

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael
NAOMH BRÍD



**ANNUAL
REPORT 2017**



Cumann Luthchleas Gael Naomh Brid Béal Feirste

st. BRÍGÍD'S gac BELFAST

Founded 1998



Annual General Meeting 2017

**The Annual General Meeting will
be held in**

Harlequins RC

on Sunday,

26th November 2017,

at 8:00pm



CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

May I welcome you all to the 19th Annual General Meeting as we review another very good year for the Naomh Brid and look forward to what lies ahead in 2018 and beyond.

Last year I opened my report with apologising for not being able to say that Musgrave was up and running. Thankfully that problem does not exist this as year, as we are not only the proud tenants of great magnificent changing rooms but also a second pitch will be ready for the New Year.

This of course is not the only great achievement of the year. Again, as usual, there are so many people to thank and it would be very easy to miss people, therefore I will leave it to the individuals reporting after me to give a more detailed go raibh agaibh. However we do need to ensure that we look after this splendid venue and going forward. We need to keep it clean and decorate it etc to show that this is our facility and that we are proud of that.

If we start on the Field of Play – it is great to see that we have been able to continue to develop Camogie and develop the Hurling aspect of the Club. It is wonderful to see our young children with Sliotars in hand on Fun Sunday and hopefully we can build on this.

Well done to all the Hurlers and the new Camogs and to John Duffy, Frank McGurk and Frank MacElhatton and all the others involved for their sterling work.

To the Managers of all Teams from Fun Sunday to Gaelic for Mothers and others to Juvenile Teams – Boys and Girls, to Seniors and Reserves: Thank you very much for all of your commitment and your resilience to continue to look after these Teams throughout the year.

It's never easy to commit yourself to looking after a Team on a regular basis, when you have to deal with cancellations, re-fixtures, exams, holidays and all the other things which can "throw a spanner in the works". But everybody kept going and we were very successful on the field, though we maybe fell at the final hurdle on some occasions.

To be Intermediate Football County Champions, to win the Antrim U16s Football, again for the third year out of four, and to qualify for the Girls Feile once again and win the girls U14 league represents another great year for the club.

Our under-age coaching is thriving and we must acknowledge all involved under Peter Mulgrew and Muiris MacCartaigh for leading this Group along with Martin McCarney, Frank McGurk and the input of so many others. Fun Sunday is the hub of the Club, though we need to improve on how we manage this event every Sunday and ensure that all groups are singing off the same hymn sheet etc. It is therefore vital that we elect a Fun Sunday officer who will lead the charge and bring all these groups together for the benefit of all.

We must congratulate ourselves on still being able to field 2 Teams at different levels – it is always very difficult when you are dealing with Children to get a happy medium between playing Players and giving all the same opportunity, as against trying to win. Although we were very successful at certain levels this year, we have to hold our hands up and say that we didn't follow through on giving everybody the same opportunity and because of this we run the risk of creating elitism between Children at different levels, which will in turn lead to those Children not wanting to participate. It is very difficult to get this right, but it's our responsibility to try, because every Member pays their Membership! We are therefore duty bound to give them the opportunities they are paying for – as I said this is difficult but is something



we need to address as we may not have got this right in 2017.

This is great for the Club but let's build on this, so again, may I thank the Coaches, and being wary not to mention some in particular over others. May I especially thank Eunan Conway and Sean Carter for looking after the Senior Team and leading our players to win the Fr Fitzpatrick Cup.

I would also thank anybody who helped in driving our Children to Matches and Tournaments and also helping with Social Events and organising Tournaments.

Going forward we need to also develop our Coaches in these areas and this will be one of the aims in 2018. This has to be seen as the priority within the Club at all levels and codes.

In 2017 we did set ourselves certain goals and I think we could safely say that we have surpassed ourselves on some of them.

At the start of the year we agreed to improve our Child Protection strategy and thanks to Deirdre Webb and Anne O'Hagan we now have a more comprehensive Child Protection Policy. To help us do this we have devised our own process to handling disputes, complaint and safeguarding issues and thank you to all involved in this.

This, I have to say, was tested on occasions throughout 2017, but we did not fail to provide our Members with a process which could be followed through on.

The fact that we trained an additional 37 members on Safeguarding last month is a huge statement and now we must harness this enthusiasm and willingness to be a volunteer. We must ensure we are compliant with all the necessary safeguarding requirements.

2017 also saw Tracy Galvin continuing to promote Scor within the Club and we host the Antrim Scor on the 19th, so all credit to Tracy and good luck to our acts who will be representing Naomh Brid .

Another great Event again was our La na gClubanna which was again was organised by Tracy, Muiris and Peter and well done to everybody else involved.

Another aspect which we endeavoured to broach this year was the Club Development Plan and this is now in place and there for all to see. However, there is no use having gone to effort. This is a document which is there as a reference point to guide us forward and should be used as such.

May I thank our Sponsors, McGrady Insurance, for their continued participation, Ryan Daly for sponsoring the defibrillator, and Cedar Grove Veterinary Clinic, our most recent shirt sponsor.

Can I thank Harlequins again for their continued support, and as we move forward we need to be aware as to what our needs are there and use it to the best we can.

May I acknowledge the fact that we have 6 young men who are participating in the Dermot Early programme and this is a great statement from these members. They are John Morgan, Cormac Barr, Thomas McCarney, Daniel Foster, John Higgins and Peter Heaney.



The Dermot Early Group.

Now turning to our Committee, thank you for all your efforts in 2017.

To Phil Convery, for his constant calm and efficient approach to matters, we are indebted and thank you Phil for continuing in this role.

To Marc Murphy and Declan and Marie Canavan— thank you for all your financial guidance and your ability to keep us aware as to the pitfalls of spending too much. We have to agree that last year, complacency crept in after Strictly Brid, though this is something we addressed and the 'money people' kept us on the straight and narrow. This was of course made easier by the Golf Day and Guest Tea which were very successful. For this we must acknowledge Orlaith and Finn McKernan for organising the Guest Tea and Patricia and Peter Lundy for the Golf Day.

From a money perspective, we however cannot become complacent and each team still needs to be self funding. We need to also apply for whatever grants might be available to help fund equipment and coaching needs as we did not do this in 2017.

We also need to apply for Club Maith for accreditation. Our relationship with referees still leaves a lot to be desired and to be put in a very simple manner – Players and Managers

at all levels must remain on sidelines and not get involved in disputes. I'd like to thank our own referees, who take on a difficult role.

Going forward therefore we, as a Club, are in a great position and remember, as I said last year that we are still in our infancy. I have always said that we could only be considered as a "Second Generation Club" as those who were involved at the start all came from different parts of the Province. Our Children are now growing up and need to lead the Club. We can't at any stage be complacent as to who will stay within the Club and who will leave and therefore Inclusivity at all times is vital.

Of course, next year is our twentieth anniversary and we hope to celebrate in style, so watch out for notification on this.

2018 is a new year and hopefully we can build on our successes, cut the corners off the areas which we are not addressing properly and build on something which is truly the envy of many Clubs in the County.

May I again thank all Coaches, Committee, Parents, helpers and most importantly the Players and the Kids within the Club and ask you to commit to building the Club over the next 10 years.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Foreword to Secretary's Report

As the Chairman in his report inevitably looks forward to the future, it's my roll to look back over the last year in the club, and what a year it has been with notable achievements both on and off the pitch.

Once again we can be very proud of what has been achieved this year. After a few years of



leading this report with the successes of our underage sides, it's good to be able to give our senior men the first mention in the review of the year.

The senior men won the Intermediate Championship for the first time since 2006. More of that later. The U14 Girls and the U16 Boys were the stars among our underage teams. The Girls carried all before them winning the Feile and taking the League title with a 100% record. Our U16 Boys also had a fantastic season, winning the South Antrim and All County Championships.

Many of our underage teams also had "nearly" seasons, getting to the latter stages of their competitions or losing key games by the narrowest of margins. However success isn't only measured with silverware. One aspect of our progress as a club that is most admired or envied by rival clubs is the number of young players we have turning out for our teams. The very essence of a GAA club is to get as many Gaels playing our games as possible and this is one area where we continue to excel. We are able to field two boys teams at U12, U14 and U16. Many of our B teams are playing A teams from other clubs and are performing well against them. No other club in Antrim fields two U16 teams. We expect to replicate this at Minor level next year and field a second Minor team for the first time. The numbers attending Fun Sunday continue to grow. Our Summer Camps are also extremely well attended. As the Chairman says in his report, every member is important and these numbers augur very well for the future.

One point illustrates the progress we have made. The senior team that won the Intermediate Championship in 2006 was heavily reliant on players who had begun their playing careers elsewhere. In this year's winning team, all but two of the players have grown up with the club, beginning at Fun

Sunday as children. We should all take a great deal of pride in that achievement.

Our thanks should go to the current group of Fun Sunday coaches and all those who have helped with this group over the years, This really is the foundation upon which the club is built.

Turning to our highlights on the field in a bit more detail, let me begin with the senior men.

The Intermediate championship was won against Dunloy on a memorable Saturday afternoon in October after victories against Tir na nOg, St Endas, and All Saint's, Ballymena, in the earlier rounds. We started the final nervously and trailed by a point at half time. Two points from super sub Ruaridh O'Neill meant the momentum was with us in the second half.

The icing on the cake came from a left footed thunder shot from Ben Leonard who nearly took the net off and his score sealed a victory. The final score of 1:13 to 0:8 flattered Naomh Brid who needed former county player Ronan McGrady to knock over some vital frees to put away a gallant Dunloy side who for 45 minutes were well in the game.

Unfortunately the Ulster Quarter Final against Rostrevor was a game too many for the boys.

The league campaign in Division 2 was less successful. Promotion was the aim, however St. Brigid's finished 5th, 10 points off Glenavy and 7 points off St. Enda's who finished second. An inability to see out games we were in control of, coupled with some unfortunate single point defeats, caused us to fall short in the race for promotion to Div 1.

However the concerted effort from the end of July to the end of October by the senior panel of 33 players was unrivalled in recent years by any adult St. Brigid's team. The future looks



bright with many of the County Minor finalists of 2016 and 2014 progressing on to the senior team.

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Sean Carter and Eunan Conway, the joint managers, backed up by a support team of Eamon Convery and Dermot Harkin with John Bogue and John Mc Keever always on hand when duty called. The reserve management duo of Mark and Damien all played their part in the successful 2017 season.

The senior reserves had a very promising year culminating in runner up spot in league and a narrow defeat in champion final. Their support was important for the seniors in their run to the intermediate championship.

