

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael Naomh Séamus
St. James' GAA



Promoting Gaelic Football in the Renmore, Mervue and Ballybane, Good Shepherd Parishes.

ST. JAMES' GAA FOOTBALL CLUB

FOUR PARISHES - ONE CLUB

PLANNING OUR WAY FORWARD

DEVELOPING FOR THE FUTURE

JANUARY 2018

Mission Statement

“To provide a social, recreational and sporting outlet for all members of our community whilst simultaneously promoting the games, values and ideals of “Cumann Lúthchleas Gael”.

Introduction

St. James' GAA Football Club Development Plan as set out reflects our club's vision over the coming years by identifying areas of critical importance that need to be advanced in order to continue to have sustainable football teams at all levels into the future.

St. James' are blessed to have a collective infantry of "Evergreen" Volunteers, whose primary interest is to ensure that the club follows a path of continuous improvement to realise our goals and aspirations in the coming years.

We are a relatively new club, established in 1994, catering initially for adult football and drawing from the existing clubs of Mervue and Renmore.

It later expanded to cater for minor and U21 football and in 2007, both Mervue and Renmore Juvenile Clubs ceased to exist as playing entities and both came under the St. James' umbrella. Many of those involved back then are still active members of St. James'.

The vision then was to improve and promote the development of football in our catchment area and to build a club capable of competing at the highest level at all grades of Gaelic Football in Galway County and beyond.

It is now the duty of this current generation of Club Officers and Members to set out aims, goals and targets for the next five years, building on today's foundations to achieve greater prosperity for our club and the community we serve.

Jimmy Newell, Chairman
December 2017

Strategic Development Plan 2018

St. James' GAA Club have just completed phase one of the 2016 Capital Development programme whereby the main pitch was redeveloped and fenced at a cost of €104,000. It took six months for the pitch sod to recover to playing standard with careful maintenance by the Pitch Management Committee.

The Clubhouse in Mervue was upgraded with a meeting room and a mini gym installed upstairs.

The upgrading cost €38,000, broken down between structural works of €27,000 and legal fees €11,000.

The club wish to acknowledge a sports grant contribution of €85,000 and a Galway City Council contribution of €7,500.

The Clubhouse in Renmore was upgraded with a full modern gym upstairs within the past 5 years.

It is our intention to make progress on phase two of our Capital Development programme (further pitch development) in 2018.

We are working hard as a club and using all our financial creativity to build a club development fund in the hope that we will be in a position to seek funding for the construction of an all-weather artificial surface pitch or otherwise, known as an astroturf pitch.

The development will encompass an area of 1800 sq. m. (60m x 30m), fenced with flood lighting and with full planning secured. The cost is expected to be in the region of €160,000. In terms of a comprehensive club

development, we view this phase two plan outlined below to complete the overall focus and vision of the club at this point in time.

We expect that its implementation will provide medium term stability in terms of infrastructure, resources and organisational foresight for our club over the next decade.

The four areas listed below are considered to be the significant framework parameters for development in this phase two plan.

Player Development System.

Facility Management and Development.

Financial Sustainability Plan.

Succession Planning.

The scope of progress will hinge on our capability to acquire major capital investment through both Government and GAA Sports Grants.

The Galway City Council will play its role as well as our own ability to create a development fund from our current expenditure budget and fundraising.

St. James' catchment base is located in a community designated as a RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) area and will therefore qualify for maximum funding under the sports grant schemes.

The overarching criteria governing this development is that the club does not commit to any form of debt to achieve its outcome.

Player Development System.

Player development starts with the first underage panel right through to the senior panel in an environment of continuous improvement delivered by capable coaches and managers who themselves have been processed, critiqued and benchmarked by a quality improvement system.

The overriding aim of player development is to create a standardised system of coaching and management that is unique to St. James' and this methodology would be used in all coaching right through the grades regardless of whether the coaches are from St. James' or from an external provider.

It is a policy requirement of St. James' GAA, that all personnel directly involved with teams are Garda vetted.

Consistency Management:

The long-term ideal for our club would involve, having in our armoury, a volume of in-house (neutral minded) coaches and managers who are capable of taking a panel of players from underage right through to senior.

