



2023

2025

CLUB DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Naomh Mhuire Achadh Gallain



OurPlace

The catchment area of St. Mary's GAC Aghagallon is based within the boundaries of the Parish of Aghagallon and Ballinderry situated in Co Antrim on the south east coast of Lough Neagh and roughly bordered by the Moira Road to the east, the Boghead Bridge Road and Ballinderry Road to the north and the M1 to the south. As such it incorporates the most north easterly area of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and to the South West of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. The boundary between the two council areas being defined by the Lurgan Road from approximately the Centra Shop and Aghalee Pharmacy to Lower Ballinderry. The Parish is also unique in that it traverses 3 counties Antrim, Down & Armagh.

Having said that St. Mary's draws the majority of our members from the Village of Aghagallon, Brankinstown, Orken Lane, Boghead, Gawley's Gate, Derrymore, Derryclone, Derryhirk and Whitehall areas of the parish.

Within this area, the following facilities exist:

Shops & Cafés

- Spar & Post Office – Aghagallon
- Village Bakery & Café - Aghagallon
- Country Meats Butchers – Whitehall Gate
- Hannon's Fruit & Veg – Whitehall Gate
- Rocco Barbers – Whitehall Gate
- Tiffy's Coffee Shop – Whitehall Gate
- Kelly's Grocery shop & Petrol Station – Cranagh
- Centra & Post Office – Aghalee
- China Kitchen Chinese Takeaway – Aghalee
- Graham's Fish & Chip Takeaway - Aghalee
- Aghalee Building Supplies – Aghalee

Schools

- St. Patrick's Primary School – Aghagallon
- St. Mary's Primary School – Derrymore
- Lower Ballinderry Primary School – Ballinderry

Churches

- St. Patrick's Church – Aghagallon
- Free Presbyterian Church – Aghalee
- Craigmore Methodist Church – Aghalee
- Holy Trinity Church of Ireland - Soldierstown

OurPlace

Sports Pitches

Pairc Na nGael – Colane Road
Parish Pitch – Aghagallon
John Mitchel Park – Derrymore
St. Mary’s Primary School – Derrymore
LCC City Council Soccer Pitch - Aghalee

Play Areas

ABC Council Play Area – Aghagallon
LCC Council Play Area – Aghalee

Public Houses & Restaurants

The Derryhirk Inn – Derryhirk
The Gate Inn – Gawley’s Gate

Health Services

Doctor's Surgery – Aghalee
Aghalee Pharmacy – Aghalee

Halls

Community Centre – Aghagallon
St. Mary’s GAC – Colane Road
Ancient Order of Hibernian Hall –
Whitehall
John Mitchel Hall – Derrymore
Aghalee Village Hall – Aghalee
Aghalee Orange Hall - Aghalee

Census 2011

St. Mary’s catchment area falls within the Aghagallon Local Government District (LGD) Ward. This data is from the 2011 census and can be updated when the data from 2021 census is released.

The number of households in the Aghagallon LGD was 1579, with each household consisting of an average of 3.1 people.

The total of population at the 2011 census was almost 5000 with an even share between males and females. The population broken down by age as follows:

Census 2011			
Age	Male	Female	Total
<3	151	158	309
4 – 9	244	214	458
10 – 17	292	329	621
18 – 19	74	60	134
20 – 39	624	635	1259
40 – 59	704	691	1395
60+	354	365	719
Total	2443	2452	4895

Our Parish

Aghagallon has a strong history of Gaelic Games stretching back to 1907, when Paddy Barnes, a member of the Belfast Shaun's introduced Gaelic Football to Aghagallon. The Club's Senior Player of The Year Award is named after Paddy Barnes and was presented by his grandchildren to the club in

The Dalcassians were formed in May 1909, becoming the first GAA club in the Parish. Based in the Brankinstown/Gawley's Gate area, it is reported that they played their first game on 19th September 1909 v Lamh Dhearg. The game was reportedly played in front of 4500 spectators, each paying 2d admission. Unfortunately, Dalcassians lost that game by 14 points to 5.

In November 1909 a second club, the Shamrocks were formed. The Shamrocks was based in the Aghagallon area playing at Stephen's Corner.

In the 1920's the John Mitchel's club was established in the Derrymore area.

In these early years, interest ebbed and flowed, the clubs amalgamated and disappeared but the 1940's saw a renewed interest and during the 50's and 60's our games thrived in the Parish with the Dalcassians, Shamrocks and Mitchel's all fielding teams. This led not only to great rivalries within the parish but often to rivalries within families, as on occasion brothers from the same family played with all 3 clubs. The 1970's saw interest waning with the Dalcassians and Shamrocks disbanding, although during this period the Mitchel's enjoyed some success and for a short time, a fourth club St. Patrick's were in existence.

