



Ballinteer St Johns GAA Club Secretary's report 39th AGM November 2021

Secretary Report 2021 – Gerry Watchorn

2021 has been another challenging year for all of us. As we left 2020 we had hopes for a return to normal activities but that hope was short lived and in December 2020 we like so many other clubs in GAA and other associations had our first incorporeal AGM in our forty year history as set out in the GAA guidelines.

In spite of the cancellation of play and the clubhouse closing in line with health restrictions the work of the executive continued throughout the year. At first through Zoom meetings and later when restrictions were lifted we met in person utilising the function room to cater for social distancing. We have had eleven full executive meetings since the AGM and many sub meetings to deal with particular issues as they arose.

With nearly four thousand members we are now among the largest clubs in the Country which is phenomenal growth in the short years of the clubs existence. It must be a great source of pride to our founder members to reflect back on what has grown from their first efforts.

The Executive have a set agenda each Month and review Registrations, child welfare, Treasurer updates Health and Wellbeing, Bar, and team updates. In addition, we review and address many other issues that arise throughout the year. Health and wellbeing were a major concern during the start of the year as many players and children were missing the outlet of sport so online training was initiated in line with child protection policy. Mental health was also a major concern during the start of the year and Trish McGrath PRO and club comms committee continued to reach out throughout lockdown to maintain contact with teams and players through news updates, advice and information.

Garda vetting and safeguarding courses continued throughout the lockdown. Temporary safeguarding course were made available on line but have a limited time scale so please check and update if necessary.

On facilities the pitch committee had to put a plan in place to ensure safe return with social distancing prior to return to play. The pride of 2020 our number two pitch suffered badly over the winter with drainage issues and the goalmouths had deteriorated rapidly through over use by the public and not the club. DLR were made aware of the situation and remedial work was undertaken and both goalmouths were resodded. The club purchased goal guards to protect the goalmouths and while it meant that the pitch was again out of use the result was a success and the pitch is perfect order today. On the All-weather Pitch Jim Devereaux does a fantastic job in managing and maintaining this facility where we recently got new bulbs fitted to bring it back to full operation. In reviewing pitch usage DLR suggested a swap of our pitch five near the dog run for the soccer pitch which is in front of our entrance to the park. The executive discussed the proposal and had the pitch committee review and survey the facilities. The result was a proposal from Ballinteer St Johns to realign the pitches and move the goalposts increasing and improving our pitches. The executive approved and DLR accepted the proposal for which we will share costs. Thanks to Enda Nolan Darren Heddon and all who contributed to the project. The executive reviewed and approved lights for the good Shepherd pitch which are proving a great success this year. A motion to have Camogie and LGFA played on alternative weeks was reviewed and passed by the executive and the motion was passed at County level. The usual problem of conflicting fixtures between both the Camogie Board and Ladies Football

Board continues to persist at adult level. The feedback from coaches and players to this has been overwhelmingly positive and has ensured a 'player centred approach'

The Health Committee was established at the start of Covid as a temporary measure but this has proved to be much more and they continue to monitor all Covid related issues for us. At the return to play we had 4300 Covid questionnaires completed in one week.

Our shop continued to trade throughout the lockdown with an appointment system and is now back open again and is really well supported. Thanks to Barbara, Anne, and the team for all their efforts and remember the club shop is a great place for your Christmas shopping too.

Big thanks to Donal Gormley our GPO who has moved on to a new career in education. Donal has been a great GPO and continues to assist us in the nursery. Unfortunately due to a ban on recruitment by the County board we are without a GPO at present.

In the nursery we need volunteers to help and assist we have a cycle for senior players to assist with training but more help needed. This year the executive approved purchase of new agility equipment for the nursery.

We have had a roller coaster time with the bar being opened closed and partially reopened again. In February we had the bar repainted and new carpet fitted in the hope that we would be returning soon but it was not to be. Restrictions and staffing availability are having a devastating effect on the industry and we in BSJ are no exception. Since our limited weekend reopening, we have had great support from teams who held their team nights in the bar. We have also had a number of functions but for now all functions will be limited to team nights.

