



KILMEENA G.A.A. CLUB

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2020 | VOLUME 7 | ISSUE 1



**A YEAR OF
CHALLENGE,
HOPE...**

**...AND
CRAIC!**



Chairman's Address John McDonald



I want to start by thanking the Newsletter team for their tremendous work on the club's annual Newsletter. Since its inception seven years ago, this publication has been a marvellous success story of which the club is immensely proud.

Every year brings with it changes and new challenges, but I do not think that this time last year, anyone could have predicted what was to unfold and how our lives and sport would be impacted. Our games were suspended, and club grounds and facilities were forced to close. Things were bleak during the period through April and into May, and it looked for a time that there might be no games for the 2020 season. However, by early June we slowly began to see green shoots with the announcement from Croke Park of a 'return to play' roadmap.

As you will see from match reports later on in the Newsletter, our underage remains vibrant. We had over 110 children compete in the ever-popular Kellogg's GAA Cúl camp in August. Our U14 boys reached the final of the West B division and were narrowly beaten by a good Balla team, while our other teams all continued to show improvements. It is important to recognise and say thank you to the underage management and coaches. It is pleasing to see the hard work, commitment and dedication you have, and you deserve the full support and encouragement of the club.

Thank you to the Ladies' club for continuing to promote and develop ladies' football in our club and community. It is great to see our girls get the opportunity and encouragement to play football and become more active. As the "20x20.i.e." women in sport initiative say, "If she can't see it she can't be it". I would caution, though, that we should not get complacent about the underage setup and that new parents are encouraged to get involved in the coaching at this level. In particular, we need more women involved in the coaching of our girl's teams. We need to promote our club and identify and introduce new families in the community to Kilmeena GAA.

For the men's Junior team there was no County League. The team competed in the Michael Walsh League, but additional restrictions imposed by the Government and Croke Park at the end of October, prompted the cancellation of the competition.

In October, the team reached the final of the Junior Championship in McHale Park. Unfortunately, on this occasion it was not to be, losing out to Kilmaine by the narrowest of margins. However, they went on a few weeks later, ending the season by winning the Cusack cup for the third year running, in one of the best displays of football produced by this team when they beat Achill in the final played in Islandeady. I do not doubt that with continued determination and focus from the players, and support from within the club, that a County Junior title and promotion into the Intermediate ranks is not far away. This match concluded the season for the team and that of the outgoing management team of John Reilly, Darren Madden and Davy Feehan. On behalf of the club, I would like to thank each of them for their hard work, effort and commitment over the past three years. By now you will be aware the club Executive has appointed a new Senior team management of John Reilly as manager, with a backroom team of Eoin Sweeney, John Doherty and Peter Carney for a three-year term and I wish them the best of luck in their roles.

Our main playing pitch has now been drained, levelled and reseeded, with nearly 13kms of drains laid underneath the surface, and the benefits should last a lifetime. With an improved playing surface, there will be a significant increase in the availability of the pitch during poor weather, especially at the start and end of the season. To finance the development, the recently formed club "Finance Committee" launched the "Ball on the Wall" fundraiser.

To fundraise for the development, the finance committee launched "Ball on the Wall". This initiative allows for the name of an individual, a family or a loved one, to be inscribed on a granite ball to be permanently displayed on the wall of the stand. I am pleased to say that support for this fundraiser has been positive, and the first pieces of granite will be erected shortly. Thank you to everyone who has kindly donated so far. There are still opportunities to subscribe, and anyone who would like to do so can contact a member of the Finance committee. This enterprise is an investment in the future of the club and that of our children and grandchildren.

Thank you to Councillors John O'Malley and Brendan Mulroy whom both contributed €5,000 and to Christy Hyland who contributed €2,000 to the club. Thank you also to Donal McIntyre for his continued sponsorship of our annual club newsletter.

Another development during the year was the movement online of our lotto draw, which may now be played within the club's website. A letterbox and lotto envelope dispenser has been installed at the side of the clubhouse porch for anyone who still likes the traditional method. Thanks to all who support our lotto and to those people, at home and abroad, who continue to support our club financially or in any other way.

One of the great positives to come out of COVID-19 was the club match-day radio, 'KGAA'. Thank you to all involved and the excitement you brought into the homes of our members far and near. I hope to see this exciting addition to the club grow and flourish into the future. It has also been great to see a new dynamic, "Healthy Club" committee set up and never more important to focus in on the physical and mental wellbeing of our community. The "Healthy Club" committee comprises of Noreen Johnston, Julie Moore, Mark Ryan and Noleen Coughlan. Watch out for more information on social media as plans are well underway to see the launch of the club 'No Smoking' policy and an 'Operation Transformation' event along with information around our "Wellbeing and Mental Health".

We held a successful AGM on Sunday 6th December, albeit from our sitting rooms and kitchen tables, as this year the AGM took place online. Thank you to all who attended and took on the roles to administer and guide our club for the coming season

Thank you to all those in the club who helped out in any way during the year. No matter how small a job may seem, it is significant and makes our club a stronger and more enjoyable place for all.

On behalf of the club, I wish to extend my deepest sympathy to club members and those in the wider community who lost loved ones over the past year, in particular, I would like to remember club stalwarts, Jim Browne and John Moran who both passed away recently. These men gave so much during their involvement, and the club is a better place because of them. May they all rest in peace. I would also like to wish anybody that is sick in our parish at the moment a speedy recovery.

As another year draws to a close, I would like to wish all our members, players, supporters, sponsors and friends at home and abroad, a very happy and peaceful Christmas with health and best wishes for the New Year.

We look forward to another exciting season for Cill Mhíodhna in 2021.

Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Daoibh.

PRO Overview

Sean Barrett, PRO, Kilmeena GAA Club



In a year which was dictated by Coronavirus, things on the media side of the club still kept plugging away. As has been said, on numerous occasions, 2020 was a year like no other. However, we did get an opportunity to play some football this summer.

The year began, in January, with a workshop in McHale Park where club officers attended to upskill and review feedback from other clubs on how they run their clubs. The Communication Committee chairperson, Martin McIntyre, and I participated in the PRO workshop. A slide show presentation demonstrated how to best network with other clubs within the county. We also gathered some useful tips and ideas that we could bring to the club's media pages. The most salient idea undertaken by some clubs was the audio commentary of games that reached out to their members all around the globe.

During the first lockdown, when football was not on the cards, we had a "throwback Thursday" picture each week of memories from the past, which we posted on all the club's media platforms for almost 8-10 weeks. We also added some entertainment with the senior players participating in quick fire questions like they have in the Mayo News.

Football returned in July, and it was great to see the pitch busy again with all the age groups. In this month the club also launched the online lotto which is streamed live on the Facebook page every Thursday at 10 pm. The lotto provides vital income for the day-to-day running of the club, so please support when and if you can.

Credit must go to the KGAA Radio team who put in Trojan work in getting the audio commentary into production for the Junior Championship games, especially at a time when games were played behind closed doors. Hopefully, the radio broadcasts will continue in 2021.

In conclusion, our social media front has grown and developed year-on-year. In this regard, we can compete with the best in the county. A special thanks to all who helped in getting the club through a challenging year.

Make sure to keep an eye on the social media platforms and the website for the latest news and fixtures and events within the club. Onwards and upwards!



Kilmeena, Westport F28 PR94. Telephone (098) 41768

PROUD SPONSORS OF KILMEENA GAA CLUB

ELECTED CLUB OFFICERS FOR 2021

Club Patron: Fr. Jim Walsh
President: Willie Keaveney
Vice President: Joe Madden
Chairman: John McDonald
Vice Chairman: Damien Hughes
Secretary: Mary Slattery
Assistant Secretary: Majella McGonagle
Treasurer: Padraic Moore
Assistant Treasurer: T.B.D.
PRO: Sean Barrett
Registrar/Data Protection Officer: Damian Hughes
Coaching Officer: John Reilly
Safety Officer: Michael O'Grady
County Board Delegate: Kevin Barrett
West Board Delegate: Kevin Barrett
Scór Officer: Brian Lennon
Irish Language Officer: Máire Uí Riain
Development Officer: Willie Keaveney
Children's Officers: Majella O'Malley
Fixtures Secretary: Darren Madden
Healthy Club Officer: Noreen Johnston

ELECTED BORD NA NÓG OFFICERS FOR 2021

Chairman: Patrick Golden
Vice-Chairman: Pete Mortimer
Secretary: Mairead Durkan
Assistant Secretary: Barry Murphy
LGFA Registrar: Davina Carney
LGFA Assistant Registrar: Maura Hastings
LGFA PRO: Sarah Hogan
LGFA County Board Delegates: John McDonald, Trish Hogan
Bord na nÓg County Board Delegate: Leonie Martin



NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION TEAM:

John McDonald, Mairead Durkan, Noleen Coughlan, Majella O'Malley, Mel King, Ollie Mulchrone, Trish Hogan, Barry Murphy and Martin McIntyre.

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Donal McIntyre, New York. www.wesbuilt.com.

U6 & U8 Girls **Maureen Durkan**

The 2020 season started a little later than planned (22nd July) this year because of Covid-19 restrictions. Only eight girls were registered at this age group, but with a lot of detective work and scouting we ended up with 23 girls by the last week of the season. We worked on the basic skills with all our U6 girls as they were all new to the sport. There is some serious talent amongst these girls. Watch this space! The U6 girls played their first-ever match against Burrishoole at home on Sun 13th September. They really enjoyed getting to wear the jersey for the first time. We worked on increasing our

level of skills with our U8 girls. We arranged three games for them during our shortened season. They played Louisburgh away and played Islandeady both at home and away. All three games were highly competitive with our girls showing some brilliant skill and team performances.

On behalf of Lesley, Trish, Mags, Sinead and myself we wish our older girls, Aoife, Éabha F, Éabha G, Kate, Sheena, Lauren and Holly, all the best with U10s next year and we look forward to welcoming new and existing players to U6 and U8 squads in 2021.



U6 Girls: Back row, left to right: Cliodhna Ryder, Annie Mullarkey, Emma Mongey, Lily Sheridan, Front row, left to right: Aoibheann Hyland, Annie Cawley, Sadhbh Martin, Holly Hastings, Anna Browne. Absent from photo: Jessica Kelly.



U8 Girls: Back row, left to right: Millie Chambers, Ellen McDonagh, Aoife Durkan, Éabha Feehan, Lydia Ní Faolain, Grace Cunningham, Kate Cawley. Front row, left to right: Lauren Munroe, Jessica Kelly, Sheena Cawley, Rachel Feehan, Sadhbh McGawley, Eleanor Munroe. Absent from photo: Amy Joyce

U10 Girls **Mairead Durkan**

It was a year like no other! With Covid-19 restrictions tightening in springtime this year, we thought we would not have the opportunity to train at all this season. However, with considerable effort from club management and the many Covid Officers that stepped forward to help, we were in a position to get back to what we love doing on 15th July.

As we were directed by the GAA and LGFA guidelines this year, there were no blitzes permitted. So, unfortunately, the highlight of our season, The Paddy Golden U10 Blitz got the chop.

We were small in numbers again this year with twelve determined girls who braved some terrible weather conditions to train in the first few weeks.

We played our first game on 29th August at home against Islandeady, and our fixture games began on 5th September matched up with Westport, Castlebar, Louisburgh, Burrishoole and Breaffy. Unfortunately, with the GAA announcement of the suspension of all remaining games, we were unable to play our last two fixtures.

However, on a positive note, the girls played some lovely football throughout the season, and it was delightful to see how their skills progressed through the games.

We are grateful to senior girls Sarah and Roisín Hogan, who hosted a training workshop with the girls towards the end of the season. It was hugely beneficial and very enjoyable for them. We rounded up our season on 7th October with some games and bubbles!

Although the season was short, it was gratifying, with a bunch of players who got better and better as the season progressed. Please encourage the girls to practice their skills over the winter - it will significantly benefit those who are moving to U12s next year.

On behalf of myself, Trish, Bernie and Leonie, I would like to thank all those involved in training this year, including the two Covid Officers Aidan and Veronica who supported us at every training session.

I would also like to thank all the parents who co-operated fully with the extra Covid requirements this season as regulated by the Government and Croke Park.