The U14 Girls had a really great year, winning the Antrim Feile in an epic final against Gort na Mona by 5-01 to 3-06, followed by a guard of honour reception at Musgrave at the Lá na gClubanna. They went on to represent Antrim in the All Ireland Feile in Cavan & Fermanagh.

At the Feile the girls were a credit to themselves, their families, St Brigid's and Antrim – both on and off the field. They lost to the eventual winners San Francisco in the semi Finals. Had it not been for a finger tip save by the San Francisco keeper with the last kick of the game it could have been so different. After beating St Galls, Creggan and Sarsfields in the Antrim championship, the final against St Johns had to be delayed due to the All Ireland Feile and the summer break. When it was eventually played in September the girls were second best to a strong St Johns team which had "helpfully" been bolstered by transferring in two county players from Ardoyne over the summer. In the U14 league the girls also set the standard, lifting the trophy with a 100% win record. Such success doesn't happen by accident and was built on a tough programme of circuits and skills development training stretching back to last

Halloween. This success has been made possible by a group of very dedicated coaches including Noreen Courtney, Ciaran McCann, Stephen Austin, Eamonn Leonard and Niall Mitchell. Add to this a very supportive group of parents that helped to fund raise (especially James Higgins), took girls to matches, etc. A huge thanks to everyone for their ongoing support.

Once again the U16 Boys had a fantastic year. They won the Antrim County Championship beating Sarsfields, St Galls, and St Pauls on the way to winning the South Antrim title (a tense game won by 2 points in extra time) and beating Glenravel 2.12 to 1.06 in the county final.

They lost out to a strong Crossmaglen side in the Ulster quarter final, at the Paul McGirr Tournament where despite a great first half display Cross won a very entertaining game. The lads were obviously disappointed but conducted themselves with dignity and represented the Club honourably. That shouldn't take away from what was a magnificent season again for the U16 boys. Congratulations and thanks must go to Gareth Bradley, John McKenna, Joe Brolly and all involved with the U16 boys for what has been an outstanding year.

But of course at St Brigid's the U16s action doesn't stop with the A team. We are fortunate to have enough boys at this age group that we can field two U16 teams, the only club in the county to do so. In the league the boys acquitted themselves very well when you consider they are playing other clubs A teams. We finished a credible second in the league and with a bit more luck in the semi final we could have found ourselves in the B final but that wasn't to be.

This year's Minor squad was a talented group with many distinguishing themselves for the County. Attendance at training though was



very poor. As a result the squad had a frustrating season that did not fulfil their true potential. Thanks to Joe, Gareth, John and everyone involved in with the Minors this year.

The U12 A at times were excellent and vied all season with St Paul's and St Gall's to be the top team in South Antrim. In the end they were edged out by St Pauls finishing second to them in the league and losing to them in the championship, but there was a lot to be proud of in their performances. The U12bs also did well and made the final of their championship but fell at the final hurdle. They were regularly playing other clubs A teams so their mid table finish was very commendable.

During 2017 our U12, U14 and U16 hurlers continued to play in an amalgamated team under the name of Brid Og. Brid OG U12 had a very successful year, qualifying for Division 1 in The S Antrim league and the Nipper Quinn Cup competition on the basis of their wins in the grading league. Unfortunately the team lost to St Paul's in the league final and were beaten by Davitts in the Cup semi final in a game that could have gone either way.

The team finally tasted victory in the Draco Cup floodlight competition - These games were played over 3 weeks and Brid Og went through the tournament unbeaten with a victory over Lamh Dhearg in the Final.

For the U14 hurlers the highlight of the year was in June when the Ulster Council organised Feile was played at Woodlands. The lads played their best hurling of the year with wins against Letterkenny, Killyclogher and Omagh eventually losing by one point in the final against Eoghan Rua, Coleraine.

For the U16 boys playing in South Antrim Division 2, the step up from U14 was a steep learning curve. However they ended the season strongly losing the South Antrim B

Championship final narrowly to Division 1 team Lamh Dearg after extra time. All but one player in the panel is eligible for U16 again next year so the future is bright for this young team.

The ladies U12's have had also a great year! The girls improved match after match throughout 2017, further developing match skills and growing in strength. They benefitted from the same training programme as the U14s. They went through the league campaign losing only 2 games and many of the U12 girls stepped up to help out the U14s throughout the year

It was always going to be difficult for the U16s ladies to emulate last year's double success. The Championship draw brought us face to face with 'A' Division challengers St John's who had been seeded with us in the 'B' competition! Despite our best efforts at Musgrave, we were beaten by a stronger and bigger squad who ultimately went on to win the competition. In the league the girls grew stronger the season went on, but in the end lost out by a single point to Sarsfields in the deciding game. No silverware but the strong foundation this team has built should enable us to compete at minor level next year.

The senior ladies had a difficult year with numbers down due to external transfers and university moves and throughout the season found it difficult to have a settled team due to holidays, exams and other commitments. For the second year running they lost out in the championship to eventual winners St Pauls.

U8 Camogie continued from strength to strength during the year with training on Monday evenings in Musgrave Park and Harlequins. The squad played regular Go Games tournaments both indoors and outdoors, with a phenomenal record of success. For the first time, St Brigid's



successfully hosted an under 8 Camogie tournament.

Under 10 Camogie continued to grow in numbers and the girls participated successfully in a number of tournaments throughout the year.

G4MO continues to go from strength to strength with strong turnouts at training. The club also hosted its first G4MO tournament in May with 10 teams from Antrim and Down taking part. Moreover the ladies continue to make a huge and important contribution to other activities within the club. The ladies also took part in a number of blitzes across the country including the Ulster and All Ireland blitzes.

It's important to appreciate that we have seen a lot of positive aspects to Fun Sunday (FS) in recent years and 2017 has been no different. We have more players participating, new coaches stepping forward and are making progress in developing hurling and camogie. At times we need to stand back and just look at our pitches on Sunday lunchtime and appreciate and take satisfaction from the fact that we have close to 200 children playing and enjoying football, hurling and camogie.

But success also brings challenges. There is pressure on playing space, a weekly free for all for goalposts, and in recent weeks getting a good spot on a Sunday morning has come down to who gets there first!

We need to get back to a more co-ordinated approach across the whole of FS. We must remember that lots of our parents have more than one child involved and it can be confusing if for example there is no uniformity about when the year finishes. Anything that departs from consistency is not good.

Not having had a Fun Sunday Officer (FSO) for this year has been unfortunate and it is imperative that we get back to having that roll filled ASAP. Once policies and plans right down to the layout of who plays where on a

Sunday has been agreed, we should see a smoother running of FS. Developing and resourcing Fun Sunday will be a priority for the club in the coming year. This year all the Fun Sunday groups have played in a number of Blitzes, challenge games and tournaments throughout the year, and have acquitted themselves well in all of them. The highlight of the year was our own U10 Tournament in September. On the field our teams were superb. We entered three teams, 2 from P7 and 1 from P6 and came away with 2 trophies. It was great to see so many players line out in Naomh Brid colours and a notable mention must go to 3 of our U10 girls who joined with the boys on that day (as they did on a few other occasions through the year) and were exceptional.

The Club set a target recently to aim to have all coaches trained in child protection and safeguarding, Access NI cleared and Level One coaching trained. The safeguarding of our young players is of paramount importance to the club and it was fantastic to see such a huge turnout at our recent child protection course. There were over 40 coaches present, many from within the ranks of our Fun Sunday group.

The evening was hosted by County Antrim officers and they were delighted with the turnout and said that it was by far the biggest crowd from a single club that they had seen.

There were a number of notable achievements in the local schools this year. 2017 proved to be an extremely successful year for Gaelic games in St Brides. Both our boy's and girl's teams were winners of their leagues. Both teams competed in the top section of the Belfast Leagues. The girls were unbeaten in the league and won their championship. Our boy's reached the Raffo Cup final for the third time in three years but lost out to a talented St. John the Baptist side. This was the only game the boy's lost all year. The defeat in the final was redeemed when



they claimed the South Belfast Schools trophy at the Bredagh Blitz in June. With an average of 36 boys attending training we were able to field three teams throughout the year. Hurling and Camogie continue their upward development in the school too.

At Victoria College we regularly have 25 players playing football and hurling. The highlight of the year was the success of the year 9/10 footballers who reached the final of the Ulster Year 9/10 competition . There were 4 St Brigid's girls on that Victoria team. The majority of the girls playing GAA at the school are attached to other clubs across the city giving us limited recruitment opportunities. Stranmillis has great recruitment possibilities but progress with this school has stalled over the last couple of years and needs a number of people involved (at least initially) to avail of the opportunity in this area. The club must look at this seriously as quickly as possible.

The Summer Cul Camps were once again a great success. We held three summer camps over the summer, with over 200 children passing through the gates of Harlequins for coaching in both football and hurling and lot of fun!

St Brigid's again continue hosting some of the largest coaching events in the county for the primary school section of the club. The camps were excellently organised by club members, again this year it was also great to see a sizable number of the Naomh Brid juveniles helping out at the camps, a number of senior players made themselves available to help throughout the summer. Without the help of these club members these camps could not have taken place.

Off the field this year, a few important achievements stand out.

The opening of the new club rooms and the addition of a second full size pitch will give us the potential to move the club to the next level. The changing rooms have already made

a huge difference. The second pitch came into play a little late this year to make a big impact but I am certain we will see the benefit of it immediately in 2018. However we cannot afford to be complacent, and we should continue to look at what our requirements will be as we grow as a club over the next 20 years.

St. Brigid's hosted the 2017 Scór na nÓg Antrim final and was without a doubt the best County Scór Final that Antrim has seen in many years . The standard in every category was so high and the young people performed to such a high standard . The event was a huge success and St. Brigid's showcased its wonderful support for culture within the club. This would not have been possible without the many volunteers on the day, from all sectors of the club, players and non-players, young and old. None of this would have happened without the tireless efforts of Tracy Galvin who took on the organisation of the event, and our thanks go to her for all her hard work.

The Club Day or La na gClubanna in May was a great success for the second year running. Held at Musgrave for the first time, it was wonderful to see so many participants, young and not so young, all enjoying the exhibition matches, stalls and activities. Everyone enjoyed the day, and I think it was a significant step in building a strong sense of club identity.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Paul Campbell and Oliver Lennon in providing facilities to play our games and the constant work done by Oliver Lennon to maintain such an active, informative and positive social media presence.

Thank you also to Marc Murphy who, as our main liaison with Harlequins, has helped to ensure that our relationship with the Rugby club here is as smooth as possible. A mention must also go to Martin McCarney who does vital work throughout the year to ensure that



our membership database is accurate and that we have all our players registered, insured and paid up.

