

Club Chairman's Address 2020

A chairde, failte roimh go leir anseo anocht son Crinniu Bhliana Nas na Riogh 2020

Can I begin by offering my sincere condolences to all our members and their families who have lost loved ones over the past twelve months. May they rest in peace. A mass was organised yesterday morning for all deceased members and friends of the club by our Club President Pat O'Shea.

The year 2020 will be remembered for all the wrong reasons. Our Club Secretary Richie Hogan has documented a summary of the club's activities in 2020. The overarching item was the Covid Pandemic and its effect on the club, our competitions, players and members. Our club accounts have been presented by our Treasurer Clive Leacy and again there are serious issues relating to Covid which in effect halted all funding activities in the club for most of the year. Competitions started as normal but as the year progressed they either were suspended, cancelled or deferred until 2021.

Despite all, our club continues to grow with large number of teams playing and representing the club over all codes and age groups. A new job description that of the Covid Supervisor came on the horizon this year. It is a mandatory roll in accordance with National and GAA guidelines. Bearing in mind the number of teams in club and the requirement to have at least one supervisor per team it presented a huge challenge. The Club and all of the sections again stepped up to the plate to fill these rolls. This then enabled us to play games and train our teams in accordance with the relevant restriction levels as notified by the authorities. Despite the lack of competitions and games it allowed a welcome outlet to our players to train and experience some semblance of normality. Our supervisors will likely be required well into 2021 and I thank you all for your work and a big thanks to our players and mentors who also cooperated in order to keep everyone safe and well.

With the suspension or otherwise if competitions we have a number of teams still to finish 2020, across all of the codes. We are still awaiting possible re-fixtured dates especially as the National Fixture calendar remains to be issued. I understand that teams need to prepare and be ready for their matches and I would ask that all sections continue to do so in a safe manner bearing in mind the time of the year and using club grounds.

Despite all the interruptions during the year we were able to progress the works to the laundry field development. Included in this project was also the remedial works in and around the viewing bank to the main pitch. There is still work outstanding to the new pitch which will be completed in the spring as weather conditions allow. The works to the bank area are almost complete. Payment for these projects is by the drawing down payment from the Sports Capital Grant, using funds through our Club Development Fund and through the loan facility from Croke Park which we applied for earlier this year. Thanks to all involved including John Walsh through the Development Committee and Andy Doyle through the Grounds Committee.

As mentioned earlier fundraising opportunities came to a halt this year. We had to cancel the disco's. We lost income from the hire of the hall, meeting rooms, mezzanine and the gym and we had to close the bar. By far the largest loss was from the disco events. While club income totally dried up we still have to maintain the facility including works to the pitches. The Club Officers and Executive were continuously monitoring this situation and various cost cutting measures were taken. Despite all it was projected that there would be an excess of expenditure over income. As fundraising was not possible it was reluctantly decided to apply a club levy for 2021. A special committee was tasked to examine this proposal and it reported on various options. Agreement was reached. Details and notification were communicated to all members. While this is regrettable it was seen as the only way forward. This levy will only be in place for one year, and various options

are in place by extending membership payments until the end of April 2021. Basically the club is in a good financial situation and this measure was deemed to be required in order to avoid future problems.

We are conscious of all financial and sponsorship related matters. Earlier this month we organised a drive-in bingo event which was hosted in Naas Racecourse. While numbers were good, the general support was relatively poor from club members. We made some money on the day and we plan to have more bingo events early in 2021. The event was widely promoted through sections and on KFM. There is a wide audience who play bingo and if we can improve club support it will help club finances and ease the gap between expenditure and income.

Our bar manager Paul Murphy resigned from his position in October. Paul was a great asset and carried out his duties over a wide spectrum. He will be missed and hard to replace. The bar remains closed and when it does eventually reopen it will be in a totally new environment. We are examining various options to determine the best way forward while acknowledging the requirements of the club and our members. Paul continues to be available to attend to any issues.

