

Tarbert GAA Chairperson's Report for 2020

A chairde Gael,

We had a wonderful start to 2020 when celebrating the achievements of the North Kerry Championship winning team of 1969, in Tomas's on 4th January. It was a great night and wonderful to see so many of that team enjoy the occasion. Little did we know how the events of 2020 would unfold, on that night. Even with the initiation of the first lockdown in March we couldn't have foreseen the seismic changes that Covid 19 brought into our personal, professional and sporting lives for the rest of the year. With all GAA activity suspended from the middle of March, the club was central, with the Development Association, in responding to the needs of our community and in supporting the people of Tarbert who needed any assistance during the lockdown. That support has continued throughout the subsequent lockdowns and is still available to anyone who requires it.

On the field of play the senior team competed in the North Kerry League and played one County League game, a defeat away to Knocknagoshel, before football was suspended. This was a difficult time for all our players and management as it was unclear when or if any further football would be played in 2020, particularly when Uachtarain CLG, John Horan said on the Sunday Game that he was pessimistic about the prospect of games in 2020. Thankfully, we got back to playing football in July in the Junior Championship in a difficult group with Lispole, Cromane & Castlegregory, with a home game, an away game and a game at a neutral venue. These were all very exciting games with Tarbert emerging victorious against all 3 opponents, to top their group. This format was even more challenging with the limitation on supporters attending games and tickets being required. This was an additional administrative burden but we were able to accommodate all requests with additional tickets for all the games being sourced from Kerry GAA. Tarbert's opponents in the quarter final were Renard and this was a great game in Keel with Tarbert securing the victory deep in extra time. The club live-streamed this game online to ensure those who couldn't travel were also able to enjoy the game. The semi-final was also live-streamed. Tarbert's great run was ended in the semi-final by Annascaul, who were favourites to win the competition, having been beaten finalists in the Junior Championship in 2019. It is clear from the team's performances in the competition that they are a match for any

team in the Junior Championship, particularly if Annascaul win it out and are promoted. The seniors also played in Asdee in the North Kerry Championship and on the day, they didn't perform to their potential and made some atypical errors which ended their progress in the competition. We have a young team, who, if they learn from their experiences in 2020, will be stronger and more determined when football resumes in 2021. Congratulations also to our club players who represented Tarbert so well, on the Shannon Rangers team, who played Kenmare away in the County Championship, and came very close to causing a major upset in a narrow defeat.

Our Junior team also competed in Junior Co. League in 2020, but the competition was curtailed with the introduction of the 2nd Covid 19 lockdown. This team are going to become very important in the development of young players graduating from the juvenile ranks to the senior ranks, as the juvenile age brackets have changed from u6, u8, u10, u12, u14, u16 and u18(Minors) to u7, u9, u11, u13, u15 and u17 in 2021. There is no clear vision yet around the gap from the u17 grade to adult football and in the absence of structured football for the players when they leave the u17 ranks, developing a pathway into the junior team, as a means of keeping these players involved with the club, when they turn 18, is essential.

Our minors played under the combined banner of Tarbert/Moyvane in 2020, and they won their division of the County League by defeating Ballylongford/ Asdee/ Ballydonoghue. We hope to see all these young men on the field of play for Tarbert seniors and Juniors in the coming years.

The 2020 management team of Steve Denihan and John O'Connell, supported by Graham Shine have stepped down after the 2020 season and I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication to the club in the management role for the past 2 years and wish them every success as they continue to develop our future players as u11 and u13 managers.

We are also delighted to announce that Cathal O'Connor will take over at the helm as senior manager and we wish him and his management team every success and our full support in the role.

The juvenile section of the club is being well run, under Chairperson Kieran Foley, and all our juvenile teams enjoyed great success in their competitions throughout

the season that was 2020. In 2021 Kieran will be joined by Marie Mulvihill as secretary and Shane Sheehan as treasurer. There is great talent coming through the juvenile ranks and our priority is to help them develop and to stay involved in the club until adulthood.

