

2016

Annual General Meeting



Eastern Harps Premium Sponsors 2016

Eastern Harps GAA Club would like to thank their Premium Sponsors for all their help and support throughout 2016:-

Padraig O'Dowd Transport / Drury's Bar



East Brothers



Tansey's Centra, Gurteen



The Traveller's Rest



James Duffy & Co., Accountants



McHugh Express



The Fox's Den



Table of Contents

Eastern Harps Premium Sponsors 2016.....	2
Chairman’s Address.....	4
Minutes of the AGM of Eastern Harps GAA Club held in the Clubhouse on Sunday 6 th December 2015.	8
Secretary’s Report on the Activities of Eastern Harps G.A.A. Club 2016.....	13
Underage Team Reports	21
Minor Boys	21
U16 Boys	21
U14 Boys	23
U13 Boys (Féile).....	23
U12 Boys	24
U10 Boys	25
U8 Boys and Girls.....	26
U6 Boys and Girls.....	26
Eastern Harps Ladies	27
Ladies Chairperson’s Address	27
Eastern Harps Senior Ladies	28
Minor Girls.....	29
U16 Girls.....	29
U14 Girls.....	30
U12 Girls.....	30
U10 Girls.....	31
Gaelic for Mothers and Others.....	31
Report from Eastern Harps GAA Bingo Committee	32
Report from Building Development Committee.....	34
Report from Bord na nÓg & Children’s Officers	35
Men on the Move.....	36
CLUB OFFICIALS 2016.....	37
TEAM MANAGEMENT 2016	38
Team Photos.....	39

Cover by Brian Stephenson

Chairman's Address

Once again it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you all, on this the occasion of our Annual General Meeting. As is the norm, we had an extremely busy year and I hope to recap on some of the highlights that occurred during the year.

Silverware won on the playing pitches was confined to the underage lads of the U.14 and U.16 teams. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention the performances of the minor team. For the first time in a number of years this panel of players operated in the 'A' Grade for both League and Championship and acquitted themselves very well. We congratulate Evan Lavin on his performances for the Sligo Minor team.

We are extremely fortunate to have large number of lads appearing at U.12 and the challenge for us is to have in place a team of quality coaches to develop their skills and nurture this talent. The younger age groups, from U.6 years & upwards, train on Wednesday evenings and this is a huge success. This year we had our biggest ever Cúl Camp with over 150 children participating and we also ran a 3-day Easter Camp. Later in the year we played host to Belmullet in an inter-club exchange that is fast becoming an annual event.

Our U.16 boys' team became the first team in Harps history to put back-to-back League and Championship 'A' titles together in successive years. They beat Shamrock Gaels in the League final and Curry in the Championship final. This was a fantastic achievement and was recognised in the county when no fewer than 10 of these lads were selected on the Sligo Panel for Manning Cup duty.

However, it was a cause of concern that an unsavoury incident perpetrated by Shamrock Gaels parents/supporters against officials from our club occurred long after the game was over. It must be stated that both teams and management shook hands after the game and there was no animosity between both parties after the final whistle.

It was good to see players from our U.16 team, Sean O'Connor and Tomás Taheny, join with newly trained Ciarán Dorrian in refereeing at underage level. Ciara Stephenson also made her debut with the whistle to become the first female referee within the club to referee underage boys' games. Indeed she may well be the first female within the County to have this distinction. With both Damien and Ciaran Mc Govern also involved at refereeing, the club has an abundance of officials, a fact of which the club should be justifiably proud.

Also, tremendous credit is due to the U.14 team who won the 'B1' Championship. They beat Tubbercurry/Cloonacool in their final held in Ballinalack Park, Bunninadden.

I wish to thank most sincerely the huge team of dedicated coaches who give unselfishly of their time to ensure that Eastern Harps underage teams continue to be at the forefront of GAA in the county. Sometimes it can be a thankless task, bordering on frustrating, but the end result of seeing young boys and girls playing football and forging friendships hopefully makes it worthwhile. As always, there is a need for coaches and we welcome any one that can offer their time.

Also a huge 'Thanks' to the parents for their assistance all year, whether it was ensuring the players were at training/ matches or helping to provide refreshments, they were never found wanting.

Our Senior team comfortably retained its Division 1 status, while never seriously challenging for the League title. Progress continued in the Championship as the team reached the semi- final for the first time since 2010. They bowed out to eventual winners Tourlestrane in Markievicz Park in terrible weather conditions.

Everything that went so well for them in their quarter-final win against Tubbercurry deserted them on this occasion and we were well beaten.

However, we must remember that the team that played Tourlestrane contained 2 Minor and 3 U.21 players, so there is talent beginning to emerge through the successful underage structure that has been in place. We extend our gratitude to Shane King, as manager, and his selectors Paul Judge and Paul Duignan for their dedication all year. Also to Shane Gallagher and Des Horan who looked after the medical side. The team has made steady progress under this management over the past 2 years. Our second team that played in Division 3 of the league competed very well and reached the semi-final of the Junior Championship. Our thanks to Aiden Ward and his backroom team of Paddy Henry, Tom O'Connor and Mikey Grady.

It was a quiet year on the Ladies front. They found the going tough in the Senior ranks. We have a very young team but there is huge potential within our ranks. We congratulate Lisa Casey, Megan Mc Cormack, and Aisling O'Gara on winning a Connacht Intermediate medal with Sligo. Many thanks to Paul Judge and Eamonn Clarke for their 'Trojan' work all year. An erratic Ladies fixture list within the county makes it very difficult to plan games but we competed at all age groups without any silverware to show. The Senior Ladies also organised a Sponsored Climb of Keash Hill in memory of Karen Powell, club player who died tragically the previous year. It was a thoughtful tribute from the girls and proceeds from this, along with a fundraising walk that took place after Christmas, went towards Strangeboats Organ Donation.

There was also a fundraiser for Dylan Towe to help alleviate the costs of his treatment that he undertook in America. Dylan required surgery to help his mobility and allow him learn to walk again. It is very pleasing to note that Dylan is progressing very well. And just a short while ago "Harps For Haiti" in the form of a sponsored walk took place with all proceeds going to the stricken region as a result of Storm Matthew.

Our Healthy Club was involved in a new initiative this year when, in conjunction with Croke Park, a promotional DVD entitled "Recipes for Success" was filmed in St Angela's College. Players from the U.16 boys and girls teams featured prominently in it. The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the DVD can be watched either on our own website or alternatively on the Croke Park site.

Bord na nÓg continues to flourish and, along with our Children's Officers, produced a short booklet on the Code of Conduct within the club. Two members of the Committee attended a training session at every level, spoke with the players and informed them of what was expected of them when they represent our club. They gave each player a copy of the booklet. They also ran a series of very successful courses entitled 'Resilience in our Community'. These courses were made available to players, mentors, parents, executive members and they were conducted under the umbrella of the Tubbercurry Resource Centre.

Bord na nÓg also organised the annual and very popular Kerry Mc Keon Literary Award and, for the second successive year, the winner came from Keash School. Saoirse Ryan was first with the runner-up spot going to Orla Dorrian. There was also a prize for the winner in each school.

After three hugely successful years of Operation Transformation (OT), the Committee took a break last year. It was very evident that there was a void left to fill so we commenced a new programme for men only. It was aptly called 'Men on the Move' and ran during the Spring. Such was its popularity that it recommenced at the beginning of October and it will run for 8 weeks. There are positive vibes that a return of OT is on the cards for after Christmas. Another health project and social outing that is in its second year is 'Gaelic for Mother's And Others', abbreviated to G4M&O. It is a light hearted fun way to play football and socialise.

After a gap of several years a hugely successful Dinner Dance took place in the Radisson Hotel. The 1975 Eastern Harps team, which was the first team to win the Senior Championship, were guests on the night. The Senior Ladies were also presented with their Intermediate Winners medals and the victorious Senior men also received their Kiernan Cup medals.

On the financial side of things we are deeply grateful to all who support our Annual Draw. It's this money that keeps the club afloat each year and is the backbone of our finances. Last year the lucky winners of the top prize of €10k were Joe and Marguerite Drury with runner-up prize of €5k going to Keith Judge. Neil and Maureen Molloy picked up the third prize of €3k. The winners of the more minor prizes are available on the club website.

Also a huge 'Thanks' to all of our Premium Sponsors printed separately in this booklet. It is refreshing to know that these people and businesses are happy to invest their money in our club.

Bingo continues unabated each Friday night. We sincerely thank our Bingo Committee for their dedication and commitment to the cause. All monies raised goes towards our Development plan.

Last year's A.G.M was a difficult night for the club. Three gentlemen were present who were unhappy with the club's response to the criminal conviction of Ronan Mc Cormack for sex abuse in the mid-eighties and made their feelings known to the meeting. The club has at all times welcomed the Court's decision to convict Ronan Mc Cormack.

The club had previously met the National Children's Officer of the GAA in December 2014, at a meeting in Carrick-on-Shannon, to seek assistance for the club and guidance on the way forward. There were numerous more contacts in person, by phone and by email before we received any response in June 2015. We have a record of all correspondence with Croke Park. I also have a record of all phone calls that I made and received from these three men, plus any meeting that occurred as we sought assistance.

Within a week of last year's A.G.M. the club sought a meeting with officials of Croke Park and the three men who were at the meeting. Gearóid Ó Maoilmhichil, the National Children's Officer, agreed to attend and the meeting was to be chaired by Colin Regan, GAA Community and Health Manager. Unfortunately the three men informed us that they were unable to attend the meeting on the scheduled date and they did not revert with an alternative date. In early January, Croke Park advised us not to meet with the three men until the GAA had discussed the findings of its own internal report into the matter.

In February of this year, the club received three letters from Damien Tansey, Solicitor, initiating civil legal proceedings against the club. The club is endeavouring to co-operate with all parties with a view to resolving the situation as best we can to the satisfaction of all. I would also like to state that at all times we worked closely and took the advice of our own Club Solicitor.

Constraints of time has forced me to curtail my address this year but I wish to thank all the volunteers in the club, either at coaching and/or helping out on a vast array of sub-committees. A special word of thanks to our Executive, without whom this Club would not be able to function. Most Executive members are immersed in several aspects of the club, too many to mention.

On behalf of the club I wish to extend our sympathy to anyone that may have suffered recent bereavements. We lost one of our most ardent supporters last year with the death of Brigid Mary O'Connor, but her legacy will live on in the club notably at the training pitch which is aptly named "Brigid Mary's"

As we look into 2017, we need to refocus our thoughts on our development project. The building must commence this year or we are in danger of losing the promised allocation of funds from Connacht Council along with the money secured from The Sports Capital Programme. Also, the Planning Permission that we secured will also lapse.

We have a lot of time, energy, effort and money spent getting this far and a Committee working fervently each Friday night to raise funds to make this dream of a new 'State of the Art' facility in Keash a reality. For all of this to happen we need everyone to support our vision.

In conclusion, I thank you all for your ongoing support and help for the past 12 months.

Padraig Henry
Chairman

Minutes of the AGM of Eastern Harps GAA Club held in the Clubhouse on Sunday 6th December 2015.

An attendance sheet was in circulation and 28 people signed it.

