laois Shopping Centre ACFL Div 2
Final (08/08/2021):**
Rosenallis 3-15; Mountmellick 3-12

**Laois Shopping Centre ACFL Div 3A
Final (21/08/2021):**
Ballyfin 2-14; Killeslin 0-04

**Laois Shopping Centre ACFL Div 3B
Final (30/07/2021):**
Ballyroan Abbey 5-15; Rosenallis 1-09

**Laois Shopping Centre ACFL Div 4
Final (28/07/2021):**
The Harps 0-15; Emo 0-07

**Laois Shopping Centre ACFL Div 5
Final (31/07/2021):**
Ballyroan Abbey 4-17
Park Ratheniska 1-06

2021 Underage

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Hurling
Championship Final 22/08/2021):**
The Harps 1-09
Park Ratheniska Timahoe 1-06

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Hurling
Championship “B” Final (21/08/2021):**
Borris in Ossory Kilcotton 2-11
Rathdowney Errill 1-10

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Hurling
Championship “C” Final (14/08/2021):**

Clonaslée St Manmans 3-06
Clonad 3-01

**Midlands Park Hotel U15 Hurling
Championship Final 11/09/2021):**
The Harps 4-16; St Fintan’s Mounrath 3-05

**Midlands Park Hotel U15 Hurling
Championship “B” Final
(18/08/2021):**
Portarlinton 2-15; Clough Ballacolla 0-14

**Midlands Park Hotel U17 Hurling
Championship Final (01/10/2021):**
Camross 1-10; St Lazerian’s Abbeyleix 0-12

**Midlands Park Hotel U17 Hurling
Championship “B” Final (22/08/2021):**
Na Fianna 3-11
Park Ratheniska Timahoe Gaels 2-10

**Minor Hurling Development League
Group 1 Winners:**
Park Ratheniska Timahoe

**Minor Hurling Development League
Group 2 Winners:**
Camross

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football
Championship Final (28/08/2021):**
Park Ratheniska Spink 1-10
Portarlinton 1-08

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football
Championship “B” Final (28/08/2021):**
Stradbally Parish Gaels 2-09
Na Fianna Og 3-03

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football
Championship “C” Final (28/08/2021):**
Crettyard 2-06; Kilcavan The Rock 1-05

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football
Development Competition Final
(28/08/2021):**
Ballyroan Abbey “B” 6-05
Portarlinton “B” 1-01

**Midlands Park Hotel U15 Football
Championship Final (18/08/2021):**
St Joseph’s 3-14; Stradbally Parish Gaels 0-08

**Midlands Park Hotel U15 Football
Championship “B” Final (18/08/2021):**
Killeshin 4-09; St Pauls 2-04

**Midlands Park Hotel U17 Football
Championship Final (29/08/2021):**
Graiguecullen 2-12; Na Fianna Og 1-09

**Midlands Park Hotel U17 Football
Championship “B” Final (06/10/2021):**
Stradbally Parish Gaels 1-18
Rosenallis 0-11

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football
Shield Final:**
O’Dempsey’s 1-13; Portlaoise 1-07

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football “B”
Shield Final (30/08/2021):**
St Pauls 2-09; The Heath 1-02

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Football “C”
Shield Final (10/09/2021):**
Clonaslee St Manmans 6-10
Portlaoise “B” 1-05

**Midlands Park Hotel U15 Football
Shield Final (11/08/2021):**
Graiguecullen 4-06; Portlaoise 3-06

**Midlands Park Hotel U15 Football
Shield Final (17/08/2021):**
The Heath 9-13
Mountmellick Parish Gaels 1-03

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Hurling
Shield Final (21/08/2021):**
Clough Ballacolla 3-05; Rosenallis 3-04

**Midlands Park Hotel U13 Hurling “B”
Shield Final (21/08/2021):**
Ballyfin 5-14; Ballinakill Ballypickas 5-12

**Midlands Park Hotel U15 Hurling
Shield Final (11/09/2021):**
Rathdowney Errill 2-14
Raheen Parish Gaels 0-06

**Minor Football Development League
Group 1 Winners:**
Mountmellick Gaels

**Minor Hurling Development League
Group 2 Winners:**
The Heath

Sub - Committees Reports

Coiste Na nÓg Laoise Annual Report 2021

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to making the best of what has been another challenging year for Laois GAA. At the outset of 2021, it was uncertain we would have any meaningful games programme to look forward to. With the ongoing backdrop of the Covid 19 Pandemic restrictions it was satisfying to successfully complete both 2020 and 2021 competitions by mid-Autumn.

In what was a difficult year, it could be argued that not enough games were provided in certain age grades, as we had to dispense with leagues in many age grades, the exception being under 17. Clubs need to be cognisant that Laois is a dual county, where there is parity of esteem between the two codes. Considering the Covid-19 situation, 2021 should not be taken as representative. However, under 15 is a particular age grade that continues to be impacted due to under 13 and 17 cutting across this grade. We also noticed a falloff in participation in urban areas during the summer which impacted greatly on the competitiveness of some urban based clubs. Clubs can't have it both ways, and we either put on a full programme of games without complaint or continue with the status quo. Often the very clubs looking for extra games will cite player welfare if two games are played within a few days of each other. Clubs should take note that no other comparable contact team sport allow players at underage to play over a 3-4 age span. This is an area that needs further review, and narrower age bands should be considered in the interest of both games' development and player welfare.

It's important that clubs strive to play at the highest possible level. However, there is still some reluctance from certain clubs to take on this challenge, which puts the onus on the Juvenile Committee to frame competitions so that as many teams as possible have an opportunity to access the top tier, while still having something to play for in the Autumn. New 'self grading' formats were introduced this year in various age grades and on balance have been very well received. These new formats threw up some surprises and resulted in very evenly matched teams reaching their respective finals. The takeaway going forward, is that 'self grading' formats should be extended to all age grades where teams enter A & B competitions.

We would also like to acknowledge and compliment the work done by Mike Henchy and his GDA team in organising end of season divisional games for area teams and small sided competitions for clubs. This a welcome initiative and should be supported to supplement the juvenile fixtures programme, and help provide a balance between the need for our underage players playing at the highest possible level, while at the same time provide an outlet for clubs to retain their own identity. Mike and his GDA team should also be acknowledged for their great work in organising the Go Games schedule of games and Cul Camps and other coaching courses and camps throughout the year. On a separate note, it would may be worth considering changing our Go Games to under 10 and under 12 to bring us in line with Treoir Oifigiúil. Some clubs

are tempted to enter under 13 teams as a 'branding exercise' for player retention and registration of first club purposes and moving to u12 Go Games would help alleviate this anomaly.

We would also like to thank the Midlands Park Hotel whose continued sponsorship of our underage championships and competitions during a difficult business trading environment is greatly appreciated.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all the referees and match officials who helped at officiating games during the year. It's important to reiterate that without referees we would have no games, and respect for match officials is paramount to the successful running an expansion of our underage games programme. For Laois to become more competitive we need more games, and we need more referees stepping forward from clubs and we would urge each and every club to actively identify and canvass potential juvenile referees from within their own club. It's important to acknowledge the work done by the outgoing committee particularly the difficult task of grading teams. Special mention must go to former juvenile chairman Danny Gorman, who gave of his time and experience throughout the year. We also would like to thank the volunteers and other county board officers, without whose help we could not have organized our finals in the LOETB Centre of Excellence and MW Hire O'Moore Park.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our County Secretary Niall Handy for his relentless assistance and guidance throughout the year. Our Office Administrator Sile Burbage deserves special mention for her assistance with organizing communications to referees and other match officials and for helping with making the arrangements for our finals seamless.

Finally, best wishes for the year ahead to all our players, parents, coaches, team mentors and club officers.

Alan Ó Langtúin agus Seán O Conghaile

Coiste Iomána Report

Senior: In the N.H.L. we lost the five games to Wexford, Dublin, Clare, Kilkenny and Antrim, which put us in a relegation playoff with Westmeath. Confidence was low approaching the first round of the Leinster Championship and we were well beaten on the day, after putting out a very defensive formation.

However, in fairness to players and management, they turned the year around with a great win against Antrim in Parnell Park on July 10th. The players seemed to relish the opportunity to play on the front foot. Inspired by two Paddy Purcell goals and showing great character when down to thirteen men for a period in the second half, we eventually won by 2.27 to 2.21, preserving our Liam McCarthy status for 2022.

The following week the team put up a great display against Waterford in the All-Ireland qualifiers, before losing by five points, 3.23 to 2.21. In the relegation playoff we looked a bit tired having been out for the third week in a row, but the team showed great spirit to come from behind to beat Westmeath by 1.27 to 0.27. This preserved our Division 1 status for 2022.

For the coming season we again face a huge challenge, with ten top class games guaranteed, five in Division 1 of the N.H.L. and five in the Leinster Championship. This is where we want to be hurling and I believe we have players good enough to compete and be successful at this level. Best of luck to Seamus Plunkett and his team for 2022.

Under-20: Our Under-20 team certainly gave us the most exciting game of the year when, in an amazing game, they eventually beat Westmeath by 4.33 to 4.27 after extra time, in the first round of the Leinster Championship. They then beat Antrim convincingly, before putting up a fine display against Kilkenny, where they lost by 1.18 to 1.15. This team improved immensely during the championship and great credit is due to all concerned.

