



*Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.*

**St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint**



## **2021 Football Committee Report – Shane Carr**

A Chara,

Like everything in 2020 the football section has had a very disrupted year, with all plans changed and adapted to comply with the ongoing Covid issues.

We realise that mentors, parents and kids all had to operate in very difficult times and thank all involved in helping the football section to operate this year. We hope that being able to play and train with their buddies helped provide some sort of normality during very strange times.

In terms of competition it was a strange year with the lack of tournaments and the tighter schedules, but we had some success from the U11 boys and the minor girls have an upcoming championship final.

We had 12 teams providing football for the boys and girls in our club from U6 to minor level. At the start of the year we were delighted to have some experienced coaches return to underage boys management as well as a number of former senior players working with underage players. This was further enhanced by a number of senior/minor girls becoming involved with the younger age groups. I would concur with the sentiment of the U7 management review in thanking these girls for their efforts.

The LGFA section also celebrated 10-years operating within the club this year. It is great that our senior ladies team had a successful year and the minors team have an upcoming final. This is the first year we have had LGFA representation at all age groups from U11 to Senior and the hard work from all involved is coming to the fore. During the year we hosted the Down senior ladies team in Moygannon and have girls representing the County at various levels. Thanks to Mike Barnett for his continued work with the LGFA section.

Another significant addition to the club is the "Gaelic for All" initiative. Seeing the enthusiasm from the kids and their mentors on a Sunday morning can only bring a smile to your face and the work from Declan Carville and his team of young mentors is a credit to him and our club.

In addition to the new coaches we had a large percentage of our existing coaches who needed to refresh their Access NI and Child Protection certification and the football section did well to ensure the appropriate certification was in place, even if it involved virtual courses or similar. We recognise the work of Anne McCormack in arranging the courses and validating the documentation to ensure all coaches within the club are compliant with the GAA regulations and our own clubs governance policies.

We also noted significant increases in playing numbers, particularly in the youngest age groups within the club and the growing girl's section, but concern would be noted in terms of the reduced number as we move up the age groups. We hope the growth with the younger age groups can continue but the numbers playing regularly from u13 onwards would be a concern.



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The Club Athletic Development Plan wasn't able to run at the start of this year due to the restrictions, but it is something we hope to be able to return with in advance of next season.

At the start of the year the football committee was further enhanced with the return of Noreen Kelly to its number and her work in the PRO role was much appreciated throughout the year.

The requirements to space out training, the restrictions in St Marks and the provisions required for hand sanitizers etc. made Daniel's job of coordinating training across all the pitches we use an even more difficult one this year. There are ongoing pressures on this role but accommodating the weekly training schedules is one of the key day-to-day roles within the club and we thank Daniel for his ongoing efforts.

I would like to thank all members of the football committee for their efforts throughout the year and hope that some semblance of normality can return to the operation of the football section in the not too distant future.

#### **Football Committee**

Cathaoirleach (Chairman) – Shane Carr

Rúnaí (Secretary) - Paul McKibben

Coiste (Additional members) – Steve Robinson, Liam Howlett, John Daly, Colm Rice, Brendan Rice, Mike Barnett, Noreen Kelly and Larry Byrne.



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## **2021 U7 (Nursery to P3) Report – Stephen Robinson**

A Chara,

Over the course of the year the U7 group had an average of 100 kids on the training pitch in St. Marks every Sunday morning with 50 partaking in mid-week training on Wednesdays (limited to the 2 older school years).

The kids training ranged from Nursery year up to P3s. As can be imagined it requires a lot of dedication from the coaches throughout the year to ensure that the training was fun and effective and one of our aims was to increase the number of coaches at this age group so that we had fewer kids per coach.

During 2021 we added an additional 11 coaches, and this helped greatly in providing the dedicated training throughout the year. So first and foremost a thank you to each of the coaches mentioned above for their dedication and enthusiasm. They are all a credit to the club and were always willing to just get stuck in. More than anything at this age they were willing to ensure things were fun for the children – many a Sunday morning had music, bubbles and water balloons on the go!

Another aim from 2020 was to increase the female representation within the coaching group at this age. During the year 5 new female coaches got involved and it makes such a difference to the U7 girls to have those role models. From a P2/P3 perspective, the girls absolutely love Clíodhna and Caoimhe S and I'm not sure they realise the impact they have on the group as a whole – the kids have a role model to look up to and can see that it's not just boys who do the coaching. Can't see, can't be!