The Chairman, Pdraig Henry, opened the meeting by welcoming everybody. He complimented Shaun Dorrian on the compilation and Brian Stephenson on the graphic design of the A.G.M. booklet and thanked those who compiled reports for it.

1. The minutes of the 2014 A.G.M. were adopted on the proposal of John Higgins, seconded by Tom Murray. There were no matters raised, arising from the minutes.
2. In a lengthy address, the Chairman thanked our Premium sponsors, members of the Club draw, the Bingo Committee, the O.T. Committee, the Development Committee, Bord na n-Óg, the Pitch Committee, the Healthy Club Committee, the Finance Committee, all the managers and coaches and all the players who represented the club over the year. He thanked the members of the Executive Committee and his fellow officers for their stewardship of the club. Treasurer Thomas Cryan, who was unable to be present, was commended for his astute management of the club finances. He complimented Edel Mc Nulty for introducing a new Code of Conduct and Anti Bullying Policy, and for her work as Children's Officer.

The Chairman recalled new ventures in the club over the year e.g. Couch to 5k, G4M&O, a team in the Sports Quiz - Pole Position and the success of Bord na n-Óg.

He congratulated the 6 girls nominated for the Ladies All-Star team, Edel Mc Nulty, Lisa Casey, Shereda Davey, Megan Mc Cormack, Ciara Stephenson and Aisling O'Gara, who was named Intermediate club player of the year.

The Chairman offered sympathy to all families bereaved in 2015, mentioning in particular the tragic passing of ladies player Karen Powell, our Patron, Jim Taheny, former coach, John Joe Nerney and faithful supporter, Ted Mc Gowan.

On a brighter note he wished 4 year old Dylan Towey well as he prepared for mobility enhancing surgery in the U.S. The club are supporting fundraisers to make it all possible.

The Chairman concluded his address by wishing everybody well for the festive season and health and happiness in 2016.

His address, as published in the booklet, was adopted on the proposal of Louis Carty, seconded by Thomas Taheny.

Louis Carty expressed the disappointment felt by all of us that Ross Donovan, one of the most consistent players in the county in 2015, wasn't awarded an All-Star. Members generally felt disappointed for Ross and wondered who was part of the selection committee.

3. The Secretary's Report dealt extensively with a variety of club activities, games, events and people over 2015. He described the past season as very busy and successful, particularly at underage level. He reviewed the performance of the different club teams, highlighting the Kiernan Cup win, the success of the Ladies team in the Intermediate Championship, the u-16 boys team who completed a Division 1 league and 'A' Championship double, the u-11's who won the Shield competition and the u-16 girls team who won the 'A' league. He went through the achievements of each club team in a season that stretched from February 15th to October 31st.

The Secretary highlighted the senior team's early season form, culminating in winning the Kiernan Cup. This victory, he said, came at a cost, with the loss through serious injury of Paul Mc Govern for the complete season.

He referred to the difficulties for club players when county football takes precedence over club football at the best time of year. He called for a better balance in favour of the vast majority who are solely club players.

The Secretary commended the different team managements who put in so much time and effort in preparing our teams. He traced the upward curve of our juvenile teams due to a good underage coaching structure.

He thanked all the team managements, the various sub-committees, those involved in newer ventures e.g. Operation Transformation, the Healthy Club Initiative, G4M&O and the Kerry Mc Keon Literary Award competition.

He congratulated Ciarán Mc Govern and Ciarán Dorrian on their involvement in refereeing and wished Paul Taylor well in taking charge of the County u-21 team for 2016. He also thanked Treasurer, Thomas Cryan "for his professional approach despite a busy schedule", the gate collectors for our home games, our P.R.O. Kevin Cryan and P.J. Mc Keon for his interesting blogs on our website.

The Secretary described the long-term outlook as very encouraging with several promising players emerging from the underage ranks. He concluded by urging everybody to work together to overcome the challenges and avail of the opportunities in the year ahead.

4. Treasurer, Thomas Cryan was unavoidably absent but forwarded a complete set of accounts for the year ending October 31st. The day-to-day income and expenditure Club account showed a deficit of €8,392 with a Balance forward of €2,770. Income had shown a decrease of approx. €12k, while expenditure had increased by almost €5k. Income from Operation Transformation had decreased by €1,500, while Bingo income was also down, reflecting the shorter 10 month period taken into account. Medical expenses showed a sharp increase due to the number of players who had to undergo cruciate operations and the club had to supplement payments from the Player Injury Scheme. Physio costs were down on last year. There was a substantial increase in Lotto membership gained in the past few weeks which will reflect in the 2016 financial accounts.

The Balance Forward on the Development Account stood at €105,511, an increase of almost €30k from December 2014.

The Financial Report was adopted on the proposal of Tom Murray, seconded by Paul Judge.

5. The meeting was then interrupted by three non-members, two of whom insisted on addressing issues relating to abuse by a former club underage coach. One of those present, Tommy Kielty, attempted to force an unidentified written document on some of those present at our A.G.M., verbally urging them to read it. This caused upset and embarrassment to those put under such duress. When they persisted to make accusations of "a cover-up" against club officers, the business of the meeting was suspended and they left the meeting.

On resumption of business, the Chairman rejected their suggestions that the club had done nothing to assist the abuse victims. He recounted the steps taken, based on decisions of the Executive, to seek guidance and assistance from Croke Park to get counselling made available to anybody who needed it as a result of the abuse. This included a pre-arranged meeting between delegated club officers and the National Child Protection Officer, Gearóid Ó Maoilmhichil, in the Landmark Hotel on December 8th 2014, at which we were promised every assistance for the abuse victims and the club from Croke Park.

There had been unacceptable delays in the Croke Park National Children’s office but eventually the counselling was put in place and the victims were informed of this. Whether or not any or all of them availed of counselling was confidential and the club wasn’t privy to such information.

The club had been pro-active in promoting the Code of Ethics, observing the Garda vetting regulations and revising the Anti-Bullying and Child Welfare Protection policies.

After considerable discussion, the majority view felt that the club should meet with the victims and try to address their issues. A professional mediator was needed in the reconciliation process with a pre-determined agenda agreed in advance. It was felt that more than one meeting may be required and if any further victims disclose themselves to the Executive, counselling needed to be available to them also.

6. The Election of Officers followed. On the proposal of Sean Scott, seconded by Shaun Dorrian, it was agreed that anyone not registered or who hasn’t attended any meeting in 2015 cannot be a member of the Executive Committee.

The following officers were elected:

Position	Name	Proposer	Seconder
Patrons	Christy Gallagher	Shaun Dorrian	Thomas Taheny
President	John Higgins*	Tom Murray	Paul Judge
Chair	Padraig Henry	Louis Carty	Tom Murray
Vice-Chair	Tom Murray Des Horan	Sean Scott	Brendan McHugh
Secretary	Padraic Duffy	Jimmy Casey	Shaun Dorrian
Assistant Secretary	Shaun Dorrian	Kevin Cryan	Louis Carty
Treasurer	Thomas Cryan	Paul Judge	Sean Scott
Vice Treasurer	Brendan McHugh	Carmel Taheny	Louis Carty
PRO	Kevin Cryan	Sean Scott	Thomas Taheny
Oifigeach na Gaeilge	Áine Nic Craith	Deirdre Ní Bhriain	Fintan MacGabhann
Delegate to Co. Board	Louis Carty	Tom Murray	Sean Scott
Registrar	Deirdre O’Brien	Edel Mc Nulty	Liz Coyle
Ladies Chairperson	TBC		
Ladies Secretary	TBC		
Schools Liaison Officer	Michael Hannon	Tom Murray	Sean Scott
Coaching Officer	Fintan Mc Gowan	Paul Judge	Paul Dwyer
Insurance Officer	Tom Murray	Deirdre O’Brien	Carmel Taheny
Pitch Committee Chair	John Cryan	Shaun Dorrian	Thomas Taheny
Healthy Club Chair	Carmel Taheny	Fintan Mc Gowan	Paul Dwyer
Children’s Officer	Edel Mc Nulty	Kevin Cryan	Tom Murray
Vice Children’s Officer	Deirdre O’Brien	Paul Dwyer	Kevin Cryan
ASAP Officer	Ross Donovan	Kevin Cryan	Michael Hannon
Health & Safety Officer	Barry Cryan	Tom Murray	Aiden Ward
Development Committee Chairman	Sean Scott	Tom Murray	Deirdre O’Brien

* John Higgins was nominated in absentia and later did not accept the position for which he was nominated.

The posts of Bord na n-Óg Chairperson & Secretary and Scór Committee Chairperson & Secretary were left to the 1st meeting of the Executive Committee.

The Chairman confirmed that senior team manager, Shane King, was interested and available to continue in the role for 2016. His appointment was ratified on the proposal of Kevin Cryan, seconded by Sean Scott. The appointment of selector, Paul Judge, was ratified on the proposal of Tom Murray, seconded by Fintan Mc Gowan.

It was agreed to defer the ratification of Bord na n-Óg to the 1st meeting of the Executive.

Some details were given of plans for a fundraiser in the Fox's Den on Wednesday 30th December and a club Dinner Dance on February 6th in the Radisson hotel.

Sympathy was extended to the Powell family, Gurteen, and the relatives of the late Brigid Mary O'Connor, Keash, on recent bereavements.

Congratulations were extended to Thomas and Claire Cryan on the birth of their daughter.

This concluded the business of the A.G.M.

Kerry Mc Keon Literary Award Winner – Saoirse Ryan

Presented by Amanda Brennan (née McKeon)



Annual Club Draw – Main Prize Winners 2016



€10,000 – Joe & Marguerite Drury, €5,000 – Keith Judge,

Secretary's Report on the Activities of Eastern Harps G.A.A. Club 2016

A Chairde Gaeil,

Is cuis áthais dom tuarascáil an Rúnaí ar cúrsaí Cláirsigh an Oirthear sa bhlian atá beagnach caite a chuir os bhur gcomhair arís. Bhí an séasúr imeartha sásúil go leor go mór mhór ag na foirne faoi-14 agus faoi-16 (buachaillí).

Ach tá diomá orainn go léir gur theip ar ár foirne sinsir agus soisir sna cluichí leath-Cheannais, Craobh Chomórtas Co. Shligigh. Tá diomá orainn freisin nár éirigh go maith le peileadoiri na mban sna comórtaisí i rith na bliana. Mar sin féin, d'oibrigh a lán daoine go dian dícheallach ar son Cláirsigh an Oirthear ar feadh na bliana. Ar son na baill go léir gabhaimid buíochas leo.

Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is once again my pleasant duty to report to ye on the activities of Eastern Harps G.A.A. Club in the year drawing to a close. As is the case most seasons, we can have mixed feelings as we reflect on the playing season. I suppose it is true to say that in any given season, the performance of the senior team is the barometer on which so much is judged. In any club, the senior team takes precedence and their success or failure somewhat unfairly defines the club's season. We were all very disappointed when our seniors exited the championship at semi-final stage, suffering a heavy defeat to Tourlestrane in the process. Our team's form in the group stages was unconvincing but the tremendous display versus Tubbercurry in the quarter-finals gave us reasons for optimism. We had become accustomed to regular appearances in Co. Senior semi-finals over several years. I suppose we were taking such progress annually for granted in the good times. In recent years we have struggled to reach that stage as consistency of performance became an issue.