An interesting statistic from the U.20 team is that three of the starting fifteen started their hurling careers in Ballyadams N.S. Ballyadams would not be considered a traditional hurling area and great credit is due to the teachers and coaches who gave those lads the opportunity to play hurling and encouraged them to dream of playing for Laois. Best of luck to Ollie Hally and his team for 2022.

Under-17: It was a disappointing year for our minor hurlers as they lost in the first round of the Leinster Championship to Kildare. In fairness Kildare were the better team but we didn't play to our potential and we have to learn from this. There was also disappointment for our Under-17B Celtic Challenge team when the final of their competition against Kildare failed to take place.

On a positive note, over ninety players attended training or trials for the Laois Minor hurling team in 2021. This huge interest augers well for the future and reflects well on the

work going on at Development Squad level over the past number of years. Best of luck to Declan Qualter and his team for 2022.

At Under-17 and Under-20 levels I believe that, in Laois, we must accommodate and encourage the dual player in order to try and maximise our chances of success in hurling and in football.

I wish to thank the members of the Hurling Steering Committee for their help, advice and ideas during the year. The members of the committee are Liam Ahern (Secretary), Adrian Fitzpatrick, Michael Bermingham, Shane Maher, James Dooley, Noel Delaney, John Kealy, Justin Kavanagh, Richard Kennedy and Liam Lalor.

As a sub committee we realise that our powers are limited but, nevertheless, there are many ways we can have a positive influence on the promotion of hurling. We can try to ensure that any child who wants to play hurling gets the opportunity, or as Nicky Brennan of the National Hurling Committee put it, “All we want is a situation where youngsters who want to play hurling don’t have obstacles put in their way.”

We are working on the following:

- Ensuring that there is a clear and defined pathway for all players from the non-traditional hurling areas to play club hurling.
- Supporting the Coaching and Games staff with the recruitment of coaches for the Development Squads and the implementation of their Athletic Development programmes.
- Supporting Cumann na mBunscol in their promotion of hurling in our primary schools and supporting their proposed Laois G.A.A. Flag initiative.
- Encouraging coaching and the promotion of hurling in our secondary schools.
- Helping clubs like Portarlinton to promote hurling in the north east of the county.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone, clubs, schools, coaches, teachers and all who promote hurling in Laois, especially at Juvenile level. Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh siad.

Is mise,

M. Ó’Coiléir

Coiste Éisteachta (Hearings Committee) Report 2021

As we reach the end of another year affected by the Covid pandemic thankfully, we are in a more positive position than we were this time last year. While we will continue to work with restrictions for some time to come it appears that things will continue to improve in 2022. We are all grateful that while it was a late start, games and competitions took place this year and supporters are once again able to attend matches, which has had a very positive impact on everyone involved.

For the Hearings Committee we finished up in early October 2020 and resumed in March 2021 to hear the appeals to decisions on transfers issued by the Competitions Control Committee (C.C.C.). We heard these on the 8th March 2021 all remotely as per the guidelines. In total, we had seven appeals to the C.C.C. decisions, which we could uphold, overrule or refer back to the C.C.C. Of these, one was upheld and five referred back to the C.C.C.

Following this, we experienced a long break until games resumed with our first disciplinary hearing taking place in June 2021 and the requests gradually increased once the championship commenced. To date we have had 31 requests for hearings, which were heard or are due to be heard and decisions issued based on the evidence provided and always in accordance with the rules of an Treoraí Oifigiúil. In all cases, we were not aware what penalty had been issued by the C.C.C. and any sanctions imposed by the C.H.C. were based solely on the evidence presented in accordance with rule. This included two hearings relating to 2020, which were appealed to the Leinster Hearings Committee but only heard in 2021 and referred back to us for rehearing

The number of hearings requested this year increased dramatically based on 2020, which was obviously significantly lower than a normal year. However, this is also considerably higher than in previous years particularly when there were a number of months when there were no games played. All hearings were in relation to disciplinary action taken against players with the exception of four, three of which related to clubs and the one to a club official. Following our decision in one of these hearings requested by a player an appeal was lodged with the Leinster Hearings Committee and subsequently lost. A summary of the cases are as follows:-

Players – 27 Hearings Requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 sanctions imposed..• 2 requests withdrawn in advance of hearing.• 3 no sanction imposed based on video evidence.• 3 no case to answer based on referee's clarification.• 5 hearings pending.
Officials/Supporters – 1 Hearings Requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No sanction imposed based on referee's report..
Club – 3 Hearings Requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hearing was not held after request was ruled out of order.• Sanction imposed• Hearing pending.

It became apparent to this C.H.C. that there were issues with the official team sheets being submitted due to the number of hearings requested based on the incorrect player being sanctioned when the referee referenced the player numbers on the team sheet. This caused a lot of unnecessary work for clubs, referees and the C.C.C. and was highlighted to the C.C.C. who subsequently highlighted it with clubs. There have been no further issues in this regard and therefore I must thank clubs for addressing the issue.

In the case of all Appeals and Hearings, individual members of the C.H.C. excused themselves if there were any perceived conflicts of interest. All those in attendance at appeals or hearings also have the opportunity to object to any member of the C.H.C.

Our proposal to hold an information meeting facilitated by the C.H.C. for all Club Officers has not yet taken place but I would be hopeful that this can be facilitated in 2022 as I think it would be very useful to a lot of club officers particularly any that are new to the role. In the meantime, I am happy to assist any Club Officer or player who is unsure of or would like clarification on any procedure or rule in relation to the Appeal or Hearing process to feel free to contact me at any time. I cannot claim to have all the answers as I learn new aspects of the rules every year however, I am happy to seek clarification and assist clubs where I can. Having come from a Club Officer role, I understand how difficult the roles are without having to know and understand every rule and procedure. There have also been some queries from clubs in relation to decisions we have reached this year, as always we are happy to engage with any club that require clarification or confirmation on how or why we have reached a decision.

I would like to thank all of the individual players and club representatives for their courteous co-operation in their dealings with the C.H.C. this year and in particular for their attendance at meetings remotely. Although we have all become used to Teams meetings we will all be happier when we can meet again in person. However, on a positive note the availability to hold meetings remotely will be an advantage in the future should there be a need for hearings at short notice. My thanks to the representatives of the C.C.C. for their courtesy and consideration in their attendance at these hearings. My sincere thanks to all the referees who replied so promptly and professionally when clarification of their reports was requested to assist the committee in reaching their decisions. I would also like to acknowledge the role of Niall Handy and our new Administrator, Síle Burbage in the preparation of paperwork and for liaising with referees when clarification of their reports was requested. Their assistance in this regard is very much appreciated.

My biggest thanks must go to the members of this year's C.H.C, Glen Brennan, Seamus Campion, Micheál Condron, Sheila Devoy, John Kelly, Michael Lennon and Alex Stenson who gave so generously of their time often a number of times each week. Their prompt response to numerous texts and emails makes my job a lot easier. As always it was a pleasure working with you all again in 2021! Finally, on behalf of all of the committee I would like to thank John Hanniffy our Chairman for his ongoing leadership and support. And finally, on behalf of all of the committee I would like to thank John Hanniffy our Chairman, we

are very fortunate in Laois GAA to have a Chairman that is so approachable with such an in depth knowledge of the Rules of the Association which he endeavours to enforce at all times.

I would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy Christmas and a very much brighter 2022!

Le meas

Adrainne Mhic Cárthaigh

Runaí

Coiste Éisteachta Laoise 2021

Planning and Physical Development Committee Report

Club delegates and fellow officers, it is indeed a great honour as County Development Officer of C.L.G. Laoise, to present my annual report to Convention County 2021.

I would firstly like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the clubs and fellow county board officers, for the commitment, dedication and, support shown to me in my two years as County Development Officer. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted normal life and brought many challenges to providing a safe environment for the attending and playing of our games.

The role of the Development Officer and the Planning, Physical Development and Health & Safety Committee continues to evolve as the responsibilities become increasingly vast and varied. The Committee's responsibilities for 2021 included upgrade, development, and maintenance of Pairc Ui Mhordha and the Centre of Excellence (COE), assisting and supporting clubs with their club plans and developments, education, and training, strategic planning and ensuring all clubs provide health and safety standards within all GAA grounds throughout Laois that are fit for purpose.

Pairc Ui Mhordha/ Centre of Excellence (COE)

It was an extremely busy year around Pairc Ui Mhordha and the Centre of Excellence (COE). As a result of COVID 19, the volume of work in presenting our facilities to the highest standards brought an increased workload. As crowds came back, and the number of games taking place in both the COE and Pairc Ui Mhordha increased, trying to turn around the facilities in such a short timeframe became a logistical challenge. The volume of rubbish has escalated, and this brings its own challenges. Every player now brings their own bottle and with twelve teams potentially playing in Pairc Ui Mhordha on any given weekend this presents many challenges.

Every year we replace the sod around the goal areas in Pairc Ui Mhordha which brings an annual cost. As a result, we considered it prudent to create our own area (far side of pitch 3) which would provide us with the required sod. While there was an initial cost in preparing this area, we believe this will be cost effective going forward.