Thank you also to all the other members of the Club Committee who help with the day to day running of the club and our planning for the future.

A special mention also to Frank McGurk who received recognition this year as "Irish News Club Volunteer of the Year" for his tireless work behind the scenes at the club and in particular his work in promoting hurling and his coaching with our local schools. People like Frank are the lifeblood of the GAA and it is very pleasing to see this recognised in this way.

I have mentioned some names in the team reports which follow, however it's impossible to mention everyone by name. I want to end by recognising the commitment, dedication and skill of all the many coaches and helpers who give up their time to work with the teams. The club would not achieve the success or growth that it does, without all your efforts and on behalf of St Brigid's I want to thank every one of you.

Good luck to all our players, coaches and members in 2018. Naomh Brid Abu!

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Phil Convery

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FOOTBALL

SENIOR MEN'S FOOTBALL



St Brigid's have a rare blend of experienced senior players and talented young players of 19 and 20 that with the right dedicated effort could land a much sought after intermediate championship title in 2017.

Despite the departure to foreign shores of Canada for Duncan McAuley, the more exotic Kilcoo for Dermot McLaughlin and the loss of Nial Lundy who transferred to England where he is studying. The Club welcomed back a few old hands in Ruaridh O'Neill and Kevin Gallagher, both were instrumental in landing a much sought after cup.

However the usual slow pace to preseason followed in January and February. A mixture of pre-season strength and conditioning and park runs were all ignored as was the Ulster league in terms of serious pre-season effort and the predictable price was paid in early league points. In the Ulster league we played four games winning two and losing in two narrowly missing out on qualifying for the quarter finals. It gave a chance to some old hands and some new ones to see how they liked the thought of furthering their Gaelic careers.

The ACFL Div 2 campaign began with a convincing defeat to the hands of St. Enda's who were much better prepared for the season than their South Belfast hosts. The absence of Enda Clarke was sorely missed in that first game as we were cleaned out to say the least in midfield and harsh lessons were learned for later on in the year. A loss of 2:16 to 1:9 meant there was much too improve upon.



Easy victories away to Davitts and Antrim helped put a smile on the senior panel's faces. Moneyglass were the subject of a facile 20 point victory at Musgrave. Next up was an away trip to Glenavy. Where the usual failings of the first half of the season came to light, the inability to see off a game we were in control of. This was not helped by the loss of keeper Dean Smith to a broken bone. A convincing win at home to Tir na nOg on Sunday 28th May helped keep the thoughts of promotion a possibility, and a comfortable win over Rasharkin at Musgrave kept things ticking over. Despite being quite a few players short a 5 point win was secured over Gort Na Mona. However the home game to Dunloy once again showed the inability to see out a game. This important art of game management was one which was slow to pick up as a draw was snatched from the jaws of victory in this topsy /turvey game.

Old foes All Saints were next on the menu and after scoring 5 goals 2 league points were in the bag. A facile victory over Ardoyne finished off the first half of the season.

The second phase meant a host of away games and first up was Rasharkin. This away game was lost again by poor game management by a point and signalled the real end of any hopes of winning the league, any thoughts of getting promotion were scuppered by another single point defeat to Moneyglass, and a home defeat to Glenavy. The away trip to Tir na nOg a week ahead of our preliminary championship game was a cagey affair with another defeat for the visiting Malone Roaders.

The game away to St. Enda's was similar as both teams would meet later in the championship a week later again, with St. Enda's keen for the points to secure promotion they did cut through St. Brigid's easily. However both teams would meet shortly in the quarter final of the championship.

The league table does not lie and St. Brigid's finished 5th, 10 points off Glenavy and 7 points off St. Enda's who finished second. The inability to close out close games and the poor away record all took their toll.



Championship

From a lucky preliminary round break to a convincing win in the county final

Glenavy hosted the game v Tir na nOg Randalstown on the 20 August. Three good weeks of preparations had meant that hopes were high going into this game. A challenge game away to Madden in Armagh, when some of our young travellers rushed from the airport to attend the game signalled to the panel we had found a system and quality to mount a challenge for the much sought after trophy. However our opponents had beaten us quite often over recent times and we were right to be wary of the south west men. The game itself was one which Randalstown took charge of after a first half goal and had their noses in front right into the final minutes of the second half when Peter Webb had a shot dip under the bar and through the hands of the Tir na nOg keeper. St Brigid's tagged on another point to seal a lucky win. A fortnight later St. Enda's were the fancied team at Hanastown in the next round. This time St Brigid's swept into an 8 point lead taking the newly promoted Glengormley men by surprise. A much improved game management set up ensured the Biddies could



withstand a spirited fight back to hold out by 2 points.

A top class opening 40 minutes and great displays from Patrick Finegan, Conor King, Finn McKernan, Cathal Conway, Enda Clarke, Peter Webb, John Blaney, James Smith and Jack Dowling meant the semi-final was approached with confidence.

The semi-final clash v All Saint's, Ballymena on Sat. 23 Sept at Corrigan Park saw a brace of goals from John Blaney and a solid team display when the panel's strength was needed as the Finegan twins had departed for New Zealand and Peter Lundy for Canada from the previous round. Older Finegan brother Rory came into the side and veteran Ruairidh O'Neill helped steer the team to victory, on a scoreline of 4:9 to 0:11. Fellow veteran Stephen Morrissey made 3 good saves at Corrigan a feat he would repeat v Dunloy in the final. "Shoukri" played in the first round in 2006 v Dunloy at Ballymena when they won their opening game in their last winning Intermediate campaign in Antrim.

Preparations continued for the final at Aghohill on Sat. 14 Oct. Dunloy were playing in their 3rd final in a row at this level. The North Antrim dual club had defeated St. Brigid's in the 2016 county minor final and quite a few from both teams had made the step up to senior. A nervous start by Naomh Brid meant Stevie Morrissey was called into action all too often in the first half but a couple of late first half points saw the Malone boys trail by a single point going into the second half. After getting on level terms substitute Ruairidh O'Neill scored 2 from play and assisted with another point and the momentum was going the Biddies way. The icing on the cake came from a left footed thunder shot from Ben Leonard who had been playing really well in training and his score sealed a victory. The final score of 1:13 to 0:8 flattered Naomh Brid who needed former county player Ronan McGrady to knock over some vital frees to put

away a gallant Dunloy side who for 45 minutes were well in the game.

The launch pad for much of the seasons success was the midfield duo of Cathal Conway and big Enda and again they dominated their men with John Blaney fleet footed for breaking ball, and possession won time and time again to break Dunloy's hearts for a 3rd season.

The draw for the Ulster Championship saw Down Champions Rostrevor travel to Corrigan to play St. Brigid's who failed to convert 3 early chances that fell just below the crossbar and then went on to concede a sloppy early goal, that meant the red and blacks went in at half time 1:7 to 0:5 in front. Despite Enda Clarke dominating Midfield and Ronan McGrady scoring 4 points from frees we simply could not get enough scores from play as James Smith and Ronan McGrady scored 2 each.

The concerted effort from the end of July to the end of October by the senior panel of 33 players was unrivalled in recent years by any adult St. Brigid's team. The future looks bright with many of the County Minor finalists of 2016 and 2014 progressing on to the senior team. It was particularly pleasing to see Michael Cummings transition from a substitute on the 2014 minor team to a senior stalwart within 3 years. The determined effort to blood younger players paid a rich dividend, in 2017. Issues for the club in 2018 at Adult level is keeping the tight bond that now exists with so many players in Dublin, England and Scotland. Our second Intermediate championship was won with all but 2 of the team graduating from Fun Sunday right through to club minor finals before playing at adult level.

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Sean Carter and Eunan Conway. joint managers. Sean combined a busy work schedule around



St. Brigid's training, unlike many players early in the season. The back up support team of Eamon Convery and Dermot Harkin with John Bogue and John Mc Keever always on hand when duty called. The reserve management duo of Mark and Damien along with proud team captain Andy Sweeney and the "ambassador's all played their part in the successful 2017 season.

SENIOR RESERVE MEN'S FOOTBALL

Senior reserves had a very promising year culminating in runner up spot in league and a narrow defeat in champion final. Momentum was gained throughout the championship but luck was not on St Brigid's side in the final. The second quarter saw a harsh sending off and two goals conceded. Despite this NB battled back to within 2 points but could not get any closer.

An undoubted highlight was a thrilling semi final against Glenavy that needed extra time to separate the sides. It was a game that both sides gave everything and will be remembered for a very long time by all that witnessed it.

Perhaps most pleasing from a senior reserve point of view is the players that returned to play football having drifted away over the last few years. The increased numbers and strong bond that developed will suggest a promising 2018 season. These positives supported the senior's in their run to winning the intermediate championship.

Thanks go to Damien Judge for his hard work throughout the year. Special thanks also to Mark Kelly who will hope to be playing as opposed to managing in 2018 and Conhuir Taylor on their support throughout the year. Eunan Conway needless to say was a constant help throughout the year and does invaluable work behind the scenes.

Minor Football

This year's Minor squad was a talented bunch with many distinguishing themselves for the County. Attendance at training though was very poor. Commitment to the league campaign was likewise disappointing and relied heavily on U16s to field.

Not once, because of injuries, exams, holidays or order commitments did we get to put our best team on the pitch. Nevertheless they but did provide us with some memorable performances. A league game against All Saints Ballymena was particularly highlight.

There was more enthusiasm towards the end of the summer but it was too late. We played Creggan twice in a fortnight once in the league and again in the championship. They lost both games but put in 2 very good performances that they could be proud of but as the dust settled you were left thinking what could have been had the squad trained together regularly. Quite a number of squad are enjoying an Indian summer with the U21 championship. Thanks to Joe, Gareth, John and everyone involved in with the Minors this year.



U16 A Football

The U16 A team was made up of 15 Graded players and 10 who moved between the A and B teams. Despite a good preseason performances in the league were inconsistent. This though is a really committed squad,



without prima donnas, who train well and play to a system.

Although they beat Sarsfields in the league during the summer the lads from Lenadoon were favourites for the Championship. However, the football that our lads played at Musgrave in poor conditions was simply outstanding. Every player stood up and distinguished himself. Final score Naomh Brid 6-07 Sarsfields 1-10. Next up was a decent St Galls team that had beaten us in the league. Our young men put in a reasonable performance despite the efforts of the referee and won by 7 points. Next up, in the SA Final was St Pauls. The teams served up the usual tense fare that stifled the performances of many but when the final whistle blew after extra time we had won by 2 points. The team had though to prove itself again and they did so against Glenravel in the Antrim All County Final. Glenravel were honest and resilient but there was little doubt in my mind that we were always going to win and they did winning 2-12 to 1-06. Their reward was to draw Crossmaglen in the Ulster quarter final on the Paul McGirr Tournament where despite a great first half display Cross won a very entertaining game. The lads were obviously disappointed but conducted themselves with dignity and represented the Club honourably.