Little separates the majority of senior club teams in Sligo at present. In the group stages our seniors had a good win over Calry/St. Joseph's who soon found themselves in a relegation play-off with Easkey and only retained senior status after two replays and extra time with the Sea Blues. Such is the fine line between qualification for the knock-out stages and a battle to avoid relegation.

Our seniors never performed to their true ability in the defeat to Tourlestrane. The South Sligo kingpins went on to reclaim the Owen B. Hunt Cup at the expense of holders, St. Mary's. The previous evening to our senior semi-final, our Junior team lost the Junior A semi-final to the same opposition, making it a bad weekend for the club. The results were deflating, coming in the wake of earlier successes for our u-14 and u-16 boys teams.

Taking an overview of activities, it must be stated that our teams performed well in all grades and the club have some very promising young players for the future. The challenge now is to keep these young players interested and involved and to support them in every way to enable them to further develop their undoubted skills. We must have some concerns that none of our Primary schools featured on the winners' podium at this year's Cumann na mBunscoil finals. It is something the club must address; how to assist schools in getting coaching assistance and promoting Gaelic games in our schools. The ongoing coaching scheme, involving 3rd level students from Sligo I.T. is laudable but its duration is of too brief a timespan to make a significant impact. There needs to be some form of follow-up by the club. Even the provision of some footballs to each local Primary school would be a step in the right direction. It must be noted that other sports are gaining a foothold in the promotion of their sports in our schools.

On the other hand, a lot of good work is ongoing on a weekly basis in the club for the u-6 to u-10 girls and boys. Under the direction of coaching officer, Fintan Mc Gowan, a large number of children are introduced to the skills of Gaelic football. The biggest difficulty is getting sufficient coaches available to handle the

growing numbers. We need more parents to take on the coaching courses which are made available and assist at the sessions. The addition of some more retired players would boost the number of coaches available. Current players too can play a useful role in assisting at the odd coaching session. They are looked up to by the new generation and this can have a very positive influence. Their difficulty is time; they have already a huge commitment to their own training and games, which greatly limits their availability for any other role.

We have a duty to do whatever we can within reason to foster a culture of Gaelic games in our schools which will ultimately benefit the club. When they move on to second level it is important that their involvement in Gaelic football is fostered and developed. Over the years the Vocational school in Gurteen produced some of our finest club players. Now that this educational establishment is no more, many students in the catchment area travel to St. Nathy's College, Abbey Community College, Boyle or either of the two schools in Ballymote. While our players, male and female, appear to be very involved in St. Nathy's with considerable success, it would appear that the same emphasis on the promotion of our games does not apply in the other second level schools. We all understand that the many demands of the overloaded curriculum means less time for sport. It must also be recognised that participation in sport is a healthy outlet which can assist the development of a student. To put it simply, our players are involved with clubs mainly from March to August/Sept. They cannot be expected to realise their potential without regular competitive training and games with their schools in Autumn and Spring. At the moment many of our young players are not getting that opportunity. There is no easy solution, but it's something that I believe needs to be looked at.

We had probably the shortest playing season for years in 2016. It ran from the 12th of March, with the opening round of the Kiernan Cup, to the 25th September, when our u-13 Féile team was defeated in Rd. 3 by St. Molaise Gaels.

For the first time in many years we didn't enter a team in the u-21 championship, played mainly in October. Our panel was limited and as the fixtures were most likely to be played on Saturday afternoons, we couldn't be sure of having a team due to 3rd level students based away and work commitments for some of them. There was also for consideration the additional cost of insuring the team for only a guaranteed minimum of two games. On balance it was probably the correct decision for this year. The greatest problem with the u-21 championship is finding the correct slot in the G.A.A. calendar to play it. There appears to be no ideal time. We can be certain from experience that October/November is far from ideal but where can we find a better alternative slot? Other time slots for the u-21 championship have been tried over the years but it would seem that there is no ideal time to play it.

Senior Football

Our senior team had an excellent start to the playing season with a 3-18 to 0-5 win over St. Mary's in the Kiernan Cup, Group B on Saturday 12th March. Unlike previous years the warm-up competition didn't run for a few consecutive rounds, which I think was a mistake. Traditionally they were used by clubs to blood new players and get some kind of a shape on a team before the league commenced. Instead the C.C.C. decided to start the leagues in the second week of the competitive season. Our opening Division 1 league game v St. Mary's on Sunday, 20th March in Keash resulted in a 1-16 to 1-5 win to boost the team's confidence.

Our seniors' next league game was away to Coolera/Strandhill on Sunday, 10th April, we were fortunate to emerge from Ransboro with a 2-07 to 0-12 victory. Another narrow win followed on Saturday 16th April when we had home advantage v Coolaney/Mullinabreena and won by 2-06 to 0-10. A week later, our team played poorly in Coola, losing by 0-11 to 0-08 in Rd. 4 to Shamrock Gaels. Our seniors returned to winning ways on home ground on Saturday 30th April, defeating Calry/St. Joseph's by 0-14 to 1-09 in Rd. 5. We were away to Tourlestrane in Rd. 6 on Sunday, 15th May and were defeated on a 2-12 to 0-12 scoreline.

A week later we lost at home to Tubbercurry by 1-11 to 0-09 in Rd.7

As the Connacht Championship intervened, the Division 1 league had a break and Rd. 2 of the Kiernan Cup was played off. We lost at home to Tubbercurry by a point on a 3-10 to 1-15 scoreline on 11th June. Our seniors were away to Curry in Rd. 8 on Saturday 18th June and were defeated by 4-09 to 1-11.

The Kiernan Cup, Rd. 4 was next up and we lost by a point away to Shamrock Gaels on a 2-13 to 1-15 scoreline on Sunday, 26th June. This result effectively ended our interest in a competition we had won in 2015. We conceded the final Kiernan Cup game to Tourlestrane on 3rd July and were subsequently fined for not fulfilling a meaningless fixture.

The league resumed with Rd. 9, the final round, on 23rd July. Our seniors were away to St. Molaise Gaels and lost by 2-13 to 1-08. The 2016 Intermediate champions ended a great season by contesting the Division 1 league final. Of the 9 rounds in the Division 1 league our seniors won 4, lost 5; had a scoring deficit of 13 points and ended up in 6th position. After a promising start we lost a number of games narrowly and were now facing into the championship.

Our first championship group game was played in Bunninadden on Garland Sunday. We got a vital win on a 0-17 to 0-11 scoreline. Old rivals Tourlestrane were the opposition in Rd. 2 a week later. It was a low scoring contest which we lost on a 1-07 to 0-04 scoreline; a very disappointing result. Three weeks later the seniors gave their best display of the year, defeating Tubbercurry by 1-17 to 0-09 in the quarter-finals in Bunninadden. This was as good as it got.

In the County semi-final on Sunday, 13th Sept in Markievicz Park, we lost heavily to the eventual County Champions, Tourlestrane on a 3-13 to 0-06 scoreline. It was a terrible way to end the season. We had a season of mixed performances and consistency was in short supply.

Our Division 3 team did very well when one considers that occasionally they played without some eligible players who were needed for the Division 1 team. In this regard there was great co-operation between the Division 1 and Division 3 team managements.

Our Division 3 team competed in the Abbot Cup, the Division 3 league and the Junior A Championship. They lost their opening competitive game of the season, an Abbot Cup fixture at home to Cloonacool by 1-14 to 1-10 on Sunday, 13th March. Just like the seniors, the Division 3 team were pressed into early league action. This league had 12 games for each team who played each other twice.

As it happened they were given a walkover by St. Mary's in Rd. 1 of the Division 3 league on Saturday, 19th March. A week later they had a splendid 1-11 to 1-08 win away to Cloonacool in Rd. 2 of the league. Rd. 3 featured the visit of St. Michael's, one of the favourites in the competition. They proved too strong for our depleted team, winning by 2-17 to 1-07. St. Pat's had withdrawn from the league and so we got a walkover in Rd.4. On Sunday, 24th April our Division 3 team scored a 2-17 to 2-11 win over Shamrock Gaels away in Coola in Rd 5. Our Division 3 team had another walkover v St. Pat's on May 1st. The team travelled to Easkey for Rd. 7 and scored their biggest win of the league campaign, winning by 6-13 to 0-04.

St. Mary's provided a more difficult test in Rd. 8, winning in Kent Park by 0-12 to 0-09. Another narrow defeat followed; this time at home to Cloonacool in Rd. 9, losing by 1-10 to 1-12. Rd. 10 saw our Division 3 team suffer another setback, losing away to St. Michael's by 1-20 to 0-09. The team returned to winning ways with a 3-15 to 2-10 win over Shamrock Gaels on Saturday 10th June. As the County teams got involved in the championship, Division 3 teams competed in the Abbot Cup. Our team were in Group B and we got 2 walkovers v Easkey on 25th June and v St. Pat's on 2nd July. It transpired that, having lost the

opening Abbot Cup game and getting 2 walkovers, our team qualified for the semi-finals. We were defeated by St. Michael's by a single point on a 1-13 to 2-09 scoreline.

The final round of the league was played on Saturday 22nd July. Our Division 3 team emerged from a home game versus Easkey with a 9-20 to 1-08 victory. So our league campaign concluded with 8 wins, 4 losses and a scoring difference of 48 points. Our team occupied a very respectable 3rd position on the league table.

Preparations for the Junior A championship were stepped up. We had Curry in Rd. 1 on Sunday, 21st August and our team won by 2-08 to 1-05. We had a bye in Rd. 2. On September 2nd the Juniors qualified for the County semi-finals with a 1-18 to 0-03 win over Shamrock Gaels. Cloonacool was the venue for the semi-final and Tourlestrane were the opposition. They proved too strong for us winning by 4-13 to 1-07. So a busy season in which our junior team proved very competitive ended in disappointment.

It must be put on record that the players and management of both the senior and junior teams put in a massive effort. There was good co-operation between both managements to try to get the best available team on the field every weekend. One of the most pleasing aspects of adult men's football in 2016 was the consistently good numbers at training. Many away players made great sacrifices to be present at training and bring the necessary competitive edge to team preparations.

Shane King, Paul Judge, Paul Duignan and Shane Gallagher complemented each other in the preparation of our senior team. They each have vast experience in the different aspects of preparation and training and used it to the team's advantage. The time and effort they put in cannot be measured but it was serious and deserved a greater reward. It is disappointing to note that they have stepped down from management. They will be very difficult to replace. Aiden Ward, Patrick Henry and Tom O'Connor also put in a great effort with the Junior team and were unlucky that the team didn't enjoy greater success.

As usual we had the dedicated services of Des Horan who looked after so many players and did so much unheralded work behind the scenes. A special word of thanks is due to Shane Gallagher whose professional advice, treatment and assistance was availed of by many injured players throughout the year.