Currently, we are having some soil issues in certain areas of our main pitch. We have tested soil samples and we are now aware of the problem in hand. As a result, an extensive plan had been put in place to solve the issue. The COE pitches remain in excellent condition considering the volume of traffic that they have experienced since the return to play.

Throughout 2021, we consistently upgraded parts of the stadium to enhance the supporter and player experience while attending and watching our games. Examples include the installation of fibre broadband to enhance the streaming quality, construction of a gantry area for streaming in the COE, the painting of the inside wall (and other areas) of

the stadium. We have also ordered extra gym equipment to ensure the players needs in this area are catered for.

In the coming months, our priority projects are a review and installation of new seating in the stand where required and the completion of fencing around Pitch 1 to facilitate supporters to watch games on both sides of the pitch. At the start of 2020, we costed the addition of a ball wall (at the top left-hand corner of Pitch 2). As a result, we applied for planning permission (which we received) and sports capital funding. We currently await the announcement of the distribution of sports capital funding before we proceed with this project.

I would like to thank all the voluntary stewards who made themselves available throughout the year. I would also like to thank Tom Jones, Event Controller, PJ Kelly, Health and Safety Officer and to our Chief Steward, Jody Conway for all their help and dedication during the year. Special thanks to Andrew Broderick, Danny Gorman and, the other gate staff and, Willie Stackpool for his continuous commitment. It is no easy task to execute a match day plan with so many variables being encountered so well done to all concerned.

I would like to thank Colm McEvoy and the personnel employed on both the C.E. Group Scheme and Tús Programme for their exemplary work that is done daily, to ensure that the highest standards are being maintained. We have a wonderful facility in Laois but the work to maintain the standards we strive for takes a huge commitment and we are most grateful for the efforts from all those concerned. Throughout the summer we received excellent feedback both from the other counties and the local and national media in relation to the facilities we have, and this feedback was very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank all those who continue to sponsor signage in both Pairc Uí Mhordha and the COE. This sponsorship is invaluable to the running of our games and is very much appreciated.

Club Development Grant Application

I have been in contact with many clubs (hurling, football, and rounders) throughout 2021 concerning funding and their development plans. Unfortunately, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Croke Park circulated correspondence that the grants process is on hold for the near future. I would like to acknowledge and compliment all those club delegates and volunteers that have shown great vision and leadership in taking on the purchase of land and development projects at their clubs. We had a few clubs this year who completed major projects to a very high standard. This is no easy task as fundraising events have become more difficult due to the restrictions implemented as a result of Covid 19.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the volunteers and staff of Comhairle Laighean, in particular, Michael Reynolds (CEO) for their advice and support throughout 2021.

Club Strategic Development Plan

Clubs that were interested in a club strategic development plan decided to put their plans on hold. A club strategic plan is a huge undertaking, and it was decided that it would be impractical and difficult to execute when clubs could not gather due to restrictions recommended by Government.

A club Strategic Plan aims to set ambitious yet achievable goals and objectives to grow your club by addressing the fundamental strategic challenges your club faces and fully exploit the opportunities available within your community.

This process results in five high-level strategic goals:

1. To improve opportunities for participating in Gaelic games in your community.
2. To develop our volunteers and administrators within your club
3. To govern and administer our affairs more efficiently.
4. To communicate GAA messages better to your members and supporters.
5. To protect and grow your club.

I would strongly urge every club to put a ‘Strategic Club Development Plan’ in place for your club. It would encourage best practice in all areas of your club and would enhance the experience of all playing and non-playing members. Clubs should be aware that if they have intentions of developing facilities or purchasing land, having a ‘Strategic Club Development Plan’ in place is beneficial in relation to your bank loan application and your purchase application to Croke Park.

Education and Training

Croke Park continued their work on the consolidation of training for club officers and members during 2021. However, with the number of lockdowns, the restriction on movement, and the numbers allowed to meet collectively, training courses had to be facilitated online. All current club officers are encouraged to continue to upskill and develop their skillset. Continuous upskilling can only be beneficial for your club and county. The dates for 2022 will be circulated in due course.

Health and Safety

I would like to thank all clubs who have their health and safety documentation up to date. While this may have been an onerous task it is extremely beneficial for the safety of your club and its members.

I would like to thank PJ Kelly for all his advice and help in relation to health and safety matters throughout the last two years. This is PJ’s area of expertise and to have access to this level of knowledge is invaluable in our engagement with clubs. We visited many clubs throughout 2021 and we hope that the advice given was both helpful and beneficial.

I would also like to acknowledge the guidance from Comhairle Laighean and Croke Park and in particular Sinead Leavy. Sinead's advice and direction was invaluable on various health and safety queries throughout the year.

Finally, I would like to thank Niall Handy and the staff in the COE for their help and assistance throughout the year. They were always very receptive and supportive of what I was trying to achieve.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh agus fanaigí slán.

Le meas,

Gerard Slevin
County Development Officer

Public Relations & Marketing Committee Report 2020

It is that time of the year again and just like last year a year of challenges highs and lows as we look back and reflect on a very busy and successful year for Laois GAA in so many aspects.

Myself and the PR committee have maintained an exceptionally busy year. We had so many challenges put in front of us to overcome, establish and continue to develop what we do to promote the games, players, fans, friends and family who are all part of Laois GAA and most importantly bring the games to you who couldn't join us on match days.

In my second and final year as PRO for Laois GAA it has been a rollercoaster of a position but mostly a proud moment for myself and my family. I never played football or hurling for Laois but I kick every ball, puck every sliotar with each player every time I sit pitch side capturing games. If you know me you know how proud I am of being a Laois man and helping to promote our games, our players and help anyone to do what's best. In doing this people have questioned my love of Laois GAA and doing what we all do as volunteers. The hurtful emails, private messages and the social media posts which I have received from people, the comments online and forums they all add up to negativity and really do affect me and other volunteers. We are only human and we do these roles only for the better and love of being a proud Laois supporter and volunteer for the games we all love.

Having started on the PR Committee 5 years ago and then become PRO I was very lucky to have some great people with me on committees. It has been my privilege to have worked with everyone on this committee and I can't thank them enough for doing so much for me and Laois GAA. I would like to thank Eoin Culliton (Mountmellick) for maintaining our Twitter feed on match days throughout the year and his amazing wealth of knowledge with Laois GAA Bible and also doing the scoreboard with his sons when ever needed. Wayne Fox (Trumera) for always being there when we needed him to be the voice of MW Hire O'Moore Park and match day scoreboard. Oonagh Maher for her amazing help in so many ways. Oonagh has travelled the country to so many locations to maintain our social media feed on match days, done scoreboard and so much more than anyone knows. Her dedication to her club and county is beyond known. Thanks for all your support Oonagh. Bryan (Pop) Lawler for helping me through so many match days on scoreboard and being there to support whenever anything needed doing, a proud Laois man and proud supporter who again does it like us all as a volunteer. To the one and only Pat O'Sullivan for always being there no matter where or what was required, his years of experience have guided me and helped me make everything possible. Not only did he maintain his role with the senior football panel, updated our social media accounts on match days, scoreboard duties when needed but this year became a viral sensation with nearly half a million views with his amazing commentary on James Duggan "Superman Point" or know as "mother of god" Moment. His dedication and work for Laois GAA goes beyond what people see and know and I personally thank him for all his support.

Finally I wish to thank my now wife Joan Dargan (Cullen) for putting up with my madness, late nights, phone calls, rants and ravings, driving the length and breadth of the country with me to support all Laois teams. From doing the scoreboard, social media and being on camera duty Joan has done it all. Many people will not know Joan but she is a proud supporter not just of what I do but of all players, managements and teams of Laois GAA who wear the blue and white. She has put up with my moments of sheer disappointment, tears and joys of being a Laois man and I couldn't have done this role without her by my side.

We worked this year with the press and media on so many different occasions. Again in a year like no other the mediums of print, radio and online were key in promoting our games and bringing the news to each Laois fan. I would like to thank the Staff of the Leinster Express, the Laois Nationalist, Laois Today and Midlands Radio. On the fields of play our senior football and hurling teams brought me in contact with so many of the media to help with photoshoots or media interviews or promotional events. The national media always thanked us for our warm welcome to MW Hire O'Moore Park and always spoke so highly of the welcome they received from the grounds staff, stewards and PR committee. It took time but I was very proud to help in increasing our internet connection in the stadium to Gigabyte fibre broadband earlier this year. It was a great addition to have for press and media and just shows how our stadium is always improving. Our relationship with the media has grown in strength both locally and nationally. We communicate and work together to bring the games of Laois to everyone all over the world.

At the start of my year we didn't know what was ahead of us with games behind closed doors or limited attendance so I had sleepless nights to continue to build and stream the games to the people of Laois all over the world. It was extremely testing to maintain but thanks to the help of John Moynihan of All Rounder Sports we have developed what is an amazing platform to bring the games to people from Borris in Ossory to Brisbane, Portlaoise to Portugal and Graiguecullen to Germany. The kind messages we received from people all around the world made up for the challenges that we faced with every broadcast. Thanks to all our commentators Tomas Moore and again Pat O'Sullivan along with all our co-commentators who helped during the games, so many of you helped out and you made it possible but also professional in every way. We are ahead of all other counties in our production and that's down to all your hard work and involvement. We stood in the wind and rain on many a night but thankfully we still managed to stream the games to the people we missed and couldn't attend the games.