Thank you very much Clíodhna/Caoimhe.

In a similar vein, a huge thank you to Katie, Enya and Caoimhe Q for helping out with the P1s throughout the year. Every Sunday they were there and no matter what was asked of them, they just jumped in and got involved. Nothing was ever a problem for them. And then to add that they are from the minor team and it's safe to say that the club is very lucky to have them.

None of the 5 female coaches have kids or siblings at this age grade so personally and as a group a massive thank you. You are creating future female stars by giving your time so generously.

For 2022, to organise the U7 better I feel it would be best to split the group into two separate groups – nursery & P1 in one group, P2 & P3 in another group. With the P2/P3 group playing games and training on Wednesdays it's more suited to 2 separate groups with 2 separate managers. The 4 years containing girls and boys was a stretch to cover for one management team!

Also, important to acknowledge that the P2/P3 girls are better in their own group than mixed with the boys. A lot of the girls do not want to play football with the boys once at this age and mixing the groups can cause a lot of drop out. The consistent level of participation of the girls throughout the



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year is testament to this (and of course to the coaches) and it would be recommended to keep this separation once the kids reach P2.

Finally, to acknowledge the impact that the volunteering can have. Within P1 we had one boy who at the start of the year just constantly repeated that he couldn't do anything and was completely lacking in confidence. By the end of the year, he was completing all drills and scored in some small games we had. He was so proud of himself and is now more likely to stay involved. This is the impact coaches can have on the children in their groups when a positive atmosphere is created and maintained.

As a personal note, I think it is great to have the U5, U7, U9 and GAA for all all training at the same time on a Sunday morning. It creates such a good atmosphere in St. Marks on those Sunday mornings. A personal goal has always been to just have kids out exercising in the fresh air, having fun and building friendships for life. The Sunday mornings are a joy in this regard.

To finish, thanks to all those coaches that gave their time in 2021, looking forward to getting onto the pitch again in 2022, and best of luck to those moving on to U9.

1, 2, 3, .....SUPERBLUES

Stephen

#### **U7 Management Team**

Managers – Stephen Robinson, Colm Rice

Coaches - Mark Toal, Paul Rafferty, Sean Doherty, Declan McGrath, Paschal McElearn, Nigel O Rourke, Brendan Curtis, Clodhna Shannon, Caoimhe Shannon, Niall McShane, Colin McGivern, Danny O'Neill, Philip Sloan, Johnny O'Hare, Katie Howlett, Enya Quinn, Caoimhe Quinn, Paul Stokes, Gavin Poland, Kevin Owens



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### **2021 U9 (P4 and P5) Report – Kieran Grant**

A Chara,

The highest attendance for the season in total was 41 kids with a weekly average of 30+ kids. The number split between boys and girls was 50/50. There are only approximately 14 P6s girls and boys with the balance coming from P5s. The P6s will be moving up to the U11s next season.

It is still not too late for kids of that age to pick up the game so it would be great if there was a drive (possibly through the school and as well as through the club) to create interest amongst this age group.

Our season started late (to Covid lockdown) on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021 on the St. Mark's pitches. We immediately decided to train twice weekly and did so every Wednesday evening in St Marks until the end of the season on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021. There was no indoor training this year. If allowed, next season it would be beneficial to start early indoors and get out onto the football pitch as soon as is practical. The twice weekly training is an obvious benefit and should continue going forwards at a time suitable to both coaches and players.

This group had on average 4 coaches per session. This is the minimum number required to ensure players are getting effective coaching. It was great to see Paul McClorey getting back involved in underage coaching. It must also be noted that the addition of female coaches this season has been very helpful. Thanks to those in the club who initiated this and please ensure that it continues going forward. I think the girls appreciated having a mentor like Lucia Morgan as one of their coaches. Some of the coaches have multiple roles within the club (Colm, Ruairi, Paul Rafferty & Declan) so thanks to them for taking time out to help with the coaching.

It should be noted that at U9 level the recommendation from the county board was that all games should remain mixed. However, it appears that a lot of clubs had already split girls and boys at this age group. In my opinion keeping the group mixed at this age was beneficial.

