



FOUNDED 1884

Fingallians GAA Club

C.L.G. FINE GHALLAINN

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2023

The 2022 AGM was held on 23rd November 2022, was the first in person AGM for some years and was well attended.

The 2023 season brought about which could well be regarded as unprecedented success on the playing field for the Club in its almost 140 year history. In brief our Senior Footballers regained Senior 1 Championship status and are in a promotion playoff to regain AFL 1 League status. Our Intermediate Hurlers won their Championship, for the second time in 3 years, this time gaining promotion to Senior Status in the process. They also gained promotion from AHL3 to AHL2 in the league. Not to be outdone our Ladies with their Intermediate Championship success have returned to the Senior Championship and comfortably retained their Division 1 League status. In a year of firsts we had our first Under 21 Camogie Team, our Minor Hurlers are in the "B" Championship final and we had our first Leinster Feile winners. For the first time we fielded 4 adult football teams and 3 adult hurling teams in both league and championship. Our under- age section continues to expand and our capital investment in our new all-weather training area was more than justified with the vast majority of children within the Club now enjoying two mid-week training sessions. This on field success could not have been achieved without the dedicated input of mentors, players, supporters and positivity from our parents with 3 summer under- age blitzes in which over 800 children from all over Ireland were involved. Off the field initiatives such as the Memory Café, as well as providing a significant social function which together with Ex Well Medical has proven to be a popular and worthwhile facility for our older members.

Maintaining such playing success and building upon it where possible, despite the addition of the new all-weather area, stretch our existing our existing facilities, training and playing resources. Climate change and inclement weather are set continue with consequent negative impact but this is nothing compared to the likely negative impact the Metro North development is likely to inflict upon us. Not least in this regard is the planned permanent loss of one full sized pitch in Balheary and the accompanied uncompensated loss of parking in that vicinity. While we have had various promises it is frustrating to relate that we still waiting the use of the facilities at Millers Glen, which when it becomes available, we are now told it might be on a shared basis with another GAA Club. Our search for viable additional facilities continues. Fingal Council tell us they have nothing to give us. We have had discussions with various political groups

Lawless Memorial Park, Swords, Co. Dublin.

Ceannróid, Páirc Uí Laighléis, Sórd Colmcille.

Tel: 01-8400125 / 01-8400763

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outlining our dire need and we have had a meeting with the Minister for Sport, which gave rise to the prospect of a new, yet to be announced, initiative for the identifying local lands that might be suitable for pitches and funding the purchase of same. No doubt the incoming Executive will be actively evaluating and pursuing all such opportunities. It is open to every member to make known to their political representatives the urgent need for the Club's needs to be addressed.

The finances of the Club continue to be well managed and perusal of our accounts will demonstrate that we have managed to achieve a surplus of almost €90,000 (with depreciation costs of €46,853) which is despite crippling increased energy costs and considerable outlay on renewals as the infrastructure of our facilities begins to age and these costs will continue to accrue. We are very lucky to have had such a successful National Draw again bringing in more than €26,000 (we were again the best in Leinster) and to have had a well-supported night at "the Dogs" in Shelbourne Park and our Bingo and Lotto income. Forward planning indicates that as well as fund raising during the year a long- postponed increase in annual subscriptions is warranted.

Our Irish Language and Cultural activities continue to be enthusiastically pursued which is in no small measure is due to the yeas of input and dedication on the part of Liam O Culbaird, who now sadly wishes us "Slán Leat" and we wish him well. However, we have every confidence and expectation that his successor Esther Williams will assume this mantle with her usual elan and dedication.

Coaching and the development of new mentors remains a vital and necessary part of the Club's success. It is hoped that the coming season will see further progress and build upon the great start commenced this year.

Press coverage will have brought to the attention of all members that High Court proceedings were issued against named officers by the Club by a mother, on behalf of her children, who are all members of the Club. This case was struck out on consent in the High Court. To try and resolve all issues surrounding this matter the Club appointed an external Mediator to meet with the parties and make recommendations as to how all parties could move positively forward. As of now there has not been a nomination for somebody that is agreeable to assume the position of Juvenile Chairperson for the 2024 season.