Our social media account followers have increased immensely over the year. With games behind closed doors or limited attendance our committee were always on hand to bring the scores of games to you. We are very lucky to have such a diaspora of proud Laois people living all over the world and we loved hearing from them on match days and receiving their stories and pictures. Our accounts again helped alongside Laois GAA TV to bring you both club and inter county games. The clubs of Laois did a huge job in also bringing updates, news and bringing the communities together with support groups throughout this pandemic. Meeting so many clubs throughout the year I would like to thank all their officials, stewards, support-

ers and fans who helped us over the year. The people of our clubs are what makes it all possible and this year the workload has doubled for the officers so well done to them all.

I would sincerely like to thank all teams, management and backroom staff of each team for making me feel part of the teams on match days. I was very lucky to be part of some memorable occasions and in particular I would like to thank Mike Quirke and Cheddar Plunkett for this opportunity. Thanks to all the backroom teams for helping me out on match days. With so many people involved I do apologise, I can't mention you all but I would like to thank the wonderful David O'Brien and my good friend Bryan Breen for supporting me through this year.

In conclusion I would like to thank the players at every level underage and senior who wear the blue and white proudly, thank you for your support both on and off the field. To the Managers of all the teams both at county and club level thanks for your courtesy and time.

To all our sponsors who have supported us and continue to take pride in Laois GAA we all appreciate everything you do. To Matty Walsh a special mention for your support and vision in supporting Laois GAA and making MW Hire O'Moore Park one of the best stadiums in the country. It was wonderful to work with you on so many levels. To all the club secretaries and officers for your assistance and cooperation in particular on match days a sincere thank you. I would also like to thank our Laois Camogie and Laois LGFA Ladies on an amazing year. I was privileged to be with Laois Ladies pitch side throughout such a successful year which brought great pride and honour to everyone in Laois Football.

To County Secretary Niall Handy, Chairman Peter O'Neill, the Wonderful Sile Burbage our administrator and my fellow county board officials for your support and advice I thank you kindly. To the stewards, Willie Stackpool, Bosco Catering and all the people behind the scenes that make match day possible in the wonderful stadium of MW Hire O'Moore Park, thank you all.

To everyone in my own club Graiguecullen GAA thanks for all your support. We are a proud club with so many great Laois people involved now and in the past. With so many of our players involved in underage squads and panels with Laois it gives me great pride every time they take to the field. It never felt so proud this year to be a graiguecullen man and present the Minor Football A cup to our captain Jack Byrne in MW Hire O'Moore Park, my nephew Scott Roycroft on being man of the match and have my family there to witness it all. Its moments like this that make it cherish for years to come.

I have been truly blessed by the unique and diverse committee that willingly volunteered to work on our PR committed. Each with their own area of expertise and people whom I have relied on constantly. Thank you again.

Finally I have to thank my wife, my parents and family for my love of GAA. I started my speech at convention two years ago saying how proud I hoped my late grandad would be looking down on me. He first played football for Laois on 13th of November in 1949 against Galway and his last game was 10 years later on the 3rd of May in 1959 against Wicklow. His

love for football still lives in me and I hope I am now passing that love onto the youth of today.

I representing my family, county and people of Graiguecullen at all times and as a proud Laois man win loose or draw.

Thank you all.

Paul Dargan

Laois GAA P.R.O.

Coaching and Games Report 2021

It is with great pleasure that Coaching and Games can report on an action packed 2021, when we consider that the early part of the year saw children remain locked out of sporting activities due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. The early season focus was centered around the continuation of Coach Education in the virtual world. The GDAs along with some special guests provided the Laois GAA audience with some interesting and insightful learning opportunities. Thankfully the role out of on pitch based GAA activity was soon upon us, the laptop cover could be closed which meant it was time to be on the pitch again, the place where hurling and football lives and breathes.

It is truly important to recognize the positive impact our games have on our young people. With this in mind, a wholehearted thank you to all the parents, coaches, club officials and administrators for all their hard work and commitment to ensure our young people could get out and about to training and games where they can be part of something that will almost certainly aid them in their development, perhaps particularly now as we all aim to move forward from what Covid had and still has to offer.

From the beginning of the Pandemic and throughout, it must be acknowledged that the GDA group have shown themselves to be creative and innovative as work life changed. While also being resilient and patient during what was another very uncertain year, but they can be assured that more certain times lay ahead. It also must be mentioned that the GDAs were among the first of the workforce to return to work outside of their homes. This cannot be left pass without thanking the GDAs Donie Brennan, Jason Coffey and Conor Shannon for their efforts. In addition to this group a special word of thanks to Tadhg Doran for all his support in the Primary school sector and during the Cul Camp season. A further word of thanks to Sile Burbage for all her support across various projects.

Once again, a special mention needs to go to Mike Henchy who works tirelessly as our Coaching and Games Manager and dedicates all of his time to this very important job and is always available for anyone to contact and is always working with the best interest and development of Laois GAA and we are very lucky to have such dedicated people working in these very important positions within our organization.

1.0 Club Activity

The 26th April was potentially one of the most important dates of 2021 as it saw the return to training for all juvenile players. Yes, there were restrictions in place but once again clubs all over the county and beyond ensured that their key objective was achieved and that is to provide a place where our young people can learn, develop, and become aware of what it means to be part of a community. A huge thank you to all our clubs for the vital services you provide.

1.1 TURAS workshops – Online

In advance of pitch-based activities resuming a series of online webinar events were scheduled. The events included (1) TURAS Principles (2) Session Planning (3) Technical Skill Development and Nursery Development as a standalone event. The events were scheduled for U7/U9 and U11 coaches across both codes. The events ran from March 11th to April 27th.

U7 football saw 21 coaches from 12 clubs engage with the process, U9 coaches numbered 32, representing 15 clubs and U11 with 9 clubs having 14 coaches in attendance. With reference to hurling 11 coaches from 6 clubs engaged at U7 level, 12 coaches from 8 clubs at U9 level and at U11, 10 coaches from 6 clubs took part. The online world certainly served us well in the Coach Education capacity throughout the last two years and as we move forward this form of communication will remain when considered appropriate for a subject matter.

1.2 TURAS Club Visits (Informal Coach Education)

When restrictions eased the GDAs were able to attend clubs to provide assistance to club coaches at the U7/U9 and U11 age grades in particular. Based on the demand the GDAs engaged with 193 coaches across 20 clubs. The role of the GDA in these instances is to provide Coach Developer support to the club coaches, meaning the GDA evaluates the coach's performance and provides feedback based on their analysis of the situations.

2.0 Coach Education

The forementioned club-based work is all linked to Coach Education. This section will advise on the additional Formal and Informal events carried out this year.

2.1 Formal Coach Education

The easing of Covid restrictions once again had a big impact on the resumption of Formal Coach Education which for 2021 came in the form of Foundation courses. A total of 19 courses were completed in Laois from April through to August. A big thank you to the Tutors who supported Coaching and Games to ensure the practical courses could be completed. The number of course carried out was very pleasing with 170 coaches working through the process to gain their Foundation award. Award 1 and Award 2 course will resume from early 2022.

2.2 Informal Coach Education

In addition to the TURAS club events, numerous online Coach Education events were held. A special word of thanks to Cheddar Plunkett and Mike Quirke for their excellent presentations on "A Games Based Approach to Coaching" Other events included "Nursery Development", "Coaching Officer Training", "Physical Fitness Testing for Youth and Adult GAA Players" and "Health and Wellbeing for Youth and Adult Players". The work prepared and delivered by GDAs Jason Coffey and Conor Shannon deserves mention. Detailing ar-

eas related to Athletic Development with a level of understanding of their discipline which is second to none.

3.0 Go Games

Our 2021 Go Games program, albeit impacted by COVID-19, was a resounding success, running from June to late October, for u7, u9, u11 football and hurling, respectively. U7 and U9 hurling, and football completed 8 games, whilst U11 hurling, and football completed 11 games across the span of the season. On a given date, up to 400 children took part in our U11 hurling, with over 700 children taking part in U11 football. In U7 and U9 football, we had up to 800 participants, and up to 500 participants for u7 and u9 hurling, respectively. We also had success in our recruiting teenagers for our Young Whistler program, where up to 20 young referees helped to officiate U11 hurling and football games. This leaves us in a very strong position leading into our 2022 program, where we will endeavor to once again provide a comprehensive program of games opportunities, alongside a range of new initiatives to further drive participation and retention.

4.0 Academies

As the club playing season returned, thoughts in turn were also on our Academies. With a view to ensuring that our players were not overloaded during that initial return to play process, it was decided that Laois Academies would resume as the club season ended in September. Since that time all our Academies from U14 through to U16 have been engaged with games and or training sessions.