Next season I know there is a strong cohort of girls joining this group so it may be worth splitting into girls and boys (like other clubs) as long there is enough coaches and availability of pitches. The county board arranged scheduled 7 friendlies with other teams with similar numbers in the area. Other friendly matches were organised with Burren (3 times), Rostrevor (twice) and Saval. All these matches were mixed and there were also girls only matches organised against these 3 teams. Everyone played well in these matches and the girls really benefited from the mixed matches when it came to playing in the girls only matches.

I would like to thank the Football Committee for their assistance throughout the year. In particular thanks to Paul McKibben for sourcing some much needed new footballs. We will definitely require more balls for next year. Thanks to Daniel Bird for organising the pitches and for contacting the caretakers at St marks to get the gates opened when required! A special thanks to Colm Rice and Noreen



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Kelly for ensuring that everyone was signed in and sanitised at the start and end of each training session.

I would like to thank all coaches who were a great help throughout the year as it would be impossible to do anything worthwhile without their help.

I would ask that myself and coaches are kept informed of any coaching sessions available over winter (even via zoom!) as this is very beneficial for organising training sessions. Most the coaches have expressed an interest in carrying on next year.

Finally, I would conclude by saying that I'm sure all the coaches would agree that it was privilege to coach such a great bunch of kids who displayed a high level of enthusiasm, as well as good manners most of the time : ) throughout the year.

Le Mise

Kieran

#### **U9 Management Team**

Manager – Kieran Grant

Coaches – Colm Rice, James Keenan, Ruari McCartney, Lucia Morgan, Paul McClorey

Thanks also to Paul Rafferty, Declan McGrath and Niamh McNally for helping out in training when they could.



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## **2021 U11 (P6 and P7) Report – Dermot Mathers**

A Chara,

### **Training Overview**

Training for the u11's, which was delayed to May this year due to Covid restrictions, focused on preparation for the league campaign. This year we made the decision to split the teams as per school year, with Primary 7's as the Gaels and Primary 6's as the Og's, with an even split of approx. 15 players on each side.

Training initially focused on fundamental skills with basic drills on toe pickups, catching, fist passing, overhead catching, soloing etc. before stepping it up to more technical passing and shooting drills, small pressured and ball orientated games along with training matches concentrating on off-the-ball movement, tracking players and an emphasis on focused passing throughout the team. Positive development of players individually and as a team has been evident throughout the season however there is still the need to continue to focus on fundamental skills moving forward into next season.

Minor behavioural issues did occur during some training sessions from a small section of players. This did become disruptive and hampered training sessions on numerous occasions. During the summer months, training participation also dropped significantly within the Gaels team that added to difficulty in planning sessions/matches, match participation and the continued development of the players.

### **League Season**

The Under 11 league format started back in late May with the Gael team placed in Div1 and the Og's team placed in Div4. Unfortunately, the progression level of all players at this point, should have had the teams placed in different divisions that better suited their current competitive level and development. This became apparent after the initial set of games, particularly the P7 Gael team that had to move away from competitive league fixtures and aim more towards competitive challenge games on a weekly basis.

The P6 Og's team, continued to play in the league with games against Bosco, Shamrocks, Burren, Annaclone, Saval, Clonduff, Mayobridge, An Riocht and Eire Og. The weekly games were very competitive and enjoyable matches that showcased team-based progression throughout.

The consistent strong performances led to the team to topping the league table and being crowned Div 4 champions.

With the last 18 months being very disruptive for all the players due to the pandemic, the positive improvement and team ethos that was on display during these games was a joy to witness and coach. The delight in the players and sense of achievement from winning the league campaign was a proud moment for all coaches and parents involved.

Both teams continued to participate in further matches post league, with visiting Rostrevor, Eire Og, An Riocht, Shamrocks and Dromintee as some stand out fixtures. Throughout these games the



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teams were split into Gaels and Og's based on ability, with placing the players in areas that we felt would help with building their confidence, skill and playing time.

### **Summary**

It has been a busy year with regards training and fixtures. The success of winning the Div 4 league being the main highlight. The players have significantly improved in most areas with a clear direction of what needs further improvement moving forward to next year. On the negative, the behaviour and commitment from a small section of players needs significant addressing and a player drive to increase numbers would certainly be helpful at this age group.

