

**Cumann Pheadair Naofa
(St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint)
www.warrenpointgaa.com**



**CUMANN PHEADAIR NAOFA C.L.G.
COISTE FORBARTHA**

REPORT BY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

TO CLUB AGM ON 14 NOVEMBER 2023

3 November 2023

Sincere thanks to our club volunteers, who have ensured that the Cumann Pheadair Naofa CLG with record membership of over 1,000 members (60% youth membership), 35 teams and 140 coaches / mentors continues to successfully develop and grow as a not-for-profit community organisation, operating at the heart of its local community for whole of family for whole of life, as a fully integrated urban one club model for GAA, Camogie, Ladies Gaelic Football, including GAA Fun for All and Gaelic4Mothers & Others with estimated voluntary social capital commitment of £1,272,000 over the past 12 months, across sports games, cultural activities and a range of community initiatives.

From a development perspective, the major club project over the past few years has been the evolution of the Our Vision Project. It is very encouraging to report that as a result of the fantastic and loyal support of Our Vision Patrons, at the end of our 4 year Our Vision Fundraising period which ended on 31 July 2023, we raised £402,734, exceeding our target of £400k (this is after allowing for our final Gift Aid claim for £8,970, which can now be submitted). This is an exceptional achievement in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. As highlighted in our club Financial Statements for the year ended 30th September 2023, the Our Vision Club Development Bank Account had a balance of £271,485 as at 30th September 2023.

You may recall to fund the acquisition of the Pony Field and related land two capital loans were secured: a 5 year £100,000 loan from Croke Park (monthly payment £1,748.40) and a £235,000 15 year loan from the Community Finance Ireland Ltd (monthly payment £1,582.00). In order to assist the potential development of the Our Vision project, the club Senior Management Committee took the very significant decision to fund the monthly repayment of the loans out of club operational funds. The most recent known balances of these loans are: Croke Park Loan £14,777.27 as at 30th September 2023 and Community Finance Loan £202,975.09 as at 1 October 2023..

St. Peter's GAA Club Warrenpoint were granted full Planning Permission on 26th November 2021 at the Newry Mourne & Down District Council (NM&DDC) Planning Committee Meeting in respect of its Planning Application (submitted March 2020) for the proposed development (of the Our Vision Project) comprising a new practice pitch with goals, ball stops and dugouts, on the former Pony Field, a walking track, amenity areas, internal road, improvements to the existing car park, boundary fencing, a two storey pavilion incorporating changing rooms, toilets with meeting rooms, improvements to existing entrance to the Rostrevor Road.

The granting of planning permission for the Our Vision project development adjacent to the club's existing Pairc Liam Úi Ír facilities at Moygannon was a significant forward step in the implementation of the club's integrated Strategic Plan to facilitate the community development of the provision of sports facilities to service the growing needs of existing and future Gaelic Football, Ladies Gaelic Football, Hurling, Camogie, GAA for All, Gaelic4Mothers & Others and Handball activities in the Warrenpoint area. The proposed project which includes a walking track will also encourage greater community participation in physical sport and facilitate improved community health and wellbeing.

With anticipated public funding support to complement the great efforts of Our Vision Patrons, enabling field ground works commenced in August 2022, and this work was completed in November 2022 at a cost of £79,435, with no grant assistance following a grant application to NM&DDC. At this stage it was hoped the overall Our Vision capital development project could be completed before the end of 2024. A small dedicated Our Vision Focus Group was established and is determined with support from the Senior Committee to see the successful delivery of the Our Vision Project.

Two grant applications in respect of the Our Vision project were submitted to NM&DDC during the past 12 months. The first project sought grant assistance of £150,000 under the NM&DDC Sports Facilities Capital Programme towards proposed £300k expenditure on proposed extension to dressing rooms at Moygannon. It was disappointing that this application was not successful.

The second grant application to NM&DDC was in relation to seeking £400k grant towards 50% cost of new grass pitch at the Pony Field as part of a multi-sports hub project. A negative response to this application submitted in May 2023 was received on 3rd November 2023. It is only natural that club members are becoming frustrated with the lack of NM&DDC support towards the Our Vision project,

noting that the first meetings held with Crotlieve Councillors and Council officials re financial support for the Our Vision project were in 2019, over four years ago.

A new company limited by guarantee, The Friends of St. Peter's GAA Club Warrenpoint Ltd (Company Number: NI699116) was incorporated on 10th July 2023 to facilitate a grant application to the Community Ownership Fund for £972k, being 80% of proposed project spending of £1,215k on the Our Vision project. Unfortunately this grant application was not successful.

Much work was involved in the preparation of these quality detailed grant submissions and I would express sincere appreciation to all involved for their support and efforts, especially Club Assistant Treasurer, Eamonn Connolly.

Although it is disappointing that the Our Vision project has not yet secured significant capital grant funding, the hunger to succeed in this regard has not diminished and the desire to develop the Our Vision project to a completion is stronger than ever. The fact that there has been no SportNI Capital Sports Programme for clubs over the past 5 years has not helped the position.

Significantly, the Facilities Community Outreach Strategic Alliance between St. Peter's GAA Club Warrenpoint and St. Mark's High School, Warrenpoint was extended for a further 3 years from 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2026 on the 28th June 2023. This Strategic Facilities Alliance with St. Mark's High School which initially commenced on 7th October 2011 has played a pivotal role in the growth and development of club activities.

All Club Policies, Individual Officer Portfolios and Terms of Reference for various Sub Committees were updated and approved on 17th April 2023. In terms of transparency and communications, all this information, including the Club Organisation Chart is available for download in dedicated section from the club website warrenpointgaa.com which has been redeveloped to be a more user friendly website (sponsored by FPM Accountants). The club Roll of Honour is regularly updated on the club website and continues to be a quality reference source.

Club Officers and Coaches have participated in County, Ulster and National GAA Officer and Coaches training programmes. As highlighted within the various Games activities Reports to the AGM, the club has been very pro-active in games participation and development over the past 12 months.

The club has also participated in the Down GAA Strategic Planning Process and made contributions to the Down GAA Strategic Review Committee via its various consultation workshops. The club was represented at the launch of the Down GAA Strategic Plan 2023-2026: "Moving Forward Together" on 10th October 2023 and would like to congratulate the Down County Board and its Strategic Planning Steering Committee on the publication of this quality Strategic Plan and looks forward to participating in the implementation of the plan.

Cumann Pheadair Naofa is now approaching the end of its extended current 5 Year Development Plan and over the next 12 months a new 3 Year Club Development Plan will be prepared and the new Club Maith certification process completed.

It has been a great honour to serve this club as Development Officer over the past 12 months and sincere thanks to all especially to club's Senior Officers for their support.

Is mise le meas.

Fearghal MacCormaic
(Oifigeach Forbartha)