4.1 Divisional Games Program

The Divisional league program has now concluded for 2021. Competitions were played at U14 and U15 grades in both hurling and football. The process saw some very competitive games across both codes. At U14 level all four Divisions in hurling and football were entered into the Leinster GAA blitzes across October and November, leading to 7 or 8 game days for each of the four teams. This allowed for on average, 85 players in both codes to take part in Academy games. At U15 level, the Divisional games process also provided for the selection of an A and B team at this grade. At U16 level the number of players who attended in the initial stages, did not allow for a Divisional league, in turn the U16 groups were training and played a selection of 4 games within the Academy structure offered by Leinster GAA.

Thank you to all the mentors who gave of their time to work with the Divisional teams. It is very pleasing to see that a good majority of the people involved have expressed an interest in working with the Academies going into next season. Each year the Divisional process will require the support of the clubs to provide mentors for the groups. The consideration post event would be that the mentors who were involved in the 2021 version enjoyed their experience.

4.2 Academy Squads

Academy A and B squads were selected at U15 hurling and football grades. Games were organized by Leinster GAA across October and November. At this grade Laois were competitive across the majority of A games, however some results at the B grade were a concern. Going forward the focus must be on preparing enough players to be competitive in both A and B games at U15 and U16 levels, thus giving more players an opportunity to transition from the youth to adult environments.

5.0 Schools

The Primary and Post Primary sectors remain a hugely valuable assets in terms of player recruitment, retention, and development. Across 2021 bar in a few rare instances the GDAs catered for the needs of the Primary school sector. As we move in 2022 with hopefully more certainty around the impact of Covid in particular, it is vital that we reengage the Club/School link program. With the additional benefit of the introduction of GPOs, both these programs will serve the sector well into the future.

5.1 Primary Schools

GDA coaching in the primary schools resumed in March and will continue through to the second week in December. During this time the GDAs have engaged with just under 2,400 children across 270 coaching sessions at the time of writing. It is also worth noting the online PE classes that took place in the early months of the year. This engagement saw 310 children within 10 schools getting the opportunity to be active as they engaged with a coach at the other side of the screen. A big thank you to a great team of interns who provided support to the GDAs to provide a total of 35 online PE sessions during this time. It is important to acknowledge the loss of Cuman na mbun scoile games during Covid. You can certainly get the impression that schools have missed the competition. Let's hope it can resume as early as possible in 2022.

5.2 Post Primary Schools

Since September work has resumed on the grounds of the Post Primary schools. The key focus areas for September to December 2021 were: 1. Athletic Development be that morning/midday or evening sessions, initially targeting 1st year groups with a view to expanding to all Academy players. Four schools are currently up and running with the program. 2. TY Courses. TY courses have been carried out in Rathdowney and Mountrath upon request. 3. Coach Developer sessions: This means that a GDA will visit the school grounds during training sessions and provide feedback to the coaches or how to improve their sessions. 1st year blitzes: Six schools took part in the 1st year football blitz held in late November with 5 schools taking part in the hurling equivalent.

6.0 Camps

Thankfully even though the Covid 19 pandemic continues, there was never any doubt about the Cul Camps taking place in 2021. It was always going to be an interesting year in terms of take up. Taking the learnings from the 2020 version was certainly an advantage in preparation for this year's event. As an organization we were safe in the knowledge that by sticking to the process from 2020 that 2021 could be a huge success. There was a heat wave and of course wet days, I would like to thank the clubs for how they responded to these scenarios during the week of the heat wave. A special mention must go to the 80 coaches who were on the ground for the seven-week period. They showed a passion for our games and a wonderful sense of empathy and understanding for the needs of the children.

6.1 Cul Camps

Total of 3,310 children attended across 39 camps, the numbers were on par with 2019. A big thank you to the clubs and coaches for all their hard work. A special mention on the first ever inclusion camp in the county, hosted by The Rock GAA. 20 children attended across 3 days. A big thank you to Laura White (The Rock GAA) and Catriona Slattery (L.S.P)

6.2 Halloween Camps

105 children took part in a three-day event in the LOETB, Centre of Excellence. 11 coaches with experience from the Cul Camp program made themselves available to ensure the event could go ahead. Even though the weather was not as kind as it had recently been, the spirits of the children and coaches remained high.

6.3 Inclusion Club Activities

It is hugely important to not let the report pass by without a very strong recognition of work currently taking place within two GAA clubs in the County. Both The Rock GAA (Rock for All) and Portlaoise GAA (Town All Stars) have established inclusion GAA session for children with disabilities. Great credit is due to both clubs for the support they have provided to these initiatives with a special word going to the work carried out by Laura White from The Rock GAA and Aine O Sullivan, Portlaoise GAA in particular. Their planning and ability to execute the events is a credit to them and their clubs.

7.0 7 A side Super Games

To coincide with the Academy season 2021 a 7 a side Super Games events were held at U13 /U15 grades for hurling and football. Overall, the event was a success, allowing all players the opportunity to continue playing the games into the Winter months. A big thank you to all the clubs who entered and your cooperation in having the games played on club grounds for the early stages. An end of season event for every team was held in the LOETB, COE across two weekends in November. A total of 20 clubs took part in U13 football, 18 in U13 hurling with the U15 grades receiving entries from 12 football and 9 hurling clubs.

8.0 GPOs (Games Promotion Officers)

Despite the ongoing Pandemic Leinster GAA have provided for a framework to allow for the development of the East Leinster project across another five counties in the province. On Monday March 22nd, Leinster P.G.M. James Devane announced details to the clubs in Laois on how the GPO project can benefit clubs. The reaction was very positive, leading to a situation where 27 clubs in Laois have now expressed an interest in becoming part of the project. Early 2022 will see the role out of our first selection of GPOs into the county with more new employees coming on board as the year progresses.

9.0 County Board Departments

The cross departmental alliances are vital to any business, this applies to Laois GAA as much as any other. In order for all our players, coaches, managers, administrators to have a fulfilling experience within the organization it takes a lot of joined up thinking and effort to strive to ensure this happens. Without having to mention particular departments and for the fear of leaving a group out could I thank everyone for their willingness to engage with the Coaching and Games department across 2021. A special mention must go to Niall Handy, since life returned to the LOETB offices, Niall as it was pre Covid creates a wonderful working environment for everyone that works in the building. His persistence to ensure everything gets done is admirable which always being approachable along with the probable hundreds of others per day.

10.0 Leinster GAA

The support offered to the Coaching and Games by Leinster GAA must be recognized. They are always available to provide leadership and understanding to Coaching and Games department in Laois on all aspect of the job roles. An acknowledgement to James Devane, Colm Clear, Alan Mulhall and Michael Reynolds for their continued leadership and support.

11.0 Club Coaching Officer

This section is listed last on the report; however, it is done to be the take home message. The club Coaching Officer has become the key role for all clubs. This person acts as a key figure head in the development and implementation of coaching and games within the club. When considering 2022 positions, every club must put this role top of the list. The Coaching Officer is the key link between the club and the Laois Coaching and Games Department. Essentially every area listed above has an impact on the development of players, the Coaching Officer must have their finger on the pulse on these matters. I implore with every club to take this position very seriously and to consider that the Coaching Officer position must be supported with a strong Coaching Committee.

The impact can be measured on, an increase on the number of clubs and coaches attending TURAS based workshops be those online on the pitch or perhaps back in a classroom-based setting, we can improve a lot from the 2021 figures. The further development of

our club coaches through Formal Coach Education along with additional Informal events. Added to this the introduction of the GPOs into numerous clubs means a very close working relationship between the clubs and the Coaching and Games office is essential. As mentioned, the Club/School link project will be a vital component of player recruitment and retention especially within non-GPO clubs.

The development and implementation of a club-based player pathway is another key area of focus. This must be viewed as a long-term project, once established of course. During 2021, 12 clubs engaged in the process on how a player pathway can be structured. This is another area where we could see an improvement going into 2022.

Fergal Byron & Mike Henchy

Tuairisc Oifigeach Cultúr & Gaeilge CLG Laoise

Cruinniú Chinn Bhliana CLG Laoise 2020

Ba mhór an onóir dom bheith tofa arís mar Oifigeach Cultúr & Gaeilge Laoise don bhliain 2021.

There was little or no in- person activity in 2021 due to the continued restrictions of Covid 19. However many meetings were conducted via Zoom and Teams.

Laois had several participants in an online training session for the singing of Amhrán na bhFiann during the summer. This “Ceardlann” was organised by Scór Laighean on July 12th. I was very proud to take part in this workshop with our representatives and to note especially, that not all Leinster counties were in attendance. Our only participant in the Under 18 section was Óisín Delaney Doheny (Portlaoise GAA Club) but we had good interest at adult level (the date not suiting some of those interested) with Mary Conway (Clonaslee St Manman’s) and Tina Cuddy (Castletown) completing the course which had emphasis on “na focail agus canadh an amhrán” including the times and occasions when the anthem should be performed. CLG Laoise have invited those who completed the course to perform at games in the park whenever feasible.

Scór Laighean announced the good news in early September that the Leinster final would go ahead on October 23rd in Baile Ghib in the Meath Gaeltacht.

