

## **Secretary's Report on the Activities of Eastern Harps GAA Club for the year 2024**

A Cathaoirleach agus a dhaoine uaisle, tá fáilte romhaibh go léir chuig ár gCruinniú Ginearálta Bliantúil don bhliain 2024.

Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you to Eastern Harps GAA Club's AGM for the year 2024.

2024 was another very successful year for the club on and off the pitch. Our underage teams continued to be very competitive at all levels, winning numerous titles over the course of the year. We also continued to invest in the development of our players through coaching and games. It was also a busy year off the pitch, with our Camino returning again among many other initiatives. I intend to cover as much as possible in the following pages. Starting with events on the pitch, it was a very successful season for our senior men's team, with the team victorious in the Sligo Intermediate Football Championship at the end of October.

It was great to have the buzz of a championship final back around the club, and the flags and bunting were rolled out again in anticipation of this occasion. With the club area draped in white and green, we travelled to Markievicz Park on Sunday, the 27th of October, hopeful of securing the club's first men's championship title since last lifting the Owen B. Hunt crown in 2010.

Played in very rainy conditions, the game itself didn't quite allow for the most free-flowing of football. Owenmore Gaels were quickest out of the blocks, but once we took the lead, we weren't to be headed again. An opportunistic goal extended our grip on proceedings, and after soaking up a lot of pressure from our opponents in the second half, a quick counter attack led to our second goal of the day, sealing the win. This meant that it was the honour of team captain, Shawn O'Hara, to lift the Joe McMorrow Cup on behalf of the group, giving the club just their second ever intermediate championship and securing senior status again for 2025 after four years in the second tier.

This sparked great celebrations and excitement around the club. It was heartening to see such a big Eastern Harps crowd in Markievicz Park on the day, and in particular, so many of the club's younger members. Here's hoping that this win will help inspire a lot of these, much like previous championship wins helped to inspire many of our current senior players.

After a few days of deserved celebrations, the challenge of representing Sligo in the Connacht IFC started to refocus the minds. Melvin Gaels of Leitrim were to be our opponents in the quarter final which took place a fortnight after the county final. With the Leitrim side having home advantage, we made the trip to Ballinamore for this game. Our players came poised to put in a strong performance to back up their Sligo IFC success. A solid defensive effort laid the foundations on the day, and our lads managed to run out winners on a score line of 1-12 to 1-03 to earn their place in the Connacht semi-final against Elphin.

Hyde Park was the venue for this game on Saturday, the 16<sup>th</sup> of November. After a somewhat slow start, our lads played their way into the game, and we went in at the break a point to the good. However, Elphin took control of the game in the second half, and they went on to win in the end by two points on a score line of 0-09 to 0-07. It was to be Elphin's day, and this brought the curtain down on our senior team's year. While the result was disappointing, the lads gave a very good account of themselves, and it doesn't take away from what has been a very positive year for the team. As previously mentioned, the buzz and excitement that the championship win and subsequent provincial run has caused has been palpable. From having the privilege of being involved with this group for the last four years, I have seen first-hand the level of work and commitment the players

have put in. Year on year, players have come in from the underage ranks and contributed hugely to the strength of the panel. It has been written in these pages in the past that underage success is no guarantee of senior success, and there is no doubt that this remains to be the case. While the club has had a lot of underage success in recent years, it is crucial that the structures remain in place to ensure that young players are able to continually come through to the senior ranks, and that the club are able to provide opportunities for players to develop. No doubt that every effort will be made to ensure this is the case in the years to come, which will in turn hopefully continue to put our teams in the best possible position to compete.

After securing promotion back to Division 1 last year, the first target for our senior men's team this year was to consolidate this position. A tough start lay in store with a trip to North Sligo in round one to face St. Molaise Gaels, last year's championship finalists, on Saturday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of May. On a wet and windy evening, we lost by the minimum in a game where we were made to rue missed chances. Despite the loss, the performance was promising, suggesting that wins weren't far off. We claimed our first points with a solid victory over St. Mary's the following Friday, followed by wins over Coolera/Strandhill and Tubbercurry, which saw us climbing the table. However, two narrow home losses to Curry and Tourlestrane, along with a comprehensive defeat to Shamrock Gaels in Coola, put paid to any hopes of competing at the top. Going into our penultimate game against Carly/St. Joseph's, we knew a win would secure our spot in the division. A comfortable victory achieved this and allowed us to turn our focus to the championship. In our final league game, we faced the team we would play in our championship opener two weeks later in Coolaney/Mullinabreena. With both teams' league fates decided, we ultimately lost out in a tight, entertaining game, wrapping up our league campaign.