While 2020 was such a difficult and problem year a huge amount of work continued to be carried out by a large number of members. These included Owen L'Estrange as pitch co-ordinator, Liam Whelan as the Club Registrar, Joe Friel as Child Welfare Officer, Michael O'Muircheartaig Oifigeach na Gaeilge, Linda Woulfe for hall and room bookings and Marie Kane for bar and meeting room activity. As already mentioned we needed Covid Supervisors. A number of Club people headed up this challenge including Des Bergin, Brendan Kenny, Cormac Kirwan and Richie Hogan. They were assisted by the Club Officers and by large numbers through the sections.

The loss of income generated by the disco's needs a special mention. Rory, Bernie and the disco committee organised all the discos and everything happened without problems. This funding allowed for so many different activities to happen as a matter of course. Hopefully this activity will be able to resume some time next year but the indications are it will be later on rather than early in the year.

Another activity that fell foul to Covid was Punchestown. We continued to work at the fences when racing was resumed. This provides a valuable source of income with the bulk of the organising being done by Timmy Coyle, Frank Joyce and Austin Bergin and of course the members who help on race days at the fences. Well done and thanks to all.

We have a new GPO in the club. Leon Gordon took over from Louise Keane and continued with her work and schedule. Leon has fitted in very well and working with the club and the schools. Covid has also had a serious effect in this area. Summer and Easter camps were cancelled and a schedule of other outdoor activities were postponed. It was encouraging to hear such positive reports of Leon's work at the end of year section meetings. Well done to Mick Hoban and his committee for handling the transition and setting out the schedule of works for him.

Reverting back to the playing fields the Club continues to provide players to our County Teams. This applies to all sections in the club. This year especially, winning The Christy Ring Cup was a huge achievement for hurling and promoting hurling in the County. Naas contributed 10 players to the panel and the team was again captained by our own Brian Byrne. Well done to all. The fruits of playing senior sports is a direct result of the great work being carried at juvenile sections. We continue to build on previous years, well done and thanks to parents, players team managers and mentors.

Effective communication methods are so vital for our club in order to issue information to all of the sections, players and members. Sinead Keogh our Club PRO has carried out this job so effectively over the last number of years. She has been ably assisted by the section PRO'S and well done to everyone. Sinead is moving from the roll in 2021 and a special thanks and the best of luck in your new role in Camogie.

Throughout the year the Grounds Committee continued with their work. Covid was again a challenge but it did not deter them doing their various tasks in a safe manner. Various new jobs presented varying from drought conditions in the late spring to car park marking. All their usual tasks continued undeterred and the club benefits from their collective efforts.

Thanks to all the sub committees for continuing through the year. The absence of competitions was a big loss for teams and players. Training is ok but you can't beat the competitive match. The absence of games proved to be a big social loss but especially for supporters. You can't beat going to the match, meeting friends and shouting on your team. When the National and County Fixtures resumed it did provide some respite albeit in empty grounds and watching on television. Hopefully 2021 will bring some positive changes for us all.

As covid presented , especially during the first lockdown, the GAA along with other sporting organisations were asked if they could help in their local communities. As per usual we responded and club members volunteered and helped in so many ways. While thinking of others less fortunate than us we gave a great boost to so many. Thanks to all.

Special thanks to all committee officers ,mentors and volunteers who are stepping down or moving to new roles within the club. Your work and efforts did not pass unnoticed. To retiring players I hope that you will continue to stay involved in club activities as your knowledge and experience is important.

A special thanks to your Club Officers and to all members serving on the Club Executive throughout the year. The Executive is the ruling body in the Club and all decisions are made in the best interest of the Club. I know some are moving on and I wish them well in the future.

We have learned a number of new words and phrases over the past number of months. Corona Virus Pandemic, social distancing, playing and family bubbles, Covid 19, lockdowns, restriction levels to name but a few. So maybe we can revert to the normal wordings and greetings associated with this time of year. I wish you, your families and friends and all involved with Cumann Luthcleas Gael Nas na Riogh a very happy and safe Christmas and the best of luck in 2021.

Mile buiochas libh go leir.

Seam Mac Mathuna

Cathaoirleach.