Looking at adult football in the club there is undoubted potential for a return to the glory days but much hard work needs to be done. We probably don't have the strength in depth in our panels of former years but with the right attitude and total commitment from all involved, we can build for future success. We've seen again in the past year that the standard of club football in the county is average at best. Any of a handful of teams can win a championship or league title in any given year. Very little separates the leading teams from the also-rans. Our players know that they are better than they showed in either of this year's championships. The challenge now is to go out in 2017 and prove our detractors wrong.

Underage Football

The outlook for underage football in the club is very promising. As I referred to earlier there is tremendous work being done by a number of regular, dedicated coaches from u-8 upwards. We need more to volunteer in order to cater for the increasing numbers attending. There is a serious shortage, particularly with girls' football coaches, which must be addressed.

The progress and achievements of our underage teams are dealt elsewhere in this booklet. However, it would be remiss of me not to refer to the success of our under-14 and under-16 boys teams in 2016. The u-16's took the County A league title with a 0-10 to 0-08 win over Shamrock Gaels in Markievicz Park on Monday, 18th July. They completed a unique double in Scarden on Monday, 5th September with a 4-15 to 0-12 victory over Curry. They had previously drawn with Shamrock Gaels in the semi-final in Keash, before asserting their superiority in the replay a week later in Coola. Unfortunately, in the aftermath of this

replay, one of our club mentors was the victim of an unprovoked attack by a parent of one of the opposition's players. This disgraceful behaviour is currently the subject of an investigation by Coiste Chontae Shligigh. It is something that shouldn't have happened and cannot be tolerated or excused. Such serious incidents are a reminder to us that clubs are responsible for upholding discipline, both on and off the pitch. They have also an obligation to identify the culprits, offer an apology and take steps to prevent a repeat occurrence. While nobody can condone such misbehaviour, we should be conscious of the fact that any club could be in the same unwelcome predicament in the future and must feel obliged to co-operate fully with any official investigation.

We again congratulate the under 16's on their double success and look forward to their continued progress in the years ahead. Well done to their mentors Shaun Dorrian, Paul Dwyer, Neil Molloy and Sean Scott. Congratulations too to the u-16 players chosen on the Sligo u-16 panel for the Fr. Manning Cup competition. The new league format is an interesting development for this long running competition. I recall that when I was County Secretary attempts were made to phase out the competition. Coiste Chontae Shligigh supported its retention at the time and I am pleased to see it continue to now involve 12 teams and provide a valuable platform for our stars of the future.

The club's under-14 boys team also blazed a trail in the B championship, accumulating some impressive score tallies to reach the championship final. They defeated Tubbercurry/Cloonacool in the final by 3-17 to 1-09 in Bunninadden on Thursday 8th September. It was a memorable win after a good team performance. The future looks promising for several of this panel if they have the right attitude and do not get carried away with success in the B championship. Well done to John Bruen and Peter Walsh who brought organisation, motivation and direction to this particular group of players. More recently they, together with Ronan Higgins and George Garvey, also looked after our u-13 Féile team who fielded a number of our successful u-14 team but lost out to Ballymote/Bunninadden and St. Mary's.

Much coaching continued with the u-12 and u-11 panels who regularly participated in the Go-Games. These are a very important group in the club as they are learning the basic skills and the importance of team work which we hope will assist them to enjoy the experience and develop as players for the future. This particular group need more one-to-one coaching than those in older grades. It is imperative that more coaches are available to assist in their development. Over the past year much of the responsibility for organising our u-12s fell on the shoulders of Ronan Higgins and George Garvey. We thank them for their dedication of time and effort despite other commitments.

We had one of the best minor teams for some years in 2016. A limited panel of actual u-18's were supplemented by some talented u-16 players. Their league commenced on April 4th and the final round was played after the Leaving Cert on 28th June. Our minors won 5 out of the 7 games to end up joint 2nd on the league table. In the knockout stages they had a big win over St. Mary's before losing to St. Farnan's by six points on 28th July in the semi-final.

The minor A1 championship on August 25th was disappointing. A strong Easkey/Enniscrone/Kilglass outfit dominated to win by 1-19 to 0-09. We were unable to get a sufficient number of players available to play St. Farnan's away in the Shield competition and had to reluctantly concede the game. The minor panel have some promising players who we hope will make an impact in adult football in the coming years. Any club with serious aspirations for success needs a few minors moving up to the adult stage every year to keep the momentum going and provide competition for places on adult team panels. Our thanks to Michael and Ray Hannon, Ross Donovan and Anthony Breheny for their hard work with the 2016 minors. Michael Hannon's record of service to this club over so many years has no equal. Since he captained our first senior championship winning team in 1975, he has been involved in administration and coaching teams ever since. His record of success with different age groups speaks for itself.

Pitch Matters

With so much football being played by so many different teams, there are huge demands on our pitches. John Cryan and his assistants Jimmy Casey, Eamonn Clarke, Damien Mc Govern, Ciarán Mc Govern and Frank Casey are to be complimented on the excellent condition of the main pitch right through the playing season. Through the work scheme, Brian Mc Crann did a lot of necessary work on a regular basis and was always prepared to make himself available if needed. Recently Gearóid O'Connor and helpers painted the roadside wall, which improved the appearance of the approach to our facilities.

On Saturday 15th October Paul Mc Govern provided his digger and he and some volunteers did resodding on areas of the pitch in need of repair. Brendan Mc Hugh had already delivered the grass carpet from Galway, ready to be laid. They deserve our appreciation.

It is a tribute to our own club volunteers that our main pitch was playable on every occasion it was required despite all the adverse weather we experienced. They deserve our appreciation for their unheralded work.

When spectators turn up for a club game and see a good playing surface and a well-marked pitch they probably don't realise the time and effort put in by volunteers to reach that standard of presentation.

Development Matters

Sean Scott and his Committee have done a very professional job in progressing our plans for a new clubhouse/dressing rooms. The project is now at tender stage and grant aid has been secured. Much work has been done over the past five years by this committee and they've consulted regularly with the Executive and kept us informed. The Development fund has a healthy balance but the project is a huge challenge for the club and will require some borrowings. We are aware of the need to try to avoid over borrowing and be in a position to service a loan at the best available rate, whatever the source.

We must not be constrained by the possibility of legal proceedings against the club. The Development fund was set up precisely to assist development and I believe it must be used for the purpose for which it was intended. We owe it to the many people who have contributed to the fund and to our local young people to try to provide the most modern facilities going forward. This has been our mission and we must see it through.

Post A.G.M. 2015

As you are aware, the normal business of our A.G.M. on December 6th 2015 was disrupted by three non-members who assumed the right to make various allegations against individuals present and attempted to force some unidentified document on some others. This sort of misbehaviour cannot be justified and shouldn't have been allowed. Anybody with a grievance is entitled to a hearing in the correct forum. The club A.G.M. certainly wasn't the platform to air their difficulties. It is worth repeating again that the club has been instrumental in seeking counselling and support for abuse victims. This was one of the positive outcomes of our meeting in Carrick-on-Shannon on December 8th 2014. The club has been pro-active in putting structures and policies in place to safeguard members from any form of abuse in the future.

I again repeat what I've said many times during the year that Croke Park has a responsibility to look after the interests of all units of the Association. Demanding the resignation of the three most senior officers of the club can hardly be construed as looking after the interests of our club. This was nothing short of an insult to the people who worked hard in a voluntary capacity to help build a progressive club. This demand, coming from a highly paid official, whose wages are paid by volunteers like all of us, was further exacerbated by his refusal to give any firm commitment to assisting the club with pending legal proceedings. This is the same official that, at a meeting in Carrick-on-Shannon with a number of our Executive committee on December 8th 2014, promised that Croke Park would assist the club in whatever

way possible. These are the facts however unpalatable they may seem. An injustice has been done to my two long-standing club colleagues in seeking their resignation. I have resisted the demands made on me over the past year and have been forced to take the legal route to preserve my character. It has been the most difficult time in my 44 years as club Secretary but I've come through it with the support of my family and close friends.

I also wish to place on record my thanks to my fellow officers on Connacht Council for their advice and support. Without all of their advice and support I have no doubt that I would be in a bad place right now. When you know that you are not guilty of any wrongdoing, you become more determined to retain your reputation for honesty and integrity whatever the pressure. I've had some difficult days and sleepless nights over the issues raised at our meetings and indeed the cowardly underhand attempts by an individual or individuals to damage my reputation. But despite the distractions I have continued to do my normal secretarial duties on behalf of the club. I stand on my record of service to this club and I am happy that I have made a significant contribution to the birth and development of a vibrant, progressive club.

Finance

Thanks to the Finance Committee, led by our treasurer, Thomas Cryan, who have worked hard to keep our finances in order. There has been a good response locally to the mission to increase our membership for the annual draw. Thanks to promoters and subscribers.

A special word of appreciation is due to the members who assist week after week in organising and running the Gurteen Bingo sessions. Their hard work over the past number of years has helped to bring a healthy balance to the club's Development Account.

We are fortunate to have secured generous sponsors again this year and we acknowledge their support and generosity. We had others who supported the club financially, some of whom wished to remain anonymous and we are grateful to them all. As we know very well running a club is now a business and requires careful management. We thank all who assisted in any way to provide the resources to keep the balance sheet positive. A special word of appreciation is due to our treasurer, Thomas Cryan who, despite his training and playing commitments, produced a monthly financial report for our meetings. As ye can see he has prepared a very detailed Annual Statement of Accounts for today's A.G.M.

Scór

We haven't done as well as we should over the years in promoting this aspect of the cultural activities of the G.A.A. Those involved in promoting Scór in the club need more assistance. There appears to be quite a number of young people in the area involved in learning the different Scór disciplines. They need to be invited and encouraged to take part in Scór. The Scór na n-Óg (u-17) County finals are planned for Saturday 26th November, hosted by St. Michael's G.A.A. Club in Ballintogher Hall. We should be making every effort to be well represented.

Referees

It was great to have Damien Mc Govern return to refereeing in 2016. His experience and knowledge of the referee's critical role in a game is badly needed in the county. His brother Ciarán continued to referee when available and continues to enhance his reputation for fairness and consistency, coupled with a sensible approach. It was encouraging to see Ciara Stephenson, Ciarán Dorrian, Tomás Taheny and Sean O'Connor progress through the Young Whistlers ranks. We need more like them in the county.

Without our referees we simply couldn't have games. The opportunities are there for anybody interested and training is provided. Mentoring is also provided to assist a new referee to find their feet. We need more referees in the county to cater for the huge number of games on the annual fixtures plan.

County Commitments

It has been a very busy year for Sean Scott. As well as his valuable work for the club, he has also had responsibility for the complete underage fixture plan in the county as Secretary of Bord na n-Óg. I compliment him and his committee on completing a comprehensive fixtures plan on schedule and providing the opportunity to players of every rank and ability to play our games regularly.

Paul Taylor has again been appointed as the County u-21 team manager for 2017. He and his selectors put in a big effort in the past year but we in Sligo still await our first u-21 Connacht title. We wish him well in the year ahead.

We also wish Keith Carty well as he embarks on another season as a County senior selector as a member of Niall Carew's management team. It is a big task as they prepare to seek promotion from Division 3 before travelling to Gaelic Park to take on New York in the opening round of the championship on May 7th.