After a two-week break, the championship campaign kicked off on Saturday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, where we renewed acquaintances with Coolaney/Mullinabreena in Kilcoyne Park. In a tough battle, we showed enough quality to come away with a deserved two-point win, giving us the best possible start. There was a three-week break before our second round game against St. Farnan's. Played in Castleconnor on a blustery Sunday evening, we did enough to win a low-scoring game by a five-point margin. The following Sunday, we knew a win over Enniscrone/Kilglass would guarantee us progression as group winners with a game to spare. However, in a below-par performance on the day, we could never quite get to the pitch of the game, and the West Sligo team were deserved one-point victors.

In our final group game against St. Patrick's in Bunninadden two weeks later, a more consistent performance was needed in order to keep our championship ambitions on track. With the jeopardy of a knockout feel to this game giving us the impetus, we were always largely in control, going on to win by four points in the end and ensuring our progression to the semi-finals as group winners.

Geevagh were our opponents in the semi-final, and with the two previous championship meetings between these teams resulting in draws, a close game was expected by many. As it turned out, this was to be the case once again. Played in near-perfect conditions at Markievicz Park, this game was a thrilling encounter which, for the neutrals, had a bit of everything. After conceding a very early goal, our lads recovered well and, once settled, began to largely control proceedings. However, missed chances meant we could never fully shake off a resilient Geevagh side, and the game headed for extra time. With tired bodies and minds starting to take a toll, this period of play saw no shortage of drama at both ends of the pitch. Going into the final moments, we found ourselves a point down and in need of an equaliser—an unwelcome sense of déjà vu from this stage of last season's championship. Thankfully, composure and cool heads prevailed. In a crucial phase of play, our players managed to launch a final attack that led to a free kick and the resulting equalizer. It's an accepted truth in football that any team is only as strong as its squad, so it was fitting that some of our substitutes—as well as some of the youngest members of our panel—were instrumental in this

passage of play. In a game we felt we should have won, we were ultimately relieved to get a chance to make amends in a replay the following Saturday.

Under the lights in Tourlestrane, our lads knew that if they were more efficient on the scoreboard, they could put the drawn game to bed and earn their place in the final. The replay ultimately proved to be a less dramatic affair, and a two goal salvo in the first half gave us a lead that we were not to relinquish, going on to win in the end on a score line of 2-06 to 0-08 and setting up the final with Owenmore Gaels.

I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the players for all their efforts over the course of the campaign. Also, great credit to the management team of Mikey O'Grady, Gary Ward and Errol Flynn, led by bainisteoir Ross Donovan. Thanks also to David Sheppard for looking after the S&C for all our adult teams.

Unfortunately, 2024 was another challenging year for our senior ladies' team. The unavailability of some players due to injury and other factors hampered this team's playing season again. However, challenges are always part of sport, and there is no doubt that this team can bounce back and have more positive campaigns in the future.

Our senior ladies' playing season got off to a competitive start on Sunday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, with a trip to Rivertown to face Shamrock Gaels in the All Club League. This competition was played concurrently with the team's Division 1 campaign. This ended in defeat, as Shamrock Gaels went on to get the win. With St. Michael's giving us a walkover in round two of this competition, the girls welcomed Geevagh to Keash for round three. A loss in this game meant that our ladies headed for the shield final of this competition. Here, our girls played St. Farnan's on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June. In a tight game, we just came up short, with St. Farnan's going on to win in the end by two points on a score line of 2-16 to 3-05.

In round one of the league, away to Drumcliffe/Rosses Point, the girls put in a great performance but were unlucky not to come away with the two points, as the home side scored late on to earn a draw. Unfortunately, this team were unable to build on this, and defeats to St. Mary's, Eoghan Rua, St. Nathy's and Tourlestrane saw us relegated to Division 2 for next year at the conclusion of the competition.