This would provide the *first level of consistency* throughout the years and should espouse belief and trust between participants in equal measure.

The *second level of consistency* would involve Linear Coaching, whereby all proactive club coaches are upskilled and follow pre-agreed methods and techniques.

This would champion similarity in skills and drills and should lead to a high level of understanding among players right through the years.

The semantics of operation would be specified and agreed by the club appointed Coaching and Games Development Group.

The *third level of consistency* would involve all team managers working in synchronisation, whereby the efforts of one manager is recognised and complemented by other managers working across common player panel platforms.

This Dovetail Management Technique is essential at all levels to ensure that the benefits and strengths of each panel is fully utilised in order get the best outcomes for each team.

Action: *Set-up a Coaching and Games Development Group. This should be directed by one of the club's existing experienced coaches. All St. James' Coaches will need to be upskilled or upgraded depending on level of competence so as to eventually attain official GAA certification or equivalent. The club should identify one or two individuals annually to enter a GAA formal training programme. The club should pay for the GAA course. The training personnel should then play a frontline role in the club during the training period to attain experience by putting their new skills into action - for example: setting coaching drills for teams at either juvenile or the senior cycle.*

Coaching Standardisation:

The club will need to appoint a Club Coaching Officer with responsibility for managing and overseeing all coaching related activities.

This will include not only policy oversight, but also ensuring that all coaches attend official courses, as well as implementing a system to monitor player progress.

The Coaching Officer must have completed the GAA Coach programme and Certification or have an equivalent coaching qualification, together with a proven track record in coaching and managing.

Train the trainer's programmes need to be initiated, either in-house by the Coaching Officer or by external qualified coaches or a combination of both. The Coaching Officer will be expected (and supported) to gradually introduce a formal GAA Coaching Programme to a level that ensures all our coaches achieve certification.

Each coach and manager need to be skilled on a broad spectrum of activities like strength and conditioning, training routines and managing.

All coaches and managers, whether from our club pool or from an external source, need to understand the linear coaching and dovetail management operational requirement as described above.

The important point here is that whoever coaches or manages teams in the future will be required to understand and implement the agreed ethos and principles of St. James' linear coaching and management system while at the same time bringing their own unique skills to complement the system.

This will ensure that outcomes will reflect the efforts of all coaches and managers through the years as opposed to the that of an individual coach or manager.

Action: *The club must train all existing coaches and managers under the direction of the appointed "in-house" temporary Coaching Officer, on the standardised coaching principle and methods. This is called "Building the System" and will be augmented to full maturity when the club's coaches are eventually certified. This will now provide the basis for the establishment of "Coaching Officer". The club should set out a timeline for the appointment of the Club Coaching Officer. Trained and qualified personnel within the club should be eligible to compete for this post. The semantics of how this would work operationally, the period a Coaching Officer should be in post, and the line management of other coaches is an important club wide discussion in time.*

Timeline: 2018 - discuss with the club's existing club coaches. Check availability and suitability. If we have a willing Coach that is capable of filling this position on a temporary basis then we should start the process this year. The club then needs to immediately find a suitable person that is willing to train under the GAA coaching scheme. This implies that the person in training would play a proactive role in the club's coaching set-up in the coming year, particularly at juvenile level.

Building a standardised system of coaching will start at underage and will evolve as standard practice through all the grades over time.

Code of Conduct:

Outside of the club's rules on safety and behaviour, there needs to be a clear understanding on limits of conduct acceptability from all personnel (players, officials, coaches, trainers, mentors, supporters, parents and guardians) involved in the club.

In general, respect, courtesy and honesty are required from all members. This applies to teammates, coaches, officials, referees, parents, opponents and visitors.

The inappropriate use of photographic equipment and social media, particularly from a dressing room setting, is simply not permitted. The club code of behaviour is governed by the official GAA "Code of Behaviour" at www.gaa.ie.

1. Players

In the first instance, the club expects players to be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.

Players must understand the rules of Gaelic Football and comply with these rules.

Physical and verbal abuse of opponents and referees is simply not permitted. Physical and verbal abuse of the coaching personnel is simply not permitted. Players with particular issues must channel these via the Team Coach, Team Captain or the Player Representative. Instructions from coaching personnel must be respected.