U10 Girls, left to right: Charley Coyle, Emily Fahy, Emma Gannon, Cara Mongey, Katie Moran, Grainne Feehan, Cailín McPhillips, Aishling Lawless, Shauna Durkan, Molly Mulchrone, Melodie Corcoran and Ellie Mai Keane.

Neale was a physically stronger team, but we made a few positional switches, and we played very well in the second half. Our group also comprised of Westport B, Knockmore, Claremorris, Castlebar and Kilmore-moy. Unfortunately, due to added Covid-19 restrictions, we did not play Kilmore-moy. The girls worked hard and improved with every game.

The main thing that cost us in a couple of the games was the shortage of numbers, and we encourage any parent of girls this age group to get them out playing football. Not only will they get exercise and fun, but they will learn the skill of working together as part of a team and make friends for life. We are also very grateful to the U10s girls and their parents for coming to our assistance in making up numbers and attending our games. We appreciate the help of all the U12s parents and our Covid-19 Officers who helped us throughout the season. The girls all should be proud of themselves.

U12 Girls John O'Grady

The U12 ladies team enjoyed their football this year. We fulfilled all our fixtures and competed well in all the games. Without a shadow of a doubt, 2020 was a challenging year for children and sports due to the various restrictions and lockdowns. These U12 girls just took it in their stride. We had great fun and enjoyment both at training and at the various games.

We are delighted to be able to report that we have a number of up-and-coming players at this age grade, even though there is a shortage of U12 girls registered in our club currently.

Our first game of the season was against The Neale, and it proved to be a tough test for players and management alike. The

On behalf of myself, David and Caragh, sincere best wishes to the girls who are moving up to the U14 team for 2021. We are looking forward to having the remaining girls back next year, and hopefully, a few more will consider joining the group. Ag súil go mór leis an bhliain seo chugainn..



U12 Girls: Back row, left to right: David Ingham, Amelia Fahy, Mary Kate Lonergan, Keira Kenning, Eva Mulchrone, Catherine Lawless, Roisin Brady, Ellie Mai Keane, John O'Grady, Caragh Ryan.
Front row, left to right: Phoebe Russell, Melodie Corcoran, Katie Moran, Amy Mc Intyre Gibbons, Laura Ingham, Julie O'Grady, Grainne Feehan, Cara Mongey Leah Walsh.

U14 Girls *Maura Hastings*

2020 will forever be in our history as the year of Covid-19, but for the Killeena U14 girls and panel, it will not overshadow our football season and the memories that we made. Our season started on February 26th with an indoor strength and conditioning course under the guidance of Annette Kane Lonergan in the club gym. We were only three weeks into the programme when Covid-19 shut us down. From March 18th to the July 1st, training collectively was not permitted, but the girls did their best to keep fit and stay active at home while observing the recommended 2km radius.

Finally, we returned to the pitch on Wednesday, July 8th. It rained constantly for the evening, but the girls and trainers were just so glad to be there. Everyone was happy to enjoy the freedom of the football pitch and meeting their friends. We had five weeks until our first competitive game, so we trained twice a week, and six of our older girls helped out with the U16 team when they needed a few extra subs.

We were promoted to Division 2, which was a considerable jump from Division 4 in 2019. Our first outing to play The Neale was on Saturday, August 15th. With some players absent from the panel, we had to request a few of the U12 girls to assist in fielding a team. The Neale came out on top on this occasion. Further government restrictions placed a ban on spectators attending games allowing only one parent to accompany each player to the match. So we played at home to Carnacon on August 23rd in unusual settings. The girls were up for the challenge and clocked up some massive scores to secure a home victory. Two weeks later, on Saturday, September 5th, we welcomed Ballinrobe to St Brendan's Park. Weather conditions were difficult, and with night drawing in our girls put in an impressive team effort to claim a well-deserved victory. Our semi-final trip to Aughamore to play St. Mary's marked the end of the road for our girls in this year's competition. St Mary's were much stronger than us and sailed through to win the final.

We finished our season on the pitch with a challenge match against our neighbours Westport. This game was a thrilling encounter from start to finish. Westport claimed the win by the narrowest of margins. Our girls should not be disappointed with their performance, and the management was delighted to see how well they had progressed in the short but very active season. We relocated our training from the pitch to the Greenway on September 30th and hope to continue to work on our fitness levels over the coming months.

We wish to thank the U12 girls, especially Eva Mulchrone, Catherine Lawless and Laura Ingham and their management team who supported us during the year. Thank you to the U16 and minor teams and their management for agreeing to amalgamate for the Saturday morning training sessions. Thank you to our Covid Officers, Shona Hughes and Fiona Barrett. A very sincere thank you to the parents for meeting all the extra Covid demands this season, especially bringing your daughters to our away from home matches. Thanks also to the girls for their commitment and dedication to their team and club. We all hope that 2021 will be better for all involved with the black and white.

Killeena 2020 U14 Panel: Abbie Quinn, Áine Gallagher, Amy Carney, Aoife Gannon, Aoife Walshe, Chloe McGlynn, Ciara Kelly, Éabha Carney, Emma Barrett, Katie Moran, Kelsey O'Donnell, Laura O'Grady, Lisa Hastings, Moira Fernandez Walshe, Niamh McNamara, Róisín Feehan, Ruby Lane, Siófra Hughes

Management: Davina Carney, Maura Hastings, Paul Moran, Luanne O'Donnell.



U14 Girls: Back row, left to right: Paul Moran, Maura Hastings, Katie Moran, Niamh McNamara, Emma Barrett, Aoife Gannon, Éabha Carney, Áine Gallagher, Amy Carney, Ciara Kelly, Ruby Lane, Chloe McGlynn, Davina Carney.

Front row, left to right: Kelsey O'Donnell, Siófra Hughes, Abbie Quinn, Laura O'Grady, Róisín Feehan, Laura Ingham, Eva Mulchrone, Lisa Hastings.



U16 Girls: Back row, left to right: Pete Mortimer, Hattie Cox, Ellen Lonergan, Aimee Ingham, Grace Gibbons, Aoife Gannon, Ellen O'Toole, Abby McGreal, Holly Barrett, Sarah Gillespie, Áine Regan, Sarah Hogan, and James Prenty.
Front row, left to right: Katie Moran, Lisa Hastings, Abbie Quinn, Orla McGlinchey, Mollie Keane, Emma Murray, Katie Jordan, Aisling Hoban, and Ava Prenty.

U16 Girls Pete Mortimer

Similar to other ladies' teams, our U16 panel commenced the year on 26th February with strength and conditioning sessions in the gym with Annette Lonergan. Unfortunately, just as we were settling in and developing fitness levels, our sessions had to be cut short due to Covid-19. However, determined to stay active, Annette kept the girls busy by assigning weekly workouts and updates which the girls eagerly applied to their training schedules.

Thankfully soon after the easing of restrictions, our season kicked off with an away challenge game to Kilmaine. The team panel consisted of twelve players on that wet and miserable evening. Undeterred, the girls put in a massive effort and reaped their rewards with a fine victory.

Our competitive season started with two hugely entertaining games, a narrow and painful defeat against St. Brigid's in the last minutes of the match, and a deserving

home victory against Belmullet. Playing at home to Westport in our third competitive game of the season, the girls displayed exceptional courage and drive to secure a worthy victory.

The girls reached the county semi-final against a strong Carnacon team, but it proved too much of a challenge for the Kilmeena girls. Notwithstanding, they fought courageously and with determination until the final whistle.

We finished the season along with our minor panel, celebrating a strange but memorable season with some enjoyable games, and afterwards with some tasty pizzas. There is no doubt that this panel, including some crucial U14 players, will come back better and stronger next season and hopefully be rewarded for their continued determination and efforts to improve as a team.

The list of our 2020 U16 registered players are as follows:

Áine Regan, Abby McGreal, Holly Barrett, Emma Murray, Mollie Keane, Sarah Gillespie, Aisling Hoban, Ellen Lonergan, Ava Prenty, Aimee Ingham, Ellen O'Toole, Grace Gibbons, Hattie Cox, Orla McGlinchey.

A sincere thanks to the U14 girls Katie Moran, Aoife Gannon, Katie Jordan, Éabha Carney, Abbie Quinn, Lisa Hastings and Chloe McGlynn and management for their support throughout the season. Thanks to all the girls for their efforts and commitment during the year. Thanks also to the parents for their continued support and help throughout the year. It was great to have so many parents travelling to support our away games. A massive thanks to Martin McIntyre, club photographer, for all the photos he captured throughout the season. Thanks to the Covid Officers Geraldine Gibbons, Elaine Gibbons and Catherine McGlinchey. Thanks to the management team of Sarah Hogan, Róisín Carney, James Prenty and Pete Mortimer.

Minor Ladies Pete Mortimer

Our Minor ladies began the year on February 26th with strength and conditioning sessions in the club gym with Annette Lonergan. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the sessions had to be cut short, but Annette kept everyone busy by forwarding weekly exercise workouts and updates. As the minor panel was somewhat lacking in numbers, we combined training with the U16 ladies.

Our first game of the season was against Balla at home. The Balla girls created their club's piece of history that evening by fielding a team in their first-ever competitive girls game at minor level. A few weeks later, following a titanic battle against The Neale, the girls finally came out on top, recording a great win. Our last two competitive league games were against very strong and well marshalled Tourmakeady and Claremorris sides. The Kilmeena girls determination against Tourmakeady saw them through to a semi-final against an impressive Claremorris team. Even though we eventually lost to a stronger team, great credit must be given to the ladies as they fought right up to the final whistle.

Our 2020 Minor registered players are Molly Moore, Shannon Bourke, Rachel Gibbons, Aoife Gibbons, Megan O' Malley, Megan Mulchrone, Laura Kelly, Aibhlin O'Flynn, Ciara Joyce, Keeley Hastings, Julia Szejner.

Thanks to all the girls for their dedication and commitment during the year. Thanks also to the parents for their support and help throughout the season. It was very encouraging to have so many parents travelling to away games. A massive thanks to Martin McIntyre for the photos throughout the season. Thanks also to Annette Lonergan for organising exercise classes at the start of the year. A big thanks to our teams Covid supervisors Geraldine Gibbons, Elaine Gibbons and Catherine McGlinchey. Thanks to the management team of Sarah Hogan, Róisín Carney, James Prenty and Pete Mortimer.



Minor Ladies: Back row, left to right: Pete Mortimer, Róisín Carney, Megan O'Malley, Aine Regan, Rachel Gibbons, Aoife Gibbons, Ellen O'Toole, Abby McGreal, Keeley Hastings, Holly Barrett, Shannon Bourke, and Sarah Hogan.

Front row, left to right: Megan Mulchrone, Aibhlin O'Flynn, Ciara Joyce, Laura Kelly, Ava Prenty, Hattie Cox, Orla McGlinchey, Molly Moore, and Grace Gibbons.

U6 Boys Sean Kelly

The U6 boys kicked off their 2020 training in early July. There were several familiar faces following on from the 2019 season, and we were delighted to welcome a new cohort of young footballers from all over the area to start their Kilmeena footballing journey.

We organised the training sessions to introduce the necessary skills of the game such as kicking, catching, hand pass, toe tap, bounce, pick up and tackling. The emphasis was very much on having fun, and allowing every player to get as many touches of the ball as possible during the sessions. As we progressed through the skills, it was great to see the players enjoying themselves while gaining confidence on the ball. We held a number of entertaining mini-games to execute the skills previously practised. These were commonly high scoring affairs with most games ending in the "inevitable" draw. Our season concluded with a short "in-house" match followed by some treats and a medal presentation by senior club player Jack Carney.

The coaches Adrian Cawley, Mel King, Sean Kelly and Deirdre Garvin, would like to thank the boys and their parents for their continued support. We wish the best of luck to the older boys moving on to the U8 team, and we look forward to the return of the younger boys and any new lads who wish to join Kilmeena GAA club in 2021.



U6 Boys Presentations with senior player Jack Carney

Back row, left to right: Sean Kelly, Zac Walsh, Matthew Gormonly, Ciaran Kelly, James Lawless, Jesse Lee Durcan, Michael Staunton, Kian McGlynn, Jack O'Malley, Jack Carney, Adrian Cawley.