Attentions then turned to the Intermediate Championship where Geevagh, CT Gaels and Drumcliffe/Rosses Point were our opponents. Two narrow defeats to Geevagh and CT left this team needing a win in their last group game against Drumcliffe to have a chance at progressing. However, Drumcliffe were too strong on the day in Keash, and this drew the ladies' season to a close.

While this was not what the players and management team wished for the year, there were of course positives to take. Sometimes we learn more from challenging times, and the way the girls battled all season will no doubt stand to them as they enter into next year and beyond.

There was great excitement off the pitch as well when one of our senior ladies' players, Megan McCormack, represented Sligo in the International Rose of Tralee Festival in August. With an army of club members cheering her on, it was a great moment to see Megan take to the stage in The Dome, representing herself, her family, and indeed the club so well.

At the end of the year, the management team of Stephen Powell, Paul Judge, Kevin Gallagher and Deirdre Gillen took the decision to step away. I wish to thank Stephen and his team sincerely for their work this year and over the last few years with this team. I think I speak for everyone when I say that

I hope to see them bringing their experience and expertise to Eastern Harps teams again in the future.

Our junior men's fortunes in Division 3 were mixed. The campaign started on Sunday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, with a comprehensive loss at home to St. Molaise Gaels in round one. What followed this was probably the team's best period of the season, where they went on win three on the bounce: notably winning away to St. John's and St. Michael's, as well as getting the better of St. Mary's in Keash. A somewhat flat performance at home to Drumcliffe on a warm June Saturday evening saw us fall to defeat in round five. In round six we travelled to the eventual league winners, Cloonacool, on a fine Sunday morning. Despite the concession of two early goals, we played with good credit to keep this game competitive right to the end but were just unable to claw back the deficit. A commanding win at home to St. Pat's in round 8 was then followed by a comprehensive away defeat to Shamrock Gaels on a wet Sunday afternoon in our final game.

For the Junior A Championship, we were drawn in the same group as the eventual finalists, Ballymote and Cloonacool, as well as Drumcliffe/Rosses Point. With a disappointing defeat to Drumcliffe in round one, it left us with an uphill battle in the group. The next game was against eventual winners, Ballymote. Player under lights in Kilcoyne Park on a Saturday evening, this game had a real championship intensity to it. Our team put in a huge effort in the game, but Ballymote just edged it over the course of the hour, going on to win in the end by four points. Going into our last group game against Cloonacool in Scarden, we knew that despite two losses we still had a mathematical chance of making the knockout stage if we could manage a win and if other results went our way. However, we could never get to level of our opponents on the evening, and they ran out commanding winners. This game marked the end of this team's year, as with no relegation from Junior A this year, we avoided going into a relegation playoff.

While this was a disappointing conclusion to the season, there were some positives to take from the year. A number of players who stepped up from U17 got their first taste of adult football playing for this team, and this was a launchpad for some to go on and play with the first team. At times throughout the year, the team showed the potential it has, with a blend of youth and experience. As these young players, guided by their more experienced team-mates, continue to develop, there are no doubts that our second team will continue to be very competitive into the future. As mentioned previously, having structures in place to ensure players continue to develop from underage to senior ranks is massively important, and our junior team is the main bridge between these stages.

Thanks to Shane Gallagher and his backroom team of Morgan McCormack, Des Horan and Patrick Gallagher for their efforts throughout the year, leaving no stone unturned in preparing the team. Also, a big thanks to Des who continued in his much-valued first aid role with our senior and junior teams.

Our junior ladies team competed in Division 4 this year. A win over Drumcliffe/Rosses Point and a draw with Tourlestrane saw this team enter the shield competition. Here, they saw off Curry in the semi-final before getting the better of CT Gaels in the final in Keash. Well done to the players and thanks to Dawn McGowan and Mathona Conheady for managing this team again this year.

### **Underage football**

With Sligo GAA making the decision to continue to organise underage boys' football in the odd age groups, the group that are most unlucky are perhaps the traditional minor grade of U18. However, in an attempt to provide additional football for his group, Sligo GAA organised an U18 league and championship at the beginning of the year, followed by an U17 competition later on.

For the league, county U17 and U20 players were not available to play with their clubs. This meant that we were without a few key players for this competition. However, this gave opportunities for other players to grasp. In a very competitive group, this team's record of two wins, a draw and a loss saw them finish in second place and qualify for a semi-final against St. Mary's. After a hard-fought draw in the group stage, this rematch promised to be another tough battle. However, our lads rose to the occasion, securing a more comfortable victory this time to set up a final clash with Drumcliffe/Rosses Point, who had been decisive winners in their earlier group phase encounter. Played in Markievicz Park in May, our lads showed their quality at key moments in the game to go on and win by three points in the end.