I cannot mention the bar without mentioning our dear friend and Colleague Dermot Lee who died this November. As licensee for the club, I worked closely with Dermot on many issues related to the bar and on the bar committee. Dermot had a great sense of humour and was a true professional in his work. He brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to Ballinteer St Johns and shared it willingly. The number of our young people that he trained in the club is testament to his dedication to the club and his career. Ar Dheis De go raimh a anam.

The club draw was our biggest fundraiser this year with the Marley concerts being cancelled. The draw was very well supported by all, thanks to all for their efforts to achieve such a successful result. Thanks to all our sponsors and in particular Cosgrave Developments for their continued support and sponsorship throughout the years and in their recent donation to the club in October. The clothes bins have been a huge success thanks to Kieran Brennan and all who continue to use the bins they are a great source of revenue for the club and a third bin has now been added to cater for demand. Our Lotto is back in operation on Thursday night so please support on line if possible and thanks to the lotto volunteers who make this happen. Bingo resumed in November socially distanced and ventilated and thanks to the Bingo volunteers. Bingo is a great source of revenue for the club.

On The field

Camogie

We have large numbers coming through our Juvenile section and the retention of players feeding into the Adult section. The transition of players from juvenile to adult playing ranks continues to pose some challenges but we have made good progress on implementing improved procedures for this in 2021 which should be of benefit in 2022 on onwards. Our CCC1 section is thriving. U13 winning Div 2 unbeaten. The A team and B team both promoted. U14 claimed Championship silverware winning the Div 6 Shield. The A team, led by John Wall, were promoted and competitive in Div 1 league and Championship. U15 fielded 2 teams this year securing a place in Championship semi-finals. U16 led by John O'Connor fielded 1 team in D2. We fielded three Junior teams in League Cup and Championship. The players especially the younger ones were outstanding on the pitch and their enthusiasm keeps us confident for the future of adult camogie in the club. Thanks to all our Junior mentors, the senior team, managed by Dara Taafe with Siobhan McIntyre and Peter O'Shea

competed in Division 2 and were competitive in all their league games. Many thanks to our Secretary Lorna Doran and County Board Delegates, Conor Dolan and John Wall for their hard work at County level on behalf of our teams.

Hurling

With a delayed start to the season the league comprised of 5 games with tough matches. We had a challenging run in the Senior A championship that left us in a relegation playoff with Setanta which we won. Thanks to the players and support team including our Physio Brian O Rourke and cameraman Ronan Kelly for all their efforts and commitment during the year. The intermediate hurlers won their first league match after promotion and will play intermediate league again next season. In a highly competitive Junior A championship ended up in a relegation playoff instead of progressing to quarter finals. A victory in the playoff against maintains our Junior A status for next year. The Junior hurlers had a great year with great numbers for training and matches with a number of new players transferring into the club. We would like to thank the players for all their efforts and commitment during the year. Our Minor hurlers had huge success winning their 2020 championship final in 2021 and as we go to print both our 2021 A and B teams are contesting the 2021 championship finals. Our Under 21 team are contesting their semi final in the A hurling championship. Our Minor A Hurlers having won the 2020 Minor final this year triumphed again to win the 2021 Minor Final in a thrilling encounter against Castleknock Our Minor B hurlers not to be outdone beat Castleknock in their County final. Our under 16 hurlers won their semi final replay and will also contest a County Final. Thanks to Ken Sheehan hurling coordinator and Sean Lane County Board member and all the mentors and supporters.

LGFA

Ladies football in Ballinteer St. Johns had a very successful year in 2021. The number of players registered with the club increased from 553 to 626 in 2021. Twenty-two teams were entered in Go games (u-8 to u-12), eleven teams in Juvenile competitions and two teams were entered at adult level. We hope to field three adult teams in the coming season.

Managers and mentors at every level have worked hard throughout the season to ensure the players develop the necessary skills and enjoy their football. We would like to thank them for their effort and enthusiasm. Detailed team reports are in the yearbook for each team. Orlagh Nolan, won an All-Star award for her performances for Dublin senior ladies' team in the past year. Huge congratulations to Orlagh who has made everyone in the club very proud of her achievements. Thanks to LGFA secretary Paul Leahy all the mentors and volunteers.

