



Owen Roe O'Neill's SAC
Leckpatrick



CLUB DEVELOPMENT 2011 – 2014

Meeting the Challenges



The Eoghain Ruaidh Uí Néill GAA Club in
the 21st Century

Working Together for Club and Community





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Who We Are

Gaelic Games in Leckpatrick - from 1920

The present Club, known as Eoghain Ruaidh Uí Néill, or more commonly as Owen Roe's is based in the Leckpatrick parish just north of Strabane. A section of the parish is within Strabane town while the recent developments on the northern outskirts of Strabane fall within the parish. There are three defined areas within the parish corresponding to the three church areas and the main area for GAA activity at present is Glenmornan where the Club playing facilities are situated. The northern part of the parish – based around the school and church at Cloughcor – has limited involvement in the Club, with many of the younger players there favouring cricket or soccer. The school at Cloughcor is a thriving rural school and draws many of its pupils from the town of Strabane but there is only limited interaction between Club and school. The Strabane part of the parish too has only limited association with the Eoghain Ruaidh Club and is seen as open territory for the town Club. The Glenmornan area is strongest in support of GAA activities but the primary school there is in decline and likely to close within the next few years and this despite the fact that the number of families in the area has increased substantially over the last decade. The changing demographics poses problems for the future of the Eoghain Ruaidh Club and makes it essential that the other areas of the parish are more fully mobilized in support of GAA activities at all levels.

The Eoghain Ruaidh Uí Néill GAA Club may be only forty years old but the story of the GAA in the parish of Leckpatrick goes much further back, with the first evidence of a team competing in organised competitions appearing in 1920 when Cloughcor Emmet's participated in a North Tyrone/East Donegal league in 1921 and early in 1922. Scattered reports in the local press of the time give some information on this early team and it appears to have owed much of its original enthusiasm to local curate Fr Tom Bradley who was posted to the parish in 1920 and set about establishing a GAA Club. There was clearly a revival of Gaelic games going on at that time and much of the impetus may have arisen from the strong sense of anti partitionism that the political events of the time seemed to threaten. The prospect of rule from Belfast did not meet the expectations or





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hopes of the nationalist population and the decision of both the Strabane Urban and Rural Councils to refuse to recognise the new administration at Belfast from May 1921 heightened the sense of popular protest.

There was little knowledge of GAA rules and a special exhibition match was held for the whole North Tyrone area between Strabane and Cloughcor Emmet's in June 1921 with Strabane winning by 13 pts to 4pts for the Emmet's. A full league programme was run throughout the rest of the year and press reports of games in December reported on Mc Colgan and Doherty starring for the Emmet's. A game against Dunamanagh Red Hugh's on 1st Jan 1922 saw a narrow Emmet's victory on the score of 3pts to 2pts. Games continued until April 1922 when growing problems over travel and a seriously worsening political situation led to the collapse of the league and the disappearance of all the local Clubs. Games were played at Mc Shane's field at Ballydonaghey with Mc Nally and Frank M cCay listed as referees. A camogie team was started at the same time and it appears to have lasted until 1923 under the leadership of Jane Colgan, later Mrs Joe Bradley.

The next appearance of Gaelic games in the parish seems to have been in the mid 1930s when Glenmornan St Mary's made an appearance in the North Tyrone league, being welcomed by the board in December 1934 and playing league and championship in 1935. James Magee from Strabane appears to have been the main organiser and local men like the Kelly brothers, the McShanes, McCormick, Grieve and Casey were helped out by Blee, Kane and Mc Nicholl. The team appear to have stopped playing by August 1935 and by early 1936 the North Tyrone Board had also disbanded. It seems likely that the Glenmornan team turned to soccer by that stage but the knowledge of Gaelic was kept alive by playing in parochial sports and in challenge games against local parishes.

In 1944 the most momentous revival took place with the local press reporting on the formation of a GAA Club at a meeting in Ballymagorry in October, with the parish field being made available by Fr Kerlin. The Chairman was Pearse Grieve while the Secretary was J. Mc Colgan and Treasurer John Mc Shane and a league table a year later showed that the Leckpatrick team had played 13 games plus a number of championship and other cup games. There was also an attempt to promote hurling and the press carried an advertisement for a game between Leckpatrick and Omagh at Omagh on 7th March 1945. Results did not appear to





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go the Club's way in 1946 but Packie McNamee was selected on a West Tyrone divisional team while Frank Reid was to be part of the successful Tyrone minor teams of 1946-48. The Leckpatrick team sought to withdraw from Tyrone competitions in March 1947, claiming that playing in the Derry City competitions would greatly reduce travelling. A decision on this request was postponed and by May 1947 a Club delegate withdrew Leckpatrick from adult competitions and a number of players transferred to Strabane to continue playing Gaelic games while others played with Aughabrack and later Dunamanagh. A number of players continued to play as Leckpatrick in local sports in 7 a side competitions and these helped keep the memory of Gaelic games alive for the next generation.