This team then turned their attentions to the championship, and with the return of players playing at county level, they had their sights set on capturing the Dr. Taheny Cup. Navigating the group stage unbeaten, they faced St. Mary's in the final which was held in Kilcoyne Park on the 9th of August. On the night, our lads delivered an outstanding display of football, emerging as worthy champions and adding the championship title to the league triumph they had secured earlier in the year. These have been a fantastic group of players as they have come up through the underage ranks, and it was fitting that Coiste na nÓg Chairperson, Seán Reynolds, paid tribute to them as he presented the cup to the joint captains, Jim Molloy and David Lyons.

While this group have made winning seem routine at times, their talent as a team is matched in spades by their attitude and work rate. The determination to keep striving has meant that they have always put themselves in the best possible position to succeed. Some of these players have already made the breakthrough at senior level with distinction this year, and I am confident that all these players will continue to develop and contribute to our club in the years to come. Great credit goes to their management team of Keith Carty, Ronan Higgins and Shaun Dorrian, who have guided these players every step of the way as they have come up through the grades.

With a quick turnaround after the U18 championship, the U17 "A" championship began in mid-August. A tough opener away to St. Molaise Gaels ended in a draw. From there, this team began to find their groove, and wins over Ballymote/Bunninadden, Drumcliffe/Rosses Point and St. Mary's saw the team finish top of the table and into the final. With Ballymote/Bunninadden coming through the semi-final, the decider was set again for Kilcoyne Park in Tubbercurry in late September. With a seven-point win, this group added another underage title to the club's collection, and they had the distinction of being the first group of players in the club's history to win back-to-back minor "A" titles.

With the county title in the bag, this team had a Connacht Championship campaign to look forward to. Played at the start of November, this group made the trip to Began where Glencar/Manorhamilton were their opponents in the semi-final. Unfortunately, the Leitrim side had the upper hand on the evening and were deserving winners – their forward unit in particular putting on a memorable display. This group can be very proud of their achievements, though. Overall it was a remarkable year for the club at U17 and U18 level. Well done to all the players and their coaches, Keith Carty, Shaun Dorrian, Ronan Higgins and Fintan McGowan. We look forward to seeing these players continue their development.

Our minor girls competed in the "B" championship which began at the end of July. Wins over Shamrock Gaels, Drumcliffe/Rosses Point and St. Nathy's saw this young team—which was bolstered by some U16s—finish second in the table and into the league final. Tourlestrane were the opponents for this game, which was played in Tubbercurry. After a heavy defeat when the sides met in the round-robin stage, our girls were far more competitive in the final, but despite their best efforts, they came up just short. Well done to the players, and thanks to Dawn and Mathona for coaching them.

U16 players are perhaps another unlucky group with boys' competitions structured at the odd age groups. Coming from U15, there is a considerable jump to playing U18 football. Therefore, a number of challenge matches were organised for this age group throughout the year. As well as this, the club organised an U16 blitz in June. This was a very enjoyable day, and there was some great football on display. Western Gaels, Ballaghaderreen and Swinford were the visiting teams. With Ballaghaderreen being the top team in the group stage, the Harps lads had their number in the final, winning the inaugural cup on home soil. Hopefully this can become an annual event for our club. Thanks to Fintan McGowan, Ronan Higgins and Brendan McHugh for their work in organising the blitz, and to all teams for their participation. Also, thanks to Stephen Keane and Gavin Gardiner for the officiating on the day. Thanks to Fintan McGowan and Adrian Cooke for their work with our U16 players this year.

Our U16 girls had a great year, and they ended with two trophies to show for their efforts. In Division 2 of the league, three wins and two losses saw the team finish in second place and qualify for a semi-final. Coming through this game against Tourlestrane, the girls then reversed the group stage form with St. Molaise Gaels in the final to capture the trophy and win promotion to Division 1. In the "A" championship, a narrow loss to St. Nathy's in the semi-final meant it was the shield final where this team's year would conclude. In the final in Tubbercurry in early October, the girls overcame Eoghan Rua in difficult conditions to add this to their league win. Well done to the players and their coaches, Katie McCoy and Niall Gardiner.