Bullying and its tactics' to gain advantage or isolate a player, is simply not permitted.

Behave at all times in a manner that avoids bringing the club into disrepute.

Action: The club can issue guidelines on club policy in this regard through the club communication system. The notice boards in the clubhouse can display the club's policy. Where a particular issue arises, the Club's Player Representative can liaise. Where necessary, the Healthy Club Officer can liaise. If solutions do not involve either of the above, the club can request a Team Manager or Selector to liaise. Where an issue arises between players and coaches/managers the Club's Executive Officers may have to intervene.

2. Coaches and Managers

In the first instance, the club expects players to be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.

Coaching personnel must understand the rules of Gaelic Football and comply with these rules.

Physical and verbal abuse to opponents and referees is simply not permitted. Physical and verbal abuse of players is simply not permitted.

Coaching personnel must abide by the club's philosophy of neutrality and fairness in team selection.

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. However, coaches should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions.

Action: The club can issue guidelines on club policy in the regard through the club communication system. The notice boards in the clubhouse can display the club's policy. Where a particular issue arises, the Club's Player Representative can liaise. Where necessary the Healthy Club Officer can liaise. If solutions do not involve either of the above, the club can request a Team Manager or Selector to liaise. Where an issue arises between players and coaches/managers the Club's Executive Officers may have to intervene.

3. Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians should encourage and support all players and respect the fact that one's own child may not be selected for whatever reason.

They should encourage and support the coaching personnel and respect the fact that the team selection choices were made was in good faith and fair basis. They should encourage their child to understand and respect the decisions made.

Subjecting coaching personnel or players to flippant, sarcastic or disparaging remarks is simply not acceptable.

Action: *The club can issue guidelines on club policy in this regard through the club communication system. The notice boards in the clubhouse can display the club's policy. Where a particular issue arises, the Club's Children's Officer can liaise.*

4. Supporters

Supporters who are members of the club must abide by the club's rules in relation to respect and dignity.

Subjecting coaching personnel or players to flippant, sarcastic or disparaging remarks is simply not acceptable.

Supporters who are not members of the club are obviously beyond the capability of any club sanction and simply have nothing to do with our club's code of behaviour.

However, subjecting coaching personnel or players to flippant, sarcastic or disparaging remarks is simply not acceptable and this type of behaviour, if consistent, can be dealt with at Club Officer level.

Action: *The club can issue guidelines on club policy in this regard through the club communication system. The notice boards in the clubhouse can display the club's policy. Where a particular issue arises, the club can appoint an appropriate Club Officer to liaise.*

5. Fundraising

This section is not intended to suggest any historical poor practices however, the club has a duty of care to ensure that clear lines surrounding governance and accountability is understood and adhered to by all members. The selling of lotto tickets, major fundraising tickets and bucket collections comes under the remit of the Club Treasurer. All fundraising must have clearance from the Club Treasurer. The Club Assistant Treasurer will be expected to be part of any sub-committee which deals with club finance.

All club fundraising must be coordinated in a way that ensures the same loyal Club Sponsors are not door-stepped twice by St. James' Club Members.

The Lotto Licence must be renewed on an annual basis and official ticket fundraising must have a permit. All other local fundraising must be cleared by the club and have good practice safeguards in place including clear identification and supervision. The Lotto functions well and the controls are robust.

Action: *Fundraising tickets that are not sold must be returned to the Club Treasurer. Buckets for cash collections must be marked with appropriate secure lids in place. These measures provide a measure of visibility to the public in relation to the club's financial governance.*

Bolstering Facilities:

Pitches and the training grounds must be maintained to playing standard throughout the playing season.

Building the astroturf pitch is most important to provide for winter schedules and pre-season activity. The astroturf pitch will also provide training and leisure activity for club members. The astroturf pitch will provide excellent activity based schedules for the underage. The gym facility in Renmore will need to be maintained to an up to-date standard and made available to all members. The clubhouse in Mervue will need to be maintained to modern standards, it's technology enhanced, and open as an all-day centre. The clubhouse will need to have targeted shop facilities selling light refreshments.