Congratulations to Evan Lavin who was selected on the County minor team in league and championship games in 2016. We've had a great representation from our club u-16 team on the Sligo panel for the Fr. Manning Cup competition recently. We hope they will continue their progress and assist Sligo to win a Connacht minor title over the next two years. It's hard to credit that we have to go all the way back to 1968 to recall our last minor title. We need another soon!

We were ably represented by Louis Carty at our County Board meetings and I thank him on behalf of us all. His guiding influence and sound advice is appreciated within the club and county.

Buíochas

I thank Shaun Dorrian who shared a lot of Secretarial work with me over the past number of years. He was also involved in various sub-committees as well as heading up the management of our successful u-16 team.

Thanks to the members of our Executive Committee who met at least once a month throughout the year. They had many lengthy discussions and some serious decisions to make. Thanks to our Chairman, Pádraig Henry, who put in another big effort in a difficult and demanding role in a year when external issues put the club under pressure. He devoted much time and attention to the day to day running of the club.

Thanks to our P.R.O. Kevin Cryan for his work on our website and publication of club information in the media. This is a time consuming task and he needs more assistance in the form of an active P.R. committee.

Thanks to Coiste Chontae Shligigh, the C.C.C. and Coiste na n-Óg for their assistance and co-operation throughout the year.

I extend sympathy on behalf of all of us to the many people who were bereaved in 2016. Congratulations to those who got married or engaged or had new additions to the family. If I have omitted people or events in this report I assure all that it was unintentional. The club is fortunate to have considerable young talent among its player resources and its membership at the moment. We should encourage them to stay involved at some level, whether it is on the playing fields or on a committee. They need recognition, support and encouragement from all of us in order that the next generation can carry the torch. Ní neart go chur le chéile!

Ar aghaidh linn le chéile agus guím Ráth Dé ar ár saothair. Lean na Cláirsigh go deo!

Pádraig S. Ó Dubhthaigh (Rúnai)

Underage Team Reports

Minor Boys

The Minor Boys competed in Division 1 of the league in 2016. The league consisted of 8 teams from which we finished joint-2nd after defeating Easkey, Shamrock Gaels, Coolera/Strandhill, St. Mary's and Tubbercurry/Cloonacool. We were defeated by St. Farnan's and Owenmore Gaels but 10 points out of a possible 14 was an excellent return and showed how well we could compete at this level. We met St. Mary's again in the league quarter-finals and had a comprehensive win in Kent Park. Next up was St. Farnan's in Keash in the semi-finals. Unfortunately they proved too strong again in Keash and beat us on a scoreline of 1-12 to 1-06.

In the 'A' Championship, which was run on a knockout basis, we were paired against a combination of Easkey/Enniscrone Kilglass. This was a very strong amalgamation, especially as we had only beaten Easkey by a single point in the league at home in Keash. The lads played well on the evening but eventually lost on a scoreline of 1-19 to 1-09.

Losing at quarter-final stage meant that we were then placed in the Shield competition, this time away to St. Farnan's. Unfortunately, we could not field a team for this fixture, which was a disappointing way to end the season. However, overall it was a very good season for this age group and the fact that we were able to compete at the top level is very encouraging.

Thanks to all players and coaches for their efforts throughout the year including both the U18 and U16 panels. Congratulations also to Sean Bruen and Shane O'Grady who represented the club in the senior championship and to Evan Lavin who represented the Sligo Minor team.

Team mentors for the year were Michael Hannon, Ross Donovan, Ray Hannon and Anthony Breheny.

Ross Donovan

U16 Boys

As in 2015, the club was again well served at this age group with a panel of 24 players available this year, comprising of 16 born in 2000 and 8 born in 2001. The year began with a training session on 15th February in Keash. Our first league game in Division 1, in a new format 8 team division, was away to Owenmore Gaels on Sunday, 13th March, which we won comprehensively. Further wins against Ballymote/Bunninadden, Curry, Shamrock Gaels, Tubbercurry/Cloonacool, Coolera/Strandhill & Tourlestrane resulted in qualification as division leaders on maximum points for the league quarter-finals.

Prior to the knockout stages of the league it was felt that the team needed a serious challenge game to re-focus the lads on the challenges which lay ahead. A match was arranged against Westport as they appeared to be the strongest team in Mayo. Westport proved to be exactly the type of opposition we needed, as they were very strong opposition and showed us the attitude which is required to be a top quality team. For our quarter-final away to Ballymote/Bunninadden the lads showed a renewed appetite for hard work & we won by 4-21 to 0-07. The semi-final was away again, this time to Curry. Once again our lads were too strong for the opposition and we won the game by 5-17 to 0-10.

This meant that we had reached the league final against our rivals at this age group, Shamrock Gaels. The final took place in Markievicz Park on Monday 18th July. There is usually very little between these sides and this is how it turned out again on this occasion. However, the Harps lads were in no mood to relinquish the title won a year earlier, and showing a greater desire and a great willingness to battle for each other, they eventually ran out winners on a scoreline on 0-10 to 0-08. Amid great scenes of celebration which followed the final whistle, the cup was presented to our captain, Tomás Taheny, to tremendous cheers.

A very enjoyable blitz was held for non-exam students in Scarden during the Junior Certificate. After a number of games we were eventually beaten by Enniscrone/Kilglass. Thanks to Coiste na nÓg for organising this event. On the subject of Coiste na nÓg, great credit is due to Sean Scott & his fellow committee members for the excellent way in which the underage boys competitions have been organised over the past two years.

Our first game back after the exams was a challenge match away to Longford Slashers. This proved to be very useful to get the lads back together again and should have been ideal preparation for the championship quarter-final. However, unfortunately our opposition refused to play in the 'A' Championship as they felt unable to compete at this level. As a result, we got a bye into the semi-final which was at home against Shamrock Gaels. The large attendance was treated to a very exciting encounter where we looked to be in control of the match, scoring three excellent goals. However, despite being a man down, Shamrock Gaels finished the game much the stronger to level the game at 3-06 to 0-15. Even though extra-time was due to be played, the referee felt that it was not possible due to fading light.

This meant a replay was required in Coola the following Monday evening. Starting the game without players of the calibre of Ciaran Hannon (injured) and Jake Stephenson (holidays) it appeared that we would be up against it on this occasion. This was exacerbated by Kyle Cosgrove being black carded for a foul inside the large parallelogram midway through the first half, resulting in a penalty to the Gaels. However, in what turned out to be a huge turning point in the game, Alan Davey saved the penalty expertly. The Harps lads showing a performance of true grit and no little guile for the rest of the game, ended up winning by a convincing margin of 10 points, 5-09 to 2-08.

Despite the players and team officials shaking hands and leaving the pitch as normal, there was a very unsavoury incident when our management was leaving the dressing room. A parent of one of the Gaels players physically assaulted one of our coaches, Sean Scott, and falsely accused him of pushing his son during the game. This certainly did not happen and this was confirmed by the referee's match report where it was recorded that it was the underage player who had pushed Sean Scott. Some of our supporters were also herded out of the ground in a most hostile way by some Shamrock Gaels ladies. As a result of these shocking incidents, the club executive decided to submit a written complaint to Sligo County Board. At time of writing, the club is still awaiting a reply to this complaint.

On the field, the lads were focused on the Championship final against Curry in Scarden on 5th September. The lads found it difficult to get going in this game and Curry played very well, especially in the first half. However, our greater strength in depth showed in the second half and the game finished on a scoreline of 4-15 to 0-11. The trophy was presented after the match to our captain, Marcus Meehan. A great cavalcade ensued back towards home, the highlight of which was a large turnout and bonfire to welcome Marcus back to Killaraght with the cup. We are grateful to those who welcomed us so enthusiastically in Killaraght that evening.

The 2016 season has been very enjoyable and, as mentioned earlier, also historic. All the players who have been involved at this age level over the past two seasons deserve great credit for the way they have represented the club, both on and off the field. To go two full seasons in a row without losing a competitive match is a remarkable achievement. The lads should savour these days as it may not always be like this.

Thanks to all the parents for transporting the lads to training and matches and, most especially, providing huge encouragement through their vocal support throughout the season. The value of a vocal support should not be underestimated and hopefully this will continue into the future. Thanks also to John Bruen and Mark Cosgrove who provided valuable direction and encouragement to the lads on the 'far' side-line

when required. Thanks also to those who helped out during the year, preparing the pitch and dressing rooms, umpiring or doing line official, particularly to Thomas Taheny, who once again this year did umpire for us at all of our matches. Lots of work also goes on behind the scenes and the club would like to thank Sinead Scott, Mary Frances Dwyer and Anne Dorrian for their hours of hard work scrubbing, washing and drying the team's jerseys throughout the year. Thanks, once again, to Aisling Stephenson for taking the wonderful photographs.

We wish all the lads the very best of luck in the future. If they can continue to work hard and apply themselves as they do currently, there is no doubt that they will form a large part of the club's senior team in the not too distant future & perhaps some will go on to represent Sligo at senior level in years to come also.

Shaun Dorrian, Paul Dwyer, Neil Molloy, Sean Scott.

U14 Boys

Our boys kicked off their season on the 31st March with a home game versus St. Michaels in the Division 2 league. After a great battle the visitors emerged victorious by a 3 point margin. We bounced back on the 5th of April with a convincing win over Enniscrone/Kilglass in Keash. We put 2 more points on the board on 21st April courtesy of a walkover against Coolera/Strandhill, before we went down to a physically stronger Calry/St Joseph's side on 5th May in Hazelwood. We returned to winning ways against Tourlestrane in Keash on the 19th May and we followed this up with two more wins – away to St. Johns on the 2nd June and at home to St. Farnan's on the 9th of June. We accounted for St. Farnan's again in the league quarter final on 23rd of June before losing to eventual champions Calry in the semi-final in Keash on the 9th of July.

Our championship campaign got underway on the 29th of July when we visited Connolly Park in Collooney and beat Owenmore Gaels by a handsome margin. Coolera/Strandhill were our opposition in the semi-final and a 7-10 to 3-10 win in Keash on the 29th August saw us reach the county final which was fixed for Bunninadden on the 8th of September. Tubbercurry/Cloonacool provided the opposition and after a great display of fast attacking football, we were crowned champions on a scoreline of 3-19 to 1-9. The cup was presented to our captain Diarmuid Higgins by fellow Harps man Sean Scott amid great scenes of celebration.

Great credit is due to our panel of players for their dedication and willingness to learn throughout the year. Thanks to the parents for their help and cooperation during the year. A big thank you to our four under 12s who never saw us stuck and indeed they were pivotal to our success. Thank you to Shane Gallagher and Drury Oil for sponsoring shorts and socks for the lads and also to Brid and Kevin Higgins for paying for the refreshments after the county final.

John Bruen

U13 Boys (Féile)

In September our under 13 Féile team were drawn in the 'Group of Death', being pitted against Ballymote/Bunninadden, St. Marys and St. Molaise Gaels. Despite gallant displays, we came up short in all three encounters against very strong opposition so there is much to be done prior to the under 14 competitions next year.

John Bruen

U12 Boys

In 2016 we were fortunate to be in the position to be able to field two teams. We started the year with a large panel of thirty-two members and this number grew to thirty-six by mid-summer. The panel was made up of seventeen U12s and nineteen U11s. The teams were split with the 2004 boys playing in Division 1 and our 2005 boys playing in Division 3.