Gareth Bradley preparations of the teams again this year was meticulous and an essential element of team's success. The squad believed in and played to a system designed by Joe Brolly.

John Mackle was, of course, excellent as the goal keeping coach but who knew he would be such a calming influence on the line. Jack Dowling and Rory Brolly contributed to the pre-match preparation of the teams. Una McCarney again put her inimitable stamp on the Big Breakfast fundraiser which was a wonderful morning that saw the Club come together with tremendous sense of unity.



Top row left to right
Thomas McCarney, Toirealach Brolly, Daniel Foster, Hugo Leeson, Patrick McKay, Paul Bradley, Tom O'Doherty, James McKenna (GK), Calum Webb, Ben Doherty and Conor Slevin.

Bottom row left to right
Liam Finegan, Ronan Agnew, James Turkington, Donal Harrison, Eoin Brown, Reuben Carleton, Shay Campbell, Ronan Boyle and Marcus Lynch.

Injured and not in photo Matt Smyth, Conan McNicholl and Harry O'Connor.

Mentors- Gareth Bradley, Joe Brolly and John McKenna. Thanks and congratulations to them all. On a general note John would like to acknowledge the assistance of Paul Campbell in providing facilities and the constant work done by Oliver Lennon to maintain such an active, informative and positive social media presence this year.





U16 B Football



We are fortunate to have enough boys at this age group that we can field two U16 teams, the only club in the county to do so. After a useful series of challenge games we got our league off to a great start with wins over the 'A' teams of Gael an tSleibhe Dhuibh (an amalgamation between O'Donnells and Gort Na Mona), Rossa and St Johns. With tougher opposition came harder matches and after the grading section of the league we played the second half of the season in Div 2.

We finished a credible second in the league and began to focus on the Championship where Gael an tSleibhe Dhuibh reversed their

earlier result in the semi final. With a little bit of luck we could have found ourselves in the B final but that wasn't to be.

Between challenge games, league and championship these boys played 18 games this season, winning 10 of them. In all but two of our games we were very competitive and it was a pleasure to watch the team and squad putting it up to and frequently beating U16 'A' teams from south Antrim and across the county.

Attendance at training and matches was superb and for most games we had more than 25 players available. Brendan Mulgrew has been the main man behind the U16 B team this year so our thanks to him for all the hard work he has put in.

Under 14 A&B

While winning the second tier of the league and losing in the semi-final of the Championship was not the U14 A teams ambition, there were a number of players that grew in stature and skill turning from boys into men during the season demonstrating leadership that will see them represent the Club, and potentially the County, at the highest level. Lack of availability of key players at key times throughout the season and the timing of the Championship in the middle of the summer undoubtedly had an impact. That said, the commitment to train and win challenging games in the autumn reflects the ambition within this Group.

The B team had a tough year but played with courage and great heart, on occasions, despite suffering a series of defeats in the league and championship. They improved steadily during the year and, being a young team, they have much to look forward to next year.

Thanks are due to all who assisted with coaching, communications and other support



during the year: Shane Finnegan, Adrian Toner, Mark Finegan, Brendan Birt, Michael Gorman, Brian Kavanagh, Barry Kilmartin, Una McGurk, Marie Canavan and Mícheál Ó Mainnín.

Under 12 Football

This year's u12s had a very solid if slightly disappointing season under coaches Greg Blaney, Shane Quinn, Paul McErlean, Gareth Graham and Peter Gilleece.

The squad number was around the 25 mark and the boys had an enjoyable pre-season with friendlies against Glenavy, Bredagh, Clann Eireann and a number of others. We also managed a trip to Dublin for a National League semi-final and winning friendlies against St Brigid's of Dublin. It was a great day out even if the bus broke down!

Our league performances at both A & B level were very solid though as usual, the B's suffered a bit when they came up against A teams from other clubs. They finished mid table and did very well to get their championship final, though they fell at the final hurdle in a very close game. We coaches were very proud of the progress of some of the B players who grew in both confidence and skill as the season progressed – it was a real joy to behold at times.

The As at times were excellent and vied all season with St Paul's and St Gall's to be the top team in South Antrim. They were very unlucky to lose to St Paul's in the first league game and shared the spoils with St Gall's in their two league games, winning at home and losing away in an epic battle. The return game against St Paul's was not played with St Paul's being awarded the points in controversial circumstances which left both the team and coaches more than a bit sore. St Paul's duly won the league with Naomh Brid coming second. We then faced St Paul's in the semi-final of the championship. While we started well, St Paul's first year (or Year 8 as they call

it these days) players were bigger and stronger than our lads and we were beaten by a better team on the day. We could have had no complaints about the result. In tournament play, we had some great days out including a brilliant win over Crossmaglen in the semi-final of the Dromintee tournament.

Unfortunately, we'd expended so much effort in the quarter final and semi-final that we lost the final! Still, it was a great experience and the victory over Crossmaglen (who'd beaten us in the semi final last year) was probably the highlight of the season.

We feel that we made real progress this year and the boys enjoyed it we hope but it's pretty clear we are going to have to up our game a notch – in strength, preparation, tactics etc to be the best. That's the challenge for next year though we coaches will split – with Peter, Paul and Gareth going up to the u14s and Greg and Shane staying down with the u12s. We've had a great few years taking the boys together since they were u8s. Our thanks go to coaches Greg, Shane, Paul, Gareth and Peter for their work with the boys at this level.





HURLING



During 2017 our u12, u14 and u16 hurlers continued to play in amalgamated teams under the name of Brid Og.

Under 12 Hurling

Brid OG u12 had a very successful year, qualifying for Division 1 in The S Antrim league and the Nipper Quinn Cup competition on the basis of their wins in the grading league.

Unfortunately the team lost to St Paul's in the league final and were beaten by Davitts in the Cup semi final in a game that could have gone either way.

The team also took part in Rossa's Joe McKelvey tournament and reached the semi final of the Carryduff tournament competition losing to St John's narrowly after having victories against Bredagh 2, St Galls, St Patrick's Down and St Peter's Warrenpoint

We also had several challenge games over the year against Bredagh, Con Magees, Creggan, Keady, Lamh Dhearg, St Pauls and St Peter's Warrenpoint and were unbeaten at the Ulster Provincial Blitz in Magherafelt.

The squad also attended Slaughtneil's All Ireland Club semi final against Cuala, Antrim league victory against Carlow in Newry and Antrim's defeat to Carlow at Croke Park in the

Christy Ring Final

It is said that good things come to those who wait and the team finally tasted victory in the Draco Cup floodlight competition - These games were played over 3 weeks and Brid Og went through the tournament unbeaten with a victory over Lamh Dhearg in the Final.

Thank you to Darren Hamill, Frank MacElhatton, John Duffy, Ciaran Grant, Gary McDonald and Conor Barnes for coaching and mentoring the team this year.



U14 Hurling

The first competitive match of the year was in the B Feile against Davitts. With key players out injured the team battled well on the day but came away on the losing side.

The team were entered in the S Antrim league and competed well during the games but not converting possession into scores.

During May, Brid Og entered the C Feile which was played at Randalstown. After wins against Ballymena and Clooney Gaels, the team went through to the semi final and were narrowly defeated by Sarsfields.

In June the Ulster Council organised Feile was played at Woodlands. The lads played their best hurling of the year with wins against Letterkenny, Killyclogher and Omagh eventually losing by one point in the final against Eoghan Rua, Coleraine.

In the u14 Championship the team played Lamh Dhearg and once again opportunities in



front of goal were missed and made the difference on the day.

The matches concluded with the 9-a-side floodlit competition in October at The Cricket ground, Cliftonville, with the lads acquitting themselves well.

Congratulations to Niall Murtagh and Lorcan Roberts, two members of the panel who earned their place on the Antrim u14 Development squad which won at the National Feile at Abbottstown in August.

This was a young panel coming through from U12 and all but four players will be eligible to play u14 in 2018.

Thank you to John Martin Ciaran Grant John Duffy and Darren Hamill for their coaching skills and support throughout the year.

Under 16 Hurling

The u16 panel this year was the group of lads who had come through from u14.

The team were entered in the All County Division 2 league, playing Loch Mor, Clooney Gaels, Eoghan Rua Coleraine, St Enda's, Gort na Mona, and Tir na nOg. The league proved to be a steep learning curve for the lads, playing against physically stronger teams with experience at this level.

After a tough league campaign, the Championship semi final was played in August against Gort na Mona. With home advantage the team put up a really spirited performance, coming out winners by 8 points. This being the South Antrim B Championship, the win earned the team a place in the final against Division 1 team Lamh Dearg.

On 7th October, Brid Og were entered in an Ulster Council organised blitz at Castledawson. The team showed great determination playing against Castledawson and Warrenpoint, winning through to the final for another match v Warrenpoint, losing narrowly.

After several postponements, changes of venue and pitch surface, the S Antrim final was scheduled for 8th October at the Lamh Dearg pitch. Playing some of the best hurling

of the year, the team battled well throughout. Brid Og were up at half time but in the second half the exertions of the previous day in Castledawson became apparent and Lamh Dearg pulled back to leave it level at full time. In extra time, the lads could not maintain their efforts and Lamh Dearg came out winners on the day.

Overall the year ended on a high, particularly after the win against Gort na Mona and we look forward to next year with all but one player in the panel being eligible for u16 again.

Thank you to John Rush and Gerard Murray for their continued hard work with this panel.

Once again, a big thank you to our players, parents and families for their continued support throughout 2017

Camogie





Under 8 Camogie

U8 Camogie continued from strength to strength during the year with training on Monday evenings in Musgrave Park and Harlequins. The squad played regular Go Games tournaments both indoors and outdoors, with a phenomenal record of success. For the first time, St Brigids successfully hosted an under 8 Camogie tournament.



U8 Camógs at Musgrave Park Tournament

The team travelled throughout Belfast and its environs for both indoor and outdoor tournaments and also played indoors in Ballymena.

The Camógs also participated fully in the mixed North Antrim Indoor Leagues.



Two teams reached finals day, which was a great achievement and three Camógs played

in the Bríd Óg team which won its divisional final.

Under 10 Camogie continued to grow in numbers and the girls started the year by joining up with the boys to play in the North Antrim Indoor League.