Kilcavan had qualified for Ceol Uirlise Ghrúpa and Courtwood for the Tráth na gCeist. These had qualified in Clonroche in 2019 but dusted down the required skills after a long lay-off and we headed for Gibbstown near Kells. Courtwood had to settle for 5th place and did not make the All Ireland (three counties from each province qualify) but Kilcavan won the Leinster title and now it’s off to Claremorris, Co. Mayo for the All Ireland final on November 20th. As Laois and Leinster champions they have already done us proud but the All Ireland would be the icing on the cake. The Kilcavan team comprises: Brian Ryan, Sophia Ryan, Alain Carroll, Senan Moran and Noel Stapleton, whose Mam Julia is on my Laois Scór Committee. The Courtwood Tráth na gCeist team was: Pat O’Connell, Brian Nolan, Billy Hogan and John Boland.

The national Chairman of Scór, Tomás Ó Muirí from Roscommon is currently conducting Zoom interviews with all counties to assess where Scór is at nationally so we await his findings. An Rúnaí and myself took part in the Laois interview on October 21st.

I would like to thank the Committee : Michael Martin (Runai), Christine Kealy (PRO), Paddy Connolly, John Paul Nevin ,Monica Middleton, Donal Deegan, Siobhan Byron, Julia Stapleton, Mick Lillis and Jody Conway.

As is my annual request to you, the clubs of Laois please try to promote the usage of our native language in the day to day business of your club. Please make your club signage and road signs at least, bilingual. I am reminding you again in the run up to your club’s “Crinniú chinn bhliana” to present a little of all reports ‘as Gaeilge’.

Thank you to my fellow County Board Officers, Officers of the clubs of Laois agus an foireann san Oifig.

Monica Bn Uí Dhubhshláine



The Kilcavan Team



The Courtwood Team

Children's Officer Annual Statement 2021

In 2021 we continued to experience a global pandemic that affected all aspects of life in Ireland. The members of the GAA in our communities stepped up during this time by helping their communities, neighbours. This showed the power of the GAA as a community organisation. Well done to all.

We missed socialising after games where we normally have post game chats. It has been a difficult year over all. However, we did get to play games at championship level for all ages where we finished 2021 with a small number of games being carried forward from 2020. I want to thank all players, management, clubs and supporters for assisting in Covid protocols to ensure that we were all safe during this difficult time.

Through my department in Laois GAA, we were unable to offer face to face training for our safeguarding courses.

In 2021 all clubs successfully completed the child safeguarding statement and risk assessment. This is an important document for all members and should be on show in our club grounds as well as county grounds.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all clubs of the requirement for up-to-date vetting certificated in 2022. Only vetting approved in 2020 & 2021 & 2022 is valid for the 2022 season. Only vetting letters provided by the GAA, LGFA and or Camogie are acceptable. As primary schools are welcoming back our coached in the new year they will also be requesting a copy of the vetting letter so please be ready and have an in date letter or you will be refused entry to train your club members.

For 2021 it is now in rule that no coach can be appointed to a club or county without having first completed all relevant paperwork and training central to role.

It is essential (as part of legislation) that all clubs have appointed a Children's Officer and a Designated Liaison Officer. These are not optional appointments.

Also we have secured a Children's Officer email address and this should be used by all clubs as this is the only method of approved communication in line with good governance and GDPR rule for communication especially of persons personal data.

A disappointing aspect of 2021 for me is the use of negative / abusive language on the sidelines in games in Laois. Even though we had less games the reports for negative language did not decrease to the same extent. One referee even noted that it was the worse he had heard. I would implore all clubs to ensure that this behaviour is not accepted and that any club where this behaviour occurs manage it in accordance with the Safe Guarding protocols. We need to remember that our players / mentors / official's do not deserve / expect to be a recipient of any abuse and it is not necessary. As a parent would you accept your

child being verbally abused? Would you allow them to be in the environment where verbal aggression is ok? If no is the answer to these questions then we need to better manage our behaviour better at games, training sessions and stop this negative behaviour. There is no place in the GAA (and our sister organisations or any other sporting environment) for this behaviour..

Seamas Lahart
Children's Officer

Referee Administrator Report

I want to take this opportunity to thank our referees and match officials for their assistance and co-operation in completing our 2020 and 2021 fixture programme. Due to COVID 19 it's been a very busy year working in a short period of time, sometimes 20 to 25 games on any individual day at the weekend. I have said before our referees have an onerous task and it is as simple as that without them, we wouldn't have any games. Over the course of our season we had some referees doubling up on games and other official duties in the same day, just to get all our games and competitions completed on time.

48 officials completed the annual in-service training also participated in the required Garda vetting and code of best Behaviour early in the year. While other practices which have become normal, such as rules and fitness testing, Referee assessments and plans for regular dvd meetings on live games incidents were all shelved due to Covid 19 restrictions, we plan to start these again for 2022 as they are essential to the development of our referees and match officials and must be included in our pathway for future referee development. I do believe there is an onus on a referee in all our games to try and at least get the BIG decisions correct and from what we witnessed this year it is an area open to significant improvement with some of our referees.

Unfortunately, there continues to be an escalation and an increasing lack of respect displayed by some of our Club Officials / mentors / Supporters and players towards referees and their officials. Our referees are very dedicated to the GAA who are doing their best to serve their County and the association and as stated earlier without them, our games could not continue. The complexity of GAA rules ensures that they will not get every decision right, but they do not deserve the level of verbal and sometimes threatening abuse that is being meted out at them. While referees keep reporting verbal and threatening abuse the CCC will continue to give out Club Fines or Suspensions to mentors and aggressors and will have to show that they are Garda vetted, Code of Best Behaviour course and produce certificate of completion of their respective Coaching course. This information on completion must be submitted to our Children's officer, prior to resuming mentor duties.

We again make our annual recruitment appeal and we request each club to least make an honest effort in the coming months to source at least one referee, who they believe to be both competent and suitable for training in January 2022. This recruitment drive is open to both Male and Female, It would be great to see some of our female members take up the roll of referee.

Finally I would like to thank my committee Vincent Dowling, Danny Gorman, Alan Langton, Mattie Collier, Sean Connolly, Brian Alan, Jody Conway and Laurence Phelan for the hours of work they put in this year. This must be the most thankless position in Laois GAA. I would also like to thank Sheila our Office Administrator for her outstanding work and help. I would like to wish all our clubs the best for 2022.

Tomas O Cleirigh,
Referee Administrator.

AGM

The AGM for the 2020/21 school year did not take place due to Covid-19 Restrictions. It is hoped that the 2021/22 AGM will take place before Christmas this year dependent on Covid-19 restrictions.

Leagues 2020/21

Cumann na mBunscol activities were greatly affected by Covid-19 again last year with no leagues being run throughout the year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

It is hoped that all 2021/22 leagues (hurling, camogie, boys football and girls football) will return and be played out in some form during this school year. If restrictions allow, we will begin registration of schools before Christmas with the leagues played off in the second half of the school year.

ARounders/Handball/Table Quiz

Our Rounders, handball and table quiz competitions were all casualties of Covid-19 restrictions in 2021. We are hoping that some of these can return during the 2021/22 school year in some form.

Representative Games

There were no development squads, INTO Mini Sevens or half time representative games this year due to restrictions. It is planned from National Committee that the INTO Mini Sevens half time games will return in some form for All Ireland Semi-Finals and Finals.

Cumann na mBunscol Week June 2021

As part of the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the National Cumann na mBunscol, every school in the country were encouraged to run a “Cumann na mBunscol Week” within their school. This took many forms from skills competitions to inviting club and county players to take over training sessions with classes. This was a very welcome initiative as it gave the children the chance to play hurling, football, camogie etc. in school.

Plans for 2021/22

We are currently awaiting advice from the National Cumann na mBunscol Committee on the possibility of having any Cumann na mBunscol activities during the 2021/22 school year. It has been regrettable that so much time has been lost for Cumann na mBunscol activities as well as many other activities over the past two years. There have been two cohorts of children leaving primary school where some had never had the opportunity to represent their school at Cumann na mBunscol. We are all hopeful that our games and activities can return this year for the children.

Thanks

On behalf of Cumann na mBunscol Laoise, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Laois GAA and the many clubs throughout the county for use of their facilities, providing training within schools and continued support throughout the years.

Martin Carroll

Rúnaí
Cumann na mBunscol Laoise

Laois GAA Health & Wellbeing Report 2021

The Health & Wellbeing Committee would like to acknowledge the tremendous and continued efforts that clubs have engaged with in dealing with the pandemic and the challenges that this has brought us. All the efforts in contributing to the safety and wellbeing of our communities over the past 20 months is testament to the great community spirit present in each and every club throughout the county.

In 2022 the H&W Committee will continue to assist and support our clubs in delivering health enhancing initiatives within their clubs and communities. We will continue to build on the good relationships with the Healthy Club Officers and to the support services both locally and nationally. A recognition of the great work that these agencies have provided to our members over the pandemic when faced with difficult situations has been both appreciated and valued.

Health Club Project

We are delighted that two more clubs within the county are taking part in Phase 4 of the GAA's Healthy Club Project. These clubs will hopefully receive their healthy club recognition in early 2022. The clubs are: Kilcavan GAA and Park/Ratheniska GAA

We look forward to working with the clubs as they progress further in their healthy club journey. We hope they will continue to inspire many other clubs to participate in the programme. We hope more clubs will come on board for Phase 5 of this initiative and we will certainly be encouraging other clubs within the county to take part.