Our U15 boys' year started in April, and after finishing mid-table in the league, they overcame local rivals Ballymote/Bunninadden in the "B" shield final in mid-June. This set the team up well for what was to come in the championship. Losing just once in the round robin, the team headed into the cup knockout stages. With Calry/St. Joseph's and Ballymote/Bunninadden taken care of in the quarter-final and semi-final respectively, Curry awaited in the final in Bunninadden in mid-September. Here, our lads capped off their year in great style, with a good win bringing the "B" championship cup home to Keash. Well done to these players and their coaches, Marcus Jackson, Nigel Clancy, Pdraig O'Gara, Francis Candon and Pat Conheady.

The U14 girls had another successful year, which ended with them claiming the "B" championship shield. The girls were very competitive in the Division 2 league, finishing second and qualifying for a semi-final. However, they lost out to St. Mary's on this occasion. After the group phase in the "B" championship, where these players continued to develop their skills, the girls captured the shield by overcoming CT Gaels on a fine early September Saturday. Well done, girls, and thanks to their coaches, Linda Donovan, Katie Hannon and Riona Hannon.

We had two teams at U13 boys' level again this year, and both teams were very competitive in their competitions. In the league, the "C" team just came up short of making a semi-final on scoring difference. The "A" team had a great campaign that saw them capture the "A" league cup, defeating Drumcliffe/Rosses Point in the final in Bunninadden in June. Both teams continued their good form into their respective championships. The "C" lads headed for the plate competition where they were just edged out by Easkey in a high-scoring affair in the semi-final. The "A" team were looking to add the championship to their league win. After coming through the group, Drumcliffe were once again their opponents in the final, which was played in Scarden in mid-September. However, it was the North Sligo team's day on this occasion, winning by a single point. A great year of development for this group, though. Well done all and thanks to their coaches: George Garvey, Joe Tighe, Paul McGovern, Pdraig Phillips and Martin Doherty.

There were competitions for both U12 and U13 girls this year. Our U12 girls team played in the Go Games series, getting great opportunities to develop their skills and teamwork. For the U13

competition, our girls earned their place in the shield final where Coolera/Strandhill were their opponents. Played under the lights in Keash in mid-October, the girls just came up short by the smallest of margins. Lots to build on for the future, though, so well done all. Thanks to all the coaches involved at these levels: Monica Beirne, Sarah Gallagher, Michael Doddy and Niall Gardiner.

Last but not least, our club's underage academy, featuring our teams from U5 to U11, continues to go from strength to strength. Linda has provided a comprehensive report of these age groups in the AGM booklet, so I don't intend to cover it in as much detail here. The Saturday morning training sessions for these age groups have become a staple for our club in recent years, and these continued at pace this year. Starting in April and continuing through to September, all these age groups took to the field to develop their skills. On top of this, the U9s and U11s had extra sessions during the week with their coaches. There were lots of games throughout the year for these teams, also, and a number of young Eastern Harps players made their debuts in the white and green with the U7 teams. The development of these young players is the lifeblood of every club, so a massive thanks to all the coaches involved. As there are too many to name individually, please take this as a collective thanks. Linda has named all the coaches in her report.

The club invested in a Club Development Officer in conjunction with Connacht GAA once again this year. Senior player, Dylan Walsh, fulfilled this role with great distinction this year. In this role, Dylan visited all the schools in the club area from February to June for coaching sessions. He also attended the weekly underage academy sessions, coaching some of the club's youngest players, as well as delivering S&C sessions with some of our underage teams. In conjunction with Coaching Officer Linda Donovan, Dylan also helped to coordinate a very successful schools' blitz for all the schools in the club area in May. As well as this, we had camps during the Easter and Halloween holidays, as well as a summer camp in August. The kids at the Halloween camp enjoyed a special treat when senior players Caelan Hunt and captain Shawn O'Hara joined Dylan to showcase the recently won Joe McMorrough Cup. Hopefully, this would have been inspiring for many of our younger players as they begin their playing careers with Eastern Harps. Thanks to Dylan for all his work as CDO this year. The club is already making plans for the role for next year. Also, a big thanks to Linda for all her work in coordinating the club's coaching.