Finally, I would like to thank Damian Ryan, Christy McShane, Alan Binks, Sean Doherty, Nigel O'Rourke, Larry Byrne, Gerard Leddy and Barry Mullan for their help, support, and dedication throughout the season.

Le Mise

Dermot Mathers

### **U11 Management Team**

Manager – Dermot Mathers

Coaches – Damian Ryan, Christy McShane, Alan Binks, Sean Doherty, Nigel O'Rourke, Larry Byrne, Gerard Leddy and Barry Mullan



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## **2021 U13 (born after 1 Jan 2008) Report – Sean O'Hare**

A Chara,

This year we entered 1 team into the South Down Division 2.

Numbers again this year have been very tight. We started the season with 16 of a panel which included 2 players (Ross Austin & Niko Perdikomatis) from the u11.5 squad. We were delighted to have a few players return who hadn't played for a while, which increased our numbers to 19 by the first game but had 2 players drop off during the summer so we finished the season with a panel of just 17.

We finished this year's campaign as league runners up with 6 wins 1 draw and 2 defeats. The final league game of the season against Tullylish ended up being the league decider but sadly it wasn't to be our night.

The numbers at training at times during the year were a bit disappointing very hard to prepare for matches with 9 / 10 at training. This was highlighted when we played the Division 1 teams in the Championship and struggled to compete with the depth of squads.

Overall the season was a positive one, although the last league game was disappointing, to be able to field 9 league matches and 4 championship games (all bar 1 where we played 14-a side) at 15 aside with a panel of 17 shows the commitment of the players to the matches.

The players are getting to that age where there is a natural drop-off, but we would urge all parents to encourage their kids to keep playing.

We are continuing training until mid-December and have invited all players who are still eligible to play u15s next year to attend to try and keep the fitness & skill levels up with no competitive games it is a chance for the players to try and develop their own game.

I would like to thank Johnny Rooney, Peter Shannon and Shane Carr for their help and commitment again this year.

Le Mise

Sean O'Hare (Sho)

### **U13 Management Team**

Manager – Sean O'Hare (Sho)

Coaches – Johnny Rooney, Peter Shannon and Shane Carr



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## **Under 15 Boys Football Report**

The U15 boys had a very good year playing and competing with the best clubs in the County.

At the start of the season, they were pooled in the All-County Division 2 League. After comprehensive wins against An Ríocht and Newry Shamrocks the management took the bold decision to ask the County Board to move the team up into All County Division 1. This was to push and stretch the players as much as possible for their individual development. The request was granted.

The team had an excellent league campaign finishing joint 4th. The team had great wins over Mayobridge, Kilcoo, Bryansford who finished 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively in the league. Other notable league wins were away to Bredagh and Clonduff. The league campaign was excellent with a firm focus on individual player development at training.

Player numbers and commitment to training was exceptionally high. The U.15s had consistently over 20 players at each training session which was a credit to the young Gaels attitude and mindset of developing and getting better technically and physically. Coaches Brian Powell, Gabby Smyth, Pat Healy and Shane McClory were delighted and very impressed with the U.15s attitude and standards set by the players.

Unfortunately, the U.15s could not compete at the County Feile due to injuries, illness and covid related issues which was the only disappointing issue to deal with throughout the season.

In the All-County Division one Championship the U15s had a very strong campaign. In the early rounds the U.15s were strong. They narrowly lost to Mayobridge before beating Clonduff convincingly to set up a quarter final away to Bryansford. A fantastic winning performance by 6 points against Bryansford set up an All-county semi-final against Bredagh. Unfortunately, key injuries in the quarter final ruled a few players out of the semi-final. The Bredagh side were too strong in the semi-final and ran out comfortable winners. Mayobridge won the final.

Overall, it was a great year for the U.15s. The pathway to senior football is another step closer for these great bunch of young footballers.

Brian



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### **U17 Football Report 2021**

In this unusual year the season started late. With no training in St Marks and few pitch sessions due to us trying to protect fields for the upcoming year. So, we started the league with our first game and were beat by Kilcoo by 1 point. We then came up against Loughinisland who beat us convincingly and went on to win the competition. An Ríocht also beat us well. We got our first win against Dundrum and then a great win over Leitrim, then drew against Shamrocks and then Castlewellan forfeited due to Covid.