Front row, left to right: Mel King, Aran Cawley, Callum Coughlan, Rowan Goggins, Josh Moran, Ruairi O'Malley, Aodan Gildea, Gary Feehan, Evan Gilgear, Deirdre Garvin



U8 Boys: Back row, left to right: Finn Sheridan, Oisín Martin, Cillian Gilgear, Zander Gibbons, Max Keane, Bobby Lane, Joe Durkan.
Front row, left to right: Charlie Walsh, Evan Ryder, Cody Coughlan, Ruairi Ryan, Jaye Joyce.
Absent from photo James Heanue and Brian Daly.



U8 Boys: Back row, left to right: Rory O'Donnell, James Hastings, Keegan Heritage, Tommy Cannon, Dylan Duffy, Jack Molloy.
Front row, left to right: Oran McManamon, Brendan Smyth, Patrick Scott, Caolan McLoughlin, Theo Bronkal.
Absent from photo Luke Molloy.

U10 Boys Pat Coughlan

With a panel of twenty-three, the U10 boys started back training on the 18th July

2020. Due to the late start in the season, and the possibility for more Covid-19



U10 Boys: Back row, left to right: Kieran Hastings, Rian McManamon, Charlie McLoughlin, Michael Gannon, Oisín Ryan, Regan Fitzsimons.
Front row, left to right: Paul Joyce, Jacob Chambers, Eoghan Smyth, Sam McDonnell. Absent from photo: Alex Fahy, Ruairi Browne and Ryan Cannon.

U8 Boys Paul Ryan

Our 2020 season started on Thursday, July 16th 2020, with a panel of 26 boys. We were fortunate to be able to take part in three challenge games during the season, considering the imposed Covid-19 restrictions. During these matches, the boys competed well with each player improving more and more each week. This progress was due to the combination of training and games.

As a group, we concentrated a lot on the fundamental skills needed to play Gaelic football, i.e. pick up, fist pass, solo, hop, passing and encouraging the boys to play as part of a team rather than as individuals. Our season was very short due to Covid-19, but all of the coaches could see considerable improvements in the boys' skills throughout the short season.

Over the next few months, I would ask you all to keep encouraging your kids to play ball and exercise as often as possible.

I want to extend a big thanks to, all the parents, also our U8 Covid-19 Officers Niamh and Kristian, and last but not least, to the coaches Fintan Durkan, Declan Ryan, Liam Gilgear, Brian McManamon, Sean Kenning, and Paul Ryan.

restrictions, we decided the team should train on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings thus ensuring that each player gained as much experience out of the short season as possible. It was also to assist them in building upon their skills, including match practice. We had excellent attendances on both days for training that was very impressive and encouraging from a coaching point of view. The level of commitment, passion and dedication from this bunch of young lads showed throughout our short season as they improved significantly in all areas of the game.

Throughout the season we played a number of challenge games against Burrishoole, Westport A, Westport B and Islandeady. The boys performed well on the pitch and confidently gelled as a team. We entered a blitz competition staged in Balla which unfortunately was cut short due to Covid-19 restrictions allowing for only one match to be played against a strong Balla side.



U10 Boys: Back row, left to right: Jason Lawless, Darragh Mulchrone, Luke O'Donnell, Finn Mulchrone, Alan Heanue, Billy Lane.
Front row, left to right: Judah Fitzsimons, Donnachta McCauley, Noah Coughlan, Liam Quinn, Lorcan Lane.
Absent from photo: Jack Ivin.

The U10 boys were really looking forward to the challenge of participating in the winter league and were disappointed to hear of the cancellation due to the Covid-19 restrictions. It has proved to be a challenging year for all sports due to the Coronavirus, but the future of Kilmeeena GAA football team is bright when you look at our U10 players coming through the club's underage structure.

We had a presentation of O'Neills footballs for all the boys to show our appreciation for their hard work and dedication at training. We are hoping this will encourage the boys to practice their skills throughout the winter months.

I want to say a sincere thank you to Kieran Hastings, Kevin Lawless, Chris McCauley and Liam McDonnell for their assistance in coaching the team. Also, to Aileen McNamara and Jamie Browne for carrying out the Covid-19 Officer duties, and to the parents for ensuring your children arrived at training and matches.

We finished our season with twenty-four U10 players. We look forward to building upon the skills from this year come next season. Keep practising, keep kicking with both feet and keep running for fitness.



U12 Boys: Back row, left to right: Alan Mortimer, Tiernan Ahern, Tom Cox, Sean Keane, Tadhg Daly, Robbie Murphy, Jamie Durkan.
Front row, left to right: Kyle Mulchrone, Cian Moran, Shane Durkan, Kevin Hastings, Cormac Slattery, Felix Zeray, Eoghan Cannon.
Missing from photo: Adam Moran, Alan Gannon, Jason Feehan, Dara McDonnell, Sean Kilcoyne, Logan Heraty.

U12 Boys Barry Murphy

As for all teams in our club, 2020 was a bizarre year for our U12s. Having emerged from the Covid-19 lockdown, we eventually held our first training session of 2020 on Thursday, 23rd July, four months later than usual, with a squad of twenty players. The GAA Covid-19 requirements for the sanitising of hands and equipment, pre-filling of health questionnaires before every training session, created a surreal atmosphere to the season.

Two days later we played Westport in our first challenge match of the season in what turned out to be a very competitive fixture on a muddy pitch. Two more challenge matches followed, both away, to Louisburgh and Islandeady before the much-delayed U12 league finally got underway on Saturday, 12th September, away to Parke. In an exhilarating game in which Parke looked like they were going to run away with it, our boys fought back and in the end lost by just two points. We took great heart from our resilience, but in our next fixture, against Balla, we were brought back down to earth with a thrashing from Balla who, most people - including Balla themselves - felt they should have been in a higher division. Our lads dusted themselves down for our next fixture, away to Burrishoole, in what turned out to be a thrilling encounter. In a game of high emotion and physicality, just the one point settled it in favour of Burrishoole. Looking to salvage something from the league, our attention turned to what should have been the final fixture, a home game against Louisburgh. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the fixture wasn't completed and so our season ended in something of an anti-climax.

During the second lockdown, we decided to return to non-contact training on Sunday, 1st November. The intention was to keep the kids active with equal emphasis on fun and football and to prolong the activity as long as the kids were interested.

The boys' attitude during the stunted season was fantastic. The coaches, Mairead Durkan, Mike Slattery, Jim Cannon, Barry Murphy and Tomás Gill, were very encouraged by the improvement in their skills and commitment during training.

The coaches would like to thank all the parents and especially our Covid-19 Officers, Deirdre Gannon and Hugo Feehan, without whom no football could have taken place. In this restricted GAA season, the health, fitness and social interactions were probably more valuable to the kids than the football itself. Here's hoping that 2021 will bring some semblance of normality. We could all do with it!

U14 Boys Michael Gavin

We commenced our year back in December 2019 with indoor foundation-level strength and conditioning. The boys were very enthusiastic, and the sessions were well attended and progressing well before the Government imposed lockdown. The onset of the Covid-19 virus curtailed any further GAA activity from early March until well into the summer months.

We returned after the lifting of restrictions on 1st July and fitted in thirty training sessions between games. Following a run of ten games, we lost narrowly to Balla in the West Mayo B final.

We were happy with the progress made individually. Success at underage should not and is not measured by trophies but by individual progress, personal development and social inclusion. Many thanks to our hard-working coaches, Sean Barrett and Paraic Walsh and not forgetting our Covid officers Kathleen Murphy and Julie Moore.

The 2020 panel was Aodán Feehan, John Murphy, DJ Keane, Darragh O'Grady, Cormac O'Malley, Micheál Regan, Danny Cannon, Dean Staunton, Zac Zaray, Luke Durkan, Patrick McGlynn, Oran Grimley, Patrick Feehan, Declan Moore, Aaron Murray, Alex Kenning, Martynas Grimaila, Evan O'Grady, Arron Bourke, Alex Coyne. U13 Player of Year: Cormac O'Malley; U14 Player of Year: Luke Durkan.



U14 Boys: Back row, left to right: Michael Gavin (coach), DJ Keane, Cormac O'Malley, Martynas Grimaila, Aodán Feehan, Patrick McGlynn, Danny Cannon, Alex Kenning, Micheál Regan, Jamie Durkan, Patrick Feehan, Padraig Walsh (coach), Sean Barrett (coach)
Front row, left to right: John Murphy, Luke Durkan, Oran Grimley, Darragh O'Grady, Declan Moore, Aaron Bourke, Adam Moran, Dean Staunton, Aaron Murray, Evan O'Grady

U16 Boys Neil O'Donnell

2020 was the year, but Covid-19 ruled the roost! The U16 boys for 2020 commenced training on the 4th of February. We started with indoor training in the gym under the guidance of the club Coaching Officer, John Reilly. We trained twice a week, and the lads were working really well, when on the 12th of March after 13 sessions, the GAA directed that training should cease, and all GAA grounds required to close due to the outbreak of the Covid 19 virus. We thought at the time that the break would be brief, but the training didn't resume again until the 30th of June. Twenty-three players toggled out for this training session, leaving me in no doubt about this group's commitment. Our first game was a challenge against Burrishoole on the 22nd of July which we won easily.

A directive from the Mayo County Board decreed that competitions be confined to divisional competitions only, meaning we were now competing in the West Mayo A championship.

Our first game was on the 4th of August away to Castlebar Mitchels. Missing some key players through injury, we performed really well but lost on a scoreline of 2-4 to 6 points. Little did we realise that Castlebar would go on to be crowned County Champions later on in the year! Next up was a home game against Parke on the 11th of August. Both teams played attractive football from start to finish, and we won on a scoreline of 3 - 18 to 3 - 8. Next up we were away to Breaffy on the 18th of August, but with some key players unavailable, we lost by six

points in the end. Our next game was a local derby against our neighbours Westport on the 1st of September which we needed to win to qualify for West Mayo semi-finals. In front of a large crowd (with the social distancing directive observed of course) we played exceptionally well, and led a super game right up until injury time. In the end, Westport used their strong subs bench and kicked some outstanding scores to end up winning by one point on a scoreline of 18 points to 3 - 8. As we left the field, the referee declared that he would have willingly paid to see the game, such was the level of entertainment provided by both teams.

At the time, we assumed there would be more football with the U15 and U17 leagues about to commence, but alas,

Covid 19 imposed restrictions prevented these competitions from taking place. We continued to train until the end of October, and even though there were limited amounts of games, I'm convinced that these players have improved during the course of the year judging by their level of commitment and dedication during the season.

Parents should be incredibly proud of this

exceptional group of young players. With the right level of commitment, all these players should have very bright footballing futures ahead of them!

The U16 panel for 2020: Adam O'Grady, Brian Durcan, Colin Hastings, Conall Gill, Conor Feehan, Conor Kelly, Cormac Feehan, Ciaran Kilcoyne, Darragh Slattery, Donal Hastings, Evan O'Donnell, Finlay Gibbons,

Gavin Mulchrone, Harry Sheridan, Joseph O'Malley, Josh Browne, Jack Mulchrone, Jack O'Grady, Liam Moore, Sean Gallagher, Ryan Heanue, Stephen O'Grady, Rory McDaid and Rian Kilcoyne.

Management Team: Neil O'Donnell, Mark Ryan, Pat Mulchrone, Darragh Keaveney and Niall Feehan.



U16 Boys: Back row, left to right: Mark Ryan (Management), Finlay Gibbons, Rian Kilcoyne, Adam O'Grady, Sean Gallagher, Donal Hastings, Liam Moore, Josh Browne, Conor Feehan, Brian Durcan, Joseph O'Malley and Pat Mulchrone (Management).

Front Row Left to Right: Darragh Keaveney (Management) Darragh Slattery, Ciaran Kilcoyne, Stephen O'Grady, Keelan Corcoran, Jack O'Grady, Cormac Feehan, Colin Hastings, Evan O'Donnell, Jack Mulchrone and Neil O'Donnell (Management).

Missing from photo: Rory McDaid, Conal Gill, Conor Kelly and Gavin Mulchrone.

Minors Michael O'Grady

The Under 18 (Minors) began training in early February. Following the publication of the Bord na nÓg fixtures/divisions, Kilmeena was placed in Division 2 of the County League. With the exception of the five strongest Senior clubs, Division 2 would predominantly comprise teams from the other Senior clubs. So, this initial placement in Division 2 was a realistic level for the Kilmeena Minor group to play in.

And then along came Covid-19 in mid-March and all training and games ceased for a period of three and a half months. On the 1st July, training recommenced. However, in the intervening period, the structure of the league had been altered, and we found ourselves pitted in West Mayo - Division 1, alongside Westport, Castlebar, Ballintubber and Breaffy. In reality, this was not a level (Div 1) that we sought to be playing football at in 2020, and so our revised aim in the circumstances was to be as competitive as we could be.

Our first game was away to Castlebar Mitchels, and unfortunately, our aim (to be

competitive) went out the window from the second the referee threw in the ball. On an evening to forget, Kilmeena were no match for the Mitchels – they were simply on a different level to us. And there is no shame in that, especially when one notes that Mitchels went on to win all their games in the West Mayo league by comfortable margins and thereafter defeated Ballina Stephenites in the County Minor Final by a margin of 20 points.

Our second game was at home to Westport, and in a typical local derby type match, these young men really stood up in this one. We led by a point at half time, and the game was in the balance right up to the final quarter, when a rather dubious penalty was awarded to and converted by Westport. Westport then bagged another goal shortly after to put some daylight between the teams. Westport went on to close out this game with a win, but it was a gutsy performance by our lads.

Our third game – away to Ballintubber – produced a well-deserved win for Kilmeena.

This match was a tight contest with only a couple of points separating the sides throughout as each side held the lead at different stages. Importantly, Kilmeena got the upper hand when it counted most and were helped in no small way by a classy late goal from Ian Murphy, to seal the win. The evening in Clogher wasn't without misfortune when early in the second half a significant injury to Harry Sheridan – who before this was dominating at cornerback – resulted in Harry being stretchered off and taken by ambulance to Hospital. Thankfully, Harry continues to recover, and we look forward to see him play in the Kilmeena colours next season.

Our fourth (and final) game was at home to Breaffy. As with the Westport game, our lads gave a really good account of themselves here, and we were right in the game coming up to the final quarter. However, two separate injuries sustained by Kian Moore (early in the first half) and Robbie Staunton (in the second half), took its toll on the rhythm and energy levels of the Kilmeena team. This setback allowed Breaffy to dominate the

exchanges in the final quarter and run out comfortable winners in the end. That said, the outcome could have been much different had Kilmeena taken three early goal opportunities.

So, it was a short Minor season and one that didn't bear any silverware for the men in black and white. That said, it was great for all, especially these young men to get

the opportunity to play some football during the height of summer and to do so in the challenging and ultra-competitive Division 1 group.

The U18 (minor) panel for 2020 comprised of the following:

Cathal Cawley, Harry Sheridan, Adam Sheridan, Tom Smythe, Oisín Grimley, Ronan O'Donnell, Chris McGlynn, Mikey Hastings,

Mark Hastings, Kian Moore, Robbie Staunton, Jason McGynn, Ian Murphy, Chris McNally, Cillian O'Grady, Ben Lennon, Daniel O'Malley, Jack Walsh, Rory Nolan, Ciarán Kilcoyne, Liam Moore, Darragh Slattery.

Management Team: Padraic Moore, Michael O'Grady & Sean Ryder.



Minors: Back row, left to right: Padraic Moore (Management), Chris McNally, Jason McGlynn, Ben Lennon, Cathal Cawley, Darragh Slattery, Chris McGlynn, Robbie Staunton, Kian Moore, Adam Sheridan, Rory Nolan and Michael O'Grady (Management).

Front row, left to right: Sean Ryder (Management), Ian Murphy, Ciarán Kilcoyne, Harry Sheridan, Liam Moore, Oisín Grimley, Mark Hastings, Cillian O'Grady, Ronan O'Donnell, Jack Walsh, Tom Smythe and Daniel O'Malley.

Missing from photo: Mikey Hastings

Seniors **John Reilly**

The Senior Championship 2020 season was played out over ten weeks, due to the restrictions set out to curb the ongoing pandemic. It was a privilege to get any football played this season for this set of players. We returned to club training at the start of July after spending the previous three months training individually on the byroads, fields, sheds and spare bedrooms of the parish.

The management team of John Reilly, Darren Madden and David Feehan took charge of the team for their concluding season, aiming to get a county title win for the club.

First up in the Junior championship was an away trip to play our group rivals Killala. Kilmeena controlled this game in the first half by playing some excellent champagne football. John McGlynn was moving well inside and scored some excellent points from play and with help from captain Sean Ryder and the MVP on the day, Joey Smyth. Kilmeena had the game won by half time. The second half was a completely different story to the first as Kilmeena took their foot off the gas and allowed Killala in for two quick goals. Kilmeena steadied the ship and came out 2-18 to 2-8 winners in the end.

Next up was Lacken, Kilmeena played this game in Breaffy as our home pitch is undergoing a revamp. Kilmeena controlled the game from start to finish and clocked up a 3-20 to 0-2 points score line without getting into 2nd gear.

Our final group game was against Ballycroy played in Newport. This game was a game of frustration for the Kilmeena players as the Ballycroy men set about unsettling the Kilmeena lads with a very physical game plan. Weak refereeing by the appointed officials allowed the Ballycroy men to cross the line on too many occasions. Despite going 4 points down in the first 5 minutes, the Kilmeena men stuck to their game plan and came out with a hard-fought win on a scoreline of 3-10 to 1-3.

Kilmeena qualified for the 4th year in a row as group winners and awaited the draw to see who their next opponents would be. Almost as destiny ordained, Achill, it was, and once again these age-old rivals would have to duke it out.

Westport was the battleground for this Championship game, and from the off, it was evident that Achill was going to play the defensive northern style of football to try and stop the Kilmeena attack. Kilmeena struggled to break down the Achill rearguard. However, sometimes fortune favours the brave, and from a dropping Darragh Keavney shot, Neil "Woolie" Ryan rose the highest and flicked the ball to the Island

men's net. From here it looked like Kilmeena would run out comfortable winners, but Achill had other ideas. A well-taken goal from Eddie Doran put Achill back within touching distance and only for some quality defending and excellent goalkeeping, Kilmeena would have been in for a nervous final few minutes. The final score in this one was Kilmeena 1-11 Achill 1-7.

Shrule Glencorrib awaited Kilmeena in the semi-final played in Islandeady, and what a game this turned out to be. Both teams employed a similar game plan ensuring this game was going to be end to end stuff. Both teams swapped the lead on numerous occasions. The sheer pace of the game was evident, as the men on the mike for Kilmeena GAA radio, Mickey Carney and Neil O'Donnell, could be heard struggling for breath behind the Kilmeena managements dugout. Kilmeena played this game while down to 14 men for 20 minutes in the second half, as two black cards were administered by referee Colin Reape, who by the way, had an outstanding game. Reduced to fourteen men seemed to incentivise the Kilmeena lads and with sheer work-man-like effort, they took control of the game and could have won by more if they were more clinical in front of goal. The final score reflected an exciting and exhilarating match ending in a 2-14 to 1-14 win for the black and whites.

The county final in McHale Park to face hot favourites Kilmaine would be the closing scene to this year's Junior championship. The game was set and the battle commenced. Kilmaine raced into a 4 point lead and looked to be cruising. Kilmeena struck back with a well-taken goal by Joey Smyth. Kilmeena wrestled control of the game from Kilmaine for the rest of the half to go in at half-time two points up. Kilmeena would rue six missed scoring chances in a row at the start of the second half to take a commanding lead of the game. With the game caught on a knife-edge, Kilmaine struck for a goal that would send Kilmeena reeling. Kilmaine now took control of the game, and with their county man, Oisín Mullin, driving them on there was no way back for the black and whites. Kilmeena stuck to their guns and got the score down to its minimum. With the final possession of the game, they went about chasing the equalising score. For what seemed an eternity, Kilmeena probed for an opening to take a shot. Conor Madden received the ball on the centre of the 45-yard line and drove to the right flank finding some space. Conor struck a beauty of a curler, but it was not a pure ping. The ball agonisingly drifted millimetres outside the post to give Kilmaine their first-ever County Junior county title.

The closing of our 2020 season was a beauty with a win over Achill in the Cusack Cup final. The Kilmeena side played exceptional football and won out on a scoreline of 3-25 to 2-4. Enough said.

On that note, our three-year stint as the Kilmeena management team comes to an end. It has been an excellent adventure and memories to reflect on for many years to come.

A big thank you to all involved for the past three seasons: Julie Moore, our Physiotherapist, James Keane and Michael Ryan our kit-men. The Kilmeena Executive who facilitated us without question and our loyal supporters who followed us every step of the way. A final thank you to Midwest Furniture for their generosity in continuing to sponsor our senior team jerseys every season.

Mayo Junior Championship Finalists 2020



Back row, left to right: Julie Moore, Kian Moore, Patrick Golden, James Groden, Niall Ryan, Tomás Gill, Bailey Nevin, Conor Madden, Joey Smyth, Paul Groden, Andrew Grealis, Chris Heanue, Jack Carney, Stephen Staunton, Pat Mulchrone, Niall Feehan, Kevin Ryder, Sean Moore, Brian Mortimer, David Feehan.

Front row, left to right: Darren Madden, Sean Barrett, John Ryan, Patrick Keane, Ryan McGonagle, Ronan O'Donnell, Darragh Keaveney, John Reilly, Keith Joyce, Sean Ryder, Liam Óg McNamara, John McGlynn, Kieran Sheridan, John Keane, Ian Murphy, Jason McGlynn.

Road to the County Final

Sean Barrett, Club PRO



Photo courtesy of Kevin O'Malley

In a year where uncertainty spanned across the world, it was great to get the chance to have the Junior Championship this summer during the pandemic.

Following the Championship draw in early March Kilmeena were paired with three North Mayo teams, Killala, Lacken and Ballycroy in Group 2 of the County Junior Championship.

First up was a trip to Killala on a wet bank holiday Saturday in August. This game was expected to be the most challenging in the group, but things didn't pan out that way as Kilmeena raced into an early lead and pulled away from their opponents comfortably in the first half playing some excellent football. Killala did stage a bit of a second-half comeback, but the mountain was too steep for them to climb and we came away with a deserving 2-18 to 2-8 win.

The following weekend we welcomed Lacken to Breaffy, as this was now our delegated home venue due to the ongoing pitch developments at our home venue, St Brendan's Park. A few changes in the team from the first outing didn't affect things as Kilmeena secured a very comfortable 3-20 to 0-2 win and booked their spot in the knockout stages.

We played Ballycroy in the final round of the group stages for the third year in a row in McGovern Park, Newport.

This match turned out to be a real physical encounter, but Kilmeena showed their class and experience to emerge 3-10 to 1-3 winners to top Group 2.

Things were heating up and as we came down to the last eight of the competition and we were drawn against West Mayo rivals, Achill in Westport.

Historically, Achill and Kilmeena meetings have proved to be entertaining encounters. The expectations were no different in this instance, and what a battle it proved to be. The first half was nip-and-tuck for the first 15 or 20 minutes before Niall Ryan's goal put some daylight between the sides going into the break. In the second half, Kilmeena played some great football, and Achill battled back, but it wasn't enough, and in the end, Kilmeena prevailed by four points to set up a fourth semi-final in five years.

All roads led to Islandeady for an unusual behind-closed-doors semi-final against Shrule/Glencorrib. Under normal circumstances, a considerable number of supporters would be the norm. Alas, empty stadia is now the standard. The dugout side of Islandeady pitch was a picture of media personnel from both clubs as Shrule/Glencorrib had a live stream of the game while our very own KGAA Radio was supplying audio commentary around the world. This game was said to be one of the best Junior Championship semi-finals in recent times as both teams gave it everything and put on an exhibition of entertaining football. The first half was score-for-score but the teams couldn't be separated at the break, leaving the sides 1-8 a-piece at half time. The battling performance in the second half from Kilmeena must be credited, having twice lost a player to black cards, they didn't panic! At stages in the second half Shrule/Glencorrib pushed on, but Kilmeena weathered the storm and

kept tipping away. A vital goal from Niall Ryan in the last quarter proved pivotal in the end, and Kilmeena's experience showed as they got over the line to record a 2-14 to 1-14 victory. There were great scenes of emotion and jubilation at the final whistle as we booked a County Final place for the first time in 18 long years. Too long!

The build-up around Kilmeena, Carraholly, Fahy and the surrounding areas was great to see, the place decked out in black and white flags, posters and bunting. The team were very thankful and appreciated the support they received.

It was unfamiliar territory for many of the team besides the few stalwarts who had been there before. The atmosphere in training was great for the two weeks before the final with everyone pushing themselves for the same cause. KGAA Radio, along with other media personnel were on hand for pre-match interviews to get a flavour of the atmosphere for those who couldn't be in McHale Park. Thankfully the government restrictions lifted somewhat, and one hundred spectators were allowed from each club into the grounds. But if this had been a normal year, you would have expected to see a couple of hundred Kilmeena faithful at the game. Those who couldn't get a ticket tuned into KGAA Radio and Mayo GAA TV.

It was a perfect day for football, and McHale Park was in superb condition. The hard work had been completed, and the lads were ready for battle. Kilmaine raced into an early four-point lead, but Kilmeena settled before the first water break thanks to a super goal from Joey Smyth. A strong second quarter from the lads left them two points up at the break, 1-6 to 0-7. The second half was tight for long periods, and Kilmaine did have their purple patch. Still, Kilmeena's never-say-die attitude was on show again, but unfortunately, we came up short by a single point this time around on a scoreline of 1-13 to 1-12, a heartbreaking defeat.

It was a privilege to be involved in this squad. The attitude and hunger are there, and I do not doubt that Kilmeena will come back even stronger next year to challenge for the Pete McDonnell Cup. Massive thanks must go to the players and management who gave the community a tremendous morale lift in these unprecedented times.

Bring on 2021!



After his radio commentary in Islandeady following Kilmeena's win over Shrulce Glencorrib in the County Junior Semi-Final in September, Mickey's euphoria is applauded by his production team from left: Isla Hoe, Robert Moran, Neil O'Donnell and Damian Hughes. M. McIntyre

Many noteworthy milestones denote the development of the Kilmeena GAA Club since its foundation in 1889. However, few will compare with the events of 2020 in various respects. The Covid-19 pandemic that we are all familiar with now and its global consequences, wreaking havoc on every aspect of society, as its exponential spread caused alarm with every transmitted news bulletin. GAA clubs throughout the country were no exception to the disruptions it caused, which manifested in cancellations and abandonment of match fixtures at every level, limiting competitions to all but the barest involvement to complete the seasons' fixtures.

It's funny how it sometimes takes a crisis of such local and global magnitude to inspire and harness the imagination and creative potential of groups and individuals, enabling communities to pull together for the good of all. Likewise with Kilmeena GAA Club. The social restrictions imposed by the government to suppress and curb the spread of the deadly virus meant that attendance at football matches was strictly limited to a small number of patrons, or in some cases to management and players only. This, in turn, disenfranchised many supporters, whose only option in keeping abreast of match scores depended on reviews from local radio, or text messages from those lucky enough to be afforded access to the game, as well as regular score updates on social media. A meagre alternative to a sport that depends to a great extent on spectator participation in

creating atmosphere and motivation for players and management. This void heralded the launch of KGAA Radio!

Recently appointed Chairman, John McDonald, asked if I would chair a "Communications Group" he had proposed to establish, to evaluate the degree of communication within and outside of the club. The group principally consisted of those involved in the production of the popular annual club Newsletter with some extra welcomed additions. Among other ideas proffered at our brainstorming sessions was the idea of broadcasting match commentaries. At that point (mid-January) our thoughts were to primarily serve the Kilmeena diaspora, a sizable audience as reflected through the club's social media outlets - website, FaceBook and Twitter accounts. This idea gained further impetus following a club Officer Training Workshop in McHale Park, organised by the County Board Executive. The workshop facilitated the training and development of newly appointed club officers from around the County to familiarise them with the duties of their respective posts—a very welcome and worthwhile development for club executives. I attended, with other club officers in my capacity as Chairman of the newly formed communication group, a beneficial decision as it turned out to be. At that meeting, the club PRO, Sean Barrett and I had an interesting conversation with the Chairman of Kiltane GAA club Ciaran O'Hara, an expert in communications gained from his experience while working

with Sky Sports. Following on from that discussion in McHale Park, an additional private meeting was arranged with Ciaran, whose inspired contribution and direction on the basic requirements needed for successful broadcast transmission established the basis for the initiative that was to become KGAA Radio.

And so it began! The quest for the team to coordinate and broadcast match commentaries that would inform, excite and entertain audiences at home and abroad, took on a greater dimension than the initial idea intended. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and its significant travel restrictions increased the urgency of relieving the trauma of home "incarceration" for Kilmeena GAA supporters, as described by some commentators. It was now no longer just targeting the Kilmeena diaspora, but was now encompassing our indigenous audience as well. Previous video (old VHS tape recordings for all you who can still recall those heady days) recordings in the early to mid-nineties, with some excellent commentary performances from the likes of Jim Keane and Tony Mulroy, are historically archived and digitised for future generations to peruse. A new style of radio broadcast applied in this case. One name kept popping up as the most suitable local commentator to fulfil the position, namely, Mickey Carney! And boy, were we rewarded in spades with our choice! Mickey's interest and enthusiasm could scarcely be contained when first approached to canvass his opinion for the project.

Unbeknownst to us, we were fortunate to have some talent lying dormant in our midst, in the form of club registrar, Damian Hughes. Damian had previously produced and presented programmes for local radio in Dublin before his arrival to Kilmeena. A visit to his home confirmed his interest in coming on board, while his wife Shona's expertise in Facebook marketing provided further assurance in the implementation of the project. What luck, we had a commentator and a producer on board! One afternoon, whilst pondering the addition of a technical guru, I sat contemplating out my living room window on the majestic Croagh Patrick, when my gaze fell on the home of my next-door neighbour Robert Moran. Initial approaches to discern his interest was met with equal enthusiasm to join the team. While discussing the technical aspect of our requirements he happened to mention the arrival of another equally and imminently qualified producer/presenter of radio programs into Roscahill, Isla Hoe. Isla had just completed a Masters in Computers and Electronics Engineering in Trinity College Dublin. For three years, during her tenure at Trinity College, Isla produced and presented Trinity Radio FM. What a find!

All set to go, we had a production team consisting of: Martin McIntyre, Coordinator; Mickey Carney, Commentator; Damian Hughes, Producer; Isla Hoe - Technical Consultant; Robert Moran, Technical Administrator; club PRO, Sean Barrett; Event Supervisor, Kevin Barrett. Neil O'Donnell was later to join as match pundit.

Following several meetings working through the minutiae and interesting sequential details required for successful radio productions, the first privately recorded rehearsal was scheduled for Breaffy one evening in June, where Kilmeena played Breaffy in the U-16s boys' County Championship. Any lingering doubts or

anxieties regarding the success of the venture were permanently laid to rest that evening.

His enthusiasm finally unleashed, and at breakneck speed, Mickey launched into a descriptive commentary of the game that would do justice, and in most cases surpass other more experienced professional commentators. Within minutes of his opening team introductions, the small number of spectators present gravitated to within earshot of his commentary position such was the impact and appeal of his account of events taking place on the field. Mickey's commentary was spiced with anecdotes, tales and stories relating to players from both teams, whose fathers, uncles, aunts or any other related facts that may have contributed in any small way to past glories of either club. Mickey's style of narrative was indicative of the meticulous background preparation he employed for his commentary. The same attention to detail was implemented and expanded in all subsequent broadcasts. Mickey's speed of thought concerning player recognition, including substitutions, was to become one of the hallmarks of the smooth, seamless, uninterrupted flow of his performances. Those skills were honed with every ensuing broadcast for the duration of the Junior Championship, establishing a unique and a somewhat breathless and hectic style of commentary. "KGAA Radio" was here to stay; a phenomenon was created!

Right by his side was his ever-vigilant Production Team, as mentioned earlier, Damian Hughes, Isla Hoe and Robert Moran. As production coordinator, it was illuminating to witness the scrupulous attention paid to the minute detail required for every moment, from the broadcast opening, counting down the minutes to the throw-in, and again at each of the water breaks, including the half time period. The

same conscientious observance to detail applied to all of our post-match debriefings. Any problems or snags that arose from the previous production were quickly rectified and improved upon for the next occasion. The producers' responsibilities extend to ensuring that the commentator is aware of each previously rehearsed detail and its air timing, during the performance. Robert's quiet, relaxed personality ensured the technical transmission was relayed seamlessly to the listening audience at home and abroad. One moment of hilarity worth mentioning occurred during the County Junior Final between Kilmeena and Kilmaine in McHale Park. The transmission came to a sudden stop when the commentator, in the peak of his excitement ventured beyond the limit of his "technical tether", disconnecting him momentarily from the newscast apparatus, causing immediate panic within his production team. However, the ever-vigilant quick-thinking Robert quickly rectified this momentary loss of transmission.

At this point, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the cooperation of the referees and opposing teams throughout the championship matches in presenting for the usual pre-match photographs in good time, as games needed to start as programmed to facilitate the ensuing commentary.

Following the "the Breaffy experiment", it became evident that the commentator required periodic support in his task in the form of specific analysis of events as they unfolded on the field of play. Into this role stepped Neil O'Donnell. His experience and astute awareness of tactical moves adopted by each side did not escape his eagle-eyed attention. His shrewd comments and critique of developments as the game progressed, brought clarity for listeners to the match that might otherwise be missed by the commentator. An added benefit to Neil's addition to the broadcasting team presented itself by way of stalling the pace and intensity of the commentary, by allowing the commentator to catch his breath before the next wave of detailed embroidered eloquence. This matching pair proved a perfect balance for each other during the game. The incredibly positive feedback garnered from social media outlets, individuals, private phone calls, local comments and other messages of support, confirmed the benefits and success of "KGAA Radio".

As the various championship matches progressed, and aware of the Covid social restrictions in place, the commitment of informing and connecting with those



The production team of Neil, Mickey, Damian and Robert make last minute touches to the match commentary program before the County Junior Championship Quarter-Final match, Kilmeena v Achill, played in St. Patrick's Park Westport August 29th.

cocooning at home and abroad took on an added significance. Now don't get me wrong, the value of video and TV as means of communication are not to be underestimated when available. In its absence, the listeners must rely on quality radio commentary. And in Mickey Carney "KGAA Radio" commentator extraordinaire, delivered a detailed and vivid account of the play as it developed, describing an image for listeners which kept them glued to their devices. His unique style of performance, coupled with the efficiency and ease with which he switched between the "cúpla focal as Gaeilge" embellished with entertaining anecdotes, set him apart as a gifted communicator which endeared him to his audience. His impartial and equal interest in acknowledging the efforts and exploits of the opposing teams contributed to a balanced presentation of the play. His unfettered passion and enthusiasm for his task, coupled with his richness of vocabulary became his trademark with every game.

Talk about announcing yourself onto the big stage!

It's important to acknowledge that the support and cooperation for this project had the unanimous approval of the club officers and its membership, including the team management and players who embraced the idea from its inception. A special thanks to club PRO, Sean Barrett. His constant information-flow made a considerable contribution to the success of the program. Also, it's essential to recognise the assistance of the team's "Stage Manager", Kevin Barrett, and his "Van". Ever ready to help whenever the need arose, which happened on a couple of crucial occasions, not to mention the steady supply of hot beverages and "goodies" for the commentary team throughout the championship. A special thank you to the GAA clubs and McHale Park, in accommodating our request for the use of their facilities to broadcast the games. A personal word of gratitude to Viviana Giovannetti and

Brendan Ruane, whose home lies adjacent to the Islandeady GAA grounds, in permitting us to use their domestic Internet and power connections for the County Junior Semi-Final. Your generosity is much appreciated.

The club would sincerely wish to thank Padraic Carney (Mickey's brother) for all his sponsorship towards the costings involved in the making of the programme.

Lastly, we should wish to thank all the people for their messages of support for the duration of the championship. In particular, those who tuned in from around the globe - your kind words of encouragement made the project worthwhile.

"KGAA Radio" has become one of the more positive side effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Roll on 2021 for more of the same.

My Experience Through Covid-19 by Tiernan Aherne, U12



Two weeks off school! YESSSSSSSSSS!

March 12th

After our Seachtain na Gaeilge concert, our Principal, Mr Peter Carney, told us that school was closing for 'two weeks' due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

March 27th

Lockdown! NOOOOOO!

Everything has closed. No school. No seeing friends. No visiting my Grandad Tom Sr. No mass. No going to town. No flights or holidays. No fishing with my Uncle Tom Jr. No GAA. Lockdown was far from normality.

July 19th

We received the long-awaited news that we could go back to GAA training, but there was more to think about than just remembering your boots and gumshield. You also had to remember the GAA Covid Guidelines.

Our trainers were excellent, they made it easy for us to comply with the new rules, which at first seemed daunting.

Whether training or playing a match, the health questionnaire had to be filled out online and we had to sanitise our hands on entry of the grounds and exit. We brought our own water bottles, we changed into our jerseys on the pitch, and we had to social distance when possible.

For our first match against Westport, and for the rest of the games during the season, complying with the Covid rules became the 'new normal.'

October came around and the Covid restrictions level was raised and, sadly, this meant that training and the Winter league were cancelled.

Overall, I think we would all have liked a longer season but, thanks to the club and coaches, we were able to enjoy and make the most of the limited time we had.

This will be a year for the history books.

Nigh do lámha agus tabhair aire,
Tiernan Aherne

NEW BEGINNINGS

Philip and Kathleen Murphy, The Old Schoolhouse, Kilmeena

New beginnings are exciting as well as a bit scary. Our children had flown the nest, and we decided that we were just about young enough for the next 'adventure' in our lives. So what was that to be?

We had a plan: to move house. Something completely different. Something up or down the East coast not too far from Dublin where we had lived for over forty years, and something big enough to take our five children and grandchildren when they came to visit - a two-bedroom apartment was not in the mix! The East coast proved impossible both in choice and budget, so the plan changed.

After much thought, many investigations, many changes of mind and for no particular reason, Westport came up in conversation. Memories of camping with the children and friends in Westport House over thirty years ago came flooding back. Why not?

So, armed with an internet-sourced list of possible homes, we arrived in Westport over the Whit weekend 2013 to look things over. The first house we entered was, believe it or not, the Old Schoolhouse here in Kilmeena. It was love at first sight!

It's fair to say it bore little resemblance to the original four-roomed Schoolhouse of 1925 or the Western Health Board respite house, or of the Youth Hostel, or of the Creche and all the other things that it had been in the course of its history! So it was with a mixture of anticipation and trepidation that we opened the door of the Old Schoolhouse on the morning of Friday, November 1st 2013 with over forty years of our lives packed in large brown boxes. (Kathleen's mother always said it was good luck to move house on a Friday.)

When the removal men had left to go back to Dublin, we looked at the walls of storage boxes stacked three deep and over six feet high all over the house and wondered where to start. So we lit the fire, sat down and opened a bottle of wine. Tomorrow was another day. But our peace was soon disturbed by the front doorbell. On the doorstep was a neighbour from up the road with a bunch of flowers, a box of chocolates and a bottle of wine. What a welcome! And seven years later that welcome sees no sign of diminishing. They were thorough, those removal men, when they packed us up in Dublin. Our daughter, down to help, discovered a single piece of Weetabix carefully wrapped in bubble wrap at the bottom of one of the boxes marked 'Kitchen.' Over the next few weeks, the walls of boxes got smaller, and shelves, cupboards and bookcases began to fill up.

We were relatively well insulated over the next few months as all our energies went into the house and then the garden. When some 'manners' were put on both we began to look outside to explore where we had chosen to live.

One of the advantages of living in the Schoolhouse is that we keep meeting people whose parents went to school here and, indeed, many who had been here themselves. There are lots of memories and stories in this place - some good and some not so good, and people are all so willing to tell them! It gives us a sense of connection to Kilmeena and a great sense of community and belonging.

For over forty years our interest and hobbies have centered around amateur drama and choral singing, and we were afraid that we might have to leave these joys behind in Dublin. But I soon discovered Kilmeena Drama Group just two hundred metres from our front door! And a bit further down the road in Newport, Kathleen found Cór Mhaigh Eo. With rehearsals and performances, our winter evenings were full and active.

Within a short time, we got to know many people. They say that if you put a group of people together on a stage in front of an audience, you get to know and trust those people very well indeed! And so our circle of friends and acquaintances grows ever wider. It's easy when those people you meet are warm and welcoming when they're interested and interesting, encouraging, happy to see you and talk to you about the place they have chosen to live. Many have lived here all their lives: full of stories of places, people, and the history of the land.

Do we miss Dublin? We don't miss the city too much. We do miss some very good friends. But we haven't moved to Australia, and we have a steady stream of visitors, most of whom envy us in our new adventure.

And so the adventure continues and each day brings something new and exciting - discovering a new place, a new beach, a new view, meeting new people, new characters, new histories - all the things that make our new home a happy and exciting new beginning.



An Ancient Parish

Ollie Mulchrone takes us on a brief tour of two of Kilmeena's best-known landmarks, St. Brendan's Well & Castleaffey

Saint Brendan's Well

St. Brendan's holy well is located at the townland of Moyna, in the Parish of Kilmeena. An outer stone wall of approximately three feet in height surrounds the well on all four sides. The Eastern facing wall has an opening to provide access into the well. The well itself is circular in shape with a diameter and depth of approximately two feet. The side walls are lined with stone. This well is reputed to have once changed the sex of a new-born girl. Folklore has it that the O'Malley clan were being slaughtered on Clare Island down to the last man. A heavily pregnant woman fled the slaughter and landed on the shore in Kilmeena. Having given birth to a baby girl, she met with Saint Brendan and told him her woes. St Brendan agreed to baptise the child at this location in Moyna and having dipped the baby in the water the sex was changed to a boy, thus preserving the bloodline of the O'Malley clan.

St. Brendan's well has been visited and written about for many years with articles from Historians like John O'Donovan 1806-1862, and Richard Pococke who visited the site while touring Ireland in 1752.

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Castleaffey

It is believed that Castleaffey was built towards the end of the medieval period, prior to the 1500's. Local tradition explains the name "Affey" belonging to one of the Burkes. Edmund MacTibbott, who was a minor Chieftain, resided here at Castleaffey. The 18th Lord of the Mayo Burkes, Sir Richard Burke (d. 1583) married the infamous Grainne O Malley (1530 – 1603) better known as Grainne Uaile. Their son Tibbot na Long Bourke (1567 – 1629) was fostered to Edmund MacTibbott who lived in Castleaffey. Later Tibbot moved to live with Myles McEvilly at Kinturk Castle in the barony of Carra. Fostering was more common then than it is today and with the hectic political lives of both Tibbot parents, Sir Richard and Grainne, there was little time they could devote to his upbringing. It was important for Tibbot to receive affection, discipline and a grounded education along with learning the skills and techniques of warfare, leadership and diplomacy. Tibbot na Long Bourke was an Irish peer, parliamentarian and member of the Irish House of Commons. He became the first Viscount of Mayo.

Fulmar Petrel gives a graphic description in "Grania Uaile" (London 1895), pp 39-43 of Kilmeena Castle (Castleaffey). Grainne is coming into the castle.

...The outworks passed, they enter the keep. The central hall, dimly lighted by one heavily mullioned window high up in the eastern wall, was surrounded by a gallery from which hung arms, swords, pikes, shields while on the walls were matchlocks and powder-horns mounted in polished brass. The centre of the room was occupied by a table of dark red wood brought from the Spanish Main. Dressers benches and chairs

were there for goodly company. From the heavy rafters of the oak ceiling an iron lamp hung by chains of grotesque design, while at each side of the high fireplace iron brackets for torches of bog-wood were fixed to the walls. The dry rushes with which the floor was strewn gave out an agreeable odour and mingled with the smell of smoke from the turf smouldering on the hearth which was a necessary adjunct of an Irish home.

Ascending by one of the stone staircases in the thickness of the wall, we enter a spacious chamber with a limestone mullioned window opening towards the bay, through which a flood of light poured from the sun, now sinking towards the Western sea.

In the opposite wall of the castle a window of similar structure looked out upon the sedgy swamp to the Eastward. The apartment was divided by an Oak screen into a sleeping and living room. Oak wainscoting lined walls, which were here and there adorned the old flags taken from wrecks or captured in war – faded flags of several nationalities, all suggested strange histories, could they speak of the scenes over which they had last waved. From the groined stone roof hung two silver lamps, and on the embroidered seats lay some rich silks. This was the woman's apartment, where no man ever entered except, he was a near relative.

The only openings in the Southern and Northern walls of the castle, which were those most exposed to attack, were loopholes or narrow slits, which gave some dim light to the passage in the thickness of the walls.



Leaving the woman's apartment by the door in either window niche, we can ascend to the floor above by one of these hidden stairways.

Here several small chambers, occupying the whole width of the castle, provided sleeping accommodation to the men of the household and from these there was easy access to the battlemented roof.

From this lofty viewpoint we can look down on the glassy bay inside the islands, where men in boats were busy loading the ship, the still evening air broken by their shouting and the creaking of pullies and clatter of oars. On the land side the castle bawn or court was protected by a swamp and afforded room for outoffices of various kinds – stores, stables, and the dwelling of the Scotch warders of the castle. Standing as the castle did between a swamp and shore of the creek, the most vulnerable points in its position were the approaches from the North and from the South. Here walls and loop-holed towers stood as outworks, but the real strength of the fortress lay in the immensely strong masonry of the keep and in the fact that the owners held command of the sea. Outside the fortifications were numerous skin-coloured cabins of the Kerne, herdsmen, and such like, whose business it was to tend to the cattle on the island and on the vast pastures which extended inland, or when occasion required, to take a matchlock, pike, or battle-axe, and man the galleys for any desperate undertaking. On the other fortifications several pieces of cannon known as falcons were mounted, and on the battlemented keep two long Spanish four-pounders of brass shone bright in the sunshine. Kilmeena Castle, though not very large as many of those the ruins of which one sees in the more central portions of the country, was a fortress of no mean strength, and stood there defying the invader and both protecting and dominating the people who looked up to it as the centre of their world.

Tradition says that Castleaffey was attacked by cannonballs, some of which have been found by locals in the past.

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Schools Successes

Rice College

Kilmeena GAA Club had many members representing Rice College in various disciplines, cross country athletics, Gaelic football, hurling, rugby, soccer including track and field athletics, during the academic year 2019/2020. It is always enjoyable to hear about our members who play with a variety of school teams, especially the first years, who dare to join in the many sports available to them.



Congratulations to **John Murphy** and **Luke Durkan** who both played vital roles in the All Ireland FAI Post Primary Schools Futsal Finals in the Waterford IT Arena, securing this prestigious award for Rice College.



Rice College Junior Rugby team who won the Junior League final. Kilmeena represented by **Conal Gill, Jack O'Grady, Joseph O'Malley** and **Harry Sheridan**.



Aaron Burke, Luke Durkan (capt.), Aodhán Feehan, DJ Keane and **Micheál Regan** pictured as part of the Rice College Westport First Year football team who defeated Claregalway College in the Connaught Post-Primary Schools First Year "A" League Final.



Sacred Heart School

Our Kilmeena LGFA girls are encouraged to attempt a variety of sports when moving to secondary school. The Sacred Heart School provides opportunities in badminton, basketball, camogie, cross country athletics, Gaelic football, soccer, spike ball, track and field athletics and volleyball. The past few years the school has fielded teams in U14, U16 and senior level Gaelic football. It is a testament to the girls' dedication to afterschool training that all three teams reached a Connaught final this year. Kilmeena LGFA had players on these teams. The U14 team were the only winners, thus making history as the first school team to win a Connaught title in Gaelic football.

Pictured are the Kilmeena LGFA members of the SHS Connaught Post Primary Schools U14 'A' Championship winning team. Left to right: **Ellen O'Toole, Éabha Carney, Ava Prenty, Grace Gibbons, Aoife Gannon, Katie Moran, Hattie Cox** and **Lisa Hastings**.

Other Sporting Successes



Camogie Westport Camogie Club was narrowly beaten in the final of Galway Junior "C" 12-a-side competition. **Áine Regan** admirably wore the No.9 jersey. Other Kilmeena girls included in the panel were **Sarah Harper, Stephanie** and **Máire Nixon**, and **Ruth** and **Lucy O'Malley**.



Hurling Congratulations to **Micheál Regan** who won an U14 county title with Westport.



Soccer Congratulations to Kilmeena U12 player, **Adam Moran**, who was part of the Westport United U12 Mayo Premier League and Connaught Cup-winning team.



Handball Congratulations to **Cian Moran**, of the Kilmeena U12 boys' team, who was runner up in the Cumann na mBunscoil Mayo County Handball Final representing St. Brendan's NS, Kilmeena on February 6th 2020.



Soccer Congratulations to Kilmeena U14 players, **Luke Durkan, John Murphy** and **Micheál Regan**, who were part of the Westport United U15 Mayo Premier League-winning team.



Pictured above representing Westport RFC from Kilmeena GAA club: Kevin Lawless (coach), Noah Coughlan, James Heanue, Jason Lawless, Jack Ivin and Luke O'Donnell.

Rugby Kevin Lawless

Congratulations to the Westport Bulls U-10 team who represented Westport RFC at half time at the Connacht V Montpellier game at the Sportsgrounds. Five of our U-10s were present on the day alongside one of our U-10 coaches. Everyone enjoyed this event. Westport RFC played Castlebar RFC. The team had a great day out and got to meet the Connacht team.

Golf Congratulations to **Ellen Lonergan** who has been included in the 2020/2021 Connacht Girls Inter-Provincial Squad, the first girl to do so from Westport in nearly two decades. Ellen has also recently received confirmation that she has been selected for the National U17 Girls High-Performance Development Panel for 2021.



Mayo U14 Girls

Congratulations to **Éabha Carney** and **Lisa Hastings** who were delighted to make the Mayo U14 Girls' panel. Well done girls!



GAA Healthy Club Project



Noreen Johnston

There is something uniquely Irish in the way the local GAA club is woven into the fabric of every parish and the life of its community. It's something that's just there, and you can't quite explain it. Over the years, various GAA projects have helped to reinforce this sense. Now the GAA Healthy Club Initiative hopes to bring a new focus on the parish and broader community which our club serves. The aim of the Healthy Club Initiative is "to ensure that everyone who engages with their GAA Club benefits from the experience in a health-enhancing way, be they players, officers, coaches, parents, supporters, or members of their local community." For our club, it provides a means of bringing together club, parish and the wider community in various activities to enhance the social, physical and mental health and wellbeing of everyone involved.

Achieving Healthy Club status doesn't happen overnight. In fact, it's an eighteen-month process of club and community review and assessment. Once complete, Kilmeena GAA Club will boast the title of Healthy Club for a period of four years.

Kilmeena GAA Healthy Club had just set out taking the first tentative steps into engaging with the wider community when all too soon the reality of Covid-19 was at our door. The restrictions and lockdown that ensued scuppered all the plans of the Healthy Club team.

As a result of Covid-19 and the restrictions placed on the whole country, the Healthy Club team looked at engaging with the community and using the Healthy Club forum as a means of establishing a Kilmeena – Carrowholly – Fahy Covid 19 Community Response group. The response was overwhelming and to each and every member of the Kilmeena, Fahy and Carrowholly area who responded and volunteered in any way...thank you! This group would never have been possible without the assistance of so many.

To be of greatest benefit and in keeping with the ethos of inclusion and inter-connection the Healthy Club team linked in with the following organisations:

- Kilmeena, Fahy and Carrowholly Community Alert Groups
- An Garda Síochána and in particular the Community Gardaí assigned to deal with Covid 19
- Mayo County Council who added our details to the website map
- Kilmeena and Fahy Parish Council and Westport and Newport Parishes
- An Post, and in particular Kilmeena Post Office
- Westport Family Resource Centre
- Westport Meals on Wheels
- Local Link Transport
- Centra and Supervalu as part of "Club Together Initiative", another GAA initiative
- And many more local shops and businesses who offered help and support

The club, the parish and the community rallied together to ensure our neighbours knew there was support available in this time of need. That awareness for the wellbeing of our community goes on within our parish and community.

Lockdown also saw the Healthy Club team link in with Mayo Sports Partnership who had launched "10km Your Way for Mayo Day 2020". A fun video was turned into an emoji-filled invite for the whole community. Families the length and breadth of the parish completed their 10km routes showing off the red and green and the black and white. Social media proved to be invaluable in sharing so many photos and bringing so many together while safely staying apart.

Nationally, the GAA launched various initiatives that Kilmeena GAA Healthy Club was and continues to be involved in; these included the Irish Life Step Challenge, GAA for All, Recipes for Success, Club Together, Moving your Mind and there are more in the pipeline. Some of these are ongoing while some have been one-off events. As always Kilmeena GAA and LGFA shone through in terms of participation and dedication, not to mention competitiveness!!

Long before this Healthy Club initiative, the club had so many well established and long-running activities for the wider community. Julie's fitness classes and the weekly 25 Card games to name only two. The Healthy Club Community Survey gave us great feedback on what you would want the Healthy Club to undertake. The wheels are already in motion, and a "to-do list" has been drafted. We will keep you updated! Unlike all my unsuccessful attempts at choosing the winning selection in the Kilmeena GAA lotto, the Healthy Club Team is a winning combination. Always supportive and dependable and always ready to offer guidance. The Healthy Club team members are; Julie Moore, Mark Ryan, Noleen Coughlan and myself. We should like to thank each and every one of you for your support of this project and contribution to this initiative. Thank you! We welcome feedback or any new ideas and please pass on to any member of the Healthy Club team.

We hope that through this project, we can support and enhance the special interconnection of club, parish and community that we are all so proud to call ours!

Kilmeena GAA Healthy Club team



Participants in Julie Moore's fitness classes, part of Kilmeena GAA's "Healthy Club" initiative and "20x20"; the first movement of its kind in Ireland championing women and girls in sport. "20x20" is focused on a cultural shift in Ireland so that girls' and women's participation in sport is seen as active, relevant and worth celebrating. The aim is to create a measurable cultural shift in society through a 20% increase in participation, media coverage and attendance in women's sport by the end of 2020.

From left, Kathleen Murphy, Liz Sammon, Siobhán Golden, Lorraine McDonnell, Julie Moore, Shona Hughes, Hazel Coombes, Davina Carney.



**KILMEENA
GAA CLUB**

PITCH DEVELOPMENT FUNDRAISER

PURCHASE A

BALL ON THE WALL

JOHN SMITH
ROSSAKEERAN
KILMEENA

JOHN SMITH
& FAMILY
ROSSAKEERAN
KILMEENA

JOHN & MAY
SMITH
& FAMILY
ROSSAKEERAN
KILMEENA

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN SMITH
ROSSAKEERAN
KILMEENA

Have the name of an individual, family or loved one inscribed on a granite wall to be permanently displayed on the stand.

Padraic Moore (Treasurer): 087 2861 190
Mike Slattery: 087 2384 200
Maura Hastings: 087 2139 779

Carmel Higgins: 086 3230 955
Majella McGonagle: 087 9829 958
John McDonald: 087 2475 733



PLAY YOUR PART IN YOUR CLUB'S FUTURE

Club Strategic Plan Update Willie Keaveney

Three simple questions were considered during the introduction of our club Strategic Plan 2020 -2023

- (1) What do we do?
- (2) For whom do we do it?
- (3) How can we excel?

I will try and answer those questions as briefly as I can.

- 1) We organise and play Gaelic Games in which the Mission, Vision and Values of the organisation are espoused and nurtured.
- 2) We do what we do for ourselves, our children, our grandchildren, and for future generations to come.
- 3) We will excel only when our facilities are up to an acceptable standard and when our players want to take ownership of what they do and are proud of where they come from and whom they represent.

These principles set the context for the recent upgrading of our main playing pitch, and why it was necessary to undertake the drainage groundworks as carried out.

Heavy rains for the last number of years rendered our pitch unplayable at various times during the season due to excess water saturation. Apart from this overload of surface water posing a serious danger of injury to visiting and home players, it also meant we were unable to complete the U21 Club Championship for those years. A result of this involved conceding home advantage as well as hiring pitches in Ballyheane and Began to conclude the competition. An unacceptable consequence for the club.

The benefits of a proper drainage system can be assessed from the recently constructed training pitch whose surface withstands all types of inclement weather despite consistent use throughout the year. Everything considered the consensus by the club was that the main pitch should be drained to the same exacting standard which would extend its availability on an ongoing, year-round basis.

Covid-19 presented an opportunity which just had to be grasped. With all league games cancelled and with one home game in the Championship, the club decided to proceed with the drainage of the pitch.

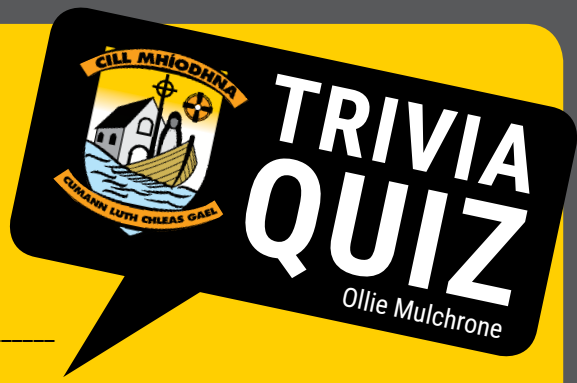
The club would wish to thank John Foran, of Emerald Pitch Development, for his direction and expertise with the project. We want to thank the O'Carroll brothers and our groundsman, Paul Feehan, working long hours on a fine, dry weekend to get the drains installed.

The hurlers on the ditch will tell you that Kilmeena had the finest pitch in Mayo and that there was absolutely no need for drainage works. The same people don't attend any meetings or provide any visible support to the club. They will also tell you that they do not support the "Ball on the Wall" initiative for one reason or another. The club thanks everyone who has supported the fundraiser so far. Those who have made serious donations towards the development. Those who have put their money upfront and those who have signed up for weekly payments.

I want to thank the people of the Parish for their support for the project so far, and assure you that this project will be completed without recourse to any Bank loans thus avoiding any financial repayment obligations on present or future club executives.

Stills from drone footage of the drainage works on the main pitch. Courtesy of Robert Moran, Roscahill.





1. Can you name the four men who captained the Kilmeena teams to win the County Junior Championship in:

- a. 1977 _____ b. 1986 _____
c. 1993 _____ d. 2002 _____

2. What is the name of the County Junior Championship Cup? _____

3. Can you name the two brothers who held the club Secretaries position during the period 2004 to 2011?

- 1) _____ 2) _____

4. Who captained the Kilmeena Junior team that first won the Cusack Cup in 1968? _____

5. How many people are on the 2020 club Executive Committee? _____

6. What year was the Kilmeena LGFA club formed? _____

7. Can you identify each of the Junior Team players who are affectionally know as:

- a. Magic _____ b. Wizard _____
c. Duck Eggs _____ d. Woolie _____

8. Can you name the Kilmeena stalwart that was heavily involved with Parnell's Gaelic club, London during the late 50's and 60's returned to Kilmeena in the early 70's and trained the Kilmeena Junior team in 73,74,75 and 76? _____

9. In what year did the yellow and red cards get introduced into the GAA games? _____

10. What team did Kilmeena play against in the Intermediate County Final of 1995? _____

11. Who officially opened the existing club house and in what year did this take place? _____

12. Which Co. Antrim club did Kilmeena host in last year's Feile competition? _____

13. What age group does the annual Kilmeena Paddy Golden Blitz cater for? _____

14. What year did Kilmeena win "Mayo Club of the Year" award? _____

15. What club beat Kilmeena in the Junior Club All Ireland football Final played on the 10th May 2003? _____

16. Kilmeena were the first Junior team from Ireland to ever play in Gaelic Park, New York. What year did this historical event take place? _____

17. Who won the Mayo News "Golden Boot" award in 2007? _____

18. In what year did the Kilmeena minors amalgamate with Burrishoole to form St Brendan's team? _____

19. What year did Joe Gibbons of Clew Bay Golf course give his facilities free to the club to run a weekly fundraising golf scramble competition? _____

20. Who captained the Kilmeena minor team that won the County "C" final on the 14th October 2018 beating Ballinrobe on a score line of 3-10 to 0-22? _____

Mayo Day 2020



Charlie, Damien, Shona & Siofra Hughes



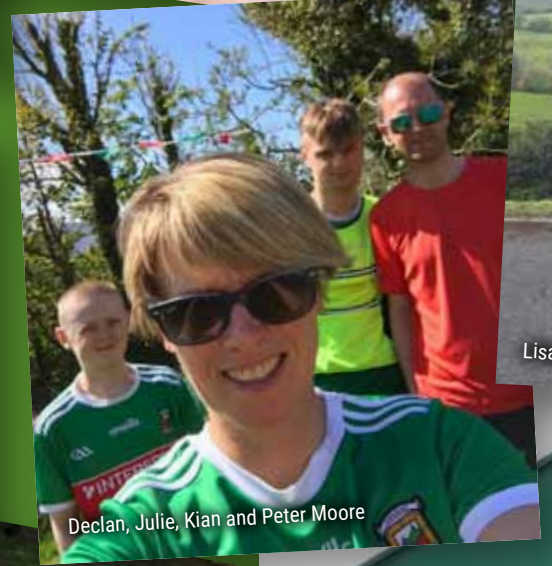
Michael, Jenny & Noreen Gavin



Noreen, Rory, Katie & James Johnston



Carmel & Molly Moore



Declan, Julie, Kian and Peter Moore

Lisa, Ke



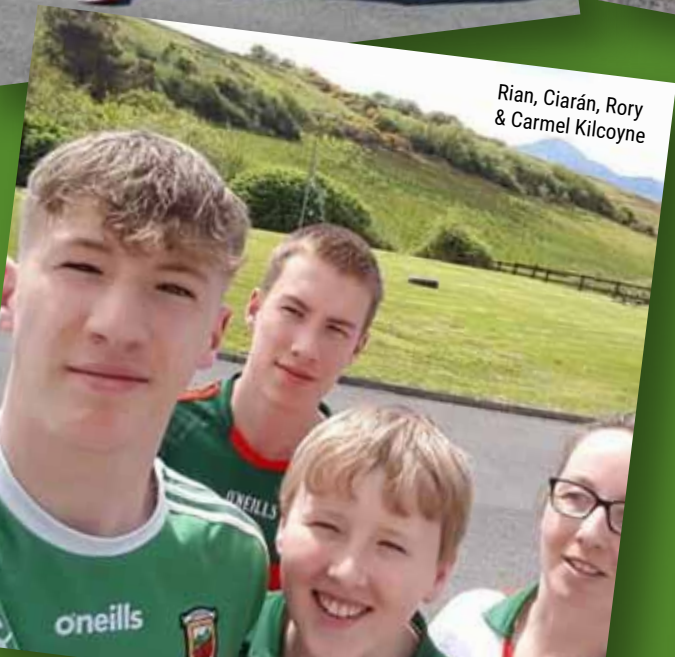
Trish, Roisín, Sarah & Katie Hogan



Ian, Keelan, Aileen & Charlie McLoughlin



Carmel & Rory Kilcoyne



Rian, Ciarán, Rory & Carmel Kilcoyne



Michelle, Leah, Sean & Zak (front)



Éabha, Amy, Davina & Mickey Carney



Michael & Ciara O'Grady



Aiden, Josh, Adam, Katie & Sarah Moran



John, Caragh & John Ryan



Vin & Maura Hastings



Katie, Justine, Rachel & Ann Moran



Noah, Pat, Callum, Noleen & Cody Coughlan



Pat, Patrick, Sarah, Jack & Maura Mulchrone



Brian, Shauna & Jamie Durkan



Mike, Ronan, Darragh, Cormac & Mary Slattery

KILMEENA GAA

Valentine's Dinner Dance

Text: Sarah Hogan, PRO of Kilmeena LGFA and Bord na nÓg. Photos courtesy of Conor McKeown

Earlier this year Kilmeena GAA Club celebrated its 6th annual Valentine's Dinner Dance held in the Knockranny Hotel attended by club members and the broader community.

At present, our lives have unavoidably altered in the wake of Covid-19, and February 15th feels like a lifetime ago. Back then, we were almost reluctant to appreciate how privileged we were to celebrate our club's annual get-together in such vast numbers. Now acclimated, we have found new methods of socialising and communicating in a safe environment with consideration and observance for social distance, hand sanitising and mask-wearing that benefits the country as a whole, especially those most vulnerable in our midst.

The continued development of our club is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers. Chairman John McDonald, highlighted on the night the necessity for our club to continuously adapt in terms of coaching, administration, funding, communication, facilities and development for the benefit of its members. Our club aims to inspire the youth, to support our players and members and to build friendships within the community. The success of our dinner dance reflects the commitment of our volunteers and the progress our club has boasted in recent years.

Traditionally, the Kilmeena GAA Dinner Dance is an occasion to celebrate the club's annual presentation of awards to those judged by the club Executive, to have made an exceptional contribution during the year to be worthy beneficiaries in the various categories listed below.

Michael Ryan was the recipient of the 2019 "Club Person of the Year" award. Sponsored by Midwest Furniture, Teresa Smyth presented Michael with the highly esteemed trophy. This presentation to Michael is an acknowledgement of his involvement and contribution to the management and coaching services of the club over a long number of years. His current service as kitman for the men's senior team is a further indication of his open-ended support, commitment and loyalty to the club marking him as a deserving winner of the award.

"Community Person of the Year" award was presented to **Caragh Ryan** by Minister Michael Ring. The club acknowledged her devotion in her fundraising efforts in aid of Western Alzheimers at the end of last year. Caragh was also a recipient of the "Mayo People of the Year" award. All at Kilmeena GAA wish Caragh the best with her future fundraising endeavours.

Dearbhla Grealis was named "Senior Ladies Player of the Year". Davy Feehan presented Dearbhla with the "Feehan Shield" in memory of Noreen Feehan. Dearbhla is acknowledged for her dedication to training and influential performances in the full-back position for the Minor and Junior ladies team.

Minister Michael Ring presented **Shannon Bourke** with the "Cleary Brothers Shield" as the "Minor Ladies Player of the Year" award in recognition of her scoring skills expertly demonstrated while playing for both the minor and junior ladies' teams in 2019.

Minister Michael Ring presented **Katie Hogan** with the award for "Players' Player of the Year" in recognition for her commitment to the team, and her ability to perform consistently under game pressure. These three girls have played with Kilmeena LGFA since its formation in 2013.

Pete McDonagh presented the "Cillian McDonagh Memorial Players' Player of Year" trophy to **Sean Ryder**. Minister Ring presented the "Alan Browne Memorial Minor Player of the Year" to **Mark Hastings**. Both awards are perpetuated to the memory of our late club members, Cillian and Alan.

The Barrett Family Memorial Shield, "Young Player of the Year", was awarded to **John McGlynn** by Jane Barrett. He was credited for his consistent scoring abilities distinguishing him as an invaluable member of the Junior team.

Brian Mortimer received the "Most Improved Player of the Year" award from Minister Ring.

"Managers' Player of the Year" went to **Darragh Keaveney** in recognition of his sterling performances throughout the season with the club and for playing an active role with the Mayo Junior team in the 2019 Championship.

The chairman, John McDonald, extended his congratulations to the Kilmeena men's U21 team on winning the 2019 County Championship title and the Junior Team on their Cusack Cup success.

Kilmeena GAA Club extends a huge thank you to everyone who made the night so memorable. A special thanks to the event coordinators, the sponsors, the band, and Knockranny House Hotel for hosting the night. Thanks to Councillor John O'Malley and Fr. John Regan for their attendance at the function. Thanks also to our special guest Minister Michael Ring, who has financially aided our club's development in recent years.

Unfortunately, the 2020 playing season for Kilmeena GAA and LGFA was unpredictable and unusual due to the Covid-19 virus. However, with a resilient community spirit and perseverance Kilmeena GAA and LGFA Club rescued the best it could out of a unique circumstance. Hopefully, the 2021 season will bring health, success, and more accomplishments to the club.





Teresa Smyth presents *Club Person of the Year*, Michael Ryan with his award



Caragh Ryan, *Community Person of the Year*, being presented with her award by Minister Michael Ring



Minister Michael Ring presents Shannon Bourke with the *Minor Ladies Player of the Year* award



Davy Feehan presents Dearbhla Grealis with the *Senior Ladies Player of the Year* award



Minister Michael Ring presents Katie Hogan with the *Minor Players' Player of the Year* award



Mark Hastings being presented with the *Alan Browne Memorial Minor Player of the Year* award by Minister Michael Ring



Sean Ryder being presented with the *Cillian McDonagh Memorial Players' Player of the Year* award from Pete McDonagh



Minister Michael Ring presents Brian Mortimer with his *Most Improved Player of the Year* award



Jane Barrett presents John McGlynn with the *Barrett Family Memorial Young Player of the Year* award

Jim Browne R.I.P.



Kilmeena GAA and parish were deeply saddened by the untimely loss of one of the community's true gentlemen. Jim was an active member of our parish and a former club player. Jim also held many officer roles within the club throughout the 60's 70's and 80's. He was West board delegate in 1965, vice-Chairman of the club from 1966 to 1971, team selector in 1971 and club Treasurer from 1976 to 1981. He was also involved in many other organisations, setting up the Foróige club in Carrowholly to junior convener at Westport Golf Club. He had a great love of music, and in the last years of his life he joined the Kilmeena and Fahy church choirs. He made firm friendships there, and he tried to keep them motivated during the first few weeks of the Covid-19 lockdown with some home-recorded exercise videos and songs!

He will be remembered by many for his dedication to the underage section of our club in tough times during the 70's and 80's. It is no coincidence that many of the players coached by Jim at underage level were to feature prominently in later successes enjoyed by the club. Many still remain active within the club thanks to Jim's influence.

All at Kilmeena GAA club would like to extend their deepest sympathies to Jim's wife Christina and to all his family and friends.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

John Moran R.I.P.



It was with great sadness that Kilmeena GAA and the community learned of the passing of John Moran, Carrowbeg, Kilmeena.

John was a great neighbour, community man and above all, a clubman and true Gael. His love and passion for Kilmeena GAA and his community was always evident and never faltering.

John's involvement in Kilmeena GAA stretches back to the formative years of the club during the 1950s when he, along with others, helped to build and guide the club in what were difficult years. He served in the role of secretary in 1957, before emigrating to London where again he was active within the GAA community, serving as treasurer of Parnell's GAA Club and as a county board delegate for 14 years until returning to his native Kilmeena in the '70s. On his return, he immediately immersed himself back into the Kilmeena club and took on the role of Junior team trainer. He also held many other roles and officerships within the club including that of club president from 1995 until 1999. Outside of the club John also held the position of West Board Divisional President.

John was to the forefront of the establishment of the club's lotto draw. In more recent years he loved nothing better than attending the Thursday night lotto draw and catching up on the week's activities within the club.

John was also a very loyal Mayo supporter and travelled the length and breadth of the country following the green and red.

John took great pride in his community and nothing was too much effort. He held roles on the Kilmeena Community Council, Kilmeena Group Water Scheme, Myna NS Board of Management, Kilmeena Graveyard Committee and was a Youth Club leader to name but a few.

John willingly imparted and shared his knowledge and years of experience. He will be greatly missed around our club and community.

All at Kilmeena GAA club would like to extend their deepest sympathies to John's wife Annette, his daughters Sandra, Tracey and her partner Ollie and to all his family and friends.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Kilmeena GAA Club would wish to express its most heartfelt sympathies to all families, neighbours and friends who have lost loved ones during this past year. May they rest in peace.