## **Development**

After some significant projects in recent years, the Development Committee turned their attentions to future projects this year. While no ground was broken, the committee had a very busy year, and combined grant applications have yielded almost €250k of grant aid. This will be used to carry out the many ambitious projects the committee have planned, which will hopefully be completed in the coming year.

Among the main projects in the proposed works will be a new spectator stand. Being able to provide adequate space and shelter for spectators at games has been a priority for a number of years since the construction of our new clubhouse. With other projects paving the way in the recent years, the committee are now in a position to deliver this project along with associated works. These include the installation of new dugouts, pitch realignment with additional remedial works, new goalposts and ball stops, and a new perimeter fence. A new egress to include a safer, one-way system is also in planning, as well as pedestrian access and lighting.

Another project proposed to take place is the construction of a walkway around the perimeter of the club's grounds. This will provide an excellent recreational facility, which will further help the club to meet the needs of the wider community in line with the aims of the Healthy Club committee. As announced at last year's AGM, the club finalised the purchase of 8.3 acres of land adjacent to the

pitch. It is hoped that this will be developed into a training pitch in the coming years. This will be of huge benefit to the club, future proofing it for the generations to come. It also has the added benefit of providing a larger perimeter for the proposed walkway, which will be delivered alongside it.

Overall, these plans will seek to put in place the best possible playing and viewing facilities, and ensure a safer and more accessible grounds for all, bringing our overall facility to a standard in line with our state-of-the-art clubhouse. 2025 promises to be a very busy year on the development side of the club. While this will bring challenges, they will be necessary ones in order to ensure that these projects are completed in the most time-efficient manner. In tandem with gains made on the pitch, the ongoing development works will ensure the future of our club will have the best possible facilities, and this is something which the Development Committee have worked tirelessly to provide. I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the committee of Cllr. Paul Taylor, Keith Carty and Ronan Higgins, led by their chairperson, Seán Scott, for all their ongoing work. The level of detail to which this committee works, as well as their expertise, cannot be overstated. With their track record of getting funding and delivering on projects, there is no doubt that these ambitious projects will come to fruition. Seán has outlined the ambitious plans the committee has, as well as the funding streams secured, in more detail in his report in the booklet.

I wish to thank everyone who supported the club in any way this year by supporting any of our fundraisers. Our 50/50 draw continues to be a great success. Coinciding with our senior men's success in the Intermediate Championship a few weeks ago, a jackpot of just over a thousand euro was given away to the lucky winner. With hampers and vouchers available throughout the year, there are many opportunities to win. Thank you to everyone for their continued support, and huge credit to the Finance Committee, Ronan Higgins, and Seamus Hannon for their efforts in running the draw each week.

Gurteen Bingo also remains to be a very steady fundraiser for our club. This bingo has become a ritual for many each Friday evening in Gurteen Hall, and it continues to grow from strength to strength. As well as raising money for the club, it provides a great social outlet for many in the locality and beyond. Huge credit goes to the committee, chaired by Deirdre Gillen, who put tremendous work into the organising of this excellent bingo.

Our club's Annual Members Draw continued again this year also. Taking place in the Mayfly in May, €22,000 was once again given out in prize money. Thanks to everyone for their continued support of this draw which is the main fundraiser for the club's day-to-day costs each year. Thanks also to John Murphy who was the independent observer on the day. If anyone would like to join next year's draw, get in contact with any of the club officers.

### **Healthy Club**

The hard-working Healthy Club committee were once again busy in 2024. The Camino returned again in April. Blessed with a lovely day, this was the most successful Camino to date. Once again, the sense of community and camaraderie on the day was palpable, as volunteers and walkers came together to make this such a positive and memorable event. This success is testament to the committee's dedication, establishing the Camino as a firm fixture on the calendar. Its growing reach was evident, with participants traveling from Europe, America, and across the country to experience the breath-taking scenery we are so fortunate to have on our doorstep.

The work of this committee didn't stop there, though, with their walks and fitness classes also continuing. Always looking to think outside the box, the committee introduced social dancing classes for the first time this year. Unfortunately, these had to be postponed due to the instructor sustaining



an injury. The committee have also been working hard on getting lights installed outside the club grounds to improve safety. For the recent intermediate final, they helped add to the excitement by working with the schools to print an invitation to the match for all the pupils in the area. Well done to this excellent committee, chaired again by Pdraig Henry, for all their work this year.