Action: Continue to maintain the playing grounds under the guidance of the Pitch Management Committee. Continue to maintain the clubhouse. The Clubhouse Manager will inform on areas for maintenance. Install the Wi-Fi system in the clubhouse. Progress the development of the astroturf in 2018. Ensure that we are ready to apply for sports grants in a timely manner.

Timeline: Continue the maintenance as in 2017. Progress the Wi-Fi immediately. Finalise the astroturf plans and progress if possible in 2018.

Reconfiguration of Operations and Delivery:

School Coaching needs to begin with the 8-10's as opposed to the 12's. This will help capture potential young players before they become aligned to other sports. The St. James' Academy training on Saturdays will be significantly enhanced under the proposed coaching programme initiative.

St. James' Juvenile Cúl camps will be significantly enhanced under the proposed coaching programme initiative.

Underage players with special skills and talent need to be engaged into a skills excellence and high performance programme.

Players in the 17 -19's need to be introduced into a development programme to nurture them to the next level.

Players not yet eligible to play senior grade must partake in the junior panel. Players who are re-graded or training with the senior panel as potential starters and are eligible to play junior, must partake in the junior panel.

Cooperation and understanding is paramount between all club managers, so that players are played across panel platforms if they deserve to be played. In other words, there should be no demarcation line in the adult programme of coaching and management that would limit a player's playing potential.

There will be an onus on all club managers to abide by the club's policy in this regard as part of their responsibilities and duties.

Training schedules pre-season must include all potential players. This will ensure that the full complement of players are exposed to the challenges of the year ahead as equals prior to being graded into senior and junior.

Commitment from players is key. No initiative can succeed without all players committing to the cause and buying into the programme for the year in full.

Action: *Review the school coaching protocol with the juvenile committee. Ascertain if it is possible from a club perspective and a school perspective to reschedule earlier intervention in this regard.*

Review coaching with the juvenile committee based on the coaching actions outlined earlier. Continue to engage a strength and conditioning coach to transition young players. Meet the adult players to explain the club's philosophy on expectation and opportunity. The players in all adult grades must be informed that all players are expected to play in whatever grade they are lodged.

For example: players languishing in the senior panel who are eligible to play junior, who are training with the senior panel and not the junior panel must realise that opting out of junior football is not acceptable. The club will expect the senior manager to inform these players that in order to qualify to play senior football, they must graduate through the junior ranks. This in no way suggests that these players are not eligible to train also with the senior panel. Unless this aspect is enforced, a certain cohort of players will actually train hard and play nothing which is a wasteful resource and of useless value to the club.

Senior and junior managers must respect the principle of cooperation in order to harmonise training routines and selection processes across panel platforms. If a senior player is re-graded and eligible to play junior football but remains training with the senior panel, then his efforts must be recognised and due process must ensue. Nothing should limit this player from fair selection on the junior team once his progress can be verified by the senior manager.

This position is fundamentally a club issue not a team manager issue. It is the prerogative of the club to ensure all players are treated equally and fairly. Likewise, players must be fair to coaches and managers to ensure they understand the principles of cooperation and due process.

Player panel differentiation is necessary and should only take place after the pre-season training. This will provide clarity for players, and will in no way hinder any player from training across platforms or playing football in any grade as the opportunity arises. This is obviously an area where the Club Coaching Officer can liaise between parties if necessary.

Timeline: All this section in 2018

Player Welfare Enhancement:

Participation in Gaelic Games is hugely important and deriving enjoyment is a key element. However, there are times when the will to win can overshadow the enjoyment. This can be mainly due to rigorous training schedules, unpredictable fixture schedules and consequent adjustment of home life, sport and work life balance.

This particular point can acutely challenge any club but it is a fundamental priority issue from a welfare perspective.

The new challenge from the club's perspective is how we adjust schedules to reduce the stress on players' particularly young players who have unrealistic expectations of playing multiple codes and at the same time trying to remain injury free.

There are also cohorts of elite players in all clubs who play across grades with their club, college and county teams.

Action: *This year (2018) try and have a balanced break between the season ending and the pre-season start. This would benefit not alone the players, but all associated with teams.*

Support and Mentoring:

Establish a framework for player welfare for both the adult (senior) and underage (juvenile) cycle. It is the club's intention to set up a Welfare Unit under the guidance of the Healthy Club Officer.