Healthy Club Officer Information Evening

In April 2021, the H&W Committee organised an information evening for our HCO's. This was an opportunity for clubs to ask any questions around the HC Officer role and how the county committee could support them, their club and their members. On the night, Josephine Rigney the Laois/Offaly Suicide Prevention Officer spoke about the importance of every club having a Critical Incident Plan and how we can go about implementing this. Josephine also discussed what preventive strategies clubs can implement in terms of supporting our members mental health. We also had Bernie Carroll who is the Suicide Bereavement Support Officer for Pieta House in the midlands region and who spoke to the group about the postvention supports that clubs can avail of during the aftermath of a critical incident.

Critical Incidents & Substance Abuse

In 2021 the Health & Wellbeing Committee has supported a number of clubs in dealing with critical incidents. There is a growing recognition that there is a pressing need for each club to have their own Critical Incident Plan. Earlier in the year we held an information evening with clubs focusing specifically on this topic.

There is also a pressing need for clubs to adopt a Substance Abuse Policy and this year we have circulated out the policy which we strongly recommend and encourage clubs to adopt. In 2022 we hope to assist clubs in delivery of educational and awareness training on this subject and if any clubs are looking for further information please contact us on chair. hwc.laois@gaa.ie

Boosting your Resilience Talk

In May the Health & Wellbeing Committee organised a ‘Ramp up your Resilience’ Talk by John Doran from ‘Ways to Wellbeing’ for all the club officers within the county. Our volunteers are at the heart of our clubs and to ensure that we supported them as club activities resumed we felt it was important to give them the skills and the tools on how to ramp up their resilience and boost their wellbeing so they were ready to return to activities with renewed positivity, energy and enthusiasm.

We’re Breastfeeding Friendly Laois Initiative

Laois GAA were delighted to support the “We’re Breastfeeding Friendly Laois” Initiative in 2021 and is proud to make O’Moore Park the first designated “Breastfeeding Friendly” GAA stadium in Ireland. Having O’Moore Park as an inclusive and welcoming stadium for all mothers and creating a family-friendly environment and a positive experience for all GAA fans at our games is paramount to all that we as an organisation value and strive to achieve. We hope that many other clubs will come on board and sign up to this initiative and we will certainly be encouraging this in 2022.

Laois GAA Website

We continue to use the Health Section (www.laoisgaa.ie/health) to disseminate health enhancing initiatives and programmes available and to keep everyone in the county up-to-date on all areas of health. If there is anything in particular you would like to see included please email us your suggestions to chair.hwc.laois@gaa.ie

Some of our plans for 2022 include:

- 1) All clubs to have a dedicated Healthy Club Officer and completed the relevant training
- 2) Adoption of a Critical Incident Plan & Substance Abuse Policy by all clubs
- 3) Rollout of educational programmes and initiatives around positive mental health, drug, alcohol and gambling awareness and many more
- 4) Laois GAA Clubs to go ‘Smoke Free’. In partnership with the HSE and Healthy Ireland to encourage as many clubs as possible to go ‘Smoke Free’

Our thanks to all who supported us through the year, the Healthy Club Officers in Laois, the Laois GAA County Executive and the great work that the Croke Park National

Health & Wellbeing Committee do. We hope to continue to build on this work with hopes that health and wellbeing becomes a more central focus on all that we do as a sporting organisation.

The Committee continued to be: Leona Conroy (Chairperson), Grainne McCann (Secretary), Fergal Byron, Catherine Doyle, Tom Jones, Ciara Conroy, Paul Harding, PJ Kelly, Seamus Lahart, Jamie Malone, Martina Murphy, Peter O'Neill

Leona Conroy

Chairperson - Laois GAA Health & Wellbeing Committee

Laois Gaels

2021 saw the return of a new Laois GAA supporters association.

Laois Gaels were formed following a meeting of County Board Chairman Peter O'Neill and Bryan Breen who was entrusted with forming a new group along with a small committee early in 2021. This committee consisted of Bryan Breen (Chair), Oonagh Maher (Secretary) Paul Dargan (PRO) MJ Tierney (Marketing) along with Seamus Dooley & Leo Turley Committee members. Seamus a former inter county hurler & Leo a former footballer.

The main objective was to provide a supporters group to encapsulate both the football and hurling supporters of the county and reach out to all Laois people to become part of a group of dedicated supporters who would feel proud to support all our teams and have a clear identity to this cause. As a result, the name Laois Gaels was chosen to demonstrate this unique group of supporters.

Our goal was modest in 2021 in a year disrupted by Covid and many other social and economic issues that arose from the pandemic. We aimed to have 250 members in this first year and expected to raise some funds to assist in development of approx. €8,000.

Following an excellent marketing campaign on social media expertly driven by Paul, MJ & Bryan we enlisted over 487 initial members both in Laois, Ireland and further afield. We have members in Australia, USA, Asia and the UK.

From a financial perspective Laois Gaels generated €17,000 in funding through membership and additional sponsorship and donations from the Laois diaspora.

These funds have been used in several areas already under the management of the County Board and we contributed a substantial sum towards gym equipment at the COE. Co board treasurer Martin Byrne can provide exact figures.

Our goal next year is to increase membership with emphasis on SMEs in the county and beyond and increase funding that can be used towards all our underage teams especially.

We hope to attract new members and increase our existing membership to 1000

We would welcome ALL DELEGATES to become members of Laois Gaels and for you to encourage your club members to do so also. We also aim to attract larger companies to become corporate members in 2022.

2022 will see Laois Gaels invest heavily in our underage Development squads in hurling and football. All this comes at a cost so the more funds we can raise through membership and sponsorship the better. We also intend to provide training seminars from guest tutors for all Laois club members provided by our funding in conjunction with Micheal Henchy and his development teams and we will further aim at the continuation of the welfare and hardship fund for all Laois intercounty players. This fund has been set aside within Laois Gaels for the benefit of any player who through injury or other requires some financial support.

Finally on behalf of the Laois Gaels committee we want to thank our outgoing chairman Peter O Neill for his support, congratulate him on his term in office and wish him every success in the future. We also want to wish Billy, Chris & Beano every success in their role as the new senior football management and continued success to Cheddar and his management team. Indeed, we wish all our teams and management every success in the coming year when hopefully we can return to some normality.

WE are all in this together. Laois Ábu. Laois Gaels 2021 Committee.

Ainmniúcháin (Nominations)

Cathaoirleach (Chairperson):

Peter O'Neill (Outgoing); Tom Clear; PJ Kelly; Kieran Leavy.

Leas Cathaoirleach (Vice Chairperson):

Tom Clear (Outgoing); Jody Conway; Kieran Leavy; Pat O'Sullivan; Mary Whelan.

Cisteoir (Treasurer):

Martin Byrne (Outgoing).

Leas Cisteoir (Asst. Treasurer):

Paschal McEvoy (Outgoing).

Ard Comhairle (Central Council Delegate):

Gerry Kavanagh (Outgoing); Kieran Leavy.

Comhairle Laighean (Leinster Council Delegate):

PJ Kelly & Richard Kennedy (Outgoing); Brian Allen; JP Cahillane; Tom Clear;
Jody Conway; Adrian Fitzpatrick; Mary Whelan.

Oifigeach Oiliúna (Coaching Officer):

Fergal Byron (Outgoing).

Oifigeach Cultir agus Gaeilge (Cultural and Irish Officer):

Monica Delaney (Outgoing).

Oifigeach Caidrimh Poiblí (P.R.O.):

No Nominee.

Congress Delegates (3 to be elected):

Cathaoirleach, Runaí & outgoing Ard Comhairle Delegate automatically attend;
Brian Allen; Martin Byrne; Tom Clear; Monica Delaney; Paschal McEvoy.

Leinster Convention Delegates (5 to be elected):

Outgoing Comhairle Laighean delegates automatically attend: Brian Allen; Tom Clear; Jody Conway; Monica Delaney.

Na Rúin (Motions)

(1). **Amend Byelaw No. 1 to reflect changes made at Special Congress to the Development officer role and the requirement for an Audit and Risk Committee (amendments in bold print) -**

1. In accordance with Riall 3.11, T.O. 2021, the County Convention shall elect the following:

Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Public Relations Officer, Coaching Officer, Officer for Irish Language and Culture, Representatives (2) on Provincial Council and one representative on Central Council. It shall appoint a Children's Officer and a County Safety and Facilities Officer as recommended by the outgoing County Committee.

Exception - In accordance with Rule 3.11 (b) (2), T.O, 2021, the Treasurer is not subject to the maximum period of office of five years.

2. In accordance with Riall 3.18, T.O. 2021, the County Committee shall consist of the following: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, **Planning and Training Officer**, Public Relations Officer, Coaching Officer, Officer for Irish Language and Culture, Children's Officer, Representatives on Provincial Council, Representative on Central Council, County Referees Administrator, County Safety and Facilities Officer, one named representative each from Primary and Post-Primary Schools' Committees, Handball Representative, Chairpersons of Hurling Committee, Football Committee and Youth Committee and one named representative of each affiliated club. All members, with the exception of the Secretary, shall have voting rights.