Championship started and again we run Kilcoo close before beating Leitrim and then we beat An Ríocht, which I feel was the game of the year for our boys. The next game we played was against Shamrocks who beat us with a last-minute goal, which left us to play Rostrevor in the quarter final, on the day Rostrevor were just the better team. They showed what they can do, and I feel there is great talent in this team and they are only going to get better.

I would like to thank Martin Trainor, Paul McKibben and Ruairi McCormack for all the hard work throughout the year and also Alan Davidson, Liam Howlett, Colm Carty and Brian Powell who stood in at certain times to help at training and games.

Looking back at the year it was very frustrating at times with injuries and boys isolating due to the unforeseen situation. We saw glimpses of what this team can do, and I have no doubt they can do it in the future.

Well done boys.

John Daly

## **U19 Football**

**Manager:** Colm Carty

**Mentors:** Martin Hoolihan & Conor Carty

The 2021 U19 season began with training on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021 as soon as COVID-19 restrictions had allowed 15 people to train on one half of a football field. A panel of 16 players minus star player Cian McLoughlin meant we could commence the season and train on Tuesday's, Thursday's and Saturday's for the first 4 weeks – when the Saturday trainings were replaced by a game on either Saturday or Sunday.

We had been placed in Division 2 All-County league, alongside 6 other teams which meant that 6 competitive league games were envisaged with the top 4 progressing to a semi-final and a final, something that our mentors and players believed to be the main objective of the season.

Preparation had gone well for the opening game of the season which was scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> June. We played a challenge game against Clonduff U19s which was a stern test for our lads in which they responded to greatly. Only losing by a couple of points where we benefited hugely by the U17 players that made the step up in grade. The majority of the lads already had a couple of competitive league games under their belt in the seconds or thirds leagues.

However, we were informed by the county board on the 5<sup>th</sup> June that the scheduled season starting on the 12<sup>th</sup> June would be postponed until the intercounty U20 championship had concluded which at that stage had the potential of being 15<sup>th</sup> August (9 weeks) should Down get to an All-Ireland Final. After 18 training sessions and 1 challenge game the training to game ratio was skewed, therefore the management team decided to give the players a 2 week break from training although the majority of players were benefiting from regular football in the reserve and thirds football leagues with some 4 players regularly attending senior training - Sean Carragher, Lorcan Ruane, Shea Magee and Cian McLoughlin.

As the season was delayed, a number of U19 teams throughout the county withdrew and only 12 teams prevailed. The county board reversed their decision and allowed games to proceed from 26<sup>th</sup> June albeit in a reshuffled league format where we found ourselves moved into Division 1. The U19 management would have preferred that there was some consultation before this county board decision was made as our squad of 15 players were beginning to pick up a number of significant injuries: James Ruddy - Hamstring (3 months), Conor Madden – Knee (6-12 months). The first league game of the season then took place on 24<sup>th</sup> July against a strong and physical Kilcoo side where we suffered a heavy defeat. After this defeat a number of players had expressed their concern on our depleted squad not being able to compete against the top teams in the county as two further players had suffered significant injuries in this game, namely Sean Carragher – Shoulder (3 months) and Lorcan Ruane – Back (1 month).

The management team liaised with the football committee that our depleted squad would not be able to field in these fixtures even with the reliance on a number of U17s. We had requested that we move to 13-a-side Division 2 but the County Board declared that all fixtures had been made, meaning that we would not be able to play in any league games yet granted an automatic place in the semi-final of Division 2.

We played Annaclone on the 14<sup>th</sup> August in the league semi-final although with 9 U19 players backed up with 3 U17 players we took to the field with only 12 players. Being a man down from the first

whistle meant we were defeated by eventual Division 2 winners Annaclone and in turn concluded the 2021 U19 season.

3 additional lads Jack Howlett, James Ruddy and Ben Lynch joined the original 4 U19 players in the senior panel bringing the total number of 7 U19 players to the senior panel.

On behalf of the management, I would like to thank all players and parents for their understanding during a complex football season brought about by fixture issues and also COVID-19. Many thanks also has to go to the management team for their ongoing commitment in changeable circumstances and remaining upbeat with uncertainty around fixtures.

Congratulations to U19 Team member Cian McLoughlin on his Ulster Title with Down U20's.