Support for the adult members will be largely based around:-

- Community activity.
- Employment.
- Further education.
- Providing support and dealing with problems as they arise.
- Talks on addiction & addiction counselling.
-

Support for the underage members will be largely based around:

- Environmental awareness together with the fulfilment and opportunities to be achieved by groups working together
- The benefits of volunteering
- Community project involvement
- Advice on further education possibilities
- Addiction awareness and talks
- Staying healthy and healthy eating and diets.

Within the club we have a broad spectrum of capable personnel in various walks of life who are capable and willing to lend support to this framework.

Action: Clarify where and when these supports are available. Use the clubhouse room upstairs for privacy when counselling problems of a sensitive nature.

GAA Player Injury Scheme:

The GAA provided an Injury Fund which is funded by Members for Members. It is not Insurance as such is not regulated by the Central Bank. In essence, it covers benefits which cannot be claimed elsewhere.

The following are covered by the Fund:

- Players who incur **accidental** bodily injury while playing Gaelic Football only either in the course of an official fixture or in the course of an official supervised training session.
- Match officials (i.e. Referees, linesmen(women) or umpires injured whilst officiating at an official game of Gaelic Football).
- Voluntary coaches, team managers, selectors and members of official team parties injured during games or training as specified above.

The following are the key features of the fund:-

- Willis Towers Watson are the appointed Administrators of the fund and they administer the fund on behalf of the GAA.
- There is no legal obligation on the GAA to provide an Injury Fund. Risk is an inherent factor in sport, as in life. When members voluntarily take part in Club activities they accept the risks that such participation may bring.
- The Injury Fund does not seek to fully compensate but to supplement other covers such as Private Health Insurance, National Health Insurance, Personal Accident Cover, Employment benefit covers, Income Payment protection covers.
- The Fund only provides cover for otherwise unrecoverable losses up to the benefit limits. The Fund should not be used as a guarantee of for the payment of expenses. Ultimately, the responsibility to ensure that adequate cover is in place rests with the individual member commensurate with their specific individual needs.
- Club must be registered and player/member must be a paid up member of the Club.

What are the Benefits:

- Medical: Otherwise unrecoverable medical expenses are covered to a maximum of €4,500. The first €100 of each claim is not covered.
- Dental: Otherwise unrecoverable dental expenses are covered to a maximum of €4,500. The first €100 of each claim is not covered.

- Supplementary Hospital benefit: €400 per days stay in hospital payable only if stay is a minimum of 10 consecutive days up to a maximum of 15days.
- Loss of Wages: Applicable only to a) Adults and b) Youths who are in full time employment at the date of Injury. Employment means permanent gainful employment of not less than 16 hours per week. Otherwise unrecoverable loss of basic nett wages (i.e. excluding bonuses, overtime, unsociable working hours allowances, etc.) Social Welfare/Income Protections/ Income protection cover and/or other entitlements will be considered recoverable and will be deducted from the basic nett wage figure.
- Capital Benefit: Permanent Total Disablement from gainful employment €100,000, Loss of sight in both eyes €100,000, Permanent partial loss of sight Up to €100,000, Loss of Limb(s) Up to €100,000, Complete and incurable paralysis €100,000
- Death Benefit: Adult - €50,000.00 Youth - €25,000

Important Features:

- Match injury – notify referee, team manager and Club Secretary.
- Training session injury – notify team manager and Club Secretary and make note of time and date and how injury occurred.
- N.B. Claim must be registered within **60 days**.
- Club will process paperwork.
- Consult Club regarding costs of procedure/operation if no health insurance in place.

Action: When the pre-season starts there should be a presentation to the players on the benefits of the scheme, the importance of having private health insurance and the importance of having their membership paid.

No player should be allowed to play an official game in 2018 without having their membership fee paid. This should be a club policy and regardless of the limitations of any team, if the player is not fully paid up he should not play. It is the responsibility of the player, not the club, to ensure that he is eligible to play.

Player Integration and Retention:

Players who live and work in our area and are not original St. James' Players are welcome to join our club as full members. However, our club policy is, that we do not actively scout to recruit players who have not voluntarily wished to become members. This is our policy and remains our policy.

