



# Volunteer Recruitment Toolkit

Developing the strength of the GAA volunteer community

[www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)





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# Introduction



**There is no organisation like the GAA. Nowhere in the world is there a national movement that has played such a positive role in the lives of its citizens or has given such meaning and purpose to small communities, larger towns and the whole nation. GAA clubs with their wonderful facilities are the jewel in the crown of the association and are its most important asset.**

It is the incredible work carried out by thousands of volunteers, young and old, male and female, from every single walk of life which drives this remarkable organisation and keeps it fresh, relevant and a critically important part of the lives of Irish people. Being involved in the GAA gives a sense of fulfilment which is unrivalled. It brings membership of the biggest club in Ireland, puts one right at the heart of Irish culture and provides a pastime for every member of the family.

Our magnificent stadium at Croke Park gives us all a sense of pride that we have built the foundations, created the players who grace the sacred sod and when we go home, we will start the process again with the under eights on the following Sunday. People want to belong to the GAA. They want to feel a part of this remarkable movement. People outside the GAA look in at us with envy and wish they could join in. The challenge for us is to open the door to them. This Recruitment Toolkit sets out how we can recruit those who are waiting

to be asked, suggests strategies to keep those who are already there and lists some approaches to attract those from outside the organisation who have gifts and skills to offer the GAA. All of the ideas within have been tried and found to succeed by clubs who helped us to create it.

Má usáideann coistí clubanna na smaointí seo, is dócha go mbeidh said abálta ní amhain fuil úr a mhealladh, a í a choinneáil chomh maith.

“Being involved in the GAA gives a sense of fulfilment which is unrivalled.”



## Why people do and do not volunteer

This section gives an insight in to why people volunteer and why they do not. Understanding these reasons will be important in devising a recruitment strategy, which is discussed later.

# Some facts about volunteering

“The three main rewards people get from volunteering are the satisfaction of seeing the results, the feeling of doing good and meeting people.”

**The following is a list of facts about volunteering that will give you an understanding of how powerful and resourceful volunteering is in Ireland and the potential that exists to increase your volunteer base.**

- Most volunteers across society are women ... but often our GAA Clubs aren't in a position to capitalise on that.
- Fewer older people tend to volunteer ... but those who do tend to deliver more hours of input than anyone else!
- Between 17% and 33% of the adult population volunteers on a regular basis.
- People volunteer for an average of 5 - 12 hours per month, although the range is wide; some give less than one hour, whilst others give over 50 hours.
- 58% of people get involved in voluntary work because they are asked, 36% offer their services.
- The three main rewards people get from volunteering are the satisfaction of seeing the results, the feeling of doing good and meeting people.
- 65% of people who don't volunteer at present say they would be willing to use some of their spare time for voluntary work.
- 72% of people feel that volunteers offer something that could never be provided by paid professionals.

(source - [volunteeringireland.ie](http://volunteeringireland.ie))

# Why people volunteer

“They make and keep friendships.”



**Firstly, lets look into the volunteer ethos and the thinking of those who volunteer and those who do not. At a GAA volunteer workshop in Co. Kildare, the answers given to the question of ‘Why do you Volunteer?’ were quite revealing and are as follows.**

- Because I was asked!
- I grew up with GAA in my family.
- I moved into a new area and wanted to get to know the community.
- I enjoy it.
- It keeps me busy/occupied.
- I make and keep friendships.
- It helps my career.
- I got involved via my children.
- I wanted to “give something back” after my playing career ended.
- I want to be associated with something positive and successful.
- I became unemployed for a while and felt my occupation had a lot to offer.
- I retired early, and had an interest in GAA and some “time on my hands”.

# Why people do not volunteer

Research found the main reason for not volunteering is that people were not asked to.

**Even more revealing are the reasons why people do not volunteer. Any attempt to recruit new helpers needs to take cognisance of these factors. The reasons, taken from various sources, are as follows;**

- I was not asked (quoted in research as the main reason).
- I don't have the skills required.
- I'll be over-burdened with work ... and will never "escape" from it.
- I don't have the confidence ...or the time ... or the interest.
- I don't know how to get involved.
- Lack of interest/enthusiasm.
- Clubs don't sell themselves/lack of marketing/communication.
- I don't know about the GAA or the local Club (much as we might think they do) ... or, worse, they have a poor image of the club.
- I have a poor image of the Club.

The above lists contain many lessons for those who want to recruit volunteers into their club. Most of us can see ourselves reflected in many of the reasons given and awareness and good management can ensure valuable volunteers are kept, affirmed and refreshed.

It is a fact that people do sometimes leave and we need to be aware of why they do so. Apart from the obvious reasons like burnout, personality clashes and frustration at the staleness of the club, those who leave because they feel their involvement has ended organically send out a particular message to club management committees. Later on, some ideas will be presented with a view to holding on to ex players and parents whose children have moved past the underage scene and now see no role for themselves within the club.



## Encouraging people to volunteer

This section discusses how to encourage new people to volunteer and provides some tips on how to approach new people and provide them with a role description etc.



# Positive image in the club

**Of critical importance is the image that your club has in the community. The GAA as an organisation has a powerful image and is rightly seen as progressive, well organised and modern in its outlook. Therefore, people will want to be associated with a GAA club that is positive in its outlook, is well managed and well respected in the local community.**

The club must be seen as:

- Open and welcoming: it should be a 'place of doors, not a place of walls'.
- An energetic place, full of enthusiastic people and full of activity.
- Making a major contribution to the community.
- Well organised where people's time is productive.
- Safe (especially for children) and well managed.
- Part of a huge, vibrant and successful organisation.

**“The club must be seen as part of a huge, vibrant and successful organisation.”**

# Club planning

**Developing a club plan is a good way of promoting a positive image for the club and will give people a sense that the club is going in the right direction. People like to see progress and a plan is a great way of demonstrating that.**

As part of the development of the club plan using the Croke Park club planning program, a workshop is held where all club members and supporters attend and discuss the future of the club. This workshop can prove very successful in attracting volunteers.

