



Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.

St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint



2024 Football Committee Report – Stephen Robinson

Cathaoirleach (Chairman) : Stephen Robinson

Rúnaí (Secretary) : Johnny Rooney

Coiste (Additional Members) : Colette Locke, Damian Doyle, Ger Leddy, Helen Carvill, Julie Blair, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Larry Byrne, Mike Barnett, Noreen Kelly, Paul McKibben, Shane Carr, Shane McClory

A Chara,

Similar to last year it's important to give some numbers at the outset on what we do as a club in the community as we sometimes take for granted the volume of activity that goes on. For Juvenile football alone :

- In 2024, there were over 70 coaches involved in training our underage teams, both boys and girls, from the nursery group up to minor
- There were over 500 kids who took part in training or matches.
- There were significantly more than 1,000 training sessions/matches held across all these age groups.
- Greater than 100 hours of training will be completed in St. Dallen's by year end, outside of the normal P6/P7 after-school training.
- More than 175 kids & 23 adult coaches took part in our summer camp week (+ the U16s)
- >30 NI Access renewed / > 40 child protection refreshed or completed. Thanks to Anne McCormack for all the hard work on this.

It takes a lot of work from all coaches to get their teams through the year so a big thank you to all coaches who gave up their time during 2024. And especially thank you for working together with regards to space in St. Marks or facilitating players playing for multiple teams – through your co-operation the club will only grow stronger. You are a credit to the club.

Thanks to Mike Barnett for organising pitches – an unenviable task.

A big thank you too to Colette Locke for all the work on the LGFA fixtures/referees etc. and generally being the go-to on all things LGFA. A huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes and it is greatly appreciated. Similarly thank you to Noreen for all the PRO work through the year.

It would be remiss given the timing of the meeting to not mention the passing of Aisling McGivern. A truly sad day for Warrenpoint as a whole. To all members of the club, all sections, while a terrible occasion for the family to have to deal with, the rallying round and support offered by the club was amazing and it is what a community club like Warrenpoint should embody. Well done to everyone in the club and especially in the Senior Committee for the support offered and the dignity in which it was delivered.



Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.

St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint



School Link

The primary goal of the year was to continue to build on the links between St. Dallan's and the club with the goal of getting the majority of children who are in St. Dallan's playing for Warrenpoint. 2023 saw a fantastic start to the initiative to get coaches into the school every week and this was continued throughout 2024. We have had coaches in pretty much every Friday throughout the school year. For the first half of the year, it continued in the same vein as 2023 with multiple people giving up 1 or 2 hours a week.

Coaches that went in during this period were :

- Paul Stokes, Colm Rice, Stephen Robinson, John Boyle, Trina McNicholas, Ruairi McCormick, Colm Carty
- At the same time, we had a couple of taster sessions in Seaview nursery school that were done by Stephen Robinson, Colm Carty and Yvonne McFerran that covered football, hurling and camogie.

It was becoming unsustainable to have people taking an hour or 2 off work each Friday when we had a low number of volunteers going in. So first and foremost a big thank you to everyone who did go in and for giving up their valuable time – it is greatly appreciated and the difference you make with your dedication is not lost on the football committee or those involved in trying to grow the underage section.

Nevertheless, it did need to change for the 2nd half of the year. To that extent John Boyle has covered the full day from 9am to 3pm every Friday since the resumption of the school in September, aided by David Ruddy for a few hours. A massive commitment so a huge thank you to John. His commitment to the club at all levels is to be commended as not only does it manage the seniors, he does U6 training, schools' football, summer/Easter camps and has brought seniors to Sunday underage training. Thanks John – you give so much to the club, and it's truly appreciated.

The ultimate goal of going into the school is 2-fold. 1. Pure and simple giving the kids exercise. The number of kids who are clearly not exercising in any fashion outside of the school setting is shocking. Co-ordination skills have really dropped. We'll not solve this ourselves but the release the club gives in this regard is truly underappreciated. Secondly, and most importantly from a club perspective, is trying to grow the number of kids in St. Dallan's who attend Warrenpoint training and become members. This is a long-term goal and only through continued strong links with the school can we progress this. This is not something that will change overnight but requires management over a number of years and we will only see the true dividend after 3 or 4 years of continuous interaction.

- Other notable items :
 - The school jerseys from last year's report were presented to the school at the start of the year.



Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.



