



FOUNDED 1884

Fingallians GAA Club

C.L.G. FINE GHALLAINN

29 NOV 2022

Dear Members,

What a wonderful year to be a Fingallian. It surely has to be the most successful year on the field on the Club's 140 years. At the time of writing, we have just won our very first Minor Hurling Championship with a brilliant 3.14 to 2.13 win, claiming Minor B Championship. Across all codes from Juvenile up, it has been amazing, a fantastic Minor season and at Adult Level, we have surpassed all expectations. Intermediate Championships at Ladies and Hurling, our first Senior football final, finals and wins throughout our teams. To see all parts of the club coming out to support each of the teams makes me so proud. The year that kept on giving. More on this later.

It has been a very tough year for many families in our club. Many who have passed before their time. We remember Tommy Howard, Tony Mills, Derek O'Connor, Vinny Regan, Deirdre O'Connor, Doreen McKittrick and all of our club members, relatives and friends who have passed this year.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.

As one of the clubs founded in 1884, we have a huge birthday next year. From small beginnings, we have grown to a club of more than 2,000 members, 1,500 players Juvenile and Adult with 55% Male and 45% Female players and more than 100 teams. Our Athletics Club continues to thrive and thanks to Liam, we are widely known for the support of our language and off field culture.

Our 140th year is a time to celebrate our long history and ever more important contribution to Swords. We need your help to start planning the celebrations.

Our deficit in facilities particularly our floodlit facilities is an issue that you have all have first hand experience with. Couple that with our dependency on Fingal CoCo pitches which can be closed on a Friday afternoon due to poor weather are challenges our teams face on a regular basis.

Last year we spoke about the €260K investment in the new allweather, which has been a huge asset to the club. These facilities have allowed us to run a January Hurling and November Football Blitz for 8 to 12 year olds. With 350 Juveniles playing each Sunday, we will reap the benefits of these investments.

Lawless Memorial Park, Swords, Co. Dublin.
Ceanróid, Páirc Uí Laighléis, Sórd Colmcille.

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Our big pinch point now is full size pitches playable all year round. We are increasing our Adult Teams year on year, but not yet able to provide additional facilities that are available year round. It is disappointing that Millers Glen is not yet available to us, and when available, will probably not be exclusive. Climate change has impacted us at our busiest times of the year, and trending towards similar impacts every year. We need to identify a location to get at a minimum 2 pitches that are floodlit and playable all year. With Metro looming, the lack of alternative facilities is very concerning. This has to be a top priority for our club in the short term and I am asking for your help by volunteering to set up a Taskforce to try and identify lands/facilities that will address the above shortfall. Please also reach out to our local representatives to garner their support.

It has been encouraging to see an improvement in the discipline on the sidelines at our games. A bit of respect goes a long way. The same for our mentors and volunteers. They give up their spare time freely to coach your kids. They also spend so much time learning and bringing new ideas. Parents and supporters, stand back and support our mentors, our players and our teenage referees who give their time to referee juvenile games – without them we would have no games. Respect our volunteers and say thank you please.

Financially, this year has been challenging. At executive level, we see that bank balances reducing month on month as we get hit by huge energy costs (up to €60K this year) and everything else costing more. We also had some significant capital spends on our building that is now touching on 30 years old. We will need to fundraise for any future capital spending. Our membership has not been adjusted since before COVID. This traditionally covers insurance, registration and competition fees and very little more. We will have to adjust our memberships upwards to reflect increasing costs. We will continue to keep costs as low as possible. But it is still incredible value to be part of a wonderful club in the heart of the community. Its our place.

A good opportunity to thank Declan and Aiden on the Boots Boutique initiative , recycling boots, helmets and hurls within our Juveniles. Funds raised have greatly assisted our Fins stars programme.

Once again, the National GAA draw is a big source of funds, We were top sellers in Leinster in 2022 with 26K insales, with incredible organisation from Aiden Doherty. We hope you will support this years draw and associated Christmas Raffle.

Back to what it's all about, the games. We had for the first time 3 Adult Hurling teams, all of whom competed well in league and championship. At the end of this year we are now promoted to Senior 1 Championship and also promoted to AHL2, an incredible year

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by any standards. And then we top it off with a Minor Championship. In Ladies Football, we are back in Senior Championship after a 3 year absence. But our 2nd team were also so close, losing a brilliant local derby to St Finians. Add in a Minor A Hield, U16 D1 Final and countless other throphies, a fantastic year.

At time of writing our Senior Footballers are in a playoff for propotion to AFL1.

Although a big challenge, it would help prepare for a campaign in Senior 1 Championship, which was a goal so well achieved. They were oh so close to a first ever Senior Championship, but inexperience told in the last minutes.

At Juvenile, we are also making significant progress. Only this past weekend, we had U13 lads promoted to D1 for next year and earlier in the year the U15's won Leinster Feile, a magnificent achievement. Also add in a Camogie Feile win. So many others have achieved this year in ways not measured by trophies. At Juvenile level keeping all playing and at a level where they are having fun and progress is so important. Having at least 2 teams at each age is critical. To achieve we need many more coaches all working together. We as a club will continue to provide coaching programmes. Our young players are on different development journeys. Don't judge them too early. A Team picked at Minor Level will look very different to that at U14.

The GAA is nothing without its volunteers. Like GAA Clubs up and down the country, Fins responded when asked during COVID. Many have continued this with the great response we get for the Memory Café, a special morning once a month. Post COVID, we are all back chasing our tails again. Fins needs help all through the club from mentors to commitees and ad hoc needs.

Fins has a huge part to play in our community. With the incredible Memory Café, we also host Exwell Medical which provides an incredible community service with clinical exercise for people with chronic illness. We recently supported a call to help spread this program throughout the country via GAA Clubs. We are once again helping the Lions Club in their Christmas appeal. Hosting the Blood Bank being another, these are key initiatives we deliver under the Healthy Clubs Umberella. We would like to do more mental health and drug and alcohol awareness initiatives. Also some community events such as darkness into light. We need people to co-ordinate and run more initiatives for 2024. Please help.

This year we have a small few changes on Club executive. For the Club to continue to grow and evolve, it needs fresh people and thinking. I indicated that I wished to step

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down, but unfortunately we have no taker at the moment. Equally, we have no nominee for Juvenile Chair. The naming of Chairperson, Secretary and Juvenile Chairperson in a High Court case is surely an influence.

Despite the challenges, we ask for you to put your hand up and help. Bring your skills and life experiences to help. Your Club needs you.

Some of our Executive members have moved on this year. Gary Beresford and Liam O'Culbaird leave after delivering a huge body of work on behalf of the club. Denis McCarthy, who moves on from Juvenile Chair after a very challenging year, has done a huge amount of unseen work. They have given so much of their time, experience and professional skills and ask nothing for it. A thanks from you would be greatly appreciated.

Esther Williams, Joe Nugent and Carl Jones morph into new roles. It is good to see new volunteers bringing experiences and a view of our younger generations. As stated last year, I wish to hand over my role and will do so in an orderly way.

There are so many volunteers behind the scenes making sure the club runs smoothly. They deserve so much thanks and they are too many to namecheck, so on behalf of the membership thank you all.

In what has been an incredible year on the field, I would like to wrap up on the most positive of notes.

Congratulations to all of you who played with our teams and performed with distinction and no little pride. We were very lucky to get a substantial amount of silverware this year. Let's celebrate that and plan for more progress next year, our 140th Birthday.

#finsabú

Colin Foley,
Cathaoirleach,
CLG Fine Ghalainn.

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