All new player members will be introduced to the club; it's coaches, and fellow players by the Club Secretary.

Once inducted, membership paid, registered and formally transferred, the player is free to use the club facilities and compete for consideration to play football as a St. James' Club Player.

The club's perspective over the coming years is documented in this document. This is the first rung of the ladder in relation to player retention, whereby all players understand the club's efforts in providing a road map to future progress. St. James' GAA Club offers all adult players modern facilities, excellent coaching, strong social and communication strategy, a safe and non-threatening environment, a culture of belonging, inclusion and diversity.

The club endeavors to use its connections to Employer Enterprises in seeking local employment short-term and long-term for its players who wish to work locally, as well as players in transition through college.

However, players who work away are connected to training schedules through social media apps, by which their workouts are vetted and performance measured. Special training arrangements are put in place at weekends on their return to minimize any adverse effects.

In future, it is hoped that collective training sessions can be arranged, particularly for Dublin and it's hinterland based players to maintain a level of performance and consistency similar to base training.

Action: *It would be worth exploring the possibilities and logistics of a Dublin*

Training Camp.

Concussion Injury Management:

Concussion is a brain injury that needs to be taken seriously to protect the long-term player welfare. Any player suspected of having sustained a concussion, should be immediately removed from the field of play and should not return to play on the same day.

Where a Team Doctor is present, he/she should advise the person in charge of the team, i.e. the Team Manager, in this regard and the player must not be allowed to continue his participation in the game.

Concussion is an evolving injury; therefore it is important to monitor the player after the injury for progressive deterioration.

Players suspected of having a concussion, must have adequate rest of at least 24 hours and then must then follow a gradual return to play protocol.

Players must receive medical clearance before returning to play.

Action: Team managers, coaches and selectors must be made aware of the club's policy in this regard.

Defibrillator Management:

The management of this important instrument is crucial

- It must be stored fully charged with unrestricted access. Time is critical
- The charge must be checked on a weekly basis, recorded, and validated
- The battery and pads expiry dates must be verified
- Trained personnel must be validated, and their training updated and verified
- A trained operator should be present for all home games
- The instrument should form part of the mobile medical equipment on the pitch

Action: *The club needs to assign responsibility. It is so important that this instrument is in full working order, mobile, and accessible by club personnel during clubhouse and field activity. There should be a defibrillator drill carried out on a double blind (test trial) routine both in the clubhouse and in the main pitch. There should be a trained operator on site for all training sessions and matches.*

Embracing Inclusiveness and Diversity:

St. James' GAA club has a proud record as a non-political, anti-racist, anti-sectarian organisation. We are fully committed to the principles of inclusion and diversity at all levels. We expect all coaches and managers to understand the club's policy in this regard, as opting out of these responsibilities is not an option.

Action: No action required, the club has a good record in this regard.

Communication and Culture:

St James' GAA clubhouse is the fulcrum of all club activity, providing a base for sporting, cultural, and social activities in our community. All members, supporters, and community organizations that wish to connect directly to the Club's Communication System may do so as follows:-

Website: <http://www.stjamesgaa.ie>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/stjamesgaagalway>

Email: secretary.stjames.galway@gaa.ie

The Club Registration Officer, and Communications Officer has the capability to communicate with all online members through the online system myclubfinances.com where online members can be updated of events, meetings and games through SMS messaging, Email and Apps.

All members that wish to be linked to the club's communication system can register their mobile and email with the Communications Officer for regular alerts.

St. James' GAA club continues to support and enjoy Friday evening's cultural session throughout the year.

This is a session of traditional Irish music and songs under the leadership of the Club's Cultural Officer.

This group draws on the talents of up to forty freelance musicians from within the club's catchment base.

The performers range from beginners to experienced, and everyone attending is encouraged to take part and showcase their artistry.

Facility Management and Development.

Phase two of our club development is primarily about constructing the Astro turf Pitch.

Most clubs in the country have astro turf facilities with lights. This is essential for early season training for our teams. Otherwise, other clubs will have advantages.