St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint

- A blue day happened in March this year where club representatives went into the classrooms of each class to discuss Gaelic games and try encouraging participation from the different groups.
- The school received a \$1,000 donation from State Street charitable trust which was based upon CPN club coaches giving up volunteer hours to coach the kids. A further \$1,000 should be received by the end of the year.

It takes a lot of work and organising, and thanks are due to a lot of people but mainly thanks to Noreen Kelly, Mrs Farrell and the Board of Governors for their openness to these links. This needs to remain a key focus for the years to come.

Summer Camp / Easter camp

After such a successful summer camp in 2023, the key to 2024 was to try keep the momentum going in this regard and to try make the summer camp a key fixture in the summer calendar of families in Warrenpoint. This year we had >175 kids participating throughout the week with each kid receiving a lovely CPN crested training top in the Warrenpoint colours. The numbers were slightly down on 2023 where we had 200 kids participating but this, I believe was due to the cul camp timing. In 2023, cul camp was after the Warrenpoint summer camp. This year cul camp was ran just a couple of weeks before it. Going forward it would be ideal to align these like 2023 to maximise the turnout & revenue for the club.

Similar to 2023 the support we got for running the summer camp was great. There are a lot of people who make this happen but mainly :

- Thank you to Ryan Boyle for organising each day. Ryan makes it all easy for each coach helping and there is no stress involved. Organising a week such as the summer camp takes a lot of effort and coordination so a big thanks to Ryan.
- To all the coaches who helped during the week, from those with a lot of experience to those who were doing it for the first time, none of it would happen without these volunteers who give so much to the club. We need to try continue to make it appealing to parents to step in and help out and having a fund week such as this only encourages that. And it does also strengthen the links between families and the club.
- Again, this year the U16 boys helped throughout the week. There were tremendous and it is great to yet again see the different strands of the club come together to help with an event such as this.

I am suspicious that it was Down won the All-Ireland on the last day on the camp, but we can let that slide.



Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.

St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint



An additional add to the calendar was the Easter training camp for the U16/U14 age group. We had identified previously that there was a gap at this age group in what was offered. As such an Easter development camp was organised targeted at both boys and girls. Unfortunately, this did not appeal to the girls with no take-up. It's something we need to try figure out and address. It would appear that the girls did not want to share a camp with the boys. Although it was never the intention that there would be mixed training, that message maybe got lost. As the dropout at U16 girls is high (in the country, not just Warrenpoint) we need to figure out a strategy for trying to keep them engaged and members of the club. Whether that's additional offerings or just a tailoring or the training we offer it's something we should try tackle again in 2025.

Taking the above into account, the Easter camp was still very warmly received by the 28 boys who did attend with some great classroom based and field-based development classes from nutrition to skills-based courses. Some highlights

- We had Sharon Madigan give the nutrition talk – Sharon is the head of Performance Nutrition at the Irish Institute of Sport who has delivered nutrition support over six Olympic cycles supporting several Olympic and world medallists.
- Ronan McMahon, Ryan McAleenan, John Boyle and Ryan Boyle gave practical on-field sessions.
- Ryan McAleenan & Ryan Boyle gave some S&C sessions.

It is something we should look to have regularly if not every year and feeds into our more senior underage players getting the proper development required to make a step out of underage and into the senior football world.





Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.

St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint



Coach the Coaches

A key foundation of a successful club is the quality of the coaching. We're very lucky in that we have some fantastic coaches within the club while also bringing new coaches into the fold each year. As mentioned above we have over 70 coaches taking our underage teams, all giving up their own time so once again a big thank you to all coaches, regardless of experience as it's a big commitment to take a team and nothing would ever happen without selfless volunteers. Saying that, it is incumbent on the committee to try provide an atmosphere where coaches can learn and improve their coaching skills. 2024 saw an increase in coach the coaches' sessions from 2023 and it is important that all coaches buy into these to make ourselves better coaches each year :

- At the start of the year, 3 coach the coaches' sessions were organised. Based off feedback from prior sessions they were split by age group with guest coaches for each. Thanks to Ryan Boyle for organising the coaches for these sessions and of course to the guest coaches themselves. I think everyone who attended a coaching session found them informative and took something away to bring back to their own age groups.
 - Gareth Thornton took the U8 and below group.
 - Donal O'Hare took U10 – U12
 - Gary, Boyle took the U14+ group.
- A Strength and Conditioning program was rolled out at the start of the year for all age groups by Ryan Boyle with a club meeting to explain it. It was good to see the practical exercises we can do right from the most junior levels to prepare them for their future journey in the game. S&C has become a key aspect in games development, and we look forward to trying to increase this in the coming years.
- Conor Lavery came down for the summer camp and gave his time to take a training session for the U12s. Thanks to Paul Rafferty for organising & to Conor for giving his time so generously.
- Mark Poland was tagged to Warrenpoint as the county coach. This was after feedback given by all clubs in the county and is a fantastic initiative. Mark kindly gave 3 coach the coaches sessions during the year that were very well attended.
- As mentioned above we had some guest coaches take sessions during our summer camp week. Again, another opportunity for the club coaches and players alike to experience some different voices demonstrating session setups etc.

Other notable Items

- For the first time in a number of years we ran a tournament within Warrenpoint.
 - This was run at the U8 boys age group and was a fantastic day with 28 teams playing on a beautiful sunny morning on the weekend before going back to school.



Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.



St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint

- The Kabin kindly sponsored all the sweets we gave out and all volunteers gave their time to it for free so there was no cost to running this. On the flip side we raised £720 in fees + ran a tuck shop that made between £250/£300 pound
- There are so many benefits to doing this. Revenue is one but it's an opportunity for the club to come together and rally around an event. Also, parents love what is being offered and it paid us back in spades later in the year. The money we raised was initially done to cover the cost of an end of year event, but we did ask parents to donate too. Due to the success of other events during the year the parents covered the cost of the end of year event in Airtastic. So, the kids got 2 days out, parents are very happy and willing to donate, and the club makes a good bit of money. It's a winner all round and we really should try do more of these next year. Perhaps even expand it out to U8 boys and girls and U10 boys and girls
- The fun day in Moygannon to mark the LGFA anniversary was a great day. Well done to all those that organised this (it wasn't the football committee in case I'm accused of trying to take the credit !!). It really should become a club fixture on the calendar each year to celebrate Warrenpoint GAA across all codes. And again, feeds into the offering to parents and links families to the club even more.
- The majority of younger age groups had end of year parties – from trips to Airtastic, Neon glow parties and pizzas parties. These are important to hold too, and I think we're getting better at these. Each year we should try finance something for these from the revenues raised by the football committee during the year.
- Equipment has always been an issue in the past. Balls, balls, balls The senior committee was very supportive in this and we can have no complaints. All asks were looked after with little pushback. Thanks to all the senior committee for the support.
- In a similar vein we need to acknowledge the supports that are in place for the injured underage players. The effort people put in at the senior levels are truly appreciated even if it doesn't appear that way sometimes. Thank you.
- As an accountant I have to mention finances – from an underage football committee perspective this year has been very good. The summer camp brings in ~£7,000 (minus jersey expense), the U16 quiz brought in another £7,000 for the injured players fund, The Easter camp another £500. The tournament another £1,000. We have raised another £2,000 for the school and then parent donations on top of that (U8 alone was £800). And we have a growing underage membership. The cost of running the club is not cheap and it's important that we self-finance initiatives such as county school coaching, end of year events etc. it's hard to keep asking people for money but with the offerings and right internal support we can maintain the above and indeed build upon it.



Cumann Pheadair Naofa C.L.G.

St. Peter's GAA Club, Warrenpoint



A lot of work has happened this year as can be seen from the above. None of this happens without the work and dedication of all the club members that offer their time each day, week and month.

There are no silver bullets to making an underage structure successful. It's just trying to improve little by little in everything we do. I hope these can be built upon further in the coming years to truly set the club up for the future where all our young Superblues can perform to the best of their ability. Thank you to all that helped us achieve this throughout the year and thank you to the football committee themselves. A lot of folk on the committee also coach teams so it's a large undertaking. Thanks to Johnny Rooney for the support during the year.

As a final note to coaches and all volunteers – coaches offer so much to society as a whole. Sunday mornings are amazing to see in St, Marks even if they are a headache for Mike on pitch allocation.

All those kids would possibly be sitting at home watching TV if coaches didn't give their time so freely. Kids are getting to have fun with their friends. Form bonds for life. In a safe fun environment while learning about teamwork and discipline. **You make a difference – well done.**

Thanks,

Stephen Robinson