Our first outing of 2016 came on the 4th of February in the form of a new GAA game called Pella, which is a 5-a-side indoor version of Gaelic football. We were drawn into a group with three other teams of similar ability, namely Ballymote, Shamrock Gaels and Geevagh. The games ran for four consecutive weeks and it was by far one of the highlights of the season for those who participated, as we managed to win two out of three games most evenings we played.

After a few outdoor training sessions in March our U12 campaign kicked off with a first round game against Castleconnor. After a brave display in the first half our Division 1 team felt the full impact of some changes by Castleconnor at half time who went on to win the game comfortably. Unfortunately, our Division 3 team had a similar fate on the evening.

Our next game on April 12th was against St Johns in Stenson Park. St John's failed to field a Division 3 team on the evening; however our Division 1 team won by a single point in a thrilling encounter. Round 3 brought us to Ransboro on April 26th against Coolera/Strandhill where we were well beaten against the home team at Division 1 Level. Our Division 3 team also lost on wet and dreary evening.

At this early stage in the season it was obvious we were out of depth at Division 1 Level. Our Division 3 team had some hard times ahead also. We could see the boys were not getting any enjoyment out of the results and we knew we had to change things up. We were very fortunate that we were able to recruit some more coaches with the help of Bord na nÓg. Chris Hannon and his son Ciarán joined, with the aid of John Lynch. Also, Ross Donovan, Mikey Grady and Ciaran McGovern took some training sessions and focused on the development of basic skills. This made a huge impact and training had now become a place where much more attention could be focused on developing our basic skills.

We continued on with our League campaign at Division 1 level and ended up in a 9th V 10th place play off against St Johns. We managed to beat St Johns in the playoff by 5 points. Our Division 3 team managed to finish 7th out of 10 teams in their group. This team have some very talented young footballers with huge determination which bodes well for the future.

We also participated in a home blitz against Ballymote, Shamrock Gaels and Geevagh organised by Sean Scott and Coiste na nÓg. We had highly competitive games on the evening and it was a great way to finish out the year as we were all equally matched on ability.

We then had very competitive skills completion in the club on the 28th of August which seen Nathan Dwyer, Conor Higgins and Sean Higgins come through to represent Eastern Harps. On September 5th the three boys represented Eastern Harps in the county skills competition in Scarden and finished a very respectable 5th out of 12 teams involved.

At times the enjoyment was taken out of the games in which we suffered some heavy loses to teams beyond our ability, but our players must be complimented for the way in which they composed themselves as representatives of Eastern Harps, on and off the field. At all times their behaviour was impeccable. This is a true reflection on their character and I look forward to working with them in the future where I have no doubt we will see success.

I would like to conclude by thanking all the fellow coaches this year, namely George Garvey, Chris Hannon, Ciarán Hannon and John Lynch. Huge thanks are due to them all as they gave their valuable time and energy to help out. These individuals, along with Ross Donovan, Mikey Grady and Ciaran McGovern all helped cement the values of both our club and the GAA in our son's lives, and I've no doubt that we will see the reward of this in years to come, both on and off the field.

Ronan Higgins



Under 12 Boys in Markievicz Park

U10 Boys

The u 10s began training in February; there was a large turnout throughout the year with 30+ attending most sessions. There was plenty of football with 2 blitzes (one in Markievicz Park & one in Scarden) and a game every other week. The lads got to play at the interval in Markievicz Park in the National League match between Sligo and Limerick. Their opposition on the day was Coolera/Strandhill.

We recently had another visit from Belmullet U9s & u10s in Keash. Our u9s performed really well on the day and had a good win. Our u10s had a very slow start to their game and were 2-04 to no score down before they got going. When they did get going they really did turn it on and ended up winning by 5 points in the end.

These u10s are a very skilful group of lads and I'm quite sure we'll be hearing more about them in years to come. The under 10 coaches this year were Fintan McGowan, Paul Taylor & Con Murray.

Fintan Mc Gowan

U8 Boys and Girls

The u8s training began in March and continued each week until September. The training was a great success for everyone involved. This year the boys and girls played a lot of football with games against neighbouring teams as well as some blitzes. A big 'thank you' to all the parents who brought the children to training and games. and to all the coaches for their time and commitment.

Dawn Mc Gowan

U6 Boys and Girls

Every Wednesday evening during Spring and Summer this year at 6:30pm we had the U-6 Gaelic training for girls and boys. We were lucky to have the support of the local parents bringing the young players up for their first go at learning the skills and having some fun and exercise. We had 25 or more children coming up whenever they could and they really did well, listening to their trainers and the helpers (U-12 and U-14 players from the girls teams did great work passing on their skills and making the children feel good about their progress).

We couldn't have been happier with the way the children performed and I'm sure those that moved on to U-8 will be valuable players for that age group. Those that were a little young will be back in U-6 next year for more fun and games and will make new friends with the new recruits! Remember, we always welcome volunteers from the parents to help out as player numbers grow each year. Thanks to everyone involved in making this year a success. Roll on next Spring!

Shane Duggan

Eastern Harps Ladies

Ladies Chairperson's Address

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Reverend Fr, Chairperson, members of the Executive, managers, players, parents and supporters to our Annual General Meeting of 2016. I especially would like to thank all those who have been involved with the Ladies club this past year.

Our Ladies club continues to be a very active and vibrant part of our club supported by parents and coaches who take a very active role in the continued growth and development of ladies football within our club. There are some who will continue to remain actively involved in the coming years and there are some who have formally resigned from their roles this year. I wish to thank you all, especially all our under age coaches, sincerely for all your hard work and effort and for giving of your time freely to encourage and coach all our young players. I would like to say a special thank you to Paul Judge & Eamonn Clarke for their commitment to our senior ladies this year.

Again I encourage anyone to get involved with the club in any way. We need parents to get involved and there is always an opening for anyone who wishes to participate at any level. Our young girls need great role models and mentors to keep them interested in the sport.

Congratulations to Lisa Casey, Aishling O'Gara & Megan McCormack for their very successful campaign with the Senior Co panel. Well done girls. We have had lots of our young girls playing at Co level on both under age panels and development squads. Well done to Aideen Coyle, Zara Stafford & Rachel Hogge who took part in the final game of the season with the U 17 Co development squad in the Connacht Blitz beating Galway 2:14 - 0:03. You have all done your club proud and help to raise the club profile at both Co & Connacht levels.

Congratulations to our 'G4M& Others' who have had another very successful year culminating in a 5/5 win at the National blitz, not that anyone was keeping scores!!!

I would like to wish everyone well and wish the club continued success into the future.

Kind regards

Liz Coyle

Ladies Chairperson

Eastern Harps Senior Ladies

The 2016 season saw a change of management for the senior ladies as Paul Judge and Eamonn Clarke took over from Jack Haran. This season would see the ladies compete in 3 competitions, the All Club League (without county players), Senior League and for the first time in a number of years, Senior Championship.

The first training session took place on Saturday, 27th February. 3 weeks later we made the trip to Geevagh for the first round of the league. A flying start saw us 10 points up by half time, however, the fitness and experience of Geevagh showed in the second half as they ran out winners on a scoreline of 4-16 to 3-3. A week later, Round 2 of the league saw us take on St Michaels in Keash. The visitors were in control of this game throughout and won the game easily, 3-12 to 1-01.

On Sunday April 3rd we were due to play St Nathy's in the opening round of the All Club league but unfortunately we had to concede this game because we were unable to field a team for various reasons. Our Round 2 game against Tourlestrane was also not played as confusion surrounded Tourlestrane's participation in all competitions for 2016. On April 17th we finally played our first game in the all club league when we made the long trip to Enniscrone to play Eoghan Rua. Despite an encouraging start we suffered defeat once again.

A number of weeks passed before we resumed league action. St Nathy's were our opponents. There were some great performances from our girls as they took the game to their more experienced opponents. Showing great fight and determination to the end we were defeated on a scoreline of 0-24 to 2-07. Despite the result, this was a marked improvement on previous weeks so there were plenty of positives to take from the game. The following week we played our final league game against St Marys in Gurteen. Building on the performance from the previous week we played with great pace, energy, and showed a brilliant work rate. This was rewarded with some magnificent scores throughout the game. As the game entered the final 10 minutes some crucial decisions went against us and St Marys won a very entertaining game, 5-16 to 5-11.

We turned our attention to preparing for Championship although, because of Sligo's successful run to the Connacht Championship title, it was unclear when Club Championship would begin. The club were delighted to be represented on the Sligo panel by Lisa Casey, Megan McCormack and Aisling O'Gara. We congratulate them on their fine achievements with Sligo in 2016.

Away from football, a Climb of Keash Hill, in memory of our friend and teammate, Karen Powell R.I.P., was organised. The climb, along with other club activities raised money for Strangeboat Organ Donation. Thanks to all who took part in the Climb, to those who sponsored the girls, to those who raised money and to the locals who ensured the climb took place safely.

We would face St Michaels in the opening round of the Championship on Sunday 10th of July. We started well with an early goal although this seemed to rattle St Michaels into action as they took control of the game and we were in trouble at half time. Despite an improved second half we simply couldn't get back into the game and St Michaels were victorious, 6-18 to 4-05. Two weeks later in the second round of Championship we made another trip to Geevagh. This was a very entertaining game with both teams evenly matched over the hour. Our girls didn't have much luck on the day as they hit the post and the crossbar on a few occasions. In a tight game Geevagh got scores at crucial times and ran out winners, 4-11 to 1-12. Seven days later in Gurteen we would play the final round of Championship and our final game of the year when we took on St Nathy's. This was probably our best performance of the year. Not over awed by Nathy's, we played without fear and, determined to finish the year off on a high, we took the game to the visitors. Once again, lacking the luck that is needed to win games we were beaten by 4 points, 1-07 to 6 points.

And so a disappointing year on the pitch had come to an end and, while the results were not positive, it is important not to focus on that but instead to focus on the number of younger players who made the breakthrough on to the senior panel in 2016. Along with these new faces, the core group of experienced players who are already there and the others who need to be encouraged to make the step up in 2017, there is no doubt that we can establish ourselves at senior level for a number of years. The management would like to thank the entire panel for all their effort and commitment in 2016 and most importantly encourage them to look forward to the 2017 season.

Paul Judge

Minor Girls

A great bunch of thirteen girls faced fifteen Eoghan Rua girls. They played with great heart but despite their best efforts lost their first game. The reason we only had thirteen was down to short notice of the fixtures. Drumcliffe was next and the girls dug deep to beat them sporting a full team. St. Nathy's then, aided and abetted by the county board, continued to move the fixture until they had a full panel. Therefore, when the game was finally fixed, we were without two of our best players. Despite our best efforts we lost by five points. The team was managed by Patricia Mc Donagh, Edel McNulty and Martina Clohessy. Most of the training can be attributed the senior & u16 management and Edel McNulty.

Martina Clohessy

U16 Girls

Our U16 girls finished up without any silverware despite some very promising displays throughout the year. They were correctly placed in the 'A' grade for League and Championship and reached the semi-final stages in the League. It is an age group that is quite short on numbers and we would have been unable to field without the help of the U14 girls. We are thankful to them and their management for their assistance.