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Discipline, while marginally improved upon since 2022, continues to be a problem and it is worrying that disciplinary problems seem to be more prevalent in some teams than others. Our objective is that the improvement achieved to date can be further built upon during 2024. One obvious way of striving towards that objective is for mentors and parents to understand and appreciate that their good behaviour both at matches and training sets the example for their children to follow. All mentors and parents are encouraged to read the Code of Conduct.

The success of our Senior Footballers has already been referenced. It is noteworthy that for the first time we fielded 4 adult teams. Our second team, newly promoted to AFL5 managed to retain that status and in winning one of their two championship matches remain at Junior 1 All County for 2024. The third team, having had to cope with early injuries, were unfortunately beaten in the Junior 6 North Final and that team's success is replicated in they being in a League promotion play-off against Castleknock. The fourth team fulfilled their league fixtures, an achievement in itself in their first year, and missed out on a quarter final place on score difference. Our Minor first team finished third in a competitive Division 2 League and our second team are mid-table in Division 6 North. Our first team, put into the "A" Championship, did well with one win, draw and a loss against good opposition while our second team won one and lost two at Minor D North Level.

On the Hurling front the success of our first team is already recorded. Our second team, having jumped a grade to AHL 6 and to Junior C Championship status comfortably retained those positions and might well have been in line for league promotion if there had been better player availability for their earlier league games. In the championship in the Quarter Final they conceded a goal with the last puck of the game to loose by a point to Tomas Davis who went on to handsomely win their semi final and finals. The third team, at times struggling for players, fulfilled their league fixtures and bolstered by a few veterans made the Championship Quarter Final where they lost to St Marks, the eventual winners.

In Ladies Football as already mentioned the first team regained Senior status by winning the Intermediate Championship and remain in Division One League. The second lost out in the final at Junior C level and finished 5th in the Division 4 league. The third team won the Junior G Shield and placed 4th in the Division 9 league. The first Minor Team won the Division One Shield and competed in the Division 1 League with the second team also enjoying Shield success at Division 8 level and competed in the Division 7 league.

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Our Adult Camogie Section is now in its third season and its progress as been remarkable. Fielding two adult teams the young first team lost out in a tightly fought semi-final to St. Maurs at Intermediate 2 level. The second team competed at Junior 6 level and has prospects of success next year with an influx of newly recruited players. The Minor Team competed at Division 1 level where there were some tough matches which experience should stand them in good stead for next season.

A comprehensive Juvenile Report for 2023 will be available at the AGM and in brief the situation is that numbers for Under 7 Girls increased from 24 to 34 over the course of the year with Under 8 Boys numbers increasing from 52 to 56. Under 8 Girls increased from 52 to 59. The Under 9 Boys increased from 32 to 36 but there was a drop of 51 to 47 for the Girls. The number of Boys at Under 10 level decreased from 61 to 52 and figures for Girls at this level were not available. The numbers for Under 11 Boys are 61 and Girls 41. Boys Under 12 number 48 and Girls 38. These teams are only referenced by numbers participating. Under 13 Boys with 69 players are now competing in CCC2 leagues and the Girls number 38 of whom only 17 participate in camogie. The Under 14 Boys field 2 football and hurling teams with the Girls fielding 2 football and 1 camogie team. Numbers at Girls Under 15 allow for 2 football and camogie teams while at boys level, who competed in the Feile with success, the numbers are much tighter with one football and a hurling team. The Under 16 Boys with 40 participants have two teams in both hurling and football and while still in the football championship have already won the B Hurling league. Numbers for Under 16 Girls are very tight with only 19 participants overall.

The foregoing is intended only as a brief overview and a prelude to the comprehensive Juvenile Report.

The Club and its members are the beneficiaries of a huge time and effort input from its Executive, Committees and Mentors without which the Club would not function. Hopefully more members will feel empowered and energised to make a contribution in that regard during the coming year and in years to come. 2024 sees the Club, as a foundation member of the GAA, celebrate its 140 years in existence. Hopefully this will be a year in which to enjoy continued if not enhanced success on the playing field and social enjoyment and harmony within the Club as we celebrate this anniversary.

Eoin Martin
Runai
November 2023.

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