U10 Camógs 2017

This proved to be good experience for the forthcoming indoor and outdoor tournaments which the team attended, throughout the year, with very good results.

U12 Camogie

The coaches are committed to developing under 12 Camogie and were delighted to see the St Bride's PS team reach the final of the School's Camogie competition. It is the aim of the club to field an U 12 team competitively. In the meantime, players are attending training and all U11 and U12 girls are welcome to attend.

Lá na gClubanna

Lá na gClubanna provided an opportunity for all of the players to show their skills to the rest of the club.





Buíochas Mór to all the Camogie players, coaches, helpers, parents and facilitators especially Marie Duffy, Catriona McKavanagh, Jenny Turkington, Muiris MacCarthaigh, Tracey Galvin and Clíodhna McAreavey.

Many thanks also to Frank McGurk and Otteran Joyce for all the Camogie development work being carried on at St Bride's P.S.

LADIES FOOTBALL

Ladies Seniors 2016

The senior ladies team began the year a few girls down following external transfers and university moves and throughout the season found it difficult to have a settled team due to holidays, exams and other commitments. There were a few notable team performances however with the home win over St Josephs being the highlight. Unfortunately for the second year running in the championship, the ladies were defeated by the eventual champions St Pauls. A good first half performance saw the team going in only a few points behind, however fitness told and St Pauls ran out convincing winners. Throughout the year there were a few ladies who stood out both in commitment and skills levels, Ciara Durnin, Orla McCaughey and Mary Jayne Smyth are role models for all up and coming girls who would wish to play for St Brigid's.

Particular thanks go to coach Barry Mulligan. Thanks should also go to Ronan Graham and Philip Doyle for their support and congratulations to Colleen Quinn and Clare Donnelly for being selected for the Irish Australian Rules team who won the world cup in Australia.

Under 16 Ladies

We came to this year's season with a mixture of elation and trepidation in equal measure!

On the back of a hugely successful season last year, we knew that this campaign would be tougher given the loss of several key players moving age groups and the huge increase in the number of teams across the county competing at Under 16s 'B' level this year, all determined to unseat us as double champions.

We were delighted to see a few new faces this year and the girls who joined us have made a significant contribution throughout the season.



Training began in earnest in early February with somewhat subdued turnout, but as the weeks passed, the numbers swelled and by the time the season kicked off in early April, we were up to a small but consistent complement.

Our first league outing against a spirited Rossa side was probably a lesson to us as we struggled to get ourselves going. On paper, it should have been a fairly comfortable opening game for us but whether it was our early



season injury list or a touch of complacency, the two point loss we suffered probably was the spark we needed to kick-start our year! Ironically it was probably this slip up that came back to haunt us at season's close.

We quickly put our opening loss behind us and started a run of victories over St Gall's, Sarsfield's, Lamh Dhearg and Glenavy with the only slip up being a home loss to strong rivals Gort na Mona who caught us cold and handed us a strict lesson.

An unexpected and premature end to our return game with Rossa due to no fault of any team meant that we would need to face them again at some point in a rescheduled fixture.

By the summer break, it was clear that the league was going to be a wide open affair with all the favourites scoring wins over each other giving nobody a clear advantage.

After a well-earned holiday break, Championship draw brought us face to face with 'A' Division challengers St John's who had been seeded in the 'B' competition! Despite our best efforts at Musgrave, we were beaten by a stronger and bigger squad who ultimately went on to win the competition.

Perhaps the early exit from championship focused our determination and again we carded good results when the league returned as we posted healthy wins over St Gall's, Glenavy, Lamh Dhearg and Tir na Nog. By the time the season's end approached, four teams remained in the mix.

It's often said that *'It's not how you start, it's how you finish!'* and in keeping with this mantra, we saved our best performances for year' end!

A wet and windy Woodlands, and we again are up against Gort na Mona who had handed

us such a comprehensive lesson earlier in the year.

From the first whistle, the St Brigid's girls set out to dismantle Gort with aggressive attacking and tight defending! The difference between our first meeting and this return fixture was something to behold. We never let the opposition settle into their stride and the crisp finishing upfront and secure handling at the back saw us over the line with a healthy margin putting paid to Gort's hopes of a first league title.

In principle the league came down to our final home game against a rejuvenated Sarsfield's who through assured performances and careful and canny management of their fixtures had opened up a three point lead over St Brigid's. We needed to win this match to keep our season alive and the battle that ensued meant no team gave any quarter. The lead changed hands several times and even when our rivals opened up a five point lead going into the last ten minutes, St Brigid's never gave up fighting. We led by two points going into a protracted injury time but couldn't ride our luck over the line, losing by a single point to the new 'B' champions! The two point loss in that first game against Rossa had indeed come back to haunt us!

All in all, it's been an exciting season which went down to the wire. The commitment and skill shown from all the girls has been a credit and the input from the fourteens ensured that we pushed our rivals all the way! Sadly there was no silverware brought home but with the same effort and assurance, next year's venture into the minor's league bodes well.



The Future?

Next year will see our current 16s rejoin their colleagues from last year as they set out on their minor's adventure. This hugely successful squad will hope to make their mark on what will be a highly competitive league and championship and we hope the entire club will get behind them.

Positives?

- Some of the performances, particularly in the latter half of the season allowed us to run the league close, with only a single point score 'pipping us to the post' in the final game of the season.
- We pretty much completed the year with the same squad that we began, except for one or two drop outs.
- The phenomenal season achieved by our U14 girls meant that several of them could bring confidence and reliability when they turned out for the 16s team. The experience that they have gained playing at an older age group should stand them in good stead for next year.
- We hope to build on the good work done over the last two years and with training schedules already under way at Stranmillis College on Monday nights, the aim is to deliver a minors team from St Brigid's to compete in League and Championship next year.

Negatives?

- We remain vulnerable with limited numbers moving up to minors next year and would encourage all girls and parents to encourage participation within the squad. We will of course look for to next year's under 16s to feed through to minors and who stood shoulder to shoulder with us this season past.
- We need players there for ALL training sessions and games in order to give next year's team the best possible chance of competing at minors!



On the county scene, congratulations go to Rebecca Doyle and Eimear Matthews, both of whom were instrumental in helping the Under 16 Antrim Squad win their division with wins over Fermanagh, Tyrone and Armagh helping them reach their first ever Ulster 'A' Final where they narrowly lost out to previous All Ireland Champions Cavan.

This year we rotated Captaincy across games so well done to all the girls who had the honor of leading the team out.



A big thank you to our coaches for the year, Oliver Lennon and Philip Doyle who brought the girls through the season and thanks also to parents and club officials who supported the squad. NBA!

Under 14 Girls

Pre Season training

The season started immediately after Halloween with Monday evening indoor training in Stranmillis:

- Pre Christmas: 8 week circuit training with Aisling Murray and her sister Clare – simply excellent!!
- Post Christmas: 6 week skill development with Emma Kelly BCSDN – excellent drills and lessons for both girls and coaches

In addition in January and February the girls teamed up in a five week outdoor series of round robin matches on a Friday night with St Enda's & Carryduff at OL&SPK 3G pitches and then in March they progressed to a series of tough pre-season challenge games against Carryduff, Bredagh and Ballymaguigan, winning all three.

U14 girls Winter League

Over a 9 week period our U14 girls threw their hat into the ring against the best Antrim has at the pre season BCSDN Winter League tournament at the Cliftonville Road 3G pitches.

During the group stages Naomh Bríd faced Moneyglass, St Galls and Ardoyne and at the end of 4 weeks we ended up on top spot which gave us the opportunity to test our skills in the Cup Competition against St Enda's, Sarsfields, Creggan and our near neighbours Bredagh. Had it not been for an unfortunate injury to one of our midfielders against St

Enda's we would have gone into the final day in top position.

In our semi final game against Sarsfields our girls displayed possibly their best performance of the tournament against an array of county footballers and came out 6 point victors with an exhibition of football. Unfortunately in the final our girls were unable to get back up to the same level of intensity against the stronger Naomh Éanna opponents and we finished runners up on the day.



Afterwards, Mary Mitchell was presented with the Naomh Bríd Star Player award by BCSDN coaches who organised this very successful tournament.

Many thanks to Niall Mitchell, Eamonn Leonard, Ciaran McCann, Stephen Austin, Catherine Higgins & Noreen Courtney, for their help to make this such an enjoyable and successful tournament for the girls.

U14 players who participated over the 9 weeks included: Mia McGuinness, Beth Courtney, Sarah Higgins, Eve Finnegan, Aoife



Leeson, Aine McCann, Amy McGivern, Mary Mitchell, Aoife Rooney, Ciara Austin, Theresa Mellon, Eva Briggs, Katherine Ward, Aoife O'Hagan, Cora Leonard, Connie McMurray, Rachel McAreavey, Laura Agnew, Caitlin Courtney, Aileen McDonnell.

Antrim Féile

Glenavy

Naomh Seosamh travelled to Musgrave quietly confident that this was a game they would come away with a convincing victory, but they forgot to tell the St Brigid's girls the script!! After a close first quarter Naomh Bríd started to apply more and more pressure on the Glenavy defence and by the third quarter the Glenavy resolve was broken and our girls finished the game 9-05 to 2-02 winners

Ardoyne

The loss of Katherine Ward due to illness was a major setback to the girls, but after another slow start the team stepped up and by the end were convincing winners, with a score line of 8-11 to 0-04

Gort Na Mona

Even before the ball was thrown in this was a game that was creating much debate with the Antrim U14 manager demanding the three Naomh Bríd U14s girls play the day before the final against Monaghan in a county league decider and rather than only play them for the 30 minutes as he had promised, he played all three for almost 50 minutes in hot conditions against the strongest team in their section – not the best preparations for a county final the following day!

Simply put this was a game to remember and has been much talked about not only in Antrim LGFA circles, but it even made the sport pages of the Irish Independent as a game that bestowed the very best of the GAA, with two teams giving it everything. St Brigid's with their fast flowing direct football, razor sharp finishing in front of goal complimented

by their tenacious defending, contrasted by Gort na Mona with their never say die high intensity short passing game. In the opening 10 minutes Naomh Bríd blitzed the opposition with a salvo of goals but then had to rely on the heroics of Aoife O'Hagan in nets just before half time to ensure a slender lead of 3-00 to 1-02.

If the first half was exciting the second half was simply pulsating; once again St Brigid's put the opposition to the sword with their stylish expansive football culminating in goals but once again Gort came back time and time again and tried to break down the rock hard Naomh Bríd defence. After just scoring a point and with 4 minutes on the clock the Gort manager was heard screaming "we need two goals" and before we knew it the final whistle blew ... there was a brief pause, followed by a frantic discussion with the ref and only then were we sure that we were heading to Féile Peil Na Nóg 2017 with a single point victory under our belts!! Our girls deserved to win, but the Gort girls didn't deserve to lose – it was that sort of game. Even the eloquent and great Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh would have tried in vain to soften the pain with words, but they wouldn't have made the pain go away ... Final score Naomh Bríd 5-01, Gort na Mona 3-06

The day ended on an even further high for the girls with a hastily organised guard of honour homecoming to Musgrave by the senior players at our annual Lá na gClubanna celebrations.





Féile Peil Na Nóg 2017 – (in Cavan & Fermanagh)

Being the last county in Ireland to decide the Féile in some ways was a blessing in disguise as we didn't have time to debate it and had to "Just Do It" Many thanks to a small group of supportive and highly focussed parents who sorted out kit orders, accommodation, and transportation not to mention the small matter of fund raising. The girls travelled to Féile wanting for nothing and they stepped off the bus in Kinawley looking, and behaving, like the champions they were!!



It's not possible to convey the sense of emotions that goes along with the Naomh Bríd trip to Féile 2017 including:

- The girls were a credit to themselves, their families, St Brigid's and Antrim – both on and off the field ...
- The endless hospitality of our host club St Finbarr's including providing our girls with a guard of honour unto the pitch and a parade behind the Bennoe brass band before playing our National Anthem ...
- Having already played 4 tough games over a 24 hour period, had it not been for a brilliant save by the San Francisco goalie in the dying seconds to deny Naomh Bríd victory in the semi final, then possibly ...
- Watching the Whatsapp and Twitter pages scroll down with live match updates it felt more like a county game ...

- Seeing photos of parents, who normally stay in the Slieve Russell when visiting Cavan, crawling into bunk beds in a fisherman's hostel just to be there to support their girls ...
- The tireless efforts of our fundraising committee to make it all possible ...
- The list goes on and on ...

Féile shows the GAA at it's best and it was a privilege to be a part of it!

St Geraldine's

A very tough baptism of fire with our girls - 3 goals down within 5 minutes, but then they knuckled down to hold St Geraldine's to a single point for the remainder of the game, but unfortunately couldn't convert our dominance out the field with scores on the board.

Final score: Naomh Bríd 2-02 St Geraldine's 3-01

Kinawley

The pain of the first game propelled Naomh Bríd to a convincing 3-02 to 0-01 lead by half time, and even with a strong comeback by the host club the girls ended the game as convincing winners

Final score: Naomh Bríd 4-06
Kinawley 3-04

St Finbarr's

On the Saturday morning we played our host club and had win to secure top spot in the group

Final score: Naomh Bríd 4-09 St Finbarr's 1-02

Devenish (Quarter Final)

Winning the group we travelled back to Fermanagh to play local team Devenish

Final score: Naomh Bríd 5-10
Devenish 1-01

San Francisco (Semi Final)

Despite scoring 15 goals in the previous 4 games we succumbed in the semi final by a single point, and a fantastic finger tip save



from the last kick of the game to the eventual winners

Final score: Naomh Bríd 0-04 San Francisco 1-02

girl on the panel competing for places on the starting 15

Final score: St Galls 4-02 Naomh Bríd 12-15



U14 Girls Championship

We always feared of a backlash of winning the Féile that it might set a sense of complacency within the team and preparations were severely hampered by all the other distractions in the lead up to travelling to the Féile. We shouldn't have worried as the girls stepped up their game and played three strong teams in June to reach the Championship final against St Johns that had to be deferred until September as the final was scheduled to be played the day before travelling to Féile

St Galls

Best team performance of the year on a wet and miserable Thursday evening with every

Creggan

First attempt at a game was called off due to a waterlogged pitch and after a very close and competitive first 20 minutes the superior fitness and strength of panel secured a comprehensive victory

Final score: Naomh Bríd 13-06 Creggan 2-02

Sarsfields (Semi final)

On the hottest day of the year the girls faced a Sarsfields team sprinkled with 10 county players. Again the intensity of the girls style of play coupled with an ever improving level of fitness secured the victory. After the game Déaglán Coleman, the Sarsfields & U14 Antrim manager, praised them for their improvement in play over the past 12 months and wished them good luck in the forthcoming trip to Féile

Final score: Sarsfields 02-02 Naomh Bríd 06-05

St John's (Final)

The summer break came at the wrong time for the girls as they were on a roll. A series of challenge matches during August against Bredagh, St Enda's, Ballinascreen, Carryduff and Coleraine (winning all five) helped get them back on track to face a very strong St John's team. The week before the game we were informed that St John's squad had been further strengthened over the holiday period by the transfer of two county footballers from Ardoyne and then 24 hours before throw in the girls chances of victory were hit a further blow by the loss of Connie McMurray to a freak hand injury. Three early goals by St John's stunned the girls but once they got into their rhythm they fought back and battled to the final whistle but unfortunately came out second best on the day.

Final score: St John's 06-04 Naomh Bríd 01-08



Kilmacud Crokes All Ireland 7's

As Antrim Féile winners Naomh Bríd were invited down to Dublin in late September to the home of the All Ireland 7's. Once again the hardest decision was in the selection of 10 girls from the panel of 26 and in fact the coaches weren't able to agree on a final selection until they were on the bus. Playing five 7-a-side games on a full size pitch, each lasting twenty minutes, was a brilliant experience our U14 girls had never been exposed to. Also the opportunity to face the best opposition from Kerry, Laois, Tipperary, Kilkenny as well as local rivals Carryduff was priceless. In the early afternoon our girls bowed out at the quarter final stage to Kilkenny City and once again they left everything on the pitch and went home exhausted but very proud.

U14 Girls League

As with all Antrim league fixtures they are subject to much change and numerous cancellations. Despite this, the girls played Rossa, Ardoyne, Lisburn, Lamh Dhearg, Aldergrove, Naomh Éanna, St Galls, Colin Gaels, Gort na Mona & finished off the league in early October with a game against Creggan (Tír na Óg failed to field) lifting the league trophy with a 100% record.



The season ended as it started in Stranmillis Hall with indoor circuits on a Monday night, but this time we booked both halls and have over sixty girls ranging from U12 to U18. Over the past 12 months between indoor training, Park Runs, Winter league, Féile, Kilmacud Crokes 7s, challenge matches, league matches and championship I have recorded 101 different activities for the girls.



This has only been possible by a bunch of very dedicated coaches including Noreen Courtney, Ciaran McCann, Stephen Austin, Eamonn Leonard and Niall Mitchell. Add to this a very supportive group of parents that helped to fund raise (especially James Higgins), took girls to matches, etc. A huge thanks to everyone for their ongoing support this is what makes Naomh Bríd unique in Antrim.

Roll on 2018 ...

2017 U14 panel

Aoife O'Hagan, Rachel McAreavey, Sarah Higgins, Amy McGivern, Aine McCann, Cora Leonard, Meabh Brolly, Connie McMurray, Ciara Austin, Katherine Ward, Theresa Mellon, Mary Mitchell, Aileen McDonnell, Eve Finnegan, Laura Agnew, Aoife Leeson, Beth Courtney, Eimear Logan, Eva Briggs, Cara Cahill, Caitlin Courtney, Cara Bradley, Aoife Rooney, Niamh Mulligan, Catriona McCrory, Aimee Crossey.

Antrim Representation

Antrim U13: Connie McMurray & Katherine Ward

Antrim U14: Ciara Austin, Theresa Mellon & Mary Mitchell

School Representation

Rathmore: Ciara Austin & Aine McCann

Victoria: Katherine Ward, Caitriona McCrory, Amy McGivern, Eva Briggs & Caitlin Courtney

OLSPK: Cora Leonard, Aoife O'Hagan & Cara Cahill

Aquinas: Meabh Brolly, Theresa Mellon & Mary Mitchell

St Brides: Aileen McDonnell & Cara Bradley (both at OLSPK since September)

Under 12 Girls

Ladies U12's have had a great year! The girls improved match after match throughout 2017, further developing match skills and growing in strength.

The year started with indoor training in Stranmillis, where the girls participated in an 8 week circuit training course with the U14s. Followed by 6 weeks of development training with Emma Kelly from BCSDN. The indoor training yielded great results during the subsequent matches of 2017.

We put up a very strong performance in the League, losing only two games. One to a dominant Gort team and the other to a very strong St Paul's team.

We also participated in blitz's hosted outside of Antrim. One in Burren, and another in RGU, Downpatrick, where we walked away with the Shield.



Some of the U12 squad participated in the U14 panel throughout 2017 including the Antrim Feile. What an experience! Furthermore, some of our younger U12s represented St Bride's in winning the schools League against St John the Baptist. Well done girls! This is an indication of the calibre of the team coming through. And we finished up the season with many of the older girls representing Antrim in the U13 squad in an Ulster blitz in the Mid Ulster Sports Arena. Great opportunity for our girls to wear the Saffron jersey!

We're now ending 2017, as we started, back indoors in Stranmillis.



The coaches, Charlie Pat McCartan and Noreen Courtney, would like to thank the girls for their participation and enthusiasm during the year, and even more the support of the parents. We need your continued support to ensure an even better 2018. Thanks to Charlie Pat and Noreen for all their efforts throughout the year.

Gaelic for Mothers and Others



This past year has again seen the G4MOs continue to play an important and in many ways inspiring role within our club. On the field the girls are second to none when it comes to turning out for training sessions where, no matter what the weather, they can always be seen at Harlequins on a Monday evening from 8.00pm. In terms of supporting other teams and events within the club, anyone would be hard pushed to attend a game/occasion where the ladies are not playing a leading or indeed supporting role.

As I highlighted in my report last year, the ladies had plans in place to host our first ever

G4MOs club blitz and as we have come to expect when these club members are involved, the blitz was a great success. 10 teams from, Antrim and Down played at Musgrave Park in May. They enjoyed the great facilities offered by having our new changing facilities and club rooms available. The sun was shining and the 'craic' was flowing. The games were played in the proper spirit of Gaelic for Mothers and Others and everyone complimented our club and commented upon how good a day they had all had.

I want to thank everyone, those who looked after car parking, everyone who helped out with providing refreshments, the referees, and spectators who all helped make this first blitz memorable.

I know the date of 19 May 2018 has been provisionally set for the 2nd club blitz and I have no doubt that we all will want to be involved and make this another landmark occasion for our club.

It was great to see that this year, even during the peak July holiday time, we were able to get a squad to travel to Saval for the Ulster Blitz. The girls played very well and only struggled in the last 2 games when the difficulties of having a small squad on the day started to take its toll. Having had an earlier visit to Carryduff they then returned to Saval for their club blitz as well as Carrickmore in preparation for the annual trip to Portmarnock.



Once again the ladies plus management team all boarded the coach at 8:15 am on Saturday and headed down to Portmarnock. The 20 strong playing squad along with 3 non-playing support crew once again enjoyed the sunshine and the superb facilities of the Naomh Mearnóg venue. This year saw the team in a group of more experienced clubs all from outside Ulster. This stronger challenge was a great test and the opening 2 games proved to be particularly trying. However having recovered from the disappointment of our opening game and a late scoring rush to see us through the second the ladies were in great spirits for the remaining games. The All Ireland Blitz is without doubt the highlight of the G4MOs calendar, growing from strength to strength and this year over 2300 ladies representing more than 120 clubs attended. It is a great encouragement to me to see that the G4MOs section of our club continues to blossom and grow. It is not unusual to see 30 ladies out training every Monday evening at Harlequins and we are clearly seeing quite a number of the ladies now taking up coaching and committee position within the club.



I wish to thank Una McGurk and Emma Gorman who have continued to coordinate and lead the development of the G4MOs, whilst rarely does a Monday go by without seeing Anthony Carleton putting the ladies through their paces at Harlequins.



Fun Sunday

It's important to appreciate that we have a lot of positive sides to Fun Sunday (FS) in recent years and 2017 has been no different. We have more players participating, new coaches stepping forward and are making progress in developing hurling and camogie. At times we need to stand back and just look at our pitches on Sunday lunchtime and appreciate and take satisfaction from the fact that we have close



to 200 children playing and enjoying football, hurling and camogie.

But success also brings challenges. There is pressure on playing space, a weekly free for all for goalposts, and in recent weeks getting a good spot on a Sunday morning has come down to who gets there first!

We need to get back to a more co-ordinated approach across the whole of FS. We must remember that lots of our parents have more than one child involved and it can be confusing if for example there is no uniformity about when the year finishes. Anything that departs from consistency is not good. Not having had a Fun Sunday Officer (FSO) for this year has been unfortunate and it is imperative that we get back to having that roll filled ASAP. Once policies and plans right down to the layout of who plays where on a Sunday has been agreed, we should see a smoother running of FS.

Safeguarding our children

The safeguarding of our young players is of paramount importance to the club and it was fantastic to see such a huge turnout at our recent child protection course. There were over 40 coaches present, many from within the ranks of our FS group.

The evening was hosted by County Antrim officers and they were delighted with the turnout and said that it was by far the biggest crowd from a single club that they had seen.



Coaches and other volunteers attend the recent child protection course.

Moving forward

The outgoing club committee has agreed that developing the FS brand should be the biggest priority for the club in 2018. It is great to hear that and we have an opportunity to ensure that Fun Sunday is properly resourced in terms of equipment and coaching.

In the year ahead we must:

- Continue to recruit more coaches and other helpers - there are always willing parents just waiting to be asked to help;
- Train our coaches so as they are capable and confident in training our young people.
- Continue to develop as a dual club;
- Ensure that every age group and code has enough coaches, and playing equipment;
- Drive recruitment of players through schools and "bring a friend" initiatives;
- Recruit a FSO and ensure that they are well supported.

Most importantly we can never forget that the most important overarching aspect of Fun Sunday is kids having fun!

Remember the club motto – "Mol an Oige" – Praise our youth, and they will come through.

Reports from each group

U8 & U10 Girls

The Girls U10 & U8 footballers had a great year with an increase in numbers from last year and a number of players moving onto the U12s. We began our fixtures in February at the Sarsfields GAA winter blitz. Thereafter we played every two weeks until the end of June



as part of the Antrim League Blitz and were very successful. We also hosted at Musgrave on two occasions also. From September to the end of October we had games every Saturday as part of the Colin Glen Winter Blitz. Overall we had over 20 different players who participated in the U10 Girls games this year. Numbers are also increasing at Fun Sunday.

The U8s participated in a number of Blitzs this year. We also hosted an U8 Blitz at Musgrave in June. Recently the U8s attended a Blitz at Bredagh. Again the numbers are increasing all the time. Moving forward next year I would welcome a new Team Leader for the U8 Girls so that sufficient coaching can be given to both the U8 and U10 Girls. I would welcome coaching courses being made available also.

We also participated in the McGlone Cup held by St Galls (All Ireland Tournament). Winning all of our group games (Four) we progressed to the quarter final of the senior cup and won our game against Lamh Dhearg. We lost in the semi-final to St Galls who ended up as tournament winners. This was a great achievement and is a measure of how much the group has come on. The team were taken to Pizza Express to celebrate!

I would like to thank Anthony Cliondha, Muiris, Catriona & Emma for their help and assistance this year with this group.

Fun Sunday Nursery, P1 & P2 (boys & girls) –



The past year has seen continued growth and expansion in this group in terms of numbers and ability. Whilst maintaining the “Fun” in Fun Sunday, this group enjoys a session which incorporates the basics in both Gaelic Football and Hurling. Each week we have approximately 35-40 children in attendance. The aim is to have as much “hands-on” ball time as possible. It is fantastic to see these little children progress in skill, confidence and ability over the year. P1s and P2s have enjoyed regular Go Games and challenge matches. The sight of fist-passing and blocking at this age is a joy to behold. The use of Stranmillis University during the cold Winter spell has proved to be very successful and we hope that Santa will take some timeout from his busy schedule to visit us closer to Christmas.



A massive thank you to Jeremy Logan the all in the P1 who make it all happen.



P3 & P4 & P5 (boys & Girls)

In January 2017 the coaching group of the P3/4 boys' football made a concerted effort to improve the participation levels, attendance and structure of this area of the club. We took over a group of 20 boys with great potential but where participation at matches was very low and attendance in the group was sporadic outside of a core group of regulars. It was decided that effective communications with parents was the key to growing the group and therefore we set about building a new database for the group that included coordinating all training and match notifications. Parents were provided with a schedule of events several times within the year; allowing them to forward plan and avoid clashes with other commitments. In addition to this we worked with the club's schools officer to do a leaflet drop in the local schools targeted at growing the P3 age group. The net result of this work is that the number of boys regularly attending Fun Sunday within the group has doubled over the year. We have added over 20 new boys to the P3/4 group and several boys, who had previously left, have returned to the club. In September 2017 we widened the administration of the group to include the new P3s and have subsequently increased the numbers in this age group by a third in the first three months. Overall, we now have over 70 boys registered

to play in the P3/4 and P5 groups with over 45 regularly attending matches & training. On the coaching side we have doubled the number of coaches in the group through maximising the participation of parents. We have introduced structured training sessions concentrating on core skills. We looked to increase the number of matches the boys were playing by moving away from the Saturday morning Go Games and replacing them with challenge matches with a wide range of clubs. We were able to use the contacts of our coaches to provide the boys with special skills sessions from guest GAA stars like Tony Kernan (Armagh) and Conleith Gilligan (Derry). Consequently, the boys have had over 40 outings this year between Fun Sunday, challenge matches, tournaments, and guest coaching sessions.

The highlights of the year were strong showings at the An Ríocht and Bellaghy U8 tournaments. We rounded off the year with a day trip to Limavady Wolfhounds GAC where the group performed well in a range of great games and enjoyed a fun day of activities laid on by our hosts. The trip was rounded off by a prize giving ceremony for all the boys. As the year closes we are in a much stronger shape for moving ahead. A big thank you must go out to Charlie O'Neill and all our coaches and parents, for what has been a great collaborative effort throughout the year.





winning the Div 4 title in the St Brigid's P7 tournament in September.

They have played against a lot of teams this year including, Bredagh, St Endas, Davitts, St Pauls, St Johns. Arboe, St Pauls Hollywood, Eire Og, St Patricks Lisburn, Sarsfields, Carryduff, Ardoyne and Glenravel.

We look forward to next year to compete fully in all the U10/U10.5 tournaments across the province.

The coaching team of Martin McCarney, Brian Morrissey and Gerry Stewart, would like to thank all the parents of the squad for their help this year getting the lads out for training and games.

P7 U10.5 Boys

It has been such a busy year and between Sundays and Wednesdays we have had over 40 training sessions. We have also entered close to 20 tournaments and whilst still at P6 participated in around 12 sessions of Go Games before moving beyond that stage. The U10.5 coaches want to acknowledge the dedication of our players and parents who ensure that the children are available for training and games week in and week out.



P6 Boys

The P6 group at Fun Sunday have had a fantastic season. The boys have come on leaps and bounds since February with their core skills, and are now developing other aspects of the game such as positioning, movement and game play.

The team have played in a number of Blitzes, challenge games and tournaments throughout the year, and have acquitted themselves well in all of them. The highlight of the year was



U10.5 training under floodlights in Feb 17



The then P6's & P5's for a series of challenge games over at Aroyne early in the year.

One of the most enjoyable features of the year has been tournaments all over the North which has allowed us to test ourselves against teams outside Belfast. Each away tournament amounts to a full day out, and is a big commitment from all involved. There is a more physical nature to the football particularly in our neighbouring Counties and this is a great learning curve for the boys.



Throughout the Summer when numbers were tight, we could always rely on the help from Martin and Brian's group.

Throughout the summer we did collect some silverware, winning the Shield against some great teams at An Ríocht in Killeel. We also had 2 tournament finals (Aghagallon and Donaghmore) where we lost in finals by a single point. Some would argue that refs determined to see trophies remain with home clubs played a part, and in some instances it is hard to disagree. The most impressive point to

note is that there was not a single tournament where the boys were outplayed by anyone.

P7 tournament in September

As the year draws to a close and each P7 group prepares to leave the umbrella of Fun Sunday, there is no doubt that a highlight is our traditional Saint Brigids U10 tournament. This year was no exception. On the field our teams were superb. We entered three teams, 2 from P7 and 1 from P6 and came away with 2 trophies. It was great to see so many players line out in Noamh Brid colours and a notable mention must go to 3 of our U10 girls who joined with the boys on that day (as they did on a few other occasions through the year) and were exceptional.

Thanks again go to all of those that helped in any way, be they on the playing side such as the refs, umpires, linesmen, pitch coordinators, runners, announcers, score coordinators or those that helped in the background such as car park attendants, those that ran the tea/coffee/sandwiches etc and the tuck shop. There is always an army of volunteers at these events and thanks in particular go to those that give up time without having a playing child involved. This is the spirit that makes a makes a club tick. On that note, the players loved it when the day after their County win, members of the Senior squad came to show the cup and talk to our players about what Saint Brigids meant to them. This is a touch of class, so thanks to the lads for doing that.



P7 squad dreaming of replicating the success of our seniors in later year. Right with some of the senior squad and the U12 squad.

School success

Another major achievement for many of this group was Saint Brides P7 winning the Belfast A league. Although not exclusively Naomh Brid players, the squad draws 85% of their players from our ranks. Thanks to Mr Cunningham and Shane Quinn & Frank McGurk for taking that team. The boys played great football over a number of weeks and were very worthy of their win.



Saint Brides Primary School P7 team win the Belfast Boys A league in October

P7 coaches

Throughout the year we have been in reasonable shape with coaches. We have had Peter Mulgerw, Colm McGurk, Michael Gorman, Dwyer Magee and Stephen Gilmore. There have also been times when at various tournaments throughout the year parents have helped out a great deal and it is great to know we have that back up too.

We are sorry to have lost Dwyer this year but we understand completely his desire to step into the year that his own son plays at and our players know that if they step out of line he is never too far away and can be drafted back but for a good shout! Dwyer stepped into this group when we were short of coaches and thankfully he leaves us after a few years in a much better position.

Moving up to U12

Our entire squad will move up to U12 in the new year and we combine with those current U12's with another year to play at that stage we will have a great group of players. Everyone in the current P7 is more than capable of playing in one or other of the 2 teams that we hope to have, so as this group says goodbye to FS – many of them having been there for the full 7 years – we hope for lots more to come from this group of young men.



A huge thanks goes to all the coaches in this group. NBA

Schools

STBRIDE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

January-June 2017 proved to be an extremely successful year for Gaelic games within the school. Both our boy's and girl's teams entered 2017 as winners of their leagues. Both teams competed in the A section of the Belfast Leagues. The league sections run from A through to E.

The girls continued a blistering start to the year by collecting the Championship after defeating John the Baptist in the final.

This saw the girls complete their league and championship fixtures for the season unbeaten. With between twenty and thirty girls lining out at training each Monday the season was a resounding success.

Our boy's reached the Raffo Cup final for the third time in three years and lost out to a talented St. John the Baptist side.

This was the only game the boy's lost all year. The defeat in the final was redeemed when they claimed the South Belfast Schools trophy at the Bredagh Blitz in June..

With an average of 36 boys attending training we were able to field three teams throughout the year. Our B team competed valiantly in the Carragher Cup, winning two out of four games. We entered a Primary 6 side into the annual Aquinas Cup and lost in the final to St. Joseph's Carryduff. Despite a weakened team, the P6s showed wonderful spirit and talent. Under the tutelage of Frank McGurk and Frank McElhatton and Pat O'Hagan, after school hurling and camogie began each Wednesday. This enabled us to enter the hurling championship, alongside the camogie league and championships. Our camogie team had a solid start to their league campaign, finishing second out of a group of four. The championship saw the camogie team top their

group and lose out narrowly in the semi final to Christ the Redeemer. The hurlers turned in valiant displays in their championship groups, just missing out.

September-December The new academic year saw an average turnout of forty at boy's Gaelic training and twenty five at girls training. Both teams have had an outstanding start to the new campaign, with the boys' and girls' retaining their league titles.

The girls' produced a series of tremendous wins before beating St. John the Baptist in an outstanding encounter. Following a five point deficit at half time, the girls turned in an amazing display of determination to claim victory.

The boys, team have been in devastating form, winning five out of five games and producing a ruthless victory in the league final against St. John the Baptist.

After school hurling and camogie continue on Wednesday afternoons.

Kieran Megraw has delivered curricular P.E. in the form of hurling to P5 and P6, while Paul Gaffney has delivered Gaelic football to our P7s.

Alfie Hannaway has recently started Gaelic Football with our p4 classes.

Our P5s have competed in an interschool hurling blitz and more are planned for P4 and P7

The school is extremely grateful for the help and support provided by St. Brigid's GAC. Special thanks to Paul McErlean, Shane Quinn. Frank McElhatton, Martin McCarney Emma Gorman, Cathal Comway, Finn McKernan, Pat O'Hagan and a big welcome to our newest coaching recruit to girls football- Abbie Carleton.

Finally St. Brigid's GAC recognises the contribution made by Marty Cunningham and Otteran Joyce in promoting the club in St. Bride's School and it is due to them that we



have hurling and camogie teams back in the school after a number of years.

VICTORIA COLLEGE

Coaching in hurling and football has continued every Tuesday throughout the year. From September there has been a noticeable increase in numbers attending.

WE now have around 20/25 girls playing football and around the same number playing hurling. A big percentage are dual players and to accommodate this we have to rotate the dual players weekly.

The highlight of the year was the success of the year 9/10 footballers who reached the final of the Ulster Year 9/10 competition .

The final was hosted by St.Brigids at Musgrave and attended by senior officers. We took the opportunity of showing our new clubhouse and changing facilities and they were greatly impressed by what they saw.

Victoria had 4 St.Brigids girls on the team and although we lost to a very experienced team from St.Peter's Warrenpoint we were not outclassed.

St.Peters were able to maintain a better scoring average during their periods of dominance whereas Victoria found it hard to score. At the end of the game we were only 5 points behind after dominating the final quarter. Congratulations to all involved

STRANMILLIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

There is nothing to report here as for the second in a row there has been no input from the club in this school. This is something that must be addressed as a matter of urgency. While things are going well at Victoria the majority of the girls playing GAA at the school are attached to other clubs across the city giving us limited recruitment opportunities. Stranmillis has great recruitment possibilities

but needs a number of people involved (at least initially)to avail of the opportunity in this area of the parish. The club must look at this seriously as quickly as possible

Circuits for Men of a Certain Age

Wednesday 'Circuits' continue in the Parish Hall attended by a finely-honed group of athletes, who 'work out' each Wednesday night.

The year on year improvement in fitness levels has borne fruit for the many Club members, and associates, who remain the 'core' members of this high-energy and focussed group of sportsmen.

Jarlath MacAllister has passed on leadership of the group because of his wish to intensify his focus on his personal fitness, and the group is now under the leadership of Damian Diamond, another fine example of athleticism.

Membership is still available for those with the appropriate physical attributes, with sessions commencing at 7.00pm each Wednesday, in the Parish Hall.

Thanks are due to Damian Diamond for his leadership, and particularly to Sarah, 'Director of High-Performance Activities' for the group.

MEMBERSHIP

Club membership had a modest increase from 2016 levels, with a growth in youth numbers, off-setting a small decline in adult men and ladies.

This year for the first time the club registered players with the Camogie Association along with the GAA and LGFA. This is a major milestone for the club, showing the club is continuing growing.

Revenue collected from subscriptions improved in line with the increase fees implemented this year. Fees continue to be



competitive in line with other clubs and codes in the local area.

The introduction of Online payment via Klubfunder was a major innovation, which saved a large amount of time and effort for the club volunteers working on membership and registration. Over 85% membership revenue this year was collected by Direct Debit and via Klubfunder.

The acting registrar would like to thank all Kieran Dillon for his diligent work on the Debts Debts, Declan Canavan for his work with Klub Funder, and to all the club coaches who assisted in registration of all the various playing squads.

Cul Camps

We held three summer camps over the summer, with over 200 children passing through the gates of Harlequins for coaching in both football and hurling and lot of fun! St Brigid's again continue hosting some of the largest coaching events in the county for the primary school section of the club.

The first of these camps was under the banner of the GAA's Kelloggs Cul Camp, and all participants of this one getting a playing shirt, half zip and rucksack. The second two camps were run by the club themselves, and all the children taking part in these got themselves a St Brigid's training shirt.



The camps were excellently organised by club members, again this year it was also great to see a sizable number of the Naomh Brid juveniles helping out at the camps, a number of senior players made themselves available to help throughout the summer.



Without the help of these club members these camps could not have taken place. Special mention to "Irish News Club volunteer of the Year" Frank McGurk who was an ever present through the summer keeping an eye on everything and making sure "the small ball" was centre stage.

Scór na nÓg

St. Brigid's hosted the 2017 Scór na nÓg Antrim final and was without a doubt the best County Scór Final that Antrim has seen in many years. The standard in every category was so high and the young people performed to such a high standard. It was fantastic to be able to welcome clubs who haven't competed in Scór in a long time such as Carey Faughs and Ruairí Óg, who both managed to clinch a County title.

The day began with a minute silence to remember a beautiful young lady, Nicole Fegan from Mayobridge Scór who tragically passed away the previous day. We then had the National Anthem sung by Meabh Cleary from St Brigid's. Fionnuala Mc Ateer did a fantastic job as Bean an tí, introducing everything bilingually and making sure that everything moved smoothly and on time.



First up was Ceili Dancing/Rince Foirne, with Aghagallon's performance of The Cross Reel clinching the County title, with St. Brigid's coming in second. Amhránaíocht Aonair was next up, with an amazing array of talent from all over Antrim. Méabh Mc Neill was victorious and became County champion for the second time with her performance of Cumha an Oileáin. Aithriseoireacht and Scéalaíocht is always a popular competition with the audience and our young performers didn't disappoint with fantastic performances but Mary Kate Bonnes won her 4th County Recitation title with a flawless performance. The standard in the Ballad Group section was extremely high and we heard some beautiful arrangements of songs like The Wests Awake from St Brigid's who were placed second, Dúlaman from Carey Faughs, Trasna na dTonnta from Tír na nÓg and Blaney Roses from Ruairí Óg. It was Aghagallon who came out on top with their performances of The Green Glens of Antrim and Carrick-a-rede. The Léiriú Stáitse section was first up after the interval with Aghagallon's funny sketch about a mischievous leprechaun winning the County title. This was followed by some fantastic instrumental performances from Dunloy, Sarsfields, Michael Davitts, Ruairí Óg and Carey Faughs. Carey Faughs won the County title with a great performance. Rince Seit was very enjoyable as we saw a great group of dancers from Cushendall win the County title

with their performance of The Connemara Set. The County Chairman Collie Donnelly presented the medals to the young County Champions and thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication to Scór.

I think it's safe to say that culture and Scór in Antrim is safe in the hands of a brilliantly talented next generation of young Gaels. Of course they couldn't perform at this standard without the support of their parents and mentors. The event was a huge success and St. Brigid's showcased its wonderful support for culture within the club. This would not have been possible without the many volunteers on the day, from all sectors of the club, players and non-players, young and old. None of this would have happened without the tireless efforts of Tracy Galvin who took on the organisation of the event, and our thanks go to her for all her hard work.

Treasurers Report

To be presented at the AGM.