In the late 1950s there was growing awareness of GAA activities and the success of Tyrone teams in the 1956-57 era would have contributed greatly to the new interest. Young players from Glenmornan began to go towards Dunamanagh for youth games and a number of older teenagers played with Strabane. In 1963 a group of leaders emerged in the Glenmornan area and it was decided to enter a team in Minor and Juvenile competitions. Both achieved a high degree of success in the first year, going on to contest county finals at both levels and thus was born the new Club, Leckpatrick Pearse Og, for the 1964 season. County titles were won at both Minor and Juvenile level and an adult team took part in West Tyrone competitions, with some support from Dunamanagh players. In the following years youth teams competed strongly while the adult team reached the Tyrone Intermediate semi finals in 1967 and 1969. Emigration was always a problem, however, and at the start of 1970 the Leckpatrick and Dunamanagh Clubs came together to form Owen Roes in an effort to achieve greater permanence and improved facilities. The early years of the amalgamation proved successful and a strong base was established. One problem was that very success, with more and more players wanting to play Gaelic games but with not enough teams to cater for them. The result was the decision by Aughabrack players to establish their own Club in 1978 followed by the decision of Dunamanagh players to re establish their Club by 1982. That posed problems for the Owen Roe Club and they moved from a position of a senior Club to a junior Club. Yet the committee saw the importance of developing a strong youth structure and began a programme of embarking on creating better facilities. In 1987 they opened Pairc an Ghleanna and followed this up with the building of new Clubrooms by 1998.





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A strong administrative structure and prudent financial management enabled them to embark on further ground development by 2008, with the construction of a training pitch and the redevelopment of the existing ground into a sand mattress pitch. The development of an active ladies football programme and a strong coaching ethos at youth level helped set the groundwork for looking forward to an exciting future and the development of a Club strongly based within the local community.

A Club Development group was set up in 2002 to plan the way forward for the Club and this looked at all aspects of Club activities, with initial emphasis on coaching and Club administration. The need for coach training was recognized and the creation of sub committees was the first stage in developing coherent structures. A Development Officer was added to the Club committee and by 2006 the County development officer helped lead a review of where we were and assisted in formulating a series of objectives for the short and longer term. Funding and ground development became the core elements of a 4 year plan from 2007 to 2010 while administration was also examined. By 2009 Club Maith was seen as a way forward for a whole-Club evaluation and development programme and thus we have this new series of objectives in helping to deliver the core elements of the Club ethos and plan for a reinvigorated Club in the years ahead.



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Our Vision

To establish the Club at the core of a vibrant and caring Community, dedicated to inclusion and social cohesion and working to promote Gaelic games and culture for as wide a range of people as possible in the Club catchment area and throughout the wider GAA family





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Achieving our Vision

This Vision will best be achieved by -:

- 1. Developing a strong Community base**
- 2. Valuing the importance of volunteerism and amateurism**
- 3. Seeking the widest possible involvement of the Community in Club activities**
- 4. Being open and inclusive and welcoming to others**
- 5. Ensuring that the Club provides exemplars of good practice and administration**
- 6. Seeking best possible levels of skill attainment and development**
- 7. Providing first class facilities for team games and recreational use**
- 8. Seeking co-operation with other Clubs and sporting organisations**
- 9. Encouraging the active participation of the whole Community in sporting and recreational activities**
- 10. Developing a strong ethos of healthy living and fitness**
- 11. Developing a spirit of leadership and initiative among the Club members and Community**
- 12. Being committed to the Respect ethos of the GAA with regards to all aspects of Club activity**





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Key Areas for Development

Key Area 1 Leadership and Club structures

Aim – To provide strong and effective leadership for the Club in the years ahead to allow the fullest implementation of the various development areas

1. Club to work through the Ulster Council GAA strategic programme to achieve the Club Maith Silver award
2. Club administration to be streamlined as recommended in Club Maith handbook
3. Review Club Constitution to take account of modifications in administration
4. Develop whole Club awareness of Club policies and administration processes
5. Develop financial planning to take account of annual budgets
6. Develop long term financial planning to take account of the requirements of the development plans
7. Develop annual programme of Club and Community events
8. Seek wider involvement of present and past players in Club administration and future planning
9. Seek wider involvement of the Community in Club administration and development
10. Ensure that Club administration and development programmes are updated annually by the Implementation Sub Committee and arising from continuing Club training by Ulster Council and Tyrone County Committee



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Key Areas for Development

Key area 2 Coaching and Games Development

Aim – To provide access to Gaelic Games for the whole Club Community and seek the development of player achievement to the highest possible levels

1. Revise and develop Club coaching programmes at Youth and Adult levels for male and females
2. Build up the Club reservoir of highly qualified coaches at all levels
3. Make fuller use of the coaching programmes and refresher events organised by the Tyrone Coaching Officer, the Ulster Council and GAA headquarters
4. Provide annual coaching clinics for all Club coaches
5. Develop FUNdamentals Coaching programme at school and Club level
6. Develop stronger coaching and support links with the primary schools in the Club catchment area
7. Ensure regular monitoring of coaching and management of Club teams
8. Ensure that players, Committee, coaches and parents are made aware of Club disciplinary policies and requirements
9. Develop an annual Summer Camp for coaching and recreational games
10. Devise and run an annual Coaching Clinic at U14 level
11. Seek wider involvement of current and past players in coaching and team management





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Key Areas for Development

Key area 2 Coaching and Games Development

12. Examine the fall out rate among young players and seek means of reducing this fall off
13. Develop opportunities for players from all parts of the Club catchment area to participate fully in GAA activities
14. Implement a policy of increased awareness of healthy living and fitness issues among Youth and Adult players
15. Appoint a Committee member with responsibility for Refereeing development at Club level
16. Support the opportunities for Club players to participate at county level where appropriate
17. Develop a structured programme to introduce Hurling at Primary School and Youth level
18. Implement the GAA Respect Initiative at all levels of Club activity



Key Areas for Development

Key Area 3 Culture, Heritage and Community

Aim – To reinvigorate awareness of and respect for heritage and traditions and provide opportunities for Club and Community members to actively participate in music, song, dance and other areas of heritage.

1. Deliver cultural/heritage events at Club/Community level on a quarterly basis
2. Encourage the development of dancing and music tuition at the Club
3. Organise an annual ceilidh dance as Club/Community event
4. Develop Irish language classes at Youth and Adult level within the Club
5. Provide Gaeltacht grants at Club level
6. Encourage awareness of local heritage through school and Club projects – using townlands, history, traditions and photographic exhibitions
7. Develop Scor at Youth and Adult level
8. Provide a cultural event as part of an annual Club/Community festival
9. Re-establish the Drama Group as part of heritage and recreational activity at Club/Community level
10. Develop use of Irish at Committee meetings and in Club notices.



Key Areas for Development

Key Area 4 Inclusion and Community Interaction

Aim – To place the Club at the centre of the Community to act as a motivational force for Community regeneration and progress

1. Actively promote awareness of Club plans and activities throughout the wider Community
2. Work with local Community leaders to help develop Community interaction programmes
3. Organise an annual Community Welcome Night at the Club
4. Develop programmes of recreational activities for males and females
5. Seek contacts and co-operation with other Clubs/organisations in providing sporting and recreational opportunities for Club and Community members
6. Involve people from the Community in planning and implementing Club led programmes of recreational and cultural activities
7. Provide leadership in developing programmes on healthy living and wellness
8. Organise an annual Festival to increase the feel good factor in the Community
9. Forge links with other Community groups and with the Community department at Strabane District Council
10. Investigate the needs of young people and young families in the Community and seek to provide leadership in meeting such needs
11. Producing quarterly Club newsletters aimed at Club and Community and distributed through schools, churches and shops



Key Areas for Development

Key Area 5 Development and Improved Facilities

Aim – to monitor the progress of the current development plans and ensure that future needs are kept to the forefront of Club planning and implementation

1. Complete the lease of Glenmornan Community Hall from Strabane District Council and arrange Club and Community consultation on redevelopment plans
2. Investigate and develop a funding programme for the redevelopment of the Community Hall
3. Provide fitness and training equipment in the Hall for Club and Community use
4. Initiate longer term financial planning for Club development and maintenance costs
5. Develop a 3G pitch in place of the present outdoor all weather play area
6. Enhance the physical linkage between Club and Hall
7. Complete the lighting of the training ground and the fencing of both pitches
8. Develop plans for the lighting of the main pitch within a 5 year timescale
9. Examine the future requirements of the Clubrooms and the need for further development
10. Provide for annual review of progress of development plan