Uses

1. Early season training for all our teams.
2. Five aside and seven aside matches
3. Curtails usage of the main pitches, leaving them in good condition when the football season begins
4. Bowling and other activities for the elderly during the day

St. James' Astro turf Project:

This is an exciting project of development in the club, spearheaded by the Club's Pitch Development Committee.

There is existing planning permission for a 70m. x 35m. fenced pitch with lights. The Pitch Development Committee viewed and compared astro turf pitch projects in Caherlistrane, Liam Mellows and others in terms of size and optimum use.

It is the committee's opinion that a 60m. x 30m. fenced pitch with lights would be most suitable for our needs.

However, the pitch specification is still under review and may be adjusted at the final planning stage.

Funding The Project

It is hoped that a Sports Council Capital Sport's Grant will fund 85% of the project. The remainder of the cost would be funded by a grant from Galway City

Council and from the club's own development fund. There are other possibilities of small funding available through advertising hoardings, etc.

General Costs

The cost of astroturf surfacing is in the region of €80m². In this project of 60m. x 30m., with an overall size of 1800m², the projected cost would be in the region of €145,000, depending on the tender bid outcome and specification (pitch size chosen).

However, other costs would arise in relation to finishing the project. A concrete path for security and weed control will need to be constructed around the perimeter of the pitch and the electricity required to run the facility will need to be accessed.

We view the estimated overall cost to be in the region of €160,000.

Action: Continue to boost the development fund at every opportunity. Finalise the pitch plans to be ready to apply for the sports grants. This will involve having approval from Galway City Council (GCC) and an understanding of their role in the process. The tender process will be managed by GCC, so moving the process from planning to implementation is a potential obstacle that needs to be well managed.

Financial Sustainability Plan:

Debt: Loan re: Pitch Improvement - €283.91 per month x 40 months outstanding.

Machinery - €230 per month x 9 months outstanding. (The machinery was in relation to the joint purchase of a new tractor mower with Mervue United)

General Costs: The club annual running cost is circa €50,000, including all outstanding detailed on the above "Loan". Breakdown of how the above running cost is funded:-

Club Lotto	€19,000
Fundraising	€18,500
Membership	€4,500
Sponsorship	<u>€8,000</u>
Total	€50,000

It is clear from the above figures that our club funding just meets club costs. This is not a sustainable position as it allows no flexibility for unforeseen events or sudden changes in club running costs.

There is also a need to build up a reserve fund to future proof the club during periods of economic difficulties and for capital development planning going forward.

How to Increase Funding:

Realistically, there are two ways of achieving this:-

1. Club Lotto: There is a lot of potential to increase the sale of lotto books. It is probably the most painless way of raising more funds. If the club could sell an extra 30 books per week, it would accrue an extra €7,000 annually.
2. Membership: It may be difficult to understand that St. James' GAA Club have only 70 non-playing adult members. This is obviously an area of untapped potential and needs to be addressed in our 5 year plan. The club must set-out a mechanism for scoping potential members in our catchment area.

There must be many adults who would not alone be willing to pay €25 membership but would also play an active role in day-to-day club operation.

Action: This 5 year plan will need to prioritise measures to position the club on a solid sustainable financial footing. This can be achieved with the help of the many good people in our club.

Remember: "A little extra help is better than a whole lot of pity".

Succession Planning.

St. James' GAA club is fortunate in having many volunteers who assist in the running of our many teams. However, in the overall context, general membership participation is low by comparison to other clubs.

This is obviously a critical area of untapped potential and there is a need to proactively identify key people with the right skill sets to get involved, in order to deliver maximum benefit in important roles for our club going forward.

Many of these roles will evolve around the day-to-day administration and management of the club. The current committee structure works well in relation to team and club management, due mainly to the rich crop of right skilled individuals in key positions currently available to the club.

However, resources of this magnitude will not always remain optimum, and as the years roll on, the club must plan forward to identify key structural changes in order to be in a position to absorb the shock of individual retirements.

Action: *Continue to be proactive in attracting parents of young children into joining the club. Assign responsibility and create a climate of symbiosis so that both club and parents benefit from the interaction. A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step - this is the story with all our involvement through club life.*

Executive Leadership:

Executive leadership is a key fundamental that requires skillful personnel to manage all the dynamics of a modern day club. Modern GAA Clubs must be managed like a business, having an eclectic mix of operations like games, coaching, human resource management, and financial management, to name a few.

The next generation of Club Officers will need to be selected from the club resource pool based on their ability and skill to discharge the specific requirements of future demand. They will need to be identified and enticed to become involved as leaders and with respect to the historical selection of Club Officers, it is important that every effort be made to ensure that competent personnel are processed for selection through the democratic system.

Action: Identify possible future leaders, let them shadow the Club Masters, and give them gradual responsibility. This way they will gain vital experience in the cut and thrust of club business life. The important point here is to be ready to lead when the opportunity arises.

Financial Management:

Financing the system is a key fundamental that requires good corporate governance and prudent management.

The Club Treasurer will require a broad range of financial skills; he/she will need to surround themselves with an army of like-minded volunteers who have the ability to tap into every available resource.

Identifying potential sustainable sources of income is essential, managing it is a feasible task, but risk management and cost containment will be the challenge.

Action: *The role of Treasurer is a special skill and not for the faint hearted. In general, balancing the dynamic of harmony and prosperity with conflict and under achievement, is a foremost challenge for the financial management in any club. This is where an experienced Club Treasurer is able to make ends meet by prudently managing the competing demands. Projecting and planning the budget, managing fundraising and sponsorship, managing expenditure and health claims costs, insurance, and registration costs and at the same time providing for some capital expenditure. These are only some of the responsibilities of the Club Treasurer.*

The club needs to boost support in this area, primarily by ensuring that the elected Assistant Treasurer has the capability to manage some delegated tasks.

A financial sub-committee, led by the Assistant Treasurer, under the direction and guidance of the Club Treasurer, is a key requirement for driving financial projects. This sub-committee should consist of Officers from the adult and juvenile groups who has a track record in club entrepreneurship.

Brand Marketing:

In general this area of club business needs to be led by knowledgeable in-house personnel who ideally have in depth experience in business and marketing or else we need to consider engaging with external service providers to advise and train in this area.

St. James' Juvenile Teams are currently strong on "brand". Every young player owns a St. James' jersey with crest, which is worn at training and socially. This is a simple example of St. James' brand working and hopefully we will be able to retain the same interest as these young players grow older and are challenged by competitive sports.

However, we must also be able to capture this cohort group and their parent's into becoming club members year on year, e.g. player members, ordinary members, or social members on a long-term basis as they progress through the grades.

To challenge competitive sports in later years we must plan to ensure that all age groups are catered for, in relation to optimised coaching & games.

The need for good coaching, consistent coaching and linear coaching is paramount so that consistency prevails through the grades.

Effective team management is important so that each player is given an opportunity to achieve their full potential.

All club personnel and participant's welfare is paramount. The club must ensure that it is fully indemnified against all potential risks associated with all users of our facilities.

Facilities for Physiotherapy, Rehabilitation and Counselling will need to be identified and provided.

A good “Brand” will help attract sponsorship and membership as well as coach, player and manager retention.

Facility provision is a key component long-term.

The clubhouse in Mervue will need to be open and managed as an all-day centre, with facilities for light refreshments and technology available.

The gym at Renmore will need to be opened to members and managed accordingly. In the longer term, changing rooms 1 & 2 will require upgrading to include the construction of two builder’s finish shower rooms and the installation of false ceilings. The original roof dates from 1984 and may require to be renewed at some point in the future depending on how it weathers the time.

The need to identify and handpick high quality individuals with experience in the relevant fields is paramount to future progress.

Good competent new blood will ensure that the benefits of quality succession planning will far outweigh any perceived difficulties and take St. James’ into the future as a strong vibrant GAA Club.

Action: This section will fall into place without any specific intervention once the action points above have been implemented. The important point here is “implemented”, because strategy has little value unless it is implemented in a timely manner. In the day-to-day chaos of club life, disruption from plans can easily happen. In this regard it is important to separate club operation demands from club strategy demands.

It is a known business fact that a medium to long-term view of strategy and projections will always improve the view of the short-term. Taking this into account in terms of St. James’ GAA club, having this plan should also help us short-term.