Football

The Adult Football season like in the other codes was a shortened one with the Leagues split between North and South. The Seniors after a poor start picked up 5 points from their last three games. The Intermediate team playing in Division 4 for the first time won 4 of their 7 games. The Jun A team were competitive in their league. The Jun B team struggled greatly having moved up 3 divisions while the Jun C Team fielding for the first time finished a credible mid table in Div11.

In the Championship the Seniors retained their A championship status in what was a very strong grouping. The Intermediate team playing in the Jun 1 Championship got to the QTR Final. The Jun 1 team just lost out on a QTR position while the Jun B team were graded way above their standard and struggled. The Jun C team got to the QTR Final of their Championship. Our under 21 team had a great start to their campaign with an impressive win over Ballymun which sees them progressing to their quarter final.

Our 2020 Minor A team gave us a thrilling campaign that eventually ended in the A championship final in Parnell Park in 2021 having had the 2020 final cancelled days before the appointed date. The on off campaign due to Covid was always going to have an effect and unfortunately the lads ended as runners up. However, the campaign and spirit by the team was a great source of pride to the club which was evident in the huge support in Parnell Park on the night of the final. Thanks to Kieran Duffy, Darren Chambers all mentors and volunteers and Pat Smith Board delegate.

Full detailed reports on all teams are available in our year book.

In July we were proud to have Michelle Carey Represent Ireland in the Tokyo Olympics as part of the Irish women's hockey team. Orlagh Nolan, won an All-Star award for her performances for Dublin senior ladies' team in the past year. Dara Kennedy was selected for the Dublin Minor hurling team. Ian O Heithir, Tom Aherene Seamus Fenton were selected for Dublin under 20 team. Mathew Gardiner Mark McNally and John Clair were selected for Dublin Minor Football team. Ben Millist and Jack Lundy made the Dublin under 20 Football team. Lauren Burke and Hazel Grady starred in Under 16 Dublin Camogie team all Ireland Final and Rachel Dolan (Intermediates) and Ellie Doran (Minors) were on Dublin Camogie teams.

We continued our tradition of charity in the club despite Covid and in April our Darkness in to Light in aid of Pieta house was well supported. In May Our Senior Hurlers staged a hurlathon to raise funds for our All-stars team.

The one message I must impress upon all is the need for volunteers throughout the club and at all levels on all committees. We can provide training where necessary but we need people to volunteer throughout the club.

We need referees, the referee situation is at crisis level in the County and clubs may be asked to have at least one referee for every two teams. Training is given for all referees and Ballinteer St Johns have offered to host training courses. Please volunteer.

As 2021 draws to a close I am proud to say that the club members and executive and all committee members worked so hard to bring us through this trying time. Thanks to all of them and in particular those members of the executive that are stepping away this year. Elaine Dolan has served on the executive for many years and in many roles and now is moving on to the County Board. Eamonn Hession former secretary Mary Devereaux registrar and former secretary, Niall Joye Vice Chairman and Sue Markey our child protection officer leaves a full team in place and continues to volunteer for Camogie. Eamonn Coleman is also stepping down from the executive, Eamonn is a founder member of the club and it is great to see that forty years later Eamonn is still volunteering and making himself available as are all those who are stepping down this year. Our club chairman Darren works tirelessly and is always on hand and everywhere working on behalf of the club on and off the field. Special thanks to Cian Duffy for his legal support, Denis Ward, Paul McGrath for work on fire certification; Tom McCabe, Tom Murphy, Nicholas O Connor, injury officer, Mary Devereaux insurance advice and all those who work to maintain the clubhouse; Terry, Frank, Mark, Kieran, and Peter Byrne and many more volunteers that work away in the background putting their shoulder to the wheel when required asking not what the club can do for them but "what can we do for the club".

I had every confidence that 2021 would see us leave the pandemic behind us but as we enter 2022, I can just ask that we all stay safe and stay positive. We have had a great year despite the trials we faced and we will continue to thrive in to the future.

Gerry Watchorn

Runai Naomh Eoin Baile an Tsaoir

November 2021