Shane Enright announced his retirement from the Kerry senior set-up and I would like to thank Shane for having been a great ambassador for the club and a wonderful role model for our younger members. We had great enjoyment following Shane through his minor, u21 and senior career. It was a source of great pride to have a man from our parish and club representing Kerry on the biggest stage and we had the privilege to share in his many successes. I am sure we are all looking forward to seeing Shane continue to grace the playing fields of Kerry in the Red and Black for a few more years.

The return of football in July was extremely welcome but this brought its own challenges. GAA clubs had to become compliant with Covid 19 return to play guidelines, which included the erection of signage, the availability of hand sanitizer in the grounds, limitations on the number of people who could attend matches and limitations in the number of players who could train together. All indoor facilities were closed such as the dressing rooms and gyms. All players, both juvenile and adults, had to complete a Covid health questionnaire before returning to play and update that declaration before every training session and match. This process was overseen by our Player Welfare officer Marie Mulvihill. Great credit is due to Marie and all the coaches and players within the club that we had no case of Covid 19 within the club, or related to club activity during this time.

Off the field it became apparent that the club lotto as a funding model was unsustainable with the pubs closed and not being able to meet people. The decision was taken to introduce the Monthly 500 draw and this started in October. The livestream format is constantly evolving and we hope to be able to broadcast live from the local pubs when they reopen fully. A big thanks is due to Niall Fitzgerald who developed the concept to what we have today. Thanks also to Shane Enright who starred in the promotional videos with some of our juvenile players, which proved a great success. This draw stabilised our regular income and we are looking forward to expanding our income from the draw as the country reopens and we can

meet more people within the community. Tickets for the draw are available from committee members, at the post office and online at www.tarbertgaa.ie.

We applied for funding from the Eirgrid Community fund and were very disappointed when our application was unsuccessful, but we were not the only community group from Tarbert that was not successful. We are following up with the company to ascertain the reason we were unsuccessful and to ensure that we take learning from the process for future applications.

We have submitted an application for an energy efficiency project with the Sports Capital Grants programme to upgrade the floodlight heads from halogen heads to LED lights and we are hopeful that this application will be successful.

In 2021 we plan to submit plans for an extension and upgrade to our dressing room complex. This is being designed by Brian Carey and is at an advanced stage. We will share the plans with the community once completed and will have to initiate a fundraising campaign to help fund the development. There will be no capital spending on this project until a corresponding funding plan is in place.

We will also continue to carry out maintenance of the pitch and grounds and hope to sand the pitch again in 2021. This is essential in keeping the pitch in good condition.

We would like to extend our sympathies to the families, relatives and friends of Alan Fitzell, Bill O'Carroll, Gerald Stack, Bridget Guerin, Patrick Boucher Hayes, Hannah Kiely Moynihan, James Enright, John Coleman, Tom Buckley, Hannah Moriarty (nee Mackessy), Maurice Buckley, John Denihan, Sr. Mary O'Carroll, Sean Ahern, Fr. Michael Murphy, Rosemary Eacrett, Rita King Celeya, Thomas Mulvihill, Sr. Aquin Enright, Joan Brennan, Una Hurley, Pat Joe Keane and Marie Carmody (nee Mahoney), who all died during 2020. Ar dheis Dé go raidh a n-anamacha dilis.

At the moment there is no clear roadmap as to when GAA activity will recommence and when club football will resume. When it does, we will be ready for the resumption of games and will continue to do everything we can to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all our players and supporters. Although we could not hold a proper AGM for 2020, for obvious reasons, we will reschedule an AGM when conditions permit. I would finally like to thank the officers and committee of

Tarbert GAA for all their hard work throughout what was and remains a difficult period. With so much uncertainty as to what the future holds, I am delighted that all the officers and committee have agreed to remain in place, to maintain continuity in leading this club at this challenging time. I would also like to thank all our members, players, both juvenile and adult, their families and all our supporters for everything they have done for the club during 2020 and for their ongoing support.

Is mise le meas,

Seosamh Ó Cúlachain, Cathaoirleach, CLG, Tairbeart.