## Club Example:

The Edenderry club in Offaly held a club planning workshop as part of the development of their club plan. At end of the club house, they put 6 flipcharts on the wall with headings of 6 areas they required volunteers (coaching and games, fundraising etc). They then put post-it notes on each table and asked people to write their name and contact number and put the post-it note on to the flipchart that contained the topic they wished to volunteer in. This proved very successful in getting new people involved in the club.

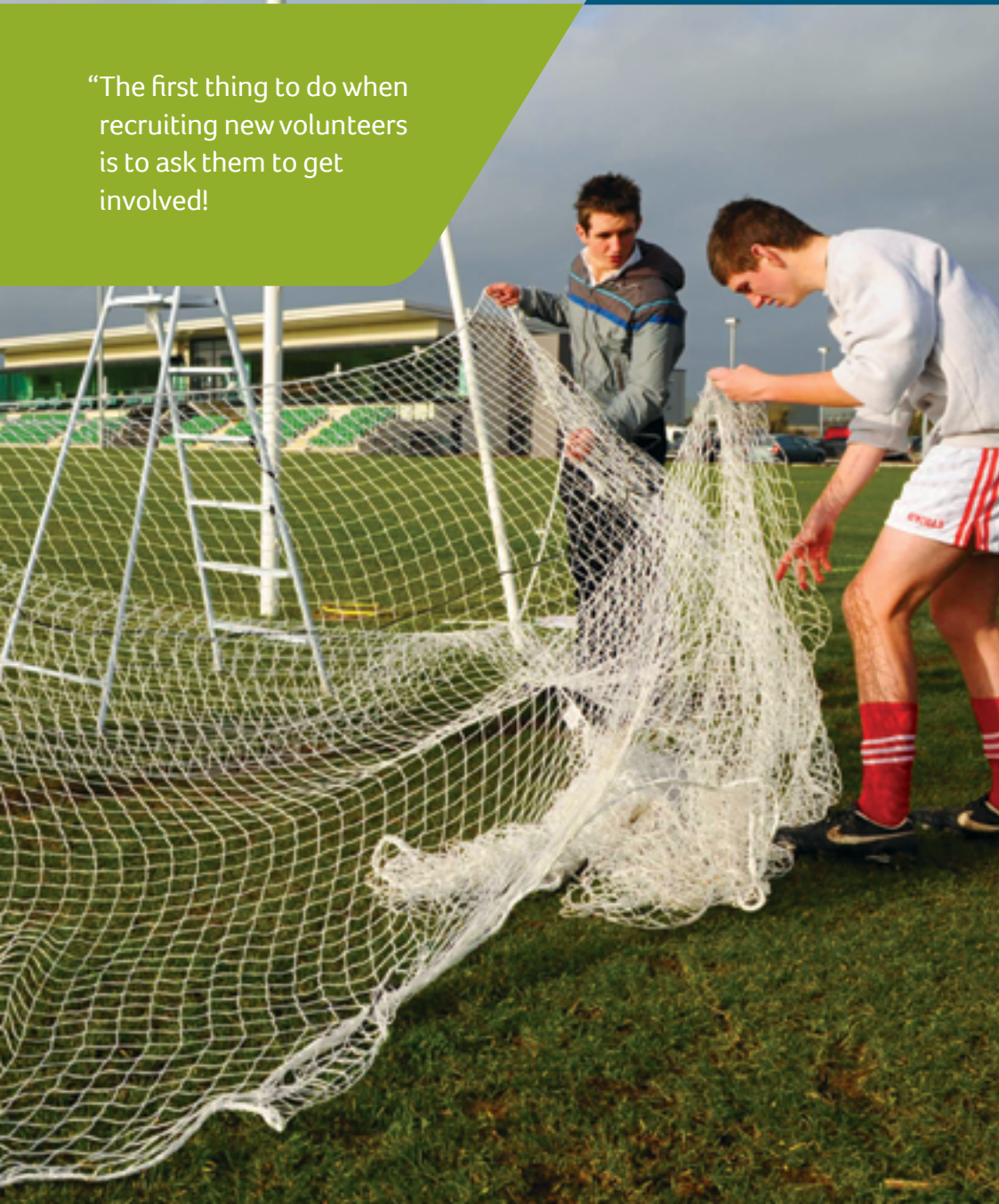
For more on developing a Club plan, please see the section in the GAA Club manual on club planning on the clubzone section of [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)

*Appendix 2 discusses how the Ballygarvan GAA Club in Cork developed a Club strategy and how it has helped them to attract new volunteers.*



# Approaching new volunteers and providing a role description

“The first thing to do when recruiting new volunteers is to ask them to get involved!



**The first thing to do when recruiting new volunteers is to ask them to get involved! It is advantageous that the person who is asking is known and respected by the potential volunteer.**

Be specific about what they are being asked to do and the amount of time involved. Remember, one of the main reasons given for not volunteering is that people feel that they do not have the time and the necessary skills. Therefore, it is best to match people to roles within the club based on their own personal and work related skills. Therefore, if the club needs someone to update the club website, ask someone with IT knowledge and explain to them the amount of time involved. Ensure that this is all they will be asked to do.

Once they're willing to help, best practice tells us to:

- Bring them along and formally introduce them to the Club.
- Let them know “who’s-who-and what’s- what”.
- As outlined, explain what it is you want them to do and make sure it’s a specific, clear-cut piece of work. (Note: See the sample role descriptions on the next page).
- Avoid, at all costs, over-loading them: don’t throw anyone in at the deep end...and be clear about the time commitment involved.
- Provide them with support...maybe get an existing volunteer to mentor them.

Child Protection and other issues mean we can’t just let people “turn up un-announced” and walk into a role in our Club. We need to be sure we have the right people in the right places.

*Appendix 3 discusses how the Silverbridge Club in Armagh has successfully encouraged parents to become involved in coaching in the Club.*

# Sample role descriptions



As already discussed, it is a good idea to provide the potential volunteer with a brief outline of what is involved, being particularly clear on the amount of time involved.

The following are sample role descriptions. Blank ones are available in the appendix.