Some of the rivalries between the Parish Club ran deep, and although major crowds attended the local derbys to "see brother take on brother" there was reluctance of loyal followers of the clubs to throw their full weight behind the others. In 1982 St. Mary's GAC were established to draw together all strands of Gaels within the Parish to play for the single jersey.

OurClub

In the 40 years St Mary's have been in existence we have fielded teams from U12 to Senior level. We have enjoyed success climbing the ladder of Antrim football from Division 4, second from last in our first year, and Junior Football to our current Division 1 and Senior Football status, winning three intermediate titles along the way in 2003, 2012, 2016. In 2016 we won the Antrim U21 Championship, bringing a first Senior grade Championship to the Parish. This has culminated most recently in our contesting the County Senior Football Championship Final in 2021 and again in 2022.

Our Juvenile teams have enjoyed success in the South West Antrim Divisional Board and at All County level including winning the All County Minor Football Championship for the first time in the Club's history in 2021. We have had players who have, and who currently, represent Antrim at all levels and our juvenile players have been the backbone of successful St. Ronan's (and formerly St. Michael's and St. Paul's) college teams winning Armagh, Ulster and All Ireland College's titles. We currently provide Go Games for 4 - 11 year olds Boys & Girls, compete in U13, U15, U17, U20, Senior Reserve and Senior levels

In 2019 Ladies Gaelic Football was introduced to the club and an U12 team competed in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) Antrim leagues for the first time in 2020. We are currently competing in U12 & U14 competitions.

Off the field we have fostered a strong tradition in Scór in Antrim, Ulster and at National level. In 1999 the Senior Ballad group brought home a first All Ireland crown to the Club, a feat they repeated in 2015. In 2016 our young people emulated that success bringing home All Ireland Scór Na nÓg Ceili Dancing & Novelty Act titles.

Camogie also has a long tradition in the Parish catered for by St. Mary's Camogie Club. The Camogs play in the Armagh leagues and in 2020 became Armagh Junior Champions. Although a separate club, there is a relationship between the GAA and Camogie Club with the facilities at Pairc Na Gael being available to Camogie.

Club Membership 2022			
	Male	Female	Total
Adult	129	66	195
Youth	132	110	242
Total	261	176	437

Our Facilities

In the early years of our existence we did not have a ground to call home, and it is thanks to our neighbours, and rivals, St. Joseph's Glenavy and St. James' Aldergrove who provided us with use of their facilities, that we were able to play games relatively close to home. In 1986 we purchased our current grounds at the Colane Road. These were to be named Pairc Na nGael in recognition of all the Gaels of Aghagallon, Past, Present and future, who had, were and would contribute to Gaelic Games in Aghagallon. Originally, we as the home team had the honour & luxury of changing in "The Hut" (a body from a 40 foot lorry which had neither electricity nor water), which in winter involved clambering through ankle deep mud to get into, whilst visitors were unfortunate to change in their cars.

In 1993, new clubrooms were constructed which continue to be used today. The clubrooms consist of two changing rooms with showers, a referee's room, male, female & disabled toilets, a boiler room, a kitchen and a committee room. Luxury for those who transferred from "The Hut". Despite being completely renovated in 2019 do not meet the needs of our increasing numbers, particularly the growing number of females representing St. Mary's.

In 2003, the main playing pitch was renovated, and the current sand-based pitch laid with floodlights installed, surrounding fencing, catch nets and terracing. At the same time the car park was extended to its current size. In 2006, following a drought which destroyed the playing surface, a borehole was sunk to enable irrigation should this ever happen again. For many reasons the borehole was not utilised to its full potential until 2020 when the CoVid lockdown gave the grounds committee and volunteers time to irrigate using a static gun. Following the benefits experienced from this irrigating, a travelling irrigator has been purchased for future years. In 2019 the floodlights were upgraded to LED fittings which will provide better quality lighting and be more efficient.

The club also has a small grassed area which is used as an overflow car park and as a training area when the main pitch is hosting a game or is fully booked by other teams. Although it was drained as part of the upgrade work undertaken to the clubhouse and grounds through the Alpha programme in 2019, it does not have floodlights and therefore often unavailable at peak times.

In 2015, John Mitchel Park, at Derrymore was gifted to St. Mary's and vested in the GAA. The grassed area at John Mitchel Park has not been used as a pitch for games in many years and requires some renovation. The clubrooms, the "Mitchel's Hut", was used by the John Mitchel's Ceili Club until recently when it moved to the Cranagh Hall.