### **County Commitments**

Well done to all from our club who represented Sligo this year. In July, Sligo's minor girls made history by winning the county's first ever All-Ireland minor title when they beat Tyrone to win the "B" championship. This is a huge achievement, and the club was proud to have two of its members, Eimer Mitchell and Hazel Redican, on this team. Grace Carty was a member of the girls' U16 team, and Katelin Donovan and Ashling Cooke were part of the Sligo U14 girls' team. Cian Carty, Conor Walsh, Jamie McCoy and Marty Murray were part of the Sligo U20 men's team, and Noah Phillips, Alex Lillie and Aaron Healy were part of the U17 team. Ross Donovan was also involved again this year in the U20 men's management.

At committee level, Ronan Higgins sat on the Development Committee. Ciarán McGovern represented the club at County Board meetings.

### **Facilities**

As well as catering for all our own teams this year, we also hosted a raft of games across the year in both men's and ladies' competitions. With the aforementioned plans to further develop our pitch alongside our facilities in the coming year, the committee are continuing to strive to have the best possible playing facilities for our club. Thanks to the Facilities Committee which is chaired by Ronan Higgins for their ongoing work.

### **Kerry McKeon Competition**

The Kerry McKeon Literary Competition took place again this year in the last term of the school year. I am delighted to say that it was very well supported across all the primary schools in the club's area. The standard of entries was very high, and the adjudicators had their work cut out to select winners from the different age groups for the essay title: "If I had one wish...".

The prize-giving took place on a beautiful Saturday morning in July, after the underage academy training. Thanks to all the children who submitted entries, and to the schools for their help and encouragement. It was great to have PJ McKeon, as well as some members of the McKeon family, available for the prizegiving. Thanks to Mikey O'Grady for his work in organising this competition.

### **Scór**

Well done to Brendan McHugh, Seamus Hannon, John O'Neill and Gerry Snee who represented the club in Scór Sinsir which was held in Carraroe in March. The lads went on to win the quiz on the day and earned themselves another day out to represent Sligo at Connacht Scór a few weeks later. Unfortunately, they were unable to progress any further. Here's hoping we can go a step further next year! If anyone is interested in getting involved in Scór, please let me know.

Sarah Snee also represented the club in the solo singing category. After going on to Connacht last year, she just came up short in the county final this year. Sarah also gave a great rendition of Amhrán na bhFiann before this year's senior men's county final.

Well done to all for representing the club at what is always an enjoyable event. If anyone would like to find out more about Scór, at adult or underage level, please get in touch.

### **Referees**

Well done to Stephen Keane, who joined Gavin Gardiner, Tom O'Connor and Ciarán McGovern as active referees from the club this year. It is great to see the club contributing so richly to the officiating in the county. If anyone else would like to train as a referee, get in touch with one of the club officers for more information.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the club's Executive Committee for their work this year. Thanks to Paul Judge for his assistance this year as Assistant Secretary. Go raibh a maith agat, a Phóil. Thanks also to Carmel Taheny for her hard work in compiling our AGM booklet again this year. Sincere thanks to all the club's sponsors for their continued support of the club.

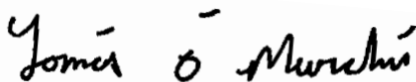
On behalf of the club, I offer congratulations to all who got married, engaged and those who had new additions to the family in 2024. I would also like to offer sincere condolences to all those who suffered bereavements during the year.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our Chairperson, Seamus Hannon, who is stepping down from the role this year after completing his five-year term. Since I came on board as Secretary four year ago, it has been a privilege to work alongside Seamus. His expertise and steady hand means that he leaves a great legacy as Chairperson. I think I speak for everyone when I say that I am glad that Seamus will continue to contribute to the club in his new role as Development Chairperson. Well done on your term, Seamus! Also, best wishes to Seán Scott who on his nomination to take over the role. Seán's work in the development side of the club speaks for itself, and there is no doubt the role of Chairperson is in extremely safe hands. I look forward to working with Seán for the year ahead.

I sincerely apologise if there are any errors or omissions in this report. This report is submitted for ratification at this year's AGM.

Here's to continued success for our club next year.

Is mise le meas,

Handwritten signature of Tomás Ó Murchú in black ink.

Rúnaí