Our year started at the end of March when we played Eoghan Rua in Keash and we ran out comfortable winners. This was followed by another victory when we beat St Marys, again at the same venue. Our next game pitted us against a highly fancied Shamrock Gaels team and, in our best display of the year, we beat them in Gurteen. Our next game proved a little controversial. It was our fourth attempt to try to arrange a game with Tourlestrane and when we turned up to play at their venue on a beautiful Sunday evening, misfortune struck again as no referee appeared. Both teams agreed to play which was unwise and in the second half, in the interest of safety, it was decided to abandon the game. The Ladies Fixtures Committee never re-fixed the match as both teams were safely in the semi-final. Our last game in the round robin fixtures saw us lose to Drumcliffe/Rosses Point, played in Oxfield. There was a break of five weeks due to the Junior Certificate and when we recommenced, we played our semi-final where we were beaten again by Drumcliffe/Rosses Point.

The Championship didn't commence until early September which made it extremely difficult to maintain the interest with the girls during the summer. We lost our opening two games to Tourlestrane and Drumcliffe/Rosses Point, albeit by a very narrow margin but with the way the other games turned out, we went into our last game against Shamrock Gaels knowing that a win would put us in a play-off for the semi-finals. We put out our weakest team all year due to injuries, sickness and a clash with the Ploughing Championship which resulted in a total of 7 girls being absent for the game. The Gaels gained sweet revenge for their earlier loss in the league by beating us comfortably. A special word of congratulations to Aideen Coyle who played with distinction in the County colours for the Sligo U16 team. Hopefully more of this panel will follow her example and join the upcoming Development Panels.

Padraig Henry, Liz Rafferty, Therese Conlon and Edel McNulty.

U14 Girls

Our under 14 girls got their season off to a start with competition in the Féile competition which took place in Riverstown pitch back on the 26th of March. On the day we performed well winning our first game against Geevagh. On the next day we had just 13 players and the girls gave of their best in a closely contested game against Shamrock Gaels with Gaels proving too strong for us. Following that we got down to training as we had not trained prior to that outing.

The shortfall of players became a noticeable feature of our outings throughout the year and this combined with quite a few injuries during the season we were never at full strength. Our League competition saw us pitched against teams much stronger than us as we were put in Division 1. The girls always did their best and even when games were well beyond winning, they fought right to the end of each match. I think this trait endeared us to them and while we were well beaten by Tourlestrane, Eoghan Rua and Shamrock Gaels, our worst defeat came against St Mary's. We had most of our team on that day but didn't register a score until well into the second half. Meanwhile Mary's had scored several goals. Our last fixture was due to be away to Drumcliffe and this fixture as with our game with Shamrock Gaels earlier in the competition got cancelled due to County Fixtures. This further disrupted our season and we agreed to forfeit the game as Drumcliffe had topped the League and were way stronger than us having won all their games. This was the first match I ever agreed to forfeit due to inequality in standard and where we as team managers felt that playing the game would actually be of no benefit to either team. We did notify the County fixtures Secretary of this fact. We finished that competition the first week in July and played our first game in the Championship on the 5th of August.

Again we had difficulty fielding a team due to injuries and players away on holidays having to depend on many under 12 girls to make up numbers. We played three games in all recording our second win of the season away to St Farnan's but we suffered defeat to Eoghan Rua and Calry. Although we didn't win any silverware the girls can be proud of the way they performed.

We wish all those girls who suffered injuries a full recovery. Also we wish to congratulate Orlaith Connolly on her great achievements on the running track in the All-Ireland Athletics Competition and the Finals of the Community Games. An athlete to watch out for in the future!

Aoife Gallagher and I were ably assisted by both Fintan and Dawn McGowan throughout the season, many thanks to them. We are also grateful to all parents and to the club's committee members who helped us in so many ways. Thanks also to Hannah Clohessy, as ladies secretary, who had a difficult job trying to communicate with our county fixtures secretary in order to ensure we were in the 'know' about our competitions.

Patricia McDonagh

U12 Girls

U12 girls this season were a wonderful bunch of girls. We did very well in the league reaching the final but met with a very strong Tourlestrane who took the title. Benny Connolly, Kerrie Scanlon and Martina Clohessy were their mentors for the start of the season. However, Benny and Kerrie were unable to continue helping out after the league final. With the schools on holiday, attendance for training and matches was very poor. Despite Edel McNulty coming on board and upping the training standards, the poor attendance meant poor results and we didn't win any championship game. Best of luck to the girls moving up and look forward to next season. It would be highly recommended that u12 girls didn't play games during the summer holidays as, due to family holidays, summer camps etc. etc., it is impossible to field teams. We found the other teams had exactly the same problem.

Martina Clohessy

U10 Girls

The fixtures committee decided to go ahead with the Development League format used in 2015, however, the timing of matches & blitzes in the busy April/May period still caused a lot of postponements.

We had good numbers at training & fulfilled fixtures versus Curry, Owenmore Gaels & Saint Nathy's but we had to postpone matches against CT Gaels & Saint Farnan's due to bad weather. Unfortunately we were unable to agree dates for re-fixing these matches.

We also took part in a county blitz in Tubbercurry on 7/5/2016 which was hosted by CT Gaels. Another county blitz was due to take place on 27/8/2016 but it was postponed due to the ladies All-Ireland semi-final between Sligo & Kildare taking place on that date. We continued with training for a few weeks in September while awaiting word on a new date for the blitz. I found it almost impossible to get a reply from fixtures on this matter & eventually got an answer from a committee member confirming the blitz was cancelled.

The lack of communication from the County Board left a lot to be desired & their insistence on fixing matches in May in particular for this age group is baffling! Finally, thanks to all the parents for arranging transport to & from training & matches.

John O'Neill, Linda Kiernan & Niamh Lillie

Gaelic for Mothers and Others

2016 saw the 'Gaelic for Mothers and Others' Eastern Harps team continue to go from strength to strength. We said goodbye to some old friends and welcomed in some new faces. All in all we had a very strong squad made up of 18 ladies.

We have a lot of people to thank for our continued success but first and foremost is our inspirational coach and mentor Paul Dwyer who has stuck by us through thick and thin. He has been instrumental in developing this team and building us up into the force we feel we have become. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the entire Eastern Harps committee who have supported and financially backed us from the very start.

Our reputation has grown so much we were asked to play a challenge game against St Pats Junior Ladies team who were just about to contest the County Final. As we did not want to be responsible for knocking their confidence before such an important game, we politely declined. We were also concerned that they might try and poach some of our players for the big game.

Speaking of the County Final, we were honoured to be invited to give a half-time exhibition on the finer points of the game against Curry. This was a great honour and shows the strides that that our team and Gaelic for Mothers and Others as a whole has made during the two years we have been in existence. We also played in some highly competitive "friendly" fixtures this year and made some new friends against Castlereagh, Curry and Shamrock Gaels. We feel that the establishment of these links with our neighbouring teams will ensure that G4M&O continues to make strides over the coming years.

Last but by no means least, the Main Event. The reason we had worked and trained so hard. It was time for the Annual Blitz in Portmarnock. The bus was hired, the hotel was booked and the champagne was on ice. 16 of the 18 ladies took to the field against teams from all over Ireland. We played Éire Óg (Clare), Erin go Bragh (Dublin), Kilcavan (Laois), Mohill (Leitrim) and Na Gaeil (Kerry). Although scores were not kept, we have it on very good authority that we were undefeated which resulted in us keeping our winning streak going and meant we were undefeated in our second season.

In conclusion, we look forward to another exciting year in 2017. We would welcome any newcomers who would like to learn how to play, get a little fitter and have lots of fun in the process. Remember, you do not have to have ever kicked a ball before to join this team. You will make lifelong friends and on that note, one such friend got married this year and we wish Lydia & Eamonn all the very best in their married life.

Eleanor Mc Mahon



Back: Dorothy Connolly, Dawn McGowan, Nicole Cosgrove, Mathona Conheady, Sarah Gallagher, Samantha O’Gara, Esther Mullen, Rosaleen Harrison, Sharon Reid, Paul Dwyer
Front: Monica Rogers, Joanne O’Grady, Eleanor McMahan, Lydia O’Toole, Aoife McDonagh, Jacinta O’Gara.
Missing: Monica Henry, Liz Coyle & Christina Gardiner

Report from Eastern Harps GAA Bingo Committee

By the end of 2016 Eastern Harps will have been running Gurteen Bingo, in partnership with Gurteen Hall Committee, for five years. We'd like to thank them once again for the opportunity to join forces with them. It's a partnership that has proven to be successful and mutually beneficial. Proceeds from bingo are split evenly between the two groups and the club's share goes directly to the development fund. Without this quarterly cash injection our development plans would surely not be as close as they are to becoming a reality. To date, bingo has contributed in excess of €80,000 to the development fund.

As all bingo players know, bingo playing is a gamble, but what may not have been so obvious over the past five years is that running a bingo is also a gamble. As a club, we have perhaps taken it for granted that bingo being a lucrative fundraiser is a given. The reality is that bingo can just as easily be unprofitable, or worse, it can run at a loss. The massive success that we have enjoyed with our bingo in its first four years has surpassed everyone's expectations and predictions. This may have led the club as a whole to become complacent about the huge income it has generated annually to date. As you can see from the accounts, 2016 has not been nearly as profitable as previous years, but this appears to be borne out across the country as a national trend. In fact, research would suggest that bingo halls thrive in a recession, so the past years balance sheet may indicate that the country is heading out of recession!

Any number of factors can affect a crowd on a weekly basis - a local wedding, bad weather, good weather, dark evenings, lovely long evenings - you get the picture! But overwhelmingly the biggest attraction for a large crowd is a juicy jackpot. On no occasion during this past year has our jackpot come anywhere near the dizzy heights of €5,000, reached in 2015, which saw big attendances for weeks on end.

Every year we pay out in excess of €110,000, or a minimum of €2,200 each week, excluding jackpots. This year lady luck was smiling down on our players and we paid out an additional €17,000 in jackpot prizes. The bingo playing gamble paid off for five lucky punters this year who each won over €2,000.

Bingo is about more than trying to win jackpots - for most of our players at least! It provides a unique social outlet within the community and we have players ranging in age from their twenties to their nineties. People can meet casually and have a chat and a catch up on the events of the past week. Players are highly superstitious over just about everything bingo related and are creatures of habit when it comes to how they like their evening to progress! They enjoy a bit of banter with the staff, as well as their tea and biscuits at half time. As well as providing a warm and welcoming environment every Friday night, over the years Gurteen bingo has donated to local community groups and charities impacting on our community, including Community Care, Hospice, Strangeboat Organ Donor Foundation, Pieta House and Gurteen Tidy Towns Committee.

Bingo would not be possible without a very dedicated committee and we thank them most sincerely for giving up their Friday nights, when many others may be relaxing after a long week. Some weeks back, the Club Bingo Committee members were very sorry to lose its longest serving member - Aisling Stephenson and of course Ciara & Jake, as they take a well-deserved break, but we hope to see them back in the future. We are pleased to welcome Aisling's replacement, Deirdre O'Brien Gillen on to the committee and thank her for answering the call!!