In 2019, to further the development of our players, and for general use by all members, a gym was constructed in the form of a portable steel shed. The gym contains a selection Strength & Conditioning and aerobic training equipment.

Our Club Planning

In the context of the growing club membership and the constraints already mentioned above, St. Mary's engaged in a formal club planning process.

This process followed the guidance provided by the Ulster Council who appointed an Independent Facilitator to guide the engagement work. This comprehensive and structured process would help to determine more fully and understand the needs of the Club, our members and our wider community for the next 3 years, ultimately leading to the production of a 3 year club plan.

The Process

The club planning process was led by the club planning subcommittee and facilitated by Ulster Council's Jimmy Magee. There were 12 meetings of the subcommittee as they worked through the formal process and collated the feedback from all contributors across the emerging common themes. Some key statistics summarised below:

- **29 Letters of invitation to Schools, elected representatives and other community groups**
- **100's of various messages /emails / whatsapps & texts**
- **72 attendees at the club planning workshop 2 April 2022**
- **479 comments collected at the workshop - 6 Themes**
- **117 responses to the Online Club Survey by 22 April 2022**
- **539 comments from the Online Survey**

6 Themes	Workshop Comments	Survey Comments	Total comments
A. Governance	93	42	135
B. Communication & PR	35	85	120
C. Culture & Community	113	119	232
D. Coaching & Games	74	82	156
E. Finance & Fundraising	129	48	177
F. Facilities	35	163	198
Total	479	539	1018

1000+ Comments collated and grouped by sub committee

26 Targets agreed by Executive Committee 10th November 2022

The anonymised comments were available to view in the Clubrooms on the Club Funday 14 August 2022 and remained on display for comment until end of the season October 2022.

These comments will be retained and shared on the club website to help inform future club development discussions.

OurClubPlan

Targets were agreed over the duration of the three year plan (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3) for delivery of actions for the six themes (26 targets total)

A. Governance

A1. Identify and establish key Sub committees Year 1

A2. Update/ share on website all policies/procedures/role descriptors AGM 2022 (Yr1)

A3. Club Maith (Bronze) Year 2

A4. Pursue One Club Year 1

A5. Promote underage Engagement Year 1

A6. Strategy to identify & recruit Volunteers Year 1

B. Communication & PR

B1. Terms of Reference for subcommittee & Key roles Year 1-2

B2. Develop Plan / Strategy (roles/presence) Year 2

B3. Establish club calendar Year 1

C. Culture & Community

C1. Terms of Reference for subcommittee Year 1

C2. Strategy to increase engagement (Fundays/Awareness/Diverse Events) Year 1-2

C3. Strategy to promote Culture (music/ language /Scor/Dance) Year 1-2

C4. Wellbeing Strategy Role / Officer/ Initiatives Year 1-2

D. Coaching & Games Development

D1. Terms of Reference & Coaching Committee Year 1

D2. Coaching Officer (role descriptor & appointment) Year 1

D3. Training for Coaches – coach education programme Year 1-3

D4. Codes of conduct (Players/ Parents /coaches) Year 1

E. Finance & fundraising

E1. Subcommittee Year 1

E2. Cairde Achadh Galláin Year 1-3

E3. Lotto Promotion Year 1

E4. Sponsorship Year 1-3

E5. Fundraising Year 1-3

F. Facilities

F1. Explore options for second pitch & additional training space & strategy Year 2-3

F2. Develop vision for John Mitchell Park Year 1

F3. Pairc na Gael facilities – enhance to meet needs (multi targets) Year 1-3

F4. Policy for use of facilities Year 1

OurActionPlan

The Club plan will run for three years - 2023 /2024 / 2025.

The Action plan will be developed as outlined below by the incoming 2022/23 committee.

Each of the 26 targets will require a defined objective and outcome. This will comprise a sentence or two which will follow the SMART principles (Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Time bound).

Targets will be assigned named leaders with responsibility for implementing the specific actions associated with each target.

There will be a named overall club plan leader with responsibility for tracking the actions and liaising with each target leader who will report progress at defined reporting periods (each quarter or by key date, whichever is most appropriate per target)

The overall club plan leader will report to a standing item on the Executive Committee Clár and report progress against the plan the AGM.

By following these steps in the Action Plan we will deliver all the 26 targets over the 3 year period of the Club Development Plan for the benefit of all club members and the wider community.

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GETTING
INVOLVED WITHIN ONE OF OUR 6 THEMES?
WE NEED YOUR HELP**





Achadh Galláin