3. In accordance with Riall 3.20, T.O. 2021, the following Sub Committees, whose powers and functions shall be as detailed in Riall 3.20, T.O. 2021 and as otherwise outlined in these Bye-Laws, shall be appointed by, and be subject to the County Committees. Members of all Sub Committee shall be named:

a) Management Committee: It shall consist of the following: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson,

Secretary (non-voting), Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, County Safety and Facilities Officer, Public Relations Officer, Coaching Officer, Officer for Irish Language and Culture, Representatives on Provincial Council, Representative on Central Council and Chairpersons of Hurling Committee, Football Committee and Youth Committee.

e. Safety and Facilities Committee: It shall consist of six members including County Safety and Facilities Officer who shall be Chairperson, a Qualified Event Controller. The remaining members, nominated by the Management Committee for appointment by the County Committee, should be suitably qualified in areas

relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee as outlined in R. 3.20 (v) T.O. 2021.

o. Planning and Training Committee: It shall consist of five members, the Chairperson of which shall be the County Planning and Training Officer. All members shall, upon appointment, complete the necessary training as prescribed by The National Officer Development Committee and Club and County Planning Committee.

p. Audit and Risk Committee: It shall consist of no more than five named members including a Chairperson nominated by the Management Committee and approved by the Provincial Audit and Risk Committee and up to four members nominated by the Management Committee. The Treasurer shall not be a member. (CLG Laoise)

(2) Amend Laois GAA Byelaw No. 6 (Transfers) to read as follows (amended to exclude criteria referring to “Proximity to Club Base”) –

6. Transfers

A. A player shall be restricted to playing for a Club in the Catchment Area of his permanent residence as per Rule 6.5 (a) & (b), TO 2021 (Catchment Areas as defined in Laois GAA Rules and Regulations as per Rule 6.3, TO 2021).

B. There shall be two distinct Club “designations” – Urban and Rural. This will allow the CCC to distinguish between Transfers as follows: (i) Urban to Rural Clubs, (ii) Rural to Rural Clubs and (iii) Rural to Urban Clubs.

C. Portlaoise GAA Club will be designated an “Urban” Club and all other Clubs in Laois will be designated “Rural”.

D. Requests for transfer shall not be considered unless submitted to the County Secretary before January 31st in any year. Exception : In the case of an Urban to Rural Transfer, an application may be granted provided the player has not participated in Club Competition (including U12 Go Games) in the year in which the Transfer / Attachment to First Clubs is sought.

E. A Player from an exclusive Club transferring to a Dual Club must transfer for both codes.

F. The C.C.C. shall process and make initial decisions on all applications for Transfer within the county, in a timely manner with consideration to the commencement of competitions (Riail 6.5, T.O. 2021). Such decisions shall reflect the ethos of the Association as outlined in Riail 6.1, T.O. 2021 and give due consideration to the negative effect, if any, it may have on the player’s First Club and/or Own Club.

G. In exceptional circumstances the CCC may, after due consideration, approve the transfer application.

Other Relevant Connection:

(i). Urban to Rural Transfer

A player from a designated Urban Club may, at any time, transfer to, any Rural Club without the necessity of meeting any of the criteria and / or exceptions usually associated with such Transfers, provided the player has not participated in Club Competition (including U12 Go Games) in the year in which the Transfer / Attachment to First Clubs is sought.

(ii). Rural to Rural Transfer

a) Permanent Residence - An adult player or juvenile player from a family moving to a new place of Permanent Residence, which is within the Catchment Area of the Club to which he wishes to transfer. In such cases the onus of proof of new permanent residence shall be on the applicant for transfer (by provision of his or his family's ownership of the property or at least three utility bills in his name for the property), as outlined in Rule 6.3, with exception that it has been his principal private residence for at least the previous three months and is likely for at least the ensuing year.

b) Parentage Rule – A player may apply for a Transfer to a Club in the catchment area in which his Parent was a Player in Adult Competition or a Club Officer or Member, who over a reasonable period of time, made a proven contribution to that Club. Such criteria shall also apply for Transfer applications within Club catchment areas, and / or where other exceptional circumstances may be considered.

c) Primary School – A player may apply for a Transfer to a Club in the catchment area where he is presently attending or has attended Primary School. The Primary School rule will only be taken into consideration where the player has been attending this school or has attended for at least one full school year.

(iii). Rural to Urban Transfer

a) Permanent Residence - An adult player or juvenile player from a family moving to a new place of Permanent Residence, which is within the Catchment Area of the Club to which he wishes to transfer. In such cases the onus of proof of new permanent residence shall be on the applicant for transfer (by provision of his or his family's ownership of the property or at least three utility bills in his name for the property), as outlined in Rule 6.3, with exception that it has been his principal private residence for at least the previous three months and is likely for at least the ensuing year.

b) Parentage Rule – A player may apply for a Transfer to a Club in the catchment area in which his Parent was a player in adult competition, or in exceptional circumstances, a Club Officer or Member who, over a reasonable period of time, has made a proven contribution to that Club. Such criteria shall also apply for Transfer applications within Club catchment areas, and /or where other exceptional circumstances may be considered. (CLG Laoise)

(3). Amend Laois GAA Byelaw No. 7 (Permission to Play) to reflect changes made at Congress 2019 to read as follows –

7. Playing Restrictions (Club)

A Club that may be experiencing demographic decline in either or both codes that is threatening the sustainability and vibrancy of the said unit, may apply to Laois CCC to be a “Designated Club” for the purpose of this Byelaw, before 31 January in any year.

(a). Subject to Riail 6.8, (c), T.O. 2021, the CCC shall process and make decisions on applications received on or before 14th. February in any year for permission for an Adult player from an exclusively Football Club to play Hurling with a Dual Club or a player from an exclusively Hurling Club to play Football with a Dual Club.

Where players have received permission heretofore to play with another club in the aforementioned circumstances, these existing relationships between players and clubs shall be permitted to continue unless the CCC considers it to be contrary to the promotion of hurling or football within the county or his First Club decides to field a team in that particular code.

A player from an exclusive Football Club may play Hurling with an exclusive Hurling Club, and vice versa, within their catchment area, or may make application as below.

Applications will be decided by CCC based on the following criteria:

- If from an exclusive Football or Hurling Rural Club (as determined in Byelaw 6) with no particular code in that Club, the player shall be accommodated in that code by another Rural Club within his catchment area;
- If there is no Rural Club with that particular Code within his catchment area, the player shall be accommodated in that code by a “Designated Club” or in a bordering catchment area or in nearest proximity to the players First Club;

(b). Subject to Riail 6.8, (d), Exception (1), T.O. 2021, the CCC shall process and make decisions on applications received on or before 14th. February, in any year for permission for a Club’s **Underage (up to including U20 / U21)** players who may be without an Underage Team in a particular Grade or Code or who may be from an exclusive Football Club to wishing to play Hurling with a Dual Club or a player from an exclusive Hurling Club wishing to play Football with a Dual Club.

All applications must be made by a Club on behalf of its players, to play with the same club or independent team. Any exception, for individual players to go to different clubs, shall be decided by the CCC. Application shall be decided in accordance with the Central Council Code, Guideline and directive policy for the regulation of Independent Team and as outlined in Riail 6.8, (c), Exception (1) (a) & (b), T.O. 2021.

Applications will be decided based on the following criteria:

- If from an exclusive Football or Hurling Rural Club (as determined in Byelaw 6) with no particular code in that Club, the player shall be accommodated in that code by another Rural Club within his catchment area;
- If there is no Rural Club with that particular Code within his catchment area, the player shall be accommodated in that code by a “Designated Club” or in a bordering catchment area or in nearest proximity to the players First Club; (CLG Laoise)

(4). Amend Laois GAA Byelaw No. 5 (Attachment to First Club) to reflect that Laois CCC may no longer adjudicate on an application for Attachment to First Club as per Rule 6.4 and to read as follows –

5. Attachment to First Club

a) A person seeking to become a Member of the Association shall be restricted to joining a Club in the Catchment Area of his permanent residence as per Rule 6.4 (a) & (b), TO 2021 (Catchment Areas as defined in Laois GAA Rules and Regulations as per Rule 6.3, TO 2021). Exception; Primary School – A person seeking to become a Member of the Association may apply to join a Club in the catchment area where he is presently attending or has attended Primary School. This exception may only be availed of where the player has been attending this school or has attended for at least one full school year. (CLG Laoise)

(5). Amend Rule 1.16, TO 2021 to include additional section as follows

(d) All players must complete an online educational course on Alcohol, Gambling and Substance abuse (AGSA) and GAA’s Anti-doping Education Course, prior to their participation in an Adult grade of Championship and / or within the previous 12 months.

Penalty: A One Match Suspension in the same Code and at the same level applicable to the next game in the same competition, even if the game occurs in the following year.

(e) The Association should commit to outlining the comprehensive services in prevention and rehabilitation and conduct a review of the appropriate levels of testing that is currently in place at both club and county level.

(CLG Ráth Dombnaigh Airéil)



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