Despite the significant drop in profits from previous years, Gurteen bingo has over time built up a very solid reputation, and this has in no way diminished. We're seen as one of the most "decent" bingos around - players are quick to report a bingo hall elsewhere that's seen as stingy! Our loyal supporters mean everything to us, and we sincerely thank all the patrons who support Gurteen Bingo week in week out. We have supporters travelling from as far away as Dromod in Leitrim, Ballyfarnon in Roscommon and Claremorris in Mayo, as well as our locals, from Gurteen and the surrounding towns and villages.

As we alluded to earlier, the Club may have taken bingo's financial accomplishments for granted. We cannot do this; a great deal of work has gone into building and maintaining bingo. It may not be your first port of call when the question of how to spend a Friday night arises but we'd ask you to put it in there somewhere in your diary! If all executive members, coaches, players and parents made a conscious effort to attend from time to time it would make a big difference. It won't break the bank, and if lady luck spots you, she might smile in your direction.

Eastern Harps GAA Bingo Ctte

Report from Building Development Committee

Report to 2016 AGM

Project progress to date

Early 2011	Club approached two adjoining landowners to explore the possibility of obtaining ground for new dressing rooms. This was unsuccessful
July 2011	Special sub-committee established to look at existing dressing rooms. Recommended economically unviable to upgrade existing facility and that the dressing rooms should be knocked in favour of new dressing rooms on the same site. This was approved by the Executive.
August 2011	Development Committee established with Seán Scott as chair.
Autumn 2011	Engineer appointed to take the project from design to build – Michael Rowley and Associates, Consulting Engineers. It was made clear to the executive that it would be 4-5 years before the club would be in a financial position to commence development.
30 th April 2012	Planning permission lodged.
8 th June 2012	Further Information requested.
24 th August 2012	Planning Permission Granted.
2013	Club fundraisers specific to development are strongly promoted.
10 th March 2014	Sports Capital Application Lodged for dressing rooms. Application valid. No funding.
March/April 2015	Approval from County Board and Connacht Council to seek 100k loan.
21 st April 2015	Approval from BOI for 100k loan.
24 th April 2015	Further Sports Capital Application Lodged for dressing rooms.
Summer 2015	Extensive political lobbying.
8 th October 2015	Email from Sports Capital awarding €39,000. Grant to be drawn down by 31 st October 2017.
September 2015	Connacht Council Grant submitted.
27 th October 2015	Met with Connacht Council in Ballyhaunis.
29 th October 2015	€20,000 awarded to project by Connacht Council.

A detailed report has been presented each year since 2011 at our club AGMs outlining the above plans and progress achieved.

The situation regarding the preparation of trustee documentation in accordance with the GAA Model of Trust has yet to be finalised and is no further on since 2015. This is necessary in order to put in place the financial package to see the project through.

It was recommended in the 2015 AGM Report that a separate fundraising committee be put together with an eighteen month to two year time frame to organise a number of specific events for the development. This was seen as essential in order to see the project through financially, as there was concern that too much reliance was being put on Bingo profits financing the project. A fundraising committee was not put in place in 2016.

Whilst works have commenced in relation to the preparation of tender documents, the lack of fundraising and the legal situation with which the club is faced, as well as the inability to regularise the trustee situation has stalled progression of development almost to a halt. Government funding and GAA grants that were approved will need to be drawn down by the 31st October 2017.

The committee does not have a chairperson at present, as the existing chair has resigned from the executive.

Report from Bord na nÓg & Children's Officers

The Bord na nÓg Committee for 2016 included Martina Clohessy, Deirdre Gillen, Ronan Higgins, Niall McGill, Fintan McGowan, Dawn McGowan, Edel McNulty and Aiden Ward. The committee took on many roles during the year and, with the watchful eye of the executive, made a lot of progress in relation to the running of underage teams.

Following on from last year, the Bord continued to further develop the communication channels with all underage teams. This included getting coaches to submit monthly attendance records to the Bord for all trainings and games. It is hoped that this will be further improved upon and more consistent next year.

One of the main focuses of the committee at the beginning of this year was informing coaches and players of the club's Code of Conduct and Bullying Policy. Members of the committee attended a training session of all under age teams. Each player was given a booklet with these policies and a short talk about the committee's role and the policies. We felt this was very beneficial and something we hope to continue in the future.

The committee also played a role this year in recruiting underage coaches. This proved a difficult task and also didn't take place until the season had begun. As a result it has being recommended by the Bord that a special committee be set up to help get more underage coaches and to do so during the off season.

The Bord na nÓg Committee this year overseen the Kerry McKeon Literary competition. This was a very enjoyable experience and gave committee members an opportunity to meet and liaise with the teachers and students in the local primary schools. This was the third annual Kerry McKeon Literary award. A total of 53 students took part from five different schools. The essays were very topical, as the title this year was 'It was 100 years since the 1916 rising...' The overall winner was Saoirse Ryan, Keash NS and the runner-up was Orla Dorrian, Culfadda NS. We would like to thank the teachers and principals from the local schools for participating in this competition. A special thanks also to the McKeon family for continuing to sponsor prizes for this competition in memory of Kerry.

Edel McNulty completed a four hour Club Children's Officers workshop in March this year. This was a worthwhile refresher course and dealt with issues such as communicating with young people, legislation and dealing with the code of best practice and code of behaviour. It is hoped that this will be an annual event as it provides children's officers with an opportunity to liaise with others from various clubs and to share ideas.

The new online EVetting came into action in May 2016. This now means that it is a legal requirement for all coaches, managers, referees and people involved in our underage teams to be vetted prior to them taking up their role. This year only new coaches had to be EVetted, however, from next year even those coaches who have already been vetted will have to complete the online process. As a result of this it is hoped that all coaches will be in their position earlier in the year to allow this process to be completed as well as the other necessary training courses.

Edel Mc Nulty

Men on the Move

In late December 2015 the Club was approached by Deirdre Lavin from Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership with a view to joining forces to bring a new social and activity programme, Men on the Move, to county Sligo. It would be a pilot for Sligo, the programme having been rolled out in just 12 counties in Ireland up to that point. SSPR, having in the past worked successfully with Eastern Harps on a number of occasions, felt we were capable of recruiting between 20 and 25 relatively inactive men for twice weekly physical activity sessions for 8 weeks. We were a little more dubious about this, as men can be a little shy in putting themselves forward at times!

A brand new (MoM) committee was put in place, Adrian Tansey, Gerard McMahon and Bernard Hunt, and they got to work persuading their peers to venture out. On registration night we had over 40 men sign up, and by the end of the first week our numbers were a whopping 52, over twice what we'd hoped for. Local man Aiden Ward was the qualified instructor who came on board to deliver the programme. While the core components of the structured group exercise were cardiovascular exercise and strength and conditioning training, the participants also had the opportunity to attend two one hour workshops, "nutrition for men" and "well-being for men".

Much of the success of the programme is down to Aiden who pitched the training sessions very well - no participant felt under pressure to keep up with anyone else, while no one got away with slacking either! At the end of the programme there was a wish to continue, so a 6 week Phase 2 followed immediately. Everyone then took a break for the summer, and Men on the Move has just had a further registration night to get all our men fit for Christmas!

It's fantastic from a "Healthy Club" point of view to see yet another section of the community be reached in a non-football related activity. Some of the participants had never before, or not in years, taken part in sports and were complete newcomers to physical activity, and the group has developed a real sense of camaraderie.



CLUB OFFICIALS 2016

PATRONS	
PRESIDENT	
CHAIRPERSON	Padraig Henry
VICE-CHAIRPERSONS	Tom Murray, Des Horan
SECRETARY	Padraic Duffy
VICE-SECRETARY	Shaun Dorrian
TREASURER	Thomas Cryan
VICE-TREASURER	Brendan McHugh
P.R.O.	Kevin Cryan
OIFIGEACH NA GAEILGE	
CO. BOARD DELEGATE	Louis Carty
REGISTRAR	Deirdre Gillen
LADIES CHAIRPERSON	Liz Coyle
LADIES SECRETARY	Hannah Clohessy
COMMUNITY OFFICER	
SCHOOLS LIAISON OFFICER	Michael Hannon
COACHING OFFICER	Fintan Mc Gowan
INSURANCE OFFICER	Tom Murray
PITCH COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON	John Cryan
HEALTHY CLUB CHAIRPERSON	
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON	
ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION OFFICER	Ross Donovan
CHILDREN'S OFFICER	Edel Mc Nulty
VICE-CHILDREN'S OFFICER	Deirdre Gillen
BORD NA NÓG CHAIRPERSON	Niall Mc Gill
BORD NA NÓG SECRETARY	Aiden Ward

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Aisling Stephenson, Barry Cryan, Brendan Mc Hugh, Colm Duffy, Damien Mc Govern, Deirdre Gillen, Des Horan, Edel Mc Nulty, Fintan Mc Gowan, Jimmy Casey, John Cryan, John Lynch, Kevin Cryan, Kieran Mc Gill, Liz Coyle, Louis Carty, Padraic Duffy, Padraig Henry, Paul Dwyer, Paul Judge, Ronan Higgins, Ross Donovan, Sean Higgins, Shane O'Connor, Shaun Dorrian, Teresa Horan, Thomas Cryan, Tom Murray.

TEAM MANAGEMENT 2016

<u><i>MEN / BOYS</i></u>	
Senior	Shane King, Paul Duignan & Paul Judge
Junior	Aiden Ward, Patrick Henry, Mikey Grady & Tom O'Connor
U-18	Michael Hannon, Ross Donovan, Raymond Hannon & Anthony Breheny
U-16	Shaun Dorrian, Paul Dwyer, Neil Molloy, & Sean Scott
U-14	John Bruen & Peter Walsh
U-13 Féile	John Bruen, Peter Walsh, Ronan Higgins & George Garvey
U-12	Ronan Higgins, George Garvey, Chris Hannon, Ciarán Hannon, John Lynch, Mikey Grady, Ciarán McGovern, Ross Donovan
U-10, U-8, U-6	Fintan Mc Gowan, Paul Taylor, Con Murray, Dawn Mc Gowan, Adrian Cook, Ann Marie Healy, Nigel Clancy, Frances Candon, Shane Duggan, Ailish Duggan
First Aid / Physio	Des Horan, Shane Gallagher

<u><i>GIRLS / LADIES</i></u>	
U-10	John O'Neill, Linda Kiernan & Niamh Lillie
U-12	Martina Clohessy, Kerrie Scanlon, Benny Connolly & Edel McNulty
U-14	Patricia McDonagh, Aoife Gallagher, Dawn McGowan & Fintan McGowan
U-16	Padraig Henry, Liz Rafferty, Therese Conlon & Edel McNulty
U-18	Martina Clohessy, Edel McNulty & Patricia McDonagh
Senior	Paul Judge & Eamonn Clarke

Team Photos

U14 Boys – ‘B1’ Championship Winners



Our U16 Double-Double winning Captains 2015 & 2016



U16 Boys – ‘A1’ Championship Winners



U16 Boys – Division 1 Winners