## Role: Club Registrar

- Description:** Register players and members on the online registration system.
- Time:** This will involve about 6 hours work in total on the online system, in Jan, Feb and March. It will also involve attending the club juvenile registration day in early Feb.
- Training:** The County IT Officer will provide training in early February.
- Benefits:** You will be a part of the biggest sporting and community based organisation in Ireland and play a vital role in our club.

## Role: Under 10's coach

- Description:** To provide coaching to our under 10 footballers in a fun and safe environment.
- Time:** Coaching will take place each Saturday morning from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m. from April to September. There will be 4 under 10 coaches in the club as well as number of parents helping out. Therefore, if you can't make it each Saturday, there will be plenty of cover.
- Training:** You will be provided with a GAA Foundation Coaching Course and further training, if required.
- Benefits:** You will be a part of the biggest sporting and community based organisation in Ireland and play a vital role in our club.

If possible, give people a title i.e. 'pitch maintenance team'. This group could include 5 people, whose role it is to keep the pitch maintained.

# The unit of voluntary commitment – the ‘one-hour commitment’

Remember: If 20 new people volunteer for one hour per week, that is 20 hours of work that a few people were doing.

**Each recruitment drive should begin with the most basic unit of voluntary commitment which is ‘One Hour’. This is the shortest time per week during which one person can make a difference. While it might appear a small amount, lots of one hour voluntary commitments can add up to a highly effective, focused group of volunteers who can take much of the hard work away from others in the Club.**

Below are examples of how much work can be done in one hour per week;

- Sell some lotto tickets.
- Sunday morning under eight coaching.
- Clean the social club once a week.
- Put out chairs for a club function.
- Wash jerseys for one team.
- Put out the flags before a match.
- Keep the water bottles filled for an underage team.
- Update website.
- Assist with club shop/club merchandise.

Each of these tasks are straightforward and easy to do, but when taken off the workload of a hard pressed volunteer, can make a great difference to the running of a club. More importantly, it is the minimum commitment which is required to make a difference.

If the volunteer then decided to double their commitment, once again the workload of the regular volunteers is reduced. All requests for volunteer help should begin on the understanding that the entry level commitment will be one hour. This means that the volunteer is aware of their job and is in control of their duties.

# Club exercise

Is your club welcoming?

**This is a good exercise for any club officer to do. Picture yourself as a person/parent with no interest in the local club or in the GAA. Your child tells you that they want to play Hurling and Gaelic Football with the local club.**

**How would you view the club?**

- Is it well managed?
- Does it have a good image/reputation in the locality?
- Is it welcoming?
- Is it active?
- Is it interesting?
- Is it positive in its outlook?
- Is it forward thinking?
- Is it fair to everybody?
- Is there positive and enjoyable involvement for children/youth players?

Having answered the above questions, would you allow your child to get involved in the club and would you get involved as a volunteer? The answers to all these questions needs to be “yes”.



# Keeping new and current volunteers on board



# Keeping volunteers on board

“Constantly acknowledge volunteers, formally and informally.”



It's all-too-easy to take volunteers for granted. To keep everyone enthusiastic and refreshed we should check that we haven't overloaded anyone and keep providing feedback to them. It is important to give people variety and don't leave anyone in the same place/role for too long. Constantly acknowledge volunteers, formally and informally. Remember, that a simple 'thank-you' is all that is required. The club should also use its website and notes in the local newspapers to highlight the work that people are doing.

In general, people stay involved in clubs because:

- They feel valued
- They feel their contribution is respected
- They feel part of the group and do not feel excluded from decision making
- They feel a sense of pride that they have contributed to the club

In the Club, when we want to keep the atmosphere positive and friendly, remember the following;

- 6 The six most important words “**I admit that I was wrong!**”
- 5 The five most important words “**You did a great job.**”
- 4 The four most important words “**What do you think?**”
- 3 The three most important words “**May I help?**”
- 2 The two most important words “**Thank You!**”
- 1 The most important word “**We.**”
- \* The least important word “**I**”

# Communicating with your membership

“Constantly acknowledge volunteers, formally and informally.”

**Many clubs collect membership at the AGM and do not communicate with their members again until it is time to renew their membership. At some point, people are entitled to ask if they are getting value for money or if their membership means anything to them.**

For this reason, it is critical that a relationship exists between the Club Executive and its members. Paying membership to the club is the first sign that people want to be associated with the club and this should be used to its fullest advantage.

If a club is communicating with its membership on a regular basis, then people are more in tune with what is happening and the concept of a ‘closed shop’ or ‘clique’ does not exist. This will help in encouraging more volunteering and enhance the positive image of the club, as already discussed.

It is now necessary for all clubs to hold a database of all its members. This can be a toolkit in itself and serve as a highly effective way of communicating with all Members, Officers and Players. Anyone with basic office skills will know how to mail-merge from the database and send out a letter, newsletter or notice of the AGM or Registration Night. For more on the topic of communication, consult the communication section of the club manual, on the clubzone section of [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)

*Appendix 4 discusses how the Liam Mellows club in Galway communicates with its membership and with the local community and how this helps the club to attract new people.*

“ it is crucial that a relationship exists between the Club Executive and its Members.”





## Developing a recruitment strategy

This chapter discusses the development of a recruitment strategy for your club through holding of registration nights, listing of tasks in the club, etc.

# 1: Listing the tasks and identifying the people



**Club committees know at all times that more help is needed, but sometimes they find it difficult to assign a willing volunteer to a particular task within the club. This is where a recruitment strategy can help.**

Setting up a 'recruitment sub-committee', whose role is to oversee recruitment of new volunteers, is a good start.

The first task of the sub-committee is to identify all the tasks within the club, to group them into sub-categories and then develop a method of approach which will be effective. The table below is usually a good starting point since it gives structure to the clubs needs and lists the people who may be able to help the club. A blank table is included in the appendix 11.

Once this information is acquired, each area of club business is given to a team leader within the club who will then divide out the tasks according to the volunteer commitment which individuals can give.

**“The first task of the recruitment work group is to identify all the tasks within the club.”**

Area of Club Activity	We need help with...	Who could help us?	Who'll ask them?
Administration	Web site Registration Grant forms P.R.	Sean O'Brien Rachel O'Neill Shane Toner Mary O'Connor	Shane Ryan Shane Ryan Niall O'Donovan Niall O'Donovan
Coaching	Go games U 14 hurlers Link with local school		
Culture/Heritage	Organising Scór Compiling club history Promoting the language		
Facilities	Cleaning club rooms Cutting the grass Lining the pitch General maintenance		
Fund-raising	Lotto Tickets Gala Dinner Sponsorship		
Teams	Transport Wash Jerseys Referee Liaison		
Others			

(taken from Comhairle Uladh Club Maith Programme)

## 2: Sample letter to club members

**Once potential volunteers have been identified, they should be asked in person. However, a club can also write to all its members and ask them to volunteer themselves for particular tasks on the activity sheet. Below is an example of a letter which could be sent to Club Members**

Liam, a chara,

I am writing to all our members with a view to sharing out the tasks which are carried out around the club every week.

As you know, our club is always on the lookout for new volunteers. As a valued member, we would appreciate a volunteer commitment from you if you would be prepared to share an hour or two each week to help us out. I have attached a list of tasks which need to be done every week. None of these jobs last any more than one hour and will be reviewed every three months, so the minimum commitment you can give is one hour per week and for three months. If after this time you wish to end your involvement, that is fine, but we would hope you would continue to help us out.

Please take a look at the attached sheet on which we have listed all tasks which take about an hour per week to accomplish. I would be grateful if you could simply tick the task that you can do and sign it. You can post it back, or leave it into the club.

I appreciate your help.

Le meas,

Cathaoirleach an Chlub

## 3: Club open day – Lá na gClub

**A club open day is a great way to bring people from the community to the club, particularly those who are new to the area. An open day full of activity will let people see that the club is well organised and well managed.**

It can also be of great way to encourage people to volunteer in the club. Again, ask people to volunteer in specific areas in the club and in an area that suits their particular skill-sets. Use the activity sheet as discussed to align people to tasks.

Many clubs have been successful in attracting volunteers through Lá na gClub for example. The Lá na gClub model is one that club should consider holding each year.

*Appendix 5 discusses how the Round Towers club in Clondalkin, Dublin hold a family day each year and outlines how the club has recruited new volunteers through this.*

**“As a valued member, we would appreciate a volunteer commitment from you if you would be prepared to share an hour or two each week to help us out.”**



## 4: Registration night for underage players

**The registration of underage players now occurs on a specified night in many clubs in late winter/early spring. These nights present a great opportunity for recruiting new volunteers, since they are attended by parents who might be new to the area and might be keen to 'stay and play' with their children.**

The challenge for the committee is to recognise this new talent and use it to its maximum. Once again, parents who arrive to register their children may suffer from the illusion that they have nothing to offer because they have never played the game, so tasks have to be offered which are non games related, but still vital to the smooth running of the club. The first task is often to put all the information forms onto a spreadsheet or database and it is surprising how many hands go up when asked if there is anyone willing to take on with this task.

The Registration Form is another rich resource for enlisting new recruits. Below is an example of how one club recruited 25 new volunteers. This paragraph came at the end of the registration form.

### **Club Example: Volunteer Details:**

Are you available to help out with some club activities:

**YES / NO** (Please Delete As Appropriate).

If **YES** circle what you are interested in:

Coaching / Admin / Food / Hospitality / First Aid / IT / Public Relations / Photography / Entertainment / Transport / Fundraising / Match Days / Other?

(CLG O'Donovan Rossa Doire)

After the Registration Night, the information gathered is placed on the Database of Members and you have a list of people and their skills. It is best to work on the basis of a small commitment at first which can grow if the person wants to increase their involvement.

## 5: Retired/retiring players

**Each year, a number of players retire, or coaches whose children have moved through the club, come to the end of their involvement. Without a focused effort to keep these people involved, they can drift away.**

While it is appropriate to allow these people a space to get a rest from front line involvement within the club, the committee needs to be on task if they are to maintain these people. Retired players in particular have a critical role to play in the underage structures since they have benefited already from modern coaching methods and will be role models for younger players.

One member of the Executive Committee could be earmarked to approach these people, get them a coaching qualification and bring them into the underage coaching team. Most ex players will usually return when their children become involved, but few clubs can afford to lose such talent even for a few years and there is no guarantee that their children will be keen on playing the games.

*Appendix 6 discusses how Midelton GAA Club asked their players to run the Club dinner dance and how it proved to be a great success.*

**“Retired players in particular have a critical role to play in the underage structures”**



# Ten top tips for recruiting and retaining volunteers

People are waiting to be asked so **ASK THEM!**



1. People are waiting to be asked so **ASK THEM!**
2. Women and older people are the most willing volunteers. **INVOLVE THEM!**
3. Think beyond the Inner Circle. **END THE CLIQUE!**
4. Link tasks with available skills. - **USE WISELY!**
5. Begin with an agreed volunteer commitment. **ONE HOUR!**
6. Give affirmation - **PRAISE AND REWARD**
7. Use your club database to recruit and inform. **COMMUNICATE**
8. Use the 'Task Identification' idea to give people a focused and time bound commitment. **TEAMWORK COUNTS!**
9. Have plans for recently retired players and coaches. **PLAY AND STAY WITH THE GAA!**
10. Avail of the GAA's own "President's Award" scheme to recommend people to your county committee who have given dedicated service to your club over along period.....**RECOGNITION!**

A person wearing a dark blue jacket is shown from the waist down, holding a red-handled hurley. They are standing on a green grassy field. In the background, there is a blue bag with white text, possibly a club bag, and several other hurleys lying on the grass. The scene is outdoors, likely at a hurling club or training ground.

# Other points to consider

This chapter discusses the use of sub-committees in the Club, recruiting through the AGM and the benefits to the Club of participating in Scór.

# 1: The club AGM

Clubs which do not operate a 'five year rule', can enter a comfort zone of complacency with regard to the office bearers positions. This leads to an attitude where members do not think it worth their while going to the AGM because all the same officers will be returned and no change will occur.

Members who might have ambitions for themselves or the club are often reluctant to oppose sitting officers because of the fear of losing, upsetting their colleague or causing a fallout within the club. Therefore the AGM becomes a stale affair with no change and all officers returned. The poor attendance can also be lamented by hard working officers who might like to see a new person in their position, but don't want to hand over to the wrong person. It is advisable therefore that a three or five year rule be implemented in clubs which limits the number of years a senior officer can serve.

This creates a more focused committee who know they have only a certain time to deliver their vision and can make way for other members who might want to graduate to a more senior position in the club later on. It also avoids the 'clique' mentality which keeps good people away or gives the impression of a closed shop.

The Club Constitution states that at least 9 officers and five other members be elected to the Club Executive Committee at the AGM. This gives greater ownership of events and facilities to the committee members and divides out the tasks evenly.

The following tips are useful in considering a recruitment drive through the AGM

- Have a five year or a three year rule to keep the club fresh.
- When an officer has reached the end of their term, identify ways in which they can stay involved.
- Have robust structures which divide the work out clearly through dynamic sub-committees.
- Ensure the committee has an agreed plan to improve the club through a development strategy.
- Give everyone present a chance to have their say.

*Appendix 7 discusses how the Kildress Club in Tyrone has embraced full integration with the Ladies Football Club and how both are now thriving and benefiting from the 'one club model'.*

**Create a more focused committee  
who know they have only a certain time  
to deliver their vision.**



## 2: Use of sub-committees

Setting up small sub-committees can be an effective way to involve more people. Again, identify the committees needed and the people in the area with the necessary skills required. For example, the club finance sub-committee could consist of five people, who help to manage fundraising in the club and who keep the club accounts. For more on this, consult the “Club Committee Structure” section of the club manual on the clubzone section of [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)

*Appendix 8 discusses how Edenderry GAA Club has put in place a number of sub committees and how these committees have helped attract new volunteers and spread the workload in the Club.*

“Scór is the perfect opportunity to try out the ‘Ask and you shall receive’ tactic.”

## 3: Scór

Here is an excellent opportunity to bring in a whole new team of people with a specific focus and skill base, which is separate and distinct to games requirements but can have the same effect on a club.

It is also the perfect opportunity to try out the ‘Ask and you shall receive’ tactic, since very rarely is there a parish without an Irish dancing family, a singing group and an interest in Irish instrumental music.

Scór is a perfect landscape for involving other agencies in the club area; Comhaltas, Irish Dancing, Primary School and the Drama Group. For smaller clubs who do not taste success on the field too often it is often a chance for them to grab the limelight and win county or provincial titles with a whole new group of volunteers. ([www.ulster.gaa.ie](http://www.ulster.gaa.ie))

*Appendix 9 discusses how the Mullaghban Club in Armagh has embraced Scór and how this has resulted in new people becoming involved in the club who would otherwise have had little connection with the GAA.*







## Provision of training

This chapter discusses what Clubs can do to provide training to volunteers, especially new ones.

# Courses and resources

As already discussed, one of the reasons stated for not volunteering is that people feel they don't have the necessary skills for a particular role. Clubs can help by asking a volunteer with experience in a particular area to 'mentor' a new volunteer. This will give the new volunteer confidence in their role.

The GAA provides a number of specialised training programs and other resources that are of great benefit in helping volunteers to understand and carry out their role.

## Coaching Courses

The coach has a central role in the development of the GAA player and all club coaches should have received coach education training. There are two GAA coaching courses available that are of particular interest to club coaches. The Foundation Award is the introductory award for coaches and is aimed at beginner coaches. The Award 1 Course is the second award on the coaching pathway of Gaelic Games and is aimed at those who have progressed through the Foundation Award and have experience as a coach. To find out about these courses, contact your county Coaching Officer or visit [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)

## Coaching Resources:

The Fun Do Learning Resource Pack is a superb resource for those coaching Kids. It contains a series of manuals, DVD's and DVD-ROMs that outline how to organise fun filled coaching sessions for primary school aged children. This pack is available through the Games Development office in Croke Park. All those coaching children should have this pack.

All Club coaches should consult the Games Development section of the GAA website for specific information on coaching child, youth and adult players, including information on coaching specific skills in Hurling and Gaelic Football.

## Club Administration Courses:

The GAA provides club officer training programmes (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO) at the beginning of each year. These courses are designed to give officers an understanding of their role and to help officers to learn from one another through workshops etc. For further details on these courses, contact your County Development Officer.

Counties also provide courses for Club Registrars on using the GAA online registration system. For information on these courses, contact your County IT Officer.

## Club Administration Resources:

The GAA Club Manual is located on clubzone section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie). This manual contains information on all aspects of club administration including Club officer roles, insurance, membership, club property, communication, I.T. in the Club, Club planning etc. This manual will help new officers in particular to understand their role in the club and other aspects of club administration.

**These courses are designed to give volunteers an understanding of their role and to help them learn from one another.**



# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## GAISCE: The President's Award

**Gaisce - the President's Award is Ireland's National Challenge Award, which works on the basis of a personal challenge set by the young participant.**

The 4 challenge areas are as follows:

1. Community Involvement
2. Personal Skill
3. Physical Recreation
4. Adventure Journey

Thousands of young people participate in President's Award each year. One of the challenges involves a volunteer commitment to the participant's community and GAA clubs should develop a set of tasks for young members to undertake in order to fulfill this area of the challenge. Examples of the community involvement which are suitable for success in the President's Award are;

- Helping out on Sunday mornings with under eights.
- Setting up a 'youth committee' to help with the running of the club.
- Helping out at senior citizens' evenings in the club.
- Showing young members how to put a grip on a hurley.
- Doing 'kitman' for a team you are not involved with.

Clubs should actively encourage their younger members to undertake Gaisce. It is an excellent qualification and provides an opportunity for the young person to gain a more balanced perspective on life as well as equipping them with attitudes and values which places great importance on contributing to the community. All of these are essential qualities for GAA volunteers.

(for more information visit [www.gaisce.ie](http://www.gaisce.ie))

**“Clubs should encourage their younger players to undertake Gaisce.”**

# Appendix 2

## Case study: Ballygarvan GAA Club –Co. Cork

How club planning has helped the club attract new people



Ballygarvan GAA Club is situated 5 kms from Cork city and is part of the Carrighdoun GAA Division. Cumann Baile Garbháin competes in the Cork Intermediate Hurling Championship and in the Carrighdoun Football Championships. Ballygarvan GAA includes an active under age hurling and football section and a thriving Camogie club.

The inaugural county fixture under GAA Rules was staged in Ballygarvan 10th May, 1885. Ballygarvan has a particular connection with the famous All Ireland Senior Hurling trophy – the Liam MacCarthy Perpetual Challenge Cup. The donor’s parents immigrated from Ballygarvan to London in 1851. Liam was a founding member and central figure in the London GAA Board for several decades. The Club grounds are named Liam MacCarthy Park in recognition of his immense contribution to the association both nationally and internationally.

The Ballygarvan club launched their strategic plan in early 2010. Club Chairman, Joe Kennefick, explains the positive influence that doing this plan has had on the club and how it has helped to attract new people to volunteer in the club.

“In early 2010, we decided to put a club development plan together and doing this has proved to be a great success for the club and has helped us bring new people on board.

“Firstly, developing the plan gave everyone in the club a great focus. It brought the community together and got people discussing how the club could progress. One of the first things we did was to agree the launch date and this meant that we had a deadline to aim for and this helped focus everybody’s mind. We launched our documented plan at Easter time with clear actions and timescales, and we have been working to deliver these since.

“Following extensive consultation, the plan helped us to define various key targets and tasks in the club from coaching to fundraising to club administration and development. We then set about identifying people to undertake those projects. One great spin off from doing this exercise is that it has helped us to get a lot of new people involved in the club, including people who are new to the area and would have had no connection with the club previously. Presenting people who are new to the club with the document is a great way of letting them see that the club means business!

“The plan has also resulted in moulding the GAA family under a Club umbrella - Camogie, Football, Hurling, Rounders - to the mutual benefit of all sections. We are now in the process of delivering new floodlit back-to-back ball courts plus an all weather pitch and both of these projects are moving ahead with great momentum.

All clubs should look at doing a club plan. There is hard work involved in it, but the time investment yields incredible benefits.”

# Appendix 3

## Case study: Silverbridge, Co. Armagh

Getting parents involved in underage coaching



Silverbridge GAA Club is situated between Dundalk and Armagh City at the famous Ford's Crossroads outside Crossmaglen. The club plays in Division 2 of the Armagh League and participates in the Intermediate Championship. The club also fields in all grades of underage football and is known across Ulster as a very strong Scór club, having won an All Ireland in 2009 and four Ulster titles in 2010.

The club volunteered to participate in the pioneering 'Gaelic Start' project for under eights which has been launched by the Ulster Council GAA.

The club asked prominent member Jim McCann to drive the initiative and he has seen a marked increase in the number of parents staying and becoming involved with their children's development of the initial skills.

"Before we launched Gaelic Start', there was a perception that you had to be accomplished at the games to help out at sessions. This led to a situation where most parents watched from the sidelines, or dropped their children off and picked them up at the end of the session. We met all parents of under eight and below and explained to them that they would only have to sign up for the project and remain with their child for the hour on Sunday morning, helping out with the session and encouraging the children to do their best. Every parent adhered to this request and now we have about thirty parents

helping out by manning each station where a drill takes place. Parents enjoy this because it is a timebound commitment of exactly one hour per week which gives them the satisfaction of being involved in the promotion and development of games in the club without the extra onus of having a recognised qualification. All the parents involved have been vetted."

Coaching Officer Michael McGeeney has been equally impressed with the programme. "Gaelic Start" is the perfect starting point, not only for the children, but also an entry level for parental involvement in the coaching of our young players. We have tried to maintain the number of parents in attendance each week and are watching for potential recruits for the underage coaching staff. We were also helped by the fact that we can pursue the programme indoor during the winter months and after Easter we can move outdoors and into more formal games related coaching. Now that the parents have been involved, they are more encouraged to help out on the field and we have now enlisted some of them to undergo their Foundation Course in coaching'.

"All the children and their parents were invited to the underage presentations and the occasion had to be moved into the community centre, such was the crowd which turned up to celebrate the achievements of the young players."

# Appendix 4

## Case study: Liam Mellows club in Galway

Creating a good image of the club in the community through positive communication



Liam Mellows is situated along the shores of Galway Bay, at Renmore, in Galway City. The club has 16 teams competing in hurling and camogie at all age grades. Last year, our U-14 boys competed in the Féile tournament, and so far this year, our camogie U-12s and U-14s have won county titles, which we are very proud of as the camogie section was only established 6 years ago. Our minor team last won the county final in 2003 and though we haven't won a senior title in 30 years, we continue to work hard in the hope that we will move one step closer to a county title in the coming years.

In recent years, the club has placed a special emphasis on communication, as club chairman Tony Callanan explains; "Liam Mellows is situated in Galway city, which is a large urban area. A lot of people move in to the area and would not have a connection with the locality. A lot of our members wouldn't meet each other on a day to day basis, which is typical of an urban club. Therefore, we must make a special effort to communicate with our members and the community in general".

"We communicate to members through a number of different formats. Our club website is updated regularly and contains information on all aspects of the club activities. We are looking to expand on this in the coming months, to provide more information on coaching, social events, allow members to purchase merchandise online, and encourage more interaction amongst members online. We also communicate with our members via text messages. We have found this form of communication fast and highly effective in informing members of training times and matches. Finally, our club newsletter – aptly named 'The Green' symbolising our club colours – is issued to members

by email four times a year. It informs readers of events in our club both on and off the field, from the great points scored at matches, to bag packing in the supermarket to raise money, to coaching sessions.

"At Liam Mellows, we are fortunate to have a great working relationship with our local media, who are delighted to support us. We use every opportunity in the local press to promote the work we are doing, by working with them on match reports, photographs of social events, news of clubhouse development works etc. In addition to this, we have a very active Liam Mellows group on Facebook, which we have found is a great way of linking with young people in the locality. Finally, we march every year in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Galway city, which gives us an opportunity to make our name even more visible within the city.

"Due to our increased focus on communication, we have seen the benefits at Liam Mellows. Firstly, it has presented us with a good image of our club in the locality and beyond. People see us as a well organised club where there is plenty of activity going on, both on and off the field, where there is a role for everyone that gets involved. Image is critical, particularly for the people who are new to the area and who know nothing about the club. Secondly, it has helped us to attract new volunteers in areas such as coaching and fundraising, with many of our new volunteers having not lived in the area 5 years ago. We acknowledge that people want to be associated with an organisation that is seen as well organised and we continuously work to achieve this. There are lots of clubs in a locality nowadays, and so the club who shouts loudest will get heard first. Make it your club!"

# Appendix 5

## Case study: Round Towers, Clondalkin

Identifying new volunteers through Open Days/Family Days.



Round Tower GAA Club is one of the oldest clubs in Dublin, if not the country, founded as it was in 1884, the same year as the inception of the GAA. The club participates in the Dublin Senior Football Championship and the Intermediate Hurling Championship. The club has a vibrant underage structure with over 40 teams participating in various grades in hurling and football. There is also a strong Ladies Football and Camogie section also fielding numerous teams at all grades.

Each year the club holds an 'open day/family day' where everyone in the community is invited along to the club house. In 2009 and 2010, the club participated in Lá na gClub. Club Chairman, Pádraig MacCarthy, explains the benefit of holding an open day.

"We have been holding 'family days' in our clubs for the last number of years. These are proving to be very successful events and great social occasions where young and old from the local community come to the GAA club for a day of fun and enjoyment.

"Clondalkin is an urban area, and as with all urban areas, we must make an extra special effort to connect with the local community. One benefit of holding a family day is that we get parents of children to the club to meet each other and get to know each other. In some cases parents will have had little or

no contact with the club or with the GAA, particularly those who are bringing their kids to the club for the first time. This is a great way of letting them see what we are about and they also see that the club is a place where their children can come for enjoyment in a safe and well managed environment.

"We are not afraid to ask the parents to get involved and many say yes! We usually ask the parents to play a part in the juvenile coaching sessions and they are delighted to do so. Once people are involved, they will be happy to play other roles in the club. The trick is not to overburden people and to assign them to a role that they have an interest in undertaking. The great thing about a GAA club is that a person does not have to be an expert or a former player to be involved. There is a role for everybody!

"Lá na gClub and the family days have been a great success for us. All clubs, no matter if they are urban based or rural based should hold a family day. The last thing I would say is don't be afraid to ask people to get involved. Most people are happy to give some time to the local GAA club."

To view a video clip of the Round Towers Lá na gClub celebrations, click on the following link:

<http://www.gaa.ie/gaa-news-and-videos/video-room/video/3/20237/>



# Appendix 6

## Case study: Midleton GAA Club, Co. Cork

Encouraging players to become involved in club administration/organisation.



Midleton GAA club in Cork has a long and proud GAA history, winning the All Ireland football title of 1890 and an All Ireland Senior Club hurling title in 1987. Club man John Fenton captained Cork to All Ireland senior hurling glory in the centenary year of 1984, while the club was one of only three clubs to have representatives on both panels in Corks double winning year of 1990. While hurling is the main game in the club, football is also played at all grades. The club has a very active underage section that is continuing to prosper.

In 2008, the club decided to break with tradition and ask the players to organise and run the club's annual dinner dance. It proved to be a huge success as Club Chairman Niall O' Neill explains.

"We decided that instead of the Club Executive Committee organising the dinner dance, we would form a sub committee of club players and that they would organise and run the event. The players were delighted to be asked and we had no problem getting players to sit on the organising sub-committee.

"We met them to decide on ticket prices, budget and so forth, but they looked after the hotel, ticket sales, format for the night, entertainment and everything else. It was a great success with over 350 people turning up on the night.

"The great thing was that while it was a GAA dinner dance, it was not a GAA dinner dance as we know it! The players put their own stamp on the night. They decided to have no invited guests, no top table and no speeches. The only presentations on the night were for the senior, junior and minor player of the year, which were picked by all team panels prior to the night.

"Everybody really enjoyed the evening and it was great to see so many young people there. There was a fantastic buzz around the place. The really positive thing for us was that this was organised in full by the players.

"Our players are very dedicated and put a lot of time and effort in to their playing and training and so they don't have huge amounts of time to give to help with general day to day running of the club. However, this was an event that they could put time into in the quieter part of the season and there was a set amount of time involved. I think this is something that other clubs should look at doing.

"We often hear from clubs that it is very hard to get players to do anything. Our experience was that they were delighted to be asked."

# Appendix 7

## Case study: Kildress GAA Club, Co. Tyrone.

The benefits of the “One Club” Integration model



Kildress fields 14 teams and provide structured Gaelic activities for about 250 members, boys and girls, men and women. The Club is proud of its place and proud of the Club. We believe our place, Kildress, is the better for having a GAA Club in it. The better our Club gets, the better our place gets.

The Club's home ground "Gortacladdy" has changed dramatically over the past decade with the Clubrooms rebuilt and extended; the pitch re-laid; and a stand built. In 2003, that unforgettable year for the GAA in Tyrone, another landmark event happened when the local Cenel Eoghain Ladies Gaelic Football Club merged with the Wolfe Tones. The ambition of the early Fifties- a single parish GAA Club- was at last fully realised.

For years there were two Gaelic Clubs in Kildress, one exclusively for females and one for males. The Clubs were involved in separate fundraising had separate coaching structures and as well as a separate membership structure. The Ladies Club had access to Gortacladdy but never had ownership as facilities belonged to the GAA Club, who had first call on its usage.

When County Tyrone was asked in 2001 to become a pilot county for the new integration project between the three governing bodies for Gaelic Games and Culture, both Clubs in Kildress decided it was time to join forces and merge into one overall community based Club that would cater for everyone in the Kildress area.

Club Chirman, Seamus Loughran, explains how the process was undertaken and the benefit that integration has brought to Gaelic Games in the parish.

"Meetings were held between both Club Management Committees and an agreement was made on a new Club structure that would include one overall Club Management Committee with two new officer roles- Ladies Secretary and Youth Officer for Girls. It was also agreed that there would be one membership fee for everyone in Club and the short fall in higher insurance fees for the female players would be paid out of the Club central funds. Finally due the long standing and proud history of the Wolfe Tones Club in the area, it was agreed that both Clubs would merge to become Wolfe Tones GAA Kildress.

"Since the amalgamation, the Club has gone from strength to strength with the Men's football teams playing at senior grade and the Ladies at intermediate. The Club also has had great success in Scor. Cairde Cill Dreasa, a Club direct debt scheme, was formed in 2005 and currently has over 100 members giving the Club £20 per month to support the physical development project which started in 2005. Kildress now has two full size pitches, one with Floodlights in addition to the Club House that was already in existence.

"The Club Committee has an excellent gender balance and in 2006 the Club elected its first female Chairperson and currently has a female Secretary and Vice Chairperson. The benefit of full integration has been immense. We now have more people volunteering in the club than ever before. In our view, the one GAA family and community Club model is the future template for the development of the GAA at grassroots Club level across the country."

# Appendix 8

## Case study: Edenderry GAA Club, Co. Offaly

Getting new people involved in the club through the use of sub-committees.



Edenderry GAA has a long and proud GAA history. The club plays hurling and football and has won 9 county senior football titles. There is a booming underage section, which caters for teams at all grades. Club man Gerry Carroll was on the Offaly All Ireland Senior Football winning team of 1982, while Sean Óg Farrell and Cillian Farrell picked up All Ireland Senior Hurling winners medals in 1994 and 1998 respectively.

The Club launched a development plan in early 2010 and arising from this, has set up a new structure for the running of the club. Chairman Sean Farrell explains how the club is using sub-committees and how this has helped the club to get many more people involved.

“We launched our development plan in early 2010. A key part of the plan has been the introduction of sub-committees in the club to do various tasks.

“We formed a Finance and Fundraising Committee that deals with raising funds and managing the club accounts, a Facilities Committee which looks after the new dressing rooms project as well as our current hall and pitch, a Bord na nOg Committee which is essentially the juvenile section of the club, a Coaching and Games Committee which looks after coaching courses and arranging blitzes etc and finally, a Communication Committee which looks after our newsletter and website etc.

“We have increased the number of people involved in the club by the use of these committees and we have increased the expertise available to us. We found that asking people to undertake a role that they have a particular talent for was a big advantage. We also found that people are happy to work in a small group that deals with a specific task.

“The benefit to the club has been great. For example, it used be the case that our PRO would have to do everything involved with communication. Now the PRO has 5 people to assist in all of the various tasks. One looks after the website, one the club news letter and so on. It means that one officer is not burdened with all the work and there is much more expertise available to the club. The Coaching and Games Sub-Committee has people who are naturally talented at coaching and they do a great job for us. It is the same with all of the other sub-committees.

“Now, the Executive Committee meetings include a short report from each sub-committee chairman on progress etc., whereas prior to this the Executive Committee meetings were dealing with everything.

“We have got very talented people involved in the club through these new committees. I would say to clubs, don't be afraid to ask people and always ask people to undertake a role in the club that fits their own talents. Our experience has shown to us that people are there and are willing to help.”

# Appendix 9

## Case study: Mullaghbawn GAA Club, Co. Ard Mhacha

How becoming involved in Scór has been of great benefit to the club



Club Chú Chulainn, An Mullach Bán was founded in 1934 and is home to three separate clubs of football, camogie and ladies' football. In 2005 it was decided to make a bigger effort in Scór, since it was felt the club was punching below its weight in the cultural part of GAA life. Since there was a strong tradition of Irish music, drama, singing and dancing in the area, it was decided to build on the community structure already in place with Ring of Gullion Comhaltas, Tí Chulainn Cultural Activity centre and the many families in the neighbouring townlands who might not always have been involved in club life, but who were accomplished musicians, dancers and singers in their own right.

Those who drove the effort in the club were not strongly involved in the games but knew that if there was to be a coming together of all the talent, that the GAA club and Scór were the best vehicles to achieve it. In 2006 the club won 'Most Improved Club' in Armagh and this achievement drove them on to build on the work that had been carried out in that year. By 2008 they had picked up three Ulster titles and two All Ireland titles and were a leading Scór club in the country.

Club Chairman, Larry Crilly, explains the enormous impact that the Scór group has had in the local community and the great benefit that Scór has been to the GAA club.

"Over a short period of time, a significant amount of accomplished material had been built up, coupled by a desire within the community to hear the successful acts. The groups were in great demand at community events, weddings, and occasions within other clubs. To cater for this demand, they decided to record a CD of their best material and launched it with a live Radio Show on BBC in the club. This night cemented the new relationships developed between the games section and the cultural enthusiasts and now it was impossible to distinguish which was which.

"Mullaghbawn has prospered from the help and assistance given by this new influx of volunteers and it has created a special atmosphere around the club. Scór remains strong in Mullaghbawn and those who worked hard at reviving it can now be seen bringing their children to matches, helping out around the club and representing the club at other events, while those involved in the games are proud of the success they have created for the club and the community and appreciate the positive image it has created for the club.

"Scór has also continued to thrive and in 2010, preliminary rounds had to be carried out in the club, such were the numbers wishing to take part. The success of Scór has also acted as a catalyst in integrating the three clubs which operate under the Cú Chulainn banner and in most of the events they now enter three acts.

# Appendix 10

## Sample role descriptions

Role:	
Description:	
Time:	
Training:	
Benefits:	

Role:	
Description:	
Time:	
Training:	
Benefits:	

Role:	
Description:	
Time:	
Training:	
Benefits:	

