



Cumann Luthchleas Gael Naomh Bríd Béal Feirste

st. BRÍGÍDS gac Belfast

Founded 1998





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Annual General Meeting 2024

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

Harlequins Sports Club

on Sunday,

24th November 2024,

at 8:00pm



CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

The Naomh Brid 2024 school report might say: Well done on your work to date, but more needs to be done!

I will try not to cover what else is in this excellent report. But as our clubs grows in membership numbers and activity from tiny tots to g4mo and the dads and lads' section and underage tournaments so effectively run at Musgrave and Harlequin's on the field to set dancing and cultural events of it. I am overwhelmed at the great camaraderie and sense of community spirit that the club provides. The club is what many south Belfast people identify with because it creates and supports a sense of positive identity. The GAA for ALL and hurling for hunger initiatives are but two worthy examples of volunteers giving back to the community. Well done to all those involved.

After watching the ulster hurling semi-final, I remarked to a fellow Naomh Brid member. It's good that the Derry "wans" are catching up with us. We have successfully adopted the 4 codes one club model quite a few years ago and the club continues to thrive in all 4 codes. The main achievement in 2024 was the clubs' senior ladies playing in their first senior football championship final. Well done Ladies and Management team. As usual it's the ladies setting the pace and its over to the men to emulate their female colleagues, but they will never be the first to get to a senior final. Our underage teams all performed with spirit and our minor team won the league title – excellent work Girls and management team. Our Camog's have been an absolute joy to watch from underage to u16's. The youngest of our 4 codes but with the tenacity of our u16's and increasing numbers making county panels the future is bright and a pathway to having an adult camogie team is being sketched out, and will soon be coloured in. The Hurling code goes from strength to strength at fun Sunday and the underage amalgamation with Ard na ri, brought another historic first for the club - our first A County final at u16 when after a bright start we came

up just a little short to Naomh Eanna. The senior team continues to develop and performed admirably in the junior b final, our sincere thanks to the senior management duo. The increased participation on county panels in these three codes augurs well for continued success. I remain convinced that we have a solid framework to develop all three codes. The appointment of Club coach Joe McCarney as Participation Officer on a three-year basis will help Fastrack the growth of these three areas. This demonstrates the clubs' goals of providing opportunities for all to play all our 4 codes from early years to later years. A fantastic investment in our youth via the club lottery Many thanks to all those who have supported the club in the last two years. Mol an oige !

In twenty years since the club formed a senior football men's team in 2004, the club annexed its first senior league div 1 trophy and lost narrowly to a Cargin side full of guile and experience in our 4th ever senior semi-final defeat. The youthful age of the team and with success a plenty at underage. A first Senior championship final is certainly a target for 2025. A special word of thanks to all our volunteers and managers who help with all our teams in all codes and at all levels, and a note of thanks to John, Enda and Paddy who secured our first ever senior league title, and Deaghlán who captured the div 1 Reserve League title.

The age profile of the team and the quality of players joining the senior panel soon would point to the possibility of future progression, but hard work is required in the meantime. Congratulations to those who made their senior county teams, u20, u17 and development panels in football and hurling. The unrivalled success at u14 all county championship, u 15 feile, and u18 county championship winners, allied to an u16 A final appearance all point to the strongest underage boys set up in the county. There coaches deserve a round of applause!



We pay tribute to outgoing Committee men Damien and Peter Both of whom have given their all for the jersey! They adhered to the old GAA adage: before you complain volunteer! Thanks for all your great work at vice chair and pitch coordination level. We can't rest on our laurels we need extra pitch space and are still working on the renewal of the lease at Musgrave despite it being passed at full council level in January 2024. We will continue to work with our partners in at Harlequins sports club, city council and at Newforge to develop facilities for our youth. We have built up our financial resources and with the ring fencing of the generous JP McManus funding we will hope to deliver on the much-needed development plans for Musgrave and beyond. The club has been backboneed by several volunteers who helped develop Fun Sunday from its infancy to its present position Frank McGurk and Gerry Mulholland spring to mind, we must be aware of the huge contribution they have and continue to make and the current contribution of Sean Carter and Chris Owers.

The club has approved a 5-year strategic plan of where we want the club to be in the next 5 years, I thank the subcommittee under the guidance of Mr Finnegan and look forward to helping the club implement its goals.

I urge any of you who can contribute in any way to please do so. That can be in many ways in our cultural endeavours Ann Marie would be happy to hear from you or in any way to aid the club.

Our fundraising team under Fran and Lucy continue to provide the funds to drive the club forward.

There are many people who contribute so generously of their time and energy. Phil, Anthony, and Gareth in particular carry a huge workload on behalf of members. The original trustees of the club Kieron, Frank, And Conor without your foresight and endeavour there would not be a strong vibrant GAA unit in the south of the city. As with the strategic plan,

the club looks to the future and the 2024 committee recommend the GAA corporate trustee model be adopted and leave it for members to consider.

There is so many people to thanks for their contribution to this community club, please accept my thanks for your help in 2024. We have lost members along the away in this last 20 years our thoughts and prayers are indeed with them today, As we look to the future, we acknowledge the achievements of the past and use their foundations as a springboard to direct us to future development and success. There is no strength without unity of purpose. The difference we can make as a collective is vastly superior to the individual parts. It has been a huge privilege for the members to elect me as Chair, And my job to make the collective parts point in the right direction. Naomh brid abu

Eunan Conway
An Cathaoirleach

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Foreword to Secretary's Report

I sometimes feel that I repeat myself a bit year on year in these annual reports detailing the clubs achievements, but there are only so many ways you can say, its been another fantastic year. And that's what 2024 has been, with achievement and notable success in every code and nearly every age group.

In brief summary, in 2024 our senior ladies played in our first senior championship final, our senior men and senior reserves won the league, the minor men won their championship and league, the U15 boys won the Feile. The U14 boys won the South Antrim league and championship as well as the all county championship. The U12.5 team was successful in the end of season O'Donnell cup competition. While not strictly speaking a club



success, St Brides Primary schools winning the Raffo Cup involved our younger players. Our senior hurlers reached the championship final, as did our U16 hurlers. Our U14 hurlers won their league as did the minor ladies team.

Lets look at some of those areas in more detail. Firstly the 2024 season marked a significant chapter in the development of St Brigid's Senior Football team, combining a strong league performance with a valiant championship run. While silverware ultimately eluded the team in the latter stages of the championship, the campaign was full of promise, with notable performances that highlight the club's growing potential.

St Brigid's finished the Antrim Senior Football League campaign in second place, securing a place in the playoffs after a series of impressive results.

The team's consistency throughout the league phase saw them finish comfortably in the top four, but it was their resilience and focus that signalled progression from previous campaigns.

After the playoffs, St Brigid's were crowned Antrim Senior Football League champions for the first time in club history. A fantastic achievement for the team and a testament to their determination and strength in depth. This success not only bolstered confidence but also reinforced the team's credentials as serious contenders in Antrim football.

In the Antrim Senior Football Championship, despite difficult opposition, the team showed their growing maturity, with strong displays across all areas of the field and topped their group.

After defeating Dunloy in the quarter-final we met reigning champions, Cargin, in what proved to be a tight semi final encounter. Despite a valiant effort, St Brigid's fell just short, as Cargin's experience in high-pressure

situations ultimately proved decisive. The team battled hard, but were edged out by a narrow margin, leaving them to reflect on what was still a highly successful championship campaign.

While the ultimate goal of championship glory remains just out of reach, the 2024 season demonstrated that St Brigid's are a team on the rise. Securing the Antrim Senior Football League title and reaching the semi-finals of the Antrim Senior Football Championship are achievements that should not be underestimated. With a solid squad committed to further development, the team will be looking to build on these successes and go one step further in the years ahead.

The blend of experienced players and emerging talent suggests that St Brigid's are well-placed to continue challenging for silverware. The experience gained in tight playoff and championship matches will only serve to enhance the team's capabilities, and the focus will now turn to maintaining their momentum and improving their consistency in both league and championship competition.

The senior reserves also finished top of the reserve league winning 9 out of 11 games.

The reserve championship wasn't so successful unfortunately. They fell in their first game away at Ballymena. We led by 4 points with only two minutes to go, only to concede two goals at the death to bring a devastating end to their season, and highlighting how cruel knockout football can be.

Our Minors league season ended in ambiguity when our last match against Agagallon was officially ended before the final whistle. We await the official outcome but expect to be acknowledged as minor league champions for the second year in a row.



In the minor championship wins against Dunloy and Aghagallon led to a final against St Pauls. This was played in awful conditions at Hannastown and a 3 point win meant the club recorded a second All County minor success.

Our season isn't over yet and at the time of writing the squad is preparing to represent the club and the county in the Ulster minor tournament, where we face Derry champions Magherafelt in the quarter final.

This squad has been together for a number of years and has earned the success their hard work has deserved. That work paid off in 2024 and each member of this squad has a big part to play in St Brigids football for years to come.

At U16 we had a panel of around 30 -35 players meaning we could field two teams at a stretch. The team played 14 league games winning 8 drawing 1 and losing 5 and were narrowly beaten in a fierce championship final by Portglenone. The season has been a steep learning curve for these lads and with this set of players maturing into minor players and beyond the club is in very safe hands.

The 16B team won promotion to Division 3 on the back of them being runners up in the league and championship the previous season. This left Naomh Bríd as the only B team in the Division 3 league facing tough challenges against a strong selection of other A teams. Whilst this was always going to be a tough ask, but the boys performed well finishing in mid table. The U16B also fell to eventual winners Glenravel in the championship semi-final.

The fact that Féile is now played at the U15 age grade, whilst league and championship is played at U14 and U16, means the logistics and preparation are more complex than before. This is due to the need to create a combined team from the U16 and U14 squads. A lot of hard work and preparation went into this team but it paid off.

The U15 Feile team would win Antrim and represent our county with distinction getting to the grade 2 semi-final where we lost out to a strong English side from Tyrone.

The Antrim A Féile took place on the 11th May at a sunny Musgrave. En route to the final the team averaged 16 points per match. In the final the boys beat Portglenone by 3-15 to 2 points.

Success in Antrim provided the lads with the opportunity to represent their county at the grade 2 National Féile in Roscommon at the end of June. The support, sponsorship and fund-raising effort from the parental group was exceptional and really bonded the team ahead of the big day. On the field itself, the boys provided a performance the Club can be proud of. They topped their group but lost to Tyrone representatives English in the semi-final.

At U14 a large panel of over 50 boys meant we could field two teams. The Div 1 squad finished unbeaten winning the South Antrim league and championship titles, as well as the All-County 'A' championship title against a very strong Dunloy side. Whilst there is no Ulster competition at u14, the boys had the experience of playing challenge games against the Tyrone champions (Galbally), the Armagh champions (Clan na Gael) and the Derry champions (Ballinascreen) at this age grade.

The Division 2 side finished second in the league and reached the championship semi final.

The U12 Boys had another great year of development in terms of the boys' level of skill, game awareness and tactics. The boys played in the non-competitive South Antrim U12 Go Games and we had three teams entered into each of the three divisions. The boys competed in various tournaments across Belfast, Ulster and beyond at U11.5 and at



U12.5 where they acquitted themselves very well.

It was fantastic to see our younger lads win the Raffo Cup with St. Bride's Primary School and many of our lads were lucky enough to play in the recent U12.5 South Antrim O'Donnell Cup, Shield and Plate competitions. This proved to be a great end of season competitive tournament with our younger team defeating Laochra in the Plate final and our older lads defeating St. John's in a memorable Cup final.

2024 was an excellent year for hurling with our younger age groups growing and our older teams experiencing a lot of success in both league and championship competitions. The pipeline of strong young players to our Senior Hurling team continues to grow, as the game becomes more popular at all levels within the club!

In a year where the objective was primarily for consolidation of the senior hurling team our senior hurlers over-achieved, finishing fourth in the league and reaching the final of the Junior B championship. This was in no small measure due to the injection of younger players joining us from Minor and against the challenging backdrop of several established senior players stepping aside.

The objective for the senior hurlers in 2025 will be to win promotion. One of the most exciting aspects is the continued growth of the senior hurling squad who this year will be supplemented by the addition of another batch of minor players coming through to the senior ranks from the Ard Na Ri set up.

The U18 and U16 hurlers play in the Ard na Ri amalgamated team with St Galls. Four of our minor hurlers were in the Antrim squad which went on to win the Leinster B Minor Competition – The Peadar Ó Liathain Cup. Our

U16 team lost narrowly to St Endas in the championship final.

The U14 hurlers who are amalgamated with Ardoyne as Brid Og, enjoyed a very successful year, winning South Antrim Division 2 without losing a single match, meaning that next year they will be playing in Division one. At U12 the number of boys playing hurling continues to grow strongly.

The senior ladies had a best ever performance in the league coming second and recording a first ever victory over major rivals St Pauls. They beat St Pauls again by a single point in the championship semifinal that would see us play in the club's first ever adult all county final. Unfortunately, we lost to Moneyglass in the final but our St Brigid's ladies showed the sort of fantastic determination and drive that I am sure will see this squad of players achieve championship success in the near future.

The minor ladies won their league and several of the minor girls bolstered the senior ladies team. The minors were in turn supported by some of our U16 ladies stepping up a grade. The U16s themselves had a challenging year made more difficult by falling numbers in the run up to exams, meaning the support of some U14 girls was necessary to allow the team to compete. The U14 girls won the shield at the Colin Gaels tournament. Although scores are not kept at U12, the U12 girls had a very positive year and played in a number of tournaments and blitzes and hosted 4 other teams in our own blitz at Musgrave. The U10 girls also had a good year starting Go Games with one team but able to enter a second team later in the year as numbers grew. For some of the U10 girls, this was their first experience of Gaelic games. On average we had 20+ girls at training every Sunday. We entered the Go Games with initially 1 team and half way through the year we had 2 teams participating. We were very competitive throughout, with one team commenting that



we were the strongest team they had played all year.

The U8 Girls also had a fantastic year with plenty of new faces coming along to training and joining in the fun of the games and team events.

The u8 girls participated in a number of Football blitzes but undoubtedly the highlight of the year was the hosting of the Festival of Football at Harlequins where we had 32 teams in attendance from as far away as Dublin and Derry. St Brigid's girls were out in force with over 30 girls participating in 3 teams. It was a very special day and one that the girls will never forget.

The ethos of the G4MO ladies is fun and enjoyment first and foremost. They played in a number of blitzes throughout the year, including hosting our own very successful blitz at Musgrave in May. As well as their on-field activities our G4MOs were very active in leading and organizing many club funding raising events and initiatives which are so important for the club. .

In camogie our U12s continue to grow and develop both in numbers and skill levels. Some of the U12s also played up to support the U14s. Some of the U14s also stepped up to support the U16. All of our young camogs have shown great effort and commitment and we are rightly proud of them. Special recognition goes to Siofra Wall for her achievement in making the U14 Antrim Camogie panel. The U16s came third in their mini league which meant stepping up to Division 1 for the first time, which was a real challenge for them, but they acquitted themselves well against better opposition. The team have gone from Division 3 to Division 1 level in just 4 years. A magnificent achievement. Many of our girls are playing with their schools too. Rathmore won an Ulster title with 9 St Brigid's girls in that squad. Additionally, Rionach MacElhatton was in the

St Dominic's squad that won the Ulster 7s Championship recently and went on to reach the All-Ireland final. We also had representation at county and provincial level, as Mary-Angela Nic Carthaigh was selected in the Antrim squad for this year's campaign and, after trials, played for Ulster U16s against Dublin. Congratulations to all of them. Next year we will look to field an U18 / Minor team, another first for the club.

We have great numbers of children involved in Fun Sunday and these have increased throughout the year. The kids have been involved in a myriad of GoGames, training sessions, blitzes, tournaments, and have enjoyed developing the basic skills of our games which will stand them in good stead as they grow through the club

In addition to the normal business of running Fun Sunday, participating in go-games tournaments blitzes and continuing to grow our young membership, the Fun Sunday coaches committed to a renewed focus of FUN at Fun Sunday and an ambitious goal of hosting 4 U8 Festivals across Football + Hurling/Camogie for the Girls & Boys respectively.

As for the Fun, we had SuperHero Strength and Conditioning in January and February. Followed by trips to watch Antrim games at Corrigan park. And team building events such as the high wire, pizza nights and a planned cinema night for the u10 girls. We finished the year with camogie match between the U10 girls and their parents – this was great for team spirit and a great success.

We successfully hosted 3 of our 4 festivals this year at u8. The u8 boys football festival in April, boys Hurling in June and the girls football festival in September. At each festival we had over 340 kids, meaning we hosted over 1000 kids at the 3



festivals. We played games against teams from the length and breadth of Ireland, creating memories that will last forever.

All the events have helped bring out teammates closer together as friends – thank you to all our Fun Sunday coaches who continue to go above and beyond by giving up their free time to not just coach, but putting on these events to make sure we are the best show in town.

In another first for the club, 2024 saw the launch of a GAA for All giving us the opportunity to extend our games to people of all abilities. The highlight was taking the Naomh Bríd All Stars team to attend the Ulster GAA for All Blitz in September. There are few if any activities the club has launched in the last 26 years that are as worthwhile and joyous as GAA for All so a special thanks has to go to all the parents and volunteers who have helped make it happen and to Lucy Jellett the club's Diversity and Inclusion Officer who has been instrumental in making this initiative a reality. Please help spread the word that the club now offers this fantastic opportunity to join in to all our children regardless of their abilities.

It's important that Naomh Bríd continues to develop as a club that is open to all. Following the success of the Autism training for coaches in June of 2023 Naomh Bríd's coaches and club officers took part in a GAA vs Discrimination workshop, run by Croke Park in April 2024. It focused on tackling racism and discrimination both on and off the pitch.

Later on in June over 50 children and coaches from across all codes gathered in St Bride's school for an interactive workshop. We

welcomed a team from Sports Against Racism in Ireland (SARI), kindly funded by Croke Park. Children and coaches took part in drills and games focused on recognising and stamping out racism and other discrimination. The sheer numbers who turned up to the workshop on a Sunday afternoon showed that the commitment to Inclusion for All runs deeply through Naomh Bríd.

In the coming months we have further training planned for supporting players with autism. We would also like to encourage any members with experience in diversity and inclusion training to volunteer their time to support our coaches. Please contact us if you can offer help.

Thanks to Registrar Una McGurk for the efficient and fuss free way she oversees our membership registration process throughout the year.

We continue to be one of the largest clubs in Antrim. The membership of over 1,140 members comprised of more than 965 fully registered GAA (football and hurling) members; more than 165 LGFA members; and more than 80 Camogie Association members. The growth in the Camogie Association numbers is a 25% increase in the membership from 2023 and it is anticipated this number will continue to grow further. It is essential that members are registered as players and coaches for insurance purposes, and this takes effort to get right, so it's important that coaches work with Una to ensure that all players are members.



With so many teams taking the field in different codes, the PRO role is essential in keeping people up to date with what's happening. It's a huge task and thanks go to Martin McCarney for his work in taking over the PRO role this year, and we would also like to thank Liz McAree for a huge amount of help and assistance in the this role too. Coaches should remember to feed as much information as possible back to Martin so that he can spread the word around the club on fixtures, results, performances and news.

Anne Marie Duffy is responsible for co-ordinating Irish Language and Cultural activities in the club. The highpoint of the year in terms of Irish Language and Culture was a second St Brigid's Miscellany; the Scor Sinsir team claiming second place in the Co Antrim final – moving up from third place in 2023 - and the addition of a weekly Set Dancing class to our programme. The Miscellany attracted not only a loyal following of traditional culture enthusiasts but also local political and civic representatives. We also offer classes in Tin Whistle Irish Dancing and Conversational Irish. Once again, our thanks go to Irish Language & Cultural Officer Anne Marie for her excellent work on Cultural Development within the club this year.

Our thanks go as well to outgoing Facilities Officer Peter Ferris for his work this last few years ensuring all our teams have a pitch to play and train on, an unenviable task when we have more teams but the same number of pitches, and also to Carol Lamb for her work in ensuring we are compliant with all child protection procedures. The club owes them a great deal of gratitude for the hard work of these individuals.

Thanks also to Fran Lloyd and the members of the Fundraising Subcommittee. Their hard work in raising funds fro the club has helped provide the money needed to pay for groundbreaking new initiatives such as the

appointment of Joe McCarney as Participation Officer. A number of coaches have already highlighted how much they appreciate the difference Joe has made in the short time he has been involved in the club. We feel his contribution will only become more important as he settles into the role.

I have thanked some coaches in the team reports which follow, however it's impossible to mention everyone by name. As a club we owe a great deal of thanks to all our coaches and helpers, and we have relied even more this year on their skill and efforts. I want to end by recognizing the commitment, dedication and skill of all the many coaches and helpers who give up their time to work with the teams. Thanks also to the parents who help out with lifts to and from matches and other tasks around 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 all of you.

Good luck to all our players, coaches and members in 2025. Naomh Brid Abu!

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Phil MacAinmhire
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FOOTBALL

SENIOR MEN'S FOOTBALL

The 2024 season marked a significant chapter in the development of St Brigid's Senior Football team, combining a strong league performance with a valiant championship run. While silverware ultimately eluded the team in the latter stages, the campaign was full of promise, with notable achievements and performances that highlight the club's growing potential.

Antrim Senior Football League:



St Brigid's finished the Antrim Senior Football League campaign in second place, securing a place in the playoffs after a series of impressive results. The team's consistency throughout the league phase saw them finish comfortably in the top four, but it was their resilience and focus that signaled progression from previous campaigns.

After overcoming Ballymena and Cargin in the playoffs, St Brigid's were crowned Antrim Senior Football League champions for the first time in club history. A fantastic achievement for the team and a testament to their determination and strength in depth. This success not only bolstered confidence but also reinforced the team's credentials as serious contenders in Antrim football.

Antrim Senior Football Championship:

In the Antrim Senior Football Championship, St Brigid's were drawn in a tough group alongside St Gall's, Aghagallon, and Creggan. Despite the difficult opposition, the team topped their group, showing resilience and quality in their performances. The group stage results were a demonstration of their growing maturity, with strong displays across all areas of the field.

The quarter-final saw St Brigid's face Dunloy, a team that posed a serious challenge. However, St Brigid's handled the task superbly, securing a narrow victory to progress to the semi-finals.

In the semi-final, St Brigid's met the reigning champions, Cargin, in what proved to be a tight encounter. Despite a valiant effort, St Brigid's fell just short, as Cargin's experience in high-pressure situations ultimately proved decisive. The team battled hard, but were edged out by a narrow margin, leaving them to reflect on what was still a highly successful championship campaign.

Management Team:

The 2024 season saw the management team of John McGuckin, Paddy McGuckin, and Enda Gourmley guide the team through a challenging yet rewarding year. Their strategic approach, combined with an emphasis on

team unity and development, played a significant role in St Brigid's strong performances. The management team was asked to come in and change the culture and add steel and of that, there is no doubt this has been accomplished. We would like to thank them sincerely for all their efforts developing our young men both on and off the field. They will certainly be misses and we wish them well going forward.

Looking Ahead:

While the ultimate goal of championship glory remains just out of reach, the 2024 season demonstrated that St Brigid's are a team on the rise. Securing the Antrim Senior Football League title and reaching the semi-finals of the Antrim Senior Football Championship are achievements that should not be underestimated. With a solid squad committed to further development, the team will be looking to build on these successes and go one step further in the years ahead. The blend of experienced players and emerging talent suggests that St Brigid's are well-placed to continue challenging for silverware. The experience gained in tight playoff and championship matches will only serve to enhance the team's capabilities, and the focus will now turn to maintaining their momentum and improving their consistency in both league and championship competition.

Conclusion:

St Brigid's 2024 season was a campaign of progression, as they demonstrated their ability to compete at the highest level in Antrim football. The league title and semi-final championship finish are significant milestones, and the team can take pride in their achievements. With the right mix of experience and youth, the future looks bright, and the team will be aiming to build on this year's strong foundations to push for further success in the coming seasons.

Senior Men's Reserve Football



The Senior Reserves had decent league campaign lead by Deaghlan O'Hagan, the best player manager since Kenny Dalglish.

Losing only 2 games we ended the season on the top of the table. Furthermore, we used 47 different players including minors who were given plenty of valuable game time. As ever we would've liked more meaningful games but the squad did benefit from plenty of good training sessions.

The lads were well prepared for the Reserve Cup fixture away to Ballymena. However, despite being ahead by 5 points with only minutes to play we conceded 2 late goals and the season was over. Some of us are still receiving counselling.

Special thanks needs to go to Andy Magill for his commitment to this squad and to Opticare for sponsoring a new set of jerseys. Reserve football is regularly joyous but it's always great for keeping our young men connected to the Club.

As 2023 came to an end and 2024 started, the objective of the Men's Reserve set up was to ensure that the Men's playing base got more game time and could develop in a competitive environment, to be in a strong position going into the Championship in the latter part of the year.

Senior Reserve League Division 1

The Senior Reserve league proved an overwhelmingly positive campaign, with a good mix of youth and experience coming to ensure that St Brigid's fulfilled all their league games, taking full points in 9 out of the 11 games. The two losses coming on the road in weeks where the fixture Schedule meant the club had to field a Senior reserve team on a Tuesday and Friday night and a Senior Division 1 team on the Wednesday and Sunday. A heavy schedule for any club side. The lads were rewarded for their consistency however, picking up the league title after a very productive campaign.

Senior Reserve Championship

After a successful league campaign, hopes were high heading into the Championship season. St Brigid's were drawn away from home vs All Saints, Ballymena in the Q/F, having travelled there and winning with a great performance only a few weeks previously to wrap up the league. In a game that St Brigid's dominated for long periods, creating goal chance after goal chance, their lack of accuracy in front of the posts would prove costly. With only a minute of normal time on the clock, St Brigid's led by 4 points only to concede two goals in two minutes to bring a devastating end to their season, and highlighting how cruel knockout football can be.

Overview

There were a lot of positives to the season, with the formation of a core group of players bringing structure and a consistency to the reserve set up, which gave a platform to bleed a number of younger players, which will benefit their development enormously. On the other side, it proved difficult to get the full squad out on the pitch to work on a team structure and style of play, issues that need to be looked at moving forward. Thank you to Deaghlan O'Hagan, Andrew Magill, John Mc Kenna and Gareth Bradley for driving this set up this year.

U21 Mens Football

The U21 Football Championship is played at the very end of the season and comes with plenty of challenges. Lads away at university, working or with commitments elsewhere makes it difficult to get good numbers at training. Nevertheless, Cathal McNicholl assisted by Gareth Bradley, Mark Finegan and Shea Downey trained those who were available. The sessions were impressive. The effort put in by the squad was impressive and they looked decent. However, we continued to pick up injuries and the young team that



played against a strong Aghagallon didn't have enough on the day.

U18 /Minor Football

When the 2023 season ended in bitter disappointment for the Naomh Brid minor boys footballers, with an early championship exit, the collective focus was laser sharp when we got together again at the start of this year. Given the re adjustment of the age grading it meant that it was the same group of players, under the same group of coaches led by Greg Blaney, took on the same u18 teams around the county in league and championship.

We drew our first league match against an ever improving Aghagallon team, in a high scoring encounter, 2.10 apiece. From then on we went on a long successful run with wins against Cargin, St Johns, St Endas, Glenravel and Creggan. That run was halted in a defeat to St Pauls in what was the first of three games against the Shaws Road outfit this year. We reversed that league defeat two weeks later in Musgrave before our league season ended in Aghagallon ambiguity when our last match was officially ended before the final whistle. We await the official outcome but expect to be acknowledged as minor league champions for the second year in a row.



Championship had been the ambition since we re grouped and as it started our squad was supplemented with a handful of impressive U16 players whose championship was over. We ground out a quarter final win away to

Dunloy, a match played in poor weather conditions and while the lads gave a below par performance in terms of quality of play, the sheer determination and courage got us into the semi final on a scoreline of 1.9 to 0.8; the scoreline skewed somewhat by a last minute breakaway goal, at a time when the home side were pressing for an equalising point. The semi final against Aghagallon in Musgrave was the best performance of the squad to date and we won out 5.13 to 0.11. The pressing, the passing, the shooting and the work rate on display was an indication of what this side is capable of achieving.



Onto the final and a familiar opponent in St Pauls. The game was played in Hannahstown in the worst conditions of the year. On the sideline coaches were content to be within touching distance approaching half time as we had faced into a strong wind, heavy rain and a very good St Pauls side. However two Brigids goals before the halftime whistle put us in a very strong position. The lads withstood the expected period of Pauls pressure and more than deserved the 3 point win, 2.8 to 1.8 to record the club's second All County minor success. It was an emotional and proud day, and the win was celebrated well in Harlequins that night.



Our season isn't over yet and at the time of writing the squad is preparing to represent the club and the county in the Ulster minor tournament, where we face Derry champions Magherafelt in the quarter final.

This squad has been together for a number of years and has earned the success their hard work has deserved. The coaching team of Greg Blaney, Shane Quinn, Brendan Mulgrew, Peter Mulgrew and Colm McGurk have dedicated themselves to helping the talented squad maximise their potential over the years. That work paid off in 2024 and each member of this squad has a big part to play in St Brigids football for years to come.



U16 A Boys Football

The team played 14 league games winning 8 drawing 1 and losing 5 and were beaten in the championship final managing to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

It was however a most enjoyable footballing year, quite a large number played for the county football development panels at u15, u16 and county minor panels at u17. We congratulate those that won a county minor u18 football championship medal and those that also represented the county at hurling and played in a losing county minor hurling club final, with Ard na ri.

Pre-season started with Ethan Mulgrew moving to Co. Down and Liam Carson joining the u16.'s

Theoretically we had close to 50 players, with several long-term injuries and the inability to commit to the Gaelic code we had a hard core of 45 players to field two teams and compete in several pre-season challenge games. We played Rossa, Bellaghy and Dromintee to name but a few and all proved very useful.

Barra Carlile who required a shoulder operation after a challenge game injury in Dromintee in an u15 challenge game was a case in point. The u15 Feile team would win Antrim and represent our county with distinction getting to the grade 2 semi-final where we lost out to a strong English side from Tyrone.

The league campaign began well with relatively easy wins over St Johns and St Teresa and a 6-point victory over rivals St Paul's at Musgrave. A depleted Casements side were accounted for at home. On the 30TH May Naomh Eanna put in a strong performance to inflict a 7-point defeat away at Hightown and looked very strong. The Gort Na mona lads squeezed past us the following week at Mugsrave. We bounced back at the end of June with two wins away to St Johns and St. Teresa's

A 12-goal score fest v Moneyglass helped the Biddies face the 12th Holidays in fine fettle, an away draw against Portglenone after the resumption was a fair reflection on a great



match.

Two August defeats to Naomh Eanna at home and a Gort team away meant we required our players to return from their holidays pronto to prepare for the championship.

We played the Jonnies at Corrigan who had defeated St. Teresa's in the preliminary game, and they fought right to the end getting closer to us than they managed in the 2 league games the final score of 2:14 to 1:5 did not cause a great deal of fear in the St Enda's men who were playing us on their favourite top pitch and who beat us twice in the league already.

A superb team performance from the Biddies was reflected in the 1:8 to 1:3 winning margin with our defence coming out on top.

On the 12 Sept at a floodlit Dunsilly Venue Portglenone were the final opponents. Last minute injuries to our keeper and full back Jonah and Dylan mean a reshuffle for the final. The game was played with high intensity and no little skill and entering the final 10 minutes a melee broke out which resulted in 2 red cards for the Ports. Fortune seemed to favour the Biddies. But two Blood subs and a suspected concussion had a greater impact on us than the North Antrim team. They eventually turned the tables to win by 4 points.

Harsh lessons were learned on the night from players and management alike.

The final team lined out as follows.

Owen McCrory, Ed Graham, Fionn McCann, Jack Heatherington, Pdraigo o Connell, Conor Friel, Ronan Taylor, Peter Molloy and Liam Carson, Conor Hanna, Rhys Bray, Connail Taggart, Michael McCann, Joe Logan, Johnny Higgins

A Particular word of praise for Daira Mullan who was a stalwart all season and just missed out on selection for the final. The whole panel chipped in at various challenge, league, and championship games to play with the A team

and all are well deserved of the highest praise. The club with this set of players maturing to minor players and beyond is in very safe hands.

The coaching team of Carl Graham, Charlie O'Neill, Gareth Graham, Gerry Carlile, Henry Downey, Martin Hanna, Eunan Conway, and Martin McCarney all deserve a great deal of praise as does our Director of communication Lucy Jellet.

To be successful this age group needs to get out in late January to prepare for the new rules, train twice a week from the end of February. Try and control holidays while getting players fit for the championship run in, while playing as many games outside of the county against good opposition as possible to bring both the A and B squad players on. Good luck to the u16'S in 2025.

The 2024 season started early for the U16 squad with strength & conditioning beginning at the turn of the year and the boys out on the pitch at Cherryvale by the third week in January. Early squad estimates of 45-50 turned out to be optimistic as regular training attendance proved it was more in the region of 30-35. This meant fielding two teams throughout the season was always going to be a stretch for this squad. However, it was the right thing to do to maximise game time across the whole panel.

A busy pre-season period between January and late March saw the whole squad playing across Ulster in a range a challenge games that were very beneficial when the season started in earnest. A key lesson from 2024 is that the league started too late with the first Division 1 match on the 18th April and the first Division 3 match for N. Bríd not until the 2nd May. The late start, coupled with the there being no planned exam break for this key GCSE age group, meant an undue reliance on



summer re-fixes that put unnecessary pressure on all teams. Starting the league a month earlier would have helped greatly in this regard.

The 16B team won promotion to Division 3 on the back of them being runners up in the league and championship the previous season. This left N. Bríd as the only B team in the Division 3 league facing tough challenges against a strong selection of other A teams. Whilst this was always going to be a tough ask, the U16B boys were more than competitive throughout the campaign. Memorable high scoring wins against Lamh Dherg, Ballymena, Davitts and Con Magees were balanced out with defeats in the reverse fixtures. The team finished mid-table in a league where all clubs took points of each other. This was a more than credible performance given how stretched the squad was across both the U16 teams and the reliance on lifting players up from the U14s.

The U16B lads provided essential back-fill to the A squad throughout the league campaign and showed great resilience and character (especially when regularly facing opponents twice their size!). A high level of ball skills within the team was the secret to overcoming the physical difference when playing older A team opponents. The ability to do this is great testament to the fact the U16 lead coach, Eunan Conway, maintains a strong emphasis on basis skills across the squad in training.

Consequently, the U16B fixtures became a bit of the fan's favourite at Musgrave given the high scoring exploits on display. No more so than the games this season against Con Magees. Having beaten the Genravel boys strongly in the league (4-17 to 0-3); our lads fell just short in a brilliantly entertaining Championship semi-final that was lost 3-15 to 8-3!! Con Magees went on to win the Championship, but our lads can be proud in how much they punched above their weight

this season.

A big thanks to all the lads who played with the U16Bs this year and a special thanks goes to the following team stalwarts who turned out for the B's all season in a multitude of different positions and stepped up for the A's when called upon:

James McCarney; Harry Sproule; Ronan McGoldrick; Dara Graham; Thomas Vincent; Barra Carlile; Cathal O'Neill; Conor Graham; Aaron McHenry; Oliver Poots; Seagh McEwan; Ethen Irvine, Cian Graham and Rory Conway

Thanks specifically to Gerry Carlile for leading the U16B team and to the wider U16 coaching group of Eunan Conway; Charlie O'Neill; Martin McCarney; Richard Sproule; Gareth Graham; Martin Hanna; Carl Graham and Henry Downey. A special thanks to Lucy Jellet for managing all the vital communications with the parents.

U15 Féile

The fact that Féile is now played at the U15 age grade, whilst league and championship is played at U14 and U16, means the logistics and preparation are more complex than before. This is due to the need to create a combined team from the U16 and U14 squads. Hence, preparations for the 2024 Féile began early with training and challenge matches starting in February. The Club adopted a new approach of asking the U16B coaches to lead on the Féile preparations and it was a model that worked well and could be used going forward. Féile is an important competition for N. Bríd as success at county level provides an opportunity to be tested against the best U15 teams on an all-Ireland basis. Therefore, dedicated training sessions and challenges matches outside the county were arranged to give the team the best opportunity to succeed.



set the team up well to deliver an excellent performance when the Féile came around.



The Antrim A Féile took place on the 11th May at a sunny Musgrave. Home advantage was a boost as the boys opened with a strong 3-10 to 2-2 win over a good St. Galls team. This was followed by a 4-8 to 0-2 win over St. Johns, to set up a tough semi-final against St.Pauls. A classy 3-4 to 1-1 win over the Shaw's Road men led to a final against Portglenone. Despite strong opposition in the final the lads ran out 3-15 to 0-2 winners with a superb display of scoring football.



A busy pre-season challenge match schedule saw games played against Dromintee, Bredagh, the Loup and Eglis. These were vital opportunities for the Féile coaches to see as many players as possible from both the U14 and U15 age groups. This was followed up by specific training sessions aimed at the Féile group, held at Musgrave every Friday afternoon. The commitment and dedication shown by the boys was evident in the high participation rates at these sessions. It also

The overall performance across the squad was excellent on the day with everyone playing a strong part in delivering the win. The shortened game format of 12 minutes per half requires scoring opportunities to be maximised as much as possible. The boys more than delivered by averaging 16 points



per game. Special mention must go to Michael McCann who gave a captain's performance by scoring 3-14 across the day and to Conor Hanna who set the tone for the entire team with his tireless runs from one end of the pitch to the other. Success in Antrim provided the lads with the opportunity to represent their county at the grade 2 National Féile in Roscommon at the end of June.



So, the additional Féile sessions continued alongside league games for the boys in the run up to the big day on the 28th June. The Féile competition provides a special opportunity for the boys and parents to lean in and show the best of the Club on a national stage. The decision was taken to book an overnight stay in Athlone the night before the competition.



The support, sponsorship and fund-raising effort from the parental group was exceptional and really bonded the team ahead of the big day. On the field itself, the boys provided a performance the Club can be proud of.



Despite starting with a tight defeat to Four Masters of Donegal 0-4 to 0-2, the boys responded brilliantly by beating Tullamore of Offaly 2-2 to 1-3 and London 0-4 to 0-2. This meant they topped the group and advanced to the difficult semi-final against the Tyrone winners Eglis. A super match saw N. Bríd start strong with Liam Carson and Conor Graham grabbing early points. However, Eglis responded in style with three quick goals to run out 3-2 to 1-4 winners overall. Special mention must go Barra Carlile who supplied a virtuoso goalkeeping performance throughout the entire Féile competition, even scoring 1-1 in the semi-final! Injuries and key players not being available on the big day took its toll in Roscommon but it did not stop the boys representing the County with distinction.

The boys and coaches alike knew they had given it their best shot, so the long bus journey home was enjoyed in good humour by all. Overall, the 2024 boys' Féile effort was a very positive experience for the Club. A big thanks must go to the management team of Gerry Carlile and Charlie O'Neill who have set down a template for how best to make the most of the opportunities the Féile competition can bring each year. Thanks also to the parents, fundraisers, sponsors and the wider group of volunteers within the Club that helped make this a special memory for all concerned. It is the ambition of the Club to try and emulate it again in 2025 by fielding A & B teams in the County Féile.



Naomh Bríd 2024 Féile Panel:

Barra Carlile; Ethan Irvine; Dylan Donaghy; Cathal O'Neill; Cian Graham; Connor Hanna; Conor Graham; Seagh McEwan; Aaron



McHenry; Liam Carson; Michael McCann; Johnny Higgins; Rory Conway; Danial Garry; Aidan Flanagan; Dan McAuley; Aidan Holmes; Eoin Morgan; Danial Garry; Aidan Flanagan; Paddy McAteer; Senan McMahan; Rory Magee; Rudy Doyle; Lorcan Gallagher; Zac Kerr-Woodrow; Zavier Kerr-Woodrow; Garrett Finegan

Under Boys 14 Football

2024 season for the u14 group very much built upon the solid foundations established last season as that successful u13 group moved to the next age grade together. A huge thanks to the commitment and enthusiasm of this panel of over 50 boys and their parents throughout the season, and their coaches – Barry McMahon, Dwyer Magee, Emmett Holmes, Peter Ferris, Paul Turley, John O'Connor, Jim Molloy, George Maybury, Tony Creen, Paddy Dolan and Nicky Murphy.

The season began with challenge games away to O'Donovan Rossa Magherafelt, Galbally and St Brigid's Dublin, before fielding in both Div 1 and Div 2 South Antrim competitions.



The Div 2 squad showed brilliant development across all skill sets and tactical awareness. This was evident from their performances playing "heads up" football and displaying incredible determination to finish joint top of the league with 8 wins from 9 games (only to narrowly miss out on the title to CLG Laochra Loch Lao)

and to also reach semi-final of the championship. A number of the Div 2 squad also experienced game time with the Div 1 squad during the season and, with most of this younger group available for u14 again next season, the coaches are already looking forward to seeing the boys continue to build on their skills.

The Div 1 squad displayed a relentless work ethic throughout the season and, combined with a focus on "excellence in the basics", finished unbeaten in competitive action securing the league and championship titles, as well as the All-County 'A' championship title against a very strong Dunloy side. The boys also brought home a 7-a-side title from Kilcoo. Whilst there is no Ulster competition at u14, the boys had the experience of playing challenge games against the Tyrone champions (Galbally), the Armagh champions (Clan na Gael) and the Derry champions (Ballinascreen) at this age grade.



Review of the season would not be complete without mention of 2 boys in particular – James Morrissey (pictured) missed most of the season following surgery and treatment however he



returned for the South Antrim Div 1 championship final to score a hat-trick of goals and he repeated that same feat in the All-County 'A' championship final – and Oliver Vincent missed all of the season with injury however he fully expects to return towards the end of next season.



2024 season – u14 Boys – two squads, one team



Under 12 Boys Football

The U12 boys started back training in February 2024 at Harlequins and Cherryvale and trained right up to the end of October. This year we amalgamated the U11s (2013s) with the U12s (2012s) ensuring very healthy numbers at training. At times we had over 50 at training but usually there were around 40 per session.



This was another great year of development in terms of the boys' level of skill, game awareness and tactics. The boys played in the non-competitive South Antrim U12 Go Games and we had three teams entered into each of the three divisions. The boys competed well at all times showing excellent core skills combined with excellent teamwork. We had some frustration with Go Games as frequently other teams failed to field for the games.

The focus over the past year has been for the boys to enjoy playing football, having lots of fun, but also to continue to enhance their skills and develop competence and confidence when playing Gaelic football. We had regular in-house Railway Cup competitions which were always keenly contested and it has been promising to see the boys progress both individually and collectively over the year. The camaraderie has grown throughout the year. The use of a 3G pitch at Sally Gardens later in the season was fantastic for us. The boys competed in various tournaments across Belfast, Ulster and beyond at U11.5 and at U12.5 where they acquitted themselves very well.



It was fantastic to see our younger lads win the Raffo Cup with St. Bride's Primary School and many of our lads were lucky enough to play in the recent U12.5 South Antrim O'Donnell Cup, Shield and Plate competitions. This proved to be a great end of season competitive tournament with our younger team defeating Laochra in the Plate final and our older lads defeating St. John's in a memorable Cup final. Many of the boys also attended a seminar in June run by Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI) which was educational for all involved.



All in all, a good year for all the boys who worked and played hard throughout. Many thanks to all our coaching time for all their greatly appreciated time and effort over 2024: Kevin, Conor, Shane, Bertie, Francis, Dean, Paul, Conor, Kieron and Jeremy.

HURLING

2024 was an excellent year for hurling with our younger age groups growing and our older teams experiencing a lot of success in both league and championship competitions. The pipeline of strong young players to our Senior Hurling team continues to grow, as the game becomes more popular at all levels within the club!

Senior Hurling

In a year where the objective was primarily for consolidation of the senior hurling team our senior hurlers over-achieved, finishing fourth in the league and reaching the final of the Junior B championship. This was in no small measure due to the injection of younger players joining us from Minor and against the challenging backdrop of several established senior players stepping aside.



Cumann Luthchleas Gael Naomh Brid Béal Feirste

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While our pre-season started late due to a significant number of players being away at university, with commitment to their college hurling teams, buy-in to training from the start resulted in consistently good numbers and a great level of intensity during sessions. The blend of experienced players and the injection of fresh energy from our minor players at training, under lights at Woodlands, gave a real competitive edge to in-house games. This was evident when an understrength St. Brigids took on Ardoyne, the previous years championship winners, in a challenge game at Woodlands, resulting in a very narrow defeat. However, the game served as a great introduction for our minors to the physicality and competitiveness they would face in the Division Four league games ahead. In those weeks of pre-season, the emphasis was very much on raising touch rate and sharpness with a concentration on lifting intensity in all aspects of our game. The short pre-season prevented the organisation of any further challenge games but the arrival back from university of several key players set us up for a storming start to the league campaign with two wins from two posting big scores against Iatharna Óg and Loughbeg Harps. These were followed by a chastening defeat to Gort Na Mona at home in what proved to be an anomaly as the remainder of our league fixtures proved to be very competitively fought, much tighter games. The challenge during the league was the inability to select from a settled squad as university, exam and work commitments played havoc at times with numbers available. This was compounded by several long-term injuries to key players, and these would ultimately come back to haunt us in the championship final.



The struggle of dual hurling/football players to be effectively supported in managing their workload cannot go unaddressed. Our club is awash with hurling talent at senior player level, and as a club we should be doing everything to support those interested in playing both football and hurling. Establishing a harmonious system which allows full participation of all capable senior hurlers to effectively play both codes will only make our club stronger.

As we hit the second half of the league campaign St Brigid's were placed in the top half section and games became more intense as several opposition teams pushed hard for promotion. Our senior hurlers proved themselves willing and very able to compete at this level coming out on the wrong side of narrow defeats against teams that would eventually finish above us.

Our inability to match the intensity and physicality of these teams over the entire sixty-odd minutes of games cost us dearly and it is this which will become one of our main focuses for the coming season.

One of the biggest challenges we faced this year was the very long and inexplicable layoff between the end of the league and the start of our championship; a total of almost ten weeks. We succeeded in keeping momentum within the squad after an initial two week break in July. We moved to a weekly schedule of two training sessions, one at Musgrave and one at the fantastic Ball Wall facility at St. Marys Glen Road. These sessions in particular improved speed and touch and will form another area of focus in the coming pre-season schedule. These sessions were



augmented with several high intensity challenge games against Co. Down opposition including Kilclief and Ballyvarley. These games were very well contested and proved invaluable in getting us back up to match speed for our championship.



Our best all-round performance of the year was in the championship semi-final against Loch Mór Dál gCais. Despite going down to fourteen men in the opening minutes of the second half we dug deep and ran out ten-point winners, setting up a final clash with Belfast Saints.

Our final game of the season in the Championship final ended in a disappointing defeat. While our preparations for the final could not have been better, characterised by determined and focussed training with great intensity in sessions, we failed to bring that intensity into the game, and we were out-fought and out-muscled across the pitch. The loss of key players to injury in the preceding weeks and months, especially in the mid filed areas put us at a disadvantage. However that said, we should have had enough for our opponents with the selected players, but ultimately it wasn't to be our day.

Looking forward to the coming season our target is promotion from Division four. This will require consistency, determination, intensity in training, and a full pre-season that will start end of November. Our emphasis must be on improving our physical competitiveness and greatly improving our resilience across the entire sixty odd minutes of games. To this end pre-season preparations will include a full strength and conditioning programme and ball wall sessions leading into regular pitch training. Additionally, we are planning several pre-season challenge games, both in and outside of Ulster.



One of the most exciting prospects from a club viewpoint is the continued growth of the senior hurling squad who this year will be



supplemented by the addition of another batch of minor players coming through to the senior ranks from the Ard Na Ri set up. This is testament to the fantastic efforts over recent years of St. Brigid's hurling coaches who have worked tirelessly with our young hurlers within both the Brid Og and Ard Na Ri amalgamations at underage. It is their work, and indeed the commitment of these players to hurling that lays out such a bright future for hurling within the club.

We should also note, Senior Hurling gained a new sponsor, Hot Sauce Pictures. We thank them for our new team shirts, and our ongoing partnership. We'd also like to thank all of the coaches, mentors, and supporters for their continued support of Hurling at St Brigid's!

Manager: John Rush

Coaches: Darren Hamill, Mark Sidebottom

Team Captain: Jack Pardy

Players Rep: Todd Engman

Minor / U18 Hurling

EARLY SEASON TRAINING AND COUNTY

Our minor hurlers played under the Ard na Rí banner again this year along with St Galls, Lámh Dhearg and Ardoyne.

Training got underway early in the new year at the "Cricky" and Woodlands. We had training sessions on Black Mountain and Sunday morning on the beach .

Ball wall training took place in St Mary's CBGS.

We had a number of players on county hurling squads and they were required to train with the county squads under their own regime. We also had players in the county football team. These commitments did affect our ability to have full squads at training We travelled to Cavan on 10 February and played the Cavan county squad, coming away with a morale boosting win.

In March the county players also had an early season morale boost with a big win in a challenge game against a Tipperary team. Four of our squad played for Antrim in this game, Michael Marlow, Conor MacElhatton, Donncha McGurk and Rónán Taylor.



Mick and Conor block down for Antrim against Tipp

The Antrim squad went on to win the Leinster B Competition – The Peadar Ó Liathain Cup.



Ó Liathain Cup Winning Antrim Team with Rónán, Conor, Donncha and Michael





Antrim U17 team vs Tipp including St Brigid's
Conor MacElhatton, Donncha McGurk and
Rónán Taylor



L-R Conor, Donncha, Rónán and Michael with
the Peadar Ó Liathain Cup Preseason
continued with a challenge game against
Kevin Lynch's at Cliftonville.

On 30th March we were delighted to see
James Kelly and Daire Sidebottom both make
their debuts for our senior hurling team. It
was no surprise to their minor teammates that
both took to it like ducks to water.



James goes past coach Pól

Training continued in April with a further
preseason game against Bredagh in dreadful
conditions at Ravenhill.

In late April we were able to move training to
Musgrave Park.



Break in Pre Season Training on Black
Mountain

SCHOOLS COMPETITIONS - AQUINAS



L-R Aquinas Players Conor MacElhatton, Conor McKavanagh, Cuan Polley and James Kelly



Conor Mac in possession in Casement Cup Final

2023 ended on a sweet note turned slightly sour . Four of our panellists , James Kelly , Conor MacElhatton , Conor McKavanagh and Cuan Polley reached the Casement Cup Final in the Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School squad against Gaelscoil Dhoire only to lose out under The Dub floodlights in a tension filled pre Christmas game that could have gone either way. Gaelscoil Dhoire would go on to show that their performance was no flash in the pan when they subsequently competed in the Mageean Cup.

RATHMORE AND OLSPCK

While Aquinas had fought their way through to the Casement Cup Final, Rónán Taylor was starring for the Rathmore contingent in the Foresters Cup competition. Rathmore

accounted for St Louis' Ballymena , a game in which Rónán scored four goals and seven points in a four point win, but they exited at the semi-final stage.

Other St Brigid's boys playing leading roles for Rathmore were Donncha McGurk and Fíonn McCann while Conn Flannery did his bit for Knock.

Rónán's outstanding performances were recognised with an Ulster Schools GAA player of the month award.

Rónán would also go on to earn a Future Star Award in the number eight jersey for his hurling exploits including captaining the Antrim county team.

Conn Flannery and Cuan Polley also reached the final trials for the Future Stars.



Rónán gives a blocking masterclass for Rathmore



Cuan carries the sliotar through a Cavan tackle



Conor takes a high ball against Cavan

All County Minor Hurling League Div 1

At the start of the year the panel looked strong enough to challenge well in Division 1. The league opened on 3rd May with a game against Rossa played at Hannahstown. A very tight first half closed with two points between the teams but Rossa pulled away decisively in the second half.



Ard na Rí Squad v Rossa

Next up were Cushendall with the game played at Milltown. This time we let Cushendall off to a great start and despite a great second half, we left just too much to do. We were also suffering from a catalogue of injuries with key players like Joe McKay, who was out with a long-term injury unable to participate.

Others added to the casualty list, being out for weeks and sometimes months at a time, often due to injuries sustained in other sports.. This affected our ability to field during this period and with key players missing our performances also suffered.

It was another tough day at the office on 26 May when we travel to Ballycastle.

This was frustrating for players, coaches, parents and supporters who had all committed fully to the cause and were very aware of the abundance of talent in this group.

The going continued to be tough against Loughgiel Shamrocks in our home game on 2nd June.

On Sunday, 9 June 2024 we fought hard with reduced numbers against Glenariffe/Glenravel but went down to a narrow defeat.

It was not until 18 August that we featured in a further competitive game. This time we hosted Glenariffe/Glenravel at Hannahstown with a clear cut win for the visitors.

Friday 23 August saw a home league game against O'Donovan Rossa and although our boys gave it all they had, it was not enough to contain Rossa.

The long injury list had cast a shadow over the



entire league campaign and this was to be our final league outing.

CHAMPIONSHIP

After the league campaign we were drawn in the B championship against Naomh Pádraig in St Patrick's Park. With six key players out injured this is always going to be a challenging game.

We opened the scoring with the first two points and then Naomh Pádraig came back with a few more of their own. It was a goal for them and then a goal for us. We felt a bit unlucky to be going in at the break seven points down. Naomh Pádraig's accurate free taking extended their lead at the start of the second half while our shooting was off the mark. It looked over. But with five minutes to go James Kelly shook the opposition net. This was almost immediately followed by a cracker goal from Ethan Walsh. That left four points in it. We went looking for another goal but instead Naomh Pádraig landed a point and that was that. Our only consolation was that we were beaten by the Championship winners as Naomh Pádraig went on to win the cup.



Donncha strides away against Naomh Pádraig



Rónan spins out against Naