

Secretary's Report for the year 2020

The 2019 Annual General Meeting was an Historic occasion for the Clonduff Club with the appointment of Anita Branigan as the first lady Chairperson of the club a role Anita has performed admirably.

The year 2020 will be remembered as the Covid 19 Virus year as the Pandemic spread across the island of Ireland and indeed worldwide.

The season was just getting underway when in mid-March the GAA Central Council ordered a complete lockdown of Club activities and premises according to Government regulations in the hope of curtailing the spread of the Virus, this remained in place until early July when a restricted GAA club program was allowed to resume. The Lockdown was a difficult period but club members volunteered to help the community in any way possible as a lot of people were isolating, the club face book page was widely used to keep the community informed of what services the volunteers were providing. The club during this period was constantly taking advice from the Co Board and sticking to Government guidelines at all times.

When the club league season did get underway no spectators were allowed to attend the first round games. The championship games were played with crowds limited to 400 spectators which brought its own challenges with ticket allocations, or the lack of them whichever way you look at it. The Co Board introduced a live streaming program which meant most everybody had the opportunity to watch the games if they were not able to get a ticket.

Early in the year when we were still allowed to have face to face meetings the Club took the decision to Elect 5 New Vice Presidents namely Fr Charlie Byrne PP, Maura Quinn, Fintan Mussen, H J Harper and Vincent Devlin.

Going forward a lot more communication is required from sub committees and management teams regarding meetings, fixtures and challenge games to make the day to day running of the Club as smooth as possible. We need to think of The Executive and sub committees as players on the teams that carry out the everyday duties within the Club and these players need to be all playing together to get the support of all the Club members to be successful.

MEMBERSHIP.

The Club membership remains one of the largest in the County. The County Draw which was very ably coordinated by Jayme Fegan is a great way to become a member as membership is included in the price of the ticket.

With regard to playing membership it must be stressed that players are not insured under the Players Injury Support scheme until their membership has been paid and they are registered with the GAA on line Registration System. It is very important to report all injuries to the Insurance Officer who will get the injury logged on line in case a claim needs to be processed. If an injury occurs during a game the referee needs to be informed so he can record it in his report.

REFEREES.

Ciaran Branagan, Paddy Branagan, Eddie Clancy and Kevin McGrath kept the Club well represented with the whistle. Our thanks and appreciation to these Club members.

New recruits are always needed especially young members, if playing Football, Hurling, Ladies Football or Camogie is not for you maybe give a thought to taking up the Whistle as full training will be provided.

PLAYING FIELDS AND FACILITIES.

The usual resodding of the goalmouths on all 3 pitches was carried out early in the year with the help of JF Murray, Seamus Murray and Brendan Murray our thanks to these men. Verti Draining was carried out by Pattersons but we didn't put the sand on this year and Muratgh Walls spread the fertilizer thanks to Murtagh for this job. McGreevy Construction sent their machinery in and levelled the ground above the back pitch, help was sought for gathering the stones and the ground was sowed out thanks to all who helped on this project. During the year some essential maintenance work had to be carried out to replace the drain along the bottom of the bank between the main pitch and the top pitch and the front of the dugout at that side of the main pitch. The digger work for this job had to be paid for but the labour and tractor work was done voluntary, thanks to Peter Hamill for his time which was about two and half weeks. Brendan Murray took on the role of cutting the grass and organizing others to help, even during lockdown the grass continued to grow but during that time Niall O Hagan, Tony Wilson, Aidan Gilmore, Mark Trainor. Gavin Carvill, Aaron Devlin, Danny Nugent, Paddy and Charlie McConville all offered to help with the grass cutting and marking the fields. At the present time Gavin Carvill has the new frame for the FOC Lotto sign in place, thanks to Gavin and Gerard Carvill for this job. Also, at the present a new frame is ordered for the entrance Doors to the Clubrooms. When the lockdown restrictions eased to allow training to resume Hand sanitisers and signage had to be installed at the entrance and exit gates to all pitches as per regulations. Thanks to Peter Hamill and Thomas Murnin for their help with this job. There is always work needing done and at present a new Ball stop is needed at the far side of the back pitch. A new fence and entrance gates and pedestrian entrance is badly needed along the road to secure our premises and stop the 'rallyers' from getting to the pitches, but the security of our premises is the main concern here. During the year a new Grass cutting machine was purchased which was grant aided and the existing mower was sharpened and serviced, the new mower is being housed at Gerry McGreevy's farm. The club is in need of some type of building to house the mowers. One volunteer bricklayer has already offered to build whatever the club decides on. Thanks to all who helped out during the year at clean up days and all the stewards at games hosted by the Club.

ADULT GAMES.

The Club fielded at Senior, Seconds, Thirds, Under 21 levels. The football subcommittee of Paudie Matthews, Daniel McPolin, Paul McConville and Damien Fearon look after the appointment of Gate Collectors, Umpires, Linesmen, Medical personnel and scoreboard operators. The subcommittee also recommends management appointments to the Club Executive for ratification on a yearly basis.

SENIOR FOOTBALL.

The senior football league was divided into two groups of five, Clonduff's group included Kilcoo, Rostrevor, Bryansford and Warrenpoint. Clonduff have qualified for the League final with wins over Kilcoo, Rostrevor and Warrenpoint but when this takes place depends on the Covid regulations.

The championship got underway with a good win over Carryduff, in the second round we somehow lost to Bryansford after extra time in a game dominated by Clonduff. The third game against Mayobridge was a hard-fought affair but the yellows showed great heart to come out on top, The quarter final was

an exciting game which also went to extra time which still couldn't separate the teams, we lost the penalty shoot-out which is no way to finish any game. Full credit to a very disappointed group of players who left everything on the pitch in Pairc Esler. Thanks to Managers Adrian O'Donnell and Mark Harte, Selector Jamie Fegan, Physio Grainne Walsh, Kitmen Anthony Morgan and Mark Trainor, Admin Tommy Kelly. Thanks to Sheenagh Walsh for the Twitter updates during games.

SECONDS FOOTBALL,

The seconds League was also divided into two groups and they just missed out on a League Final by one point. At this stage they haven't played in the Championship. Thanks to Manager Jamie Fegan and selector Mark McNulty.

THIRDS FOOTBALL.

The Thirds played in the Fr Davies Shield where they played 5 games winning 3 drawing 1 and losing 1. In the Championship to date they beat Teconnaught and are due to play Mayobridge in the next round. The Thirds had a panel of 28 players Captained by John Fegan with Anthony Grimes as Vice-Captain. Thanks to P J McGreevy and Conor Maginn for managing this group.

UNDER 21 FOOTBALL.

The u21s reached the 2019 Championship Final where they lost out to Bryansford in Liatroim. Thanks to Jamie Fegan, Mark McNulty, Gerard McNeill and Tony Wilson for managing this group. The 2020 competition will not be played until early next year owing to Covid 19 Virus regulations.

U17 FOOTBALL

The under 17 team played six League game winning one and losing five. In the championship they lost out at the Quarter finals.

Thanks to Keith Farrell, Anthony Grimes and Connor Donnan for their dedication to this group.

SENIOR HURLING.

Despite a shorter than usual season, the Senior hurlers secured their Division 1 status for the fifth consecutive year, which is the longest period in the club's history that they have played at that level.

Strong performances against Shamrocks and Warrenpoint helped to secure this status. Meanwhile two competitive league games against Bredagh, who this year became the first non-Ards team to win a senior championship game against an Ards senior team since 1956, helped set them up to be strong contenders for this year's intermediate Championship.

Unfortunately, due to the current ongoing Covid situation and the County board's decision to only try and start non – Ards championship hurling in October for some reason, they have been unable to take part in their championship to date.

There was also a large turnout for both seniors and U16s in the annual Pearse Branagan Memorial Poc Fada on the Hen Mountain in August, and the hurlers wish to extend their thanks to Tony Branagan for

continuing this great event and to Damien Farnon for his continued assistance and help in designing and setting up the course.

U15 Hurling.

Three Clonduff hurlers, Lonan McDonald, Tommy Smith and Sean McGinn played for Warrenpoint for the second year running. Due to the close cooperation between the clubs, Warrenpoint agreed to play some of the team's home games and training sessions in Clonduff and to have the team wear Clonduff colours for some of the games to ensure that the players had the opportunity to represent the team wearing their own colours.

While there was no Championship, they had a strong league performance and continued to improve throughout the year, including two strong victories over Kilclief.

Juvenile hurling has continued to grow within Clonduff in 2020 with teams representing the Club at U7, U9, U11 and U13. In what was a very disruptive season it is pleasing to note that 2020 saw an increase in numbers of boys wanting to play the ancient game. Following in the footsteps of Con O'Callaghan, Chrissy McKaigue and Noel McGrath over 90% of our juvenile players choose to be dual, experiencing the great opportunity that kicking a football and striking a Sliotar presents.

The season started in early February in the Youth Club with our Spring training Programme for the U7, U9 and U 11s with over 40 kids taking part. Covid greatly disrupted the season in March with training going on line and the kids posting videos of their skills challenges throughout the summer.

The playing season got going in August with the Co Board organizing a round robin, Home and away League with Warrenpoint, Shamrocks, Ballela and Castlewellan for the U9 and U11 groups. Games were played on the Go Games principle with the lads showing great progression in their first touch and playing from the hand. Go raibh mile maith agaibh to the management Team of Danny Nugent, Fionnbharr Murphy, Micheál Murtagh, Gerard O'Hare, Brian Ó Ceannúbháin and Shane Quinn who continue to promote the playing of the Ancient Game within our Club. A special thanks to our Covid Supervisors Karen Rice, Caroline Byrnes and Kathy Langford who ensured the Health and Safety of the kids throughout the year and without whom we would not have had a playing season.

Pride of place goes to our U 13 Hurlers in 2020. This group of 16 players have come together over the last 2 years and have shown an incredible level of improvement in skill over this period. Many of these lads took a hurl into their hand for the first time 2 years ago, The U13s competed in a Round Robin League with Carryduff, Ballyvarley, Kilclief, Ballela and Warrenpoint. The lads won 9 of their games to qualify for the League Final which has been postponed owing to the Covid situation but hopefully it will be played to give the lads a chance to prove they are the best team in the League.

A big thank you to the management team of Eddie Clancy and Jim Murnin and Covid supervisor Eimear Clancy.

Unfortunately, we were unable to run the Sean Cairns training camp this year due to the restrictions from the Covid 19 virus. We look forward to 2021 and the opportunity to run this key event in our club calendar.

SENIOR LADIES FOOTBALL.

After winning the Junior Championship the previous year it was always going to be tough moving up to Intermediate grade. After Lockdown, Clonduff were in a group of 3 with Loughinisland and Burren, we played away to Loughinisland first and what a game, some neutrals believing it was the best game of the Championship, however we lost by a single point-one of our influential players had a mishap on the way to the game and was unable to attend. Next up was Burren away. With the Senior Camogs out the next day in the County Final and Burren and the County Board unwilling to rearrange we reluctantly conceded with Player welfare our main concern.

It was a very difficult season for all with very few games but credit to our girls for giving it their all every time they played. We also had a few additions to the squad including some U16s making their debut at this level. The future is looking good for the Ladies' game in Clonduff and thanks to everyone who helped in any way throughout the year.

Thank you to John Anthony Gribben and Niall Rafferty for managing the Ladies.

U16 LGFA

Unfortunately, Covid 19 took a firm hand in games and training in 2020. There were no Leagues played just pre-Championship games and of course the Championship never got finished before the season was cancelled. It has been a very strange time for all and the football seemed to be the only real release for us all. We would like to thank all the Girls for their effort this season. We would also like thank the parents who got the girls to training/games and supported them throughout the year, and without this parental support things would not happen.

The future is bright for Clonduff Ladies Gaelic - a number of the U16s slotted in to the Senior panel without any bother when called upon. We would like to thank the U14 girls who supplemented the U16 panel and were not out of place.

Many thanks to Damien Henning and Niall Rafferty for coaching the girls and to Covid Supervisors initially Onagh McClorey followed by Shereen Lyness.

U14 LGFA

26 XU14 girls, after lockdown put their heads and hearts into training and showed great enthusiasm and really competed in their pre-championship programme which didn't go very well results wise.

Following on from this the girls worked hard on fitness levels and had great support from Senior Ladies footballer Joeleen Mc Shane and her husband Ryan who came to take a training session, after which we travelled to Bredagh for the first Championship game (and turned out to be the last due to Covid Restrictions) We were up at half-time but just got pipped at the post in a superb game of football demonstrating exactly the standard they are capable of.

Since the cancellation of all games each training session (2) we were improving on fitness and team skills. All the girls were very upset to see the year end so abruptly as a lot of them will now move up to U16 Level,

Our plan going forward is to continue updating skills/physical drills from home throughout the next few months. Many thanks to coaches Marie Grant, Paul Close, Marty Woods and Jackie Gilbey and to our Covid Supervisors Grainne Mc Shane and Majella Kelly.

U12 LDFA.

Following Lockdown, 48 girls aged U8 to U12 regularly turned out for training putting their hearts and souls into it. Whilst the season was cut short and there is no championship at this level the girls played 5x U12 League games winning 4 of them. Where other teams had girls aged U10 we arranged for our U10s to play challenge games they got 3 games in all. Where the U10s didn't get standalone games the U12 games were played in three periods with the younger girls playing the middle period, ensuring that everyone got plenty of game time during the short season.

An U7 group that trains with the underage academy got their first taste of all-girls team football when Mayobridge accepted an invitation to take part in the fun day at the end of training season, there are 8 girls in this group.

It has been a strange year but all girls and their parents have taken it in their stride and shown us how to be confident and resilient when times are tough. Covid regulations and Health Questionnaire were just something that had to be done without any fuss. Many thanks to Covid Supervisor at this group Eileen Hart. We want to thank the older girls and some lads for refereeing these games.

Many thanks to Sinead Mc Keown, Kevin O Rourke, Anne Marie Flanagan and Marie Grant and to U14 player Niamh McConville who was always there to help out with U10 games.

SENIOR CAMOGIE.

The Senior Camogie team once again done the Club proud completing the four in a row Championship wins. The Camogs achieved this feat with a great win over Ballygalget in the final played in the Ballycran sunshine, Congratulations and well done to all involved.

The Camogie Club will provide a summary of this year's events.

YOUTH.

UNDERAGE FOOTBALL

The underage season like all others was considerably reduced again owing to Covid 19 restrictions. The youth subcommittee of Paul McConville, Damien Fearon, Paudie Matthews and Daniel McPolin oversee the youth football in the Club. With all the Covid restrictions this year it was not possible to organize the various underage tournaments within the club, thanks to all who looked after the teams during this difficult year.

U15s.

Our U15 footballers started training in the Youth Club in December following a strength and conditioning program and was followed through until the Covid lockdown in March. Preseason training consisted of fitness sessions at Tyrella beach and Tollymore as well as a day away at the UUI sports fitness suite at Jordanstown in February. Credit must go to the players over the Lockdown period as the majority of lads trained away and posted sessions to the group on a weekly basis. We had a number of

challenge games including Mayobridge, Whitecross and Teconnaught prior to the League in August. Our League campaign was short over 4 matches, overall our performances were below par, injuries played a major factor in our championship defeat to Warrenpoint which became our last game of the year. The management would especially like to commend the attitude and attendance of this group of players in what was a short but difficult season, we wish the lads all the very best as they progress next year and beyond. Thanks to the management team of Daniel McPolin, Gary Haughian, Paul McShane and John Fegan.

U13s.

This year was a short but rewarding season, they played 5 competitive league games finishing top of the table before getting beat in the semi-final of the Championship. Huge improvement was made by everybody in developing skills and mindset in their quest to become a Clonduff senior footballer.

Huge thanks go to Kevin McGrath, Charlie Carr, Paul McConville and Paul Lively for their work with this panel of players.

U11.5s (P6/7).

This group started on Rathfriland 3G pitch before Christmas 2019 and added indoor sessions in the Youth Club during Feb/March 2020.

Covid struck so we started doing challenges at home during Lockdown. We returned to the pitch after lockdown training twice weekly. Many thanks to our Covid supervisors Caroline Carville and Claire Ward for ensuring it was a safe environment to return to.

All the hard work paid off, our Gaels and Stars teams finished runners-up in Div 1 and Div 4 respectively, while our Ógs team won many games in Div 3 which included some other Clubs A teams.

This is a very determined group that will bring happy days and silverware to Clonduff in the future.

U7s/U9s

The season started with an indoor Winter Coaching Program running during November and early December, on completion of the program each of the wee ones were presented with a football for Christmas.

We started 2020 coaching in the Youth Club on the 31st January and had just finished our indoor sessions and were looking forward to returning to the pitch when our season was temporarily put on hold due to Covid restrictions.

Throughout April, May and June the wee ones were sent weekly skills videos where they practiced the basic skills of the games at home in the garden. We also had the pleasure of being set some tasks by David Moran current Kerry star and Dublin's record-breaking manager Jim Gavin.

At the beginning of July with a return to the pitch sessions the children participated in the social distancing skills challenge where they were set tasks over a 2-week period. Once we finally got back to the pitch coaching was provided to the over 40 children each Wednesday evening and Sunday mornings through August and September. We also took part in 5 games in this period and we had our first ever all girls U7 match against Mayobridge.

Our season finished on the 3rd October with our end of season Club Sport for Peace day in memory of Ella Trainor and Brian McGreevy. 48 children from our U7 1/2 group were given a coaching session from Ulster GAA, Ulster Rugby and the IFA.

A special thanks to Christine Grimes and Kathy Langford for acting as Covid supervisors for this group, to the girls for providing Tea and biscuits to the parents in the youth club throughout the winter, Anita and Sheenagh who uploaded our skills videos to social media during Lockdown and to the coaches who without fail turned up to each session to try and allow the children to have fun whilst learning the skills of the game.

HANDBALL

Nothing to report this year as no coaching or games took place owing to the Covid 19 Virus regulations. The Handball community would hope that some Handball infrastructure would be included in any future development undertaken by the Club.

SCÓR AND CULTURE.

77 Clonduff youngsters took part in Scór na nÓg and we were represented in all eight disciplines. They picked up four South Down titles - Recitation, Novelty Act, Instrumental Music and Set Dancing and were runners-up in Ceili Dancing, Recitation, Set Dancing and Quiz and went on to collect County titles in Recitation, Instrumental Music and Set Dancing. The Musicians and the Dancers qualified for the Ulster Finals. It is notable that the youngest Quiz team were all P7 age and acquitted themselves magnificently finishing mid table in an U16 competition. Three of them plus one addition went on to collect the Cumann na mBunscoil County Quiz title but missed out on the chance of representing Down in the Ulster Final due to Lockdown.

The adults were a bit more reluctant to participate in Scór Sinsir and were sparsely represented with the Quiz team qualifying for the individual playoff. In order to encourage more adult participation throughout the country Scór 2021 was supposed to see the reversal of fixtures with adult competitions taking place before Christmas and Scór na nÓg after Christmas, unfortunately Covid put paid to those plans and the Ulster and All Ireland competitions for 2020 never took place.

Plans are now afoot to hold the Scór competitions online but it's doubtful how this would materialize. During Lockdown many of our Scór competitors at Juvenile and adult level participated in Virtual Scór run by the National Scór Committee but this was not competitive and was a wonderful opportunity for our off-field members to showcase their talents. A number of our competitors took part in a National and County collaboration of singing/Music but undoubtedly the highlight of the Clonduff Connected campaign during Lockdown with the production of our own Parish collaboration-32 singers and musicians (juvenile and adult) produced their own version of "You Raise Me Up"-this was under the direction of Kayleigh McPolin whose idea this was in the first place and she was responsible for bringing it together. Well done Kayleigh and everyone involved.

Many Thanks to Cultural Officer Thomas Murnin and all those involved in preparing and coaching the youngsters to represent Clonduff on stage with style and pride.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

The club grounds are available to the local primary schools as and when they need them. Our grounds are also used to host College games when possible. Thanks to the local primary schools and the secondary schools for continuing to promote our games and culture

DISCIPLINE.

Discipline always means good behaviour but a lot of good practices are also very important like when we use the club grounds for training or games or even spectating, we should always take our rubbish home with us, don't forget if we leave it behind some volunteer has to gather it up. Water bottles especially should not be left lying around on the pitches as the grass cutters have to gather them before getting on with their voluntary work

Thankfully our discipline was good this year but we always need keep our standards high.

SOCIAL CLUB.

The Covid regulations meant that the Social club had to close and still remains closed. Thanks to Sheenagh Walsh for keeping the diary of events in the early part of the year, thanks also to Marie Milligan who had agreed to Bank takings and keep reconciliation sheets.

CLUB SHOP.

The Club shop continues to supply members and the public with the latest styles form O'Neill's Sportswear. The shop was also closed for a long period but was allowed to open and were able to get the Christmas orders done. Thanks to Goretta and Noleen Cairns and Lorraine Bloomfield for their work.

DEVELOPMENT.

The plans for the new Sports and Community Facility and 4G Pitch and Ball Wall have just been resubmitted owing to some planning issues. A big thank you to Marie Cowan for agreeing to help seek out what grants maybe available to help with the cost of this project.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

PRO Shereen Lyness keeps the club in the public eye with the weekly club notes in the Local press. Shereen also has a weekly slot on Destination Newry Radio, Thanks to Shereen for this and her predecessor Charlie Carr and also Seamus Parr with the local news.

ADMINISTRATION.

A lot of unseen work goes into the day to day running of the club, Thanks to Anita Branigan, Niamh Murray and Ciara Kelly for taking the minutes of meetings.

The Club owes a great debt to Denise Close and Niamh Murray for their expert handling of Player injury claims, well done ladies.

FINANCE.

The Treasurer will present the financial report to the members. With the plans for the New Sports and Community Facility, 4G Pitch and Ball Wall hopefully soon to be approved the Club need to think seriously about how to fund this project, with this in mind I think we need to set up a working Finance Group to push on with raising the necessary funds to make this development a reality for the club and community. Let's all get our fundraising thinking hats on and put our shoulders to the wheel to push this on and eventually over the line. A good start would be to get a lotto book and sell a few tickets weekly.

SYMPATHIES.

To all Club members and members of the community who lost loved ones during this difficult year may they Rest In Peace.

CONGRATULATIONS TO.

Four in a row Senior Camogie team

Fionnuala Carr County Senior Camogie Captain

All Scór Winners

Darren O'Hagan County Senior Football Team Captain

Senior footballers on reaching League Final

All Club members who helped the Community during Lockdown

All players who Represented the County, Universities, Colleges or Schools

THANKS TO

Our sponsors your help is greatly appreciated

The players who give their time to train and play for the Yellows

The Scór na nÓg and Scór Sinsir competitors

Our Referees

Volunteers

Friends of Clonduff Lotto, Sellers, Checkers, Poster printers and the local Publicans for hosting the Draws

To all who helped out around the Club

To McGreevy Construction for levelling the ground adjacent to the back pitch

To the Gate Collectors

Umpires and Linesmen

Covid Supervisors

Medical Attendants

Sinead Mc Keown for checking the Defibrillator.

To conclude the report this year I would like to thank everybody who helped me during the year. Even with the lockdown this was a busy year with a lot of correspondence from Co Board and Ulster Council to deal with. Most of the club business is done by email which is grand but replies need to be sent back promptly to make the correspondence work. Going forward I would urge all team mentors to study the fixtures when they become available for their respective teams and make up your minds to play the games as they are listed, changes to dates or times can be almost impossible with the amount of activity in the club. I would thank Padraig Matthews for his work on the field training and games schedule, club treasurer Daniel McPolin for his cooperation, Brendan Murray for his help with field matters and last but not least our Chairperson Anita Branigan who made my job so easy, the work and time this lady gives the club is immeasurable thank you Anita.

I would like to wish the club every success in 2021 and who knows maybe we could get our hands on that elusive senior championship. Up the Yellows.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tomás Ó Ceallaigh".

Tomás O Ceallaigh
Runai, Chluain Daimh.