

# St Brigid's GAA Club Community Walking Track

(To access video footage of this project log on to [www.getirelandwalking.ie](http://www.getirelandwalking.ie))



The walking track at St. Brigid's GAA Club, Co. Roscommon has enhanced the role of the club as a focal point for physical activity in the community. The track has also brought new people and energy into the club.

The drive to develop a walking track at St. Brigid's GAA Club primarily came from older members of the club, who were no longer able to play GAA games and were becoming increasingly less active. The project was also informed by the vision of the national positive ageing strategy. This strategy speaks of an Ireland that enables and supports all ages, including older people, to enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential.

A small group of club members came together to develop the idea of putting in a walking track around St. Brigid's club grounds. The group approached the local club executive for permission to ascertain its feasibility and to confirm agreement in principal for the project. A separate walking project committee was established to implement the project. They met with other clubs that had already successfully set up a walking track to get ideas and advice. They consulted technical experts in relation to the route and specifications of the track. The project was costed and funding options were considered.

This group secured Leader funding for the walking project. Complying with the requirements of Leader funding did require the club to allow access to the walking facility to all members of the community; to this end a licence arrangement between the GAA club and Leader was drawn up. The funding allowed the committee to construct an 800m walking track complete with lighting and an outdoor exercise area. The walking track is now available to all members of the community on a daily basis. It's a central, safe and social space for people to walk and get physically active.





The group organised a local fundraising event to get the project off the ground and these monies were considered part of the club's contribution to the project for the purpose of Leader requirements. They secured significant contributions of labour and expertise on a voluntary basis from within the club and the community. This helped immensely in achieving the completion of the project.

The facility is covered under the club insurance in the normal way and its maintenance, which is minimal, is undertaken as part of the general club ground maintenance. The on-going costs of providing the walking track are also very small. The lighting is estimated to cost only approximately only €1 per day.

The track is used on a daily basis by a broad spectrum of people from the local area. Locals speak about the benefits of having this safe walking facility in their community outlining the contribution it has made to their levels of physical activity, health, and social contact. The social impact can be seen when parents stay to walk in small groups while their children train, this is giving them an opportunity to exercise, socialise and become more connected to the club. Informal small groups of walkers often form to do a few laps and these groups draw in people of all generations. The looped track now in place enables people of different levels of fitness to walk together. People can walk at their own pace, rest and re-join a group, very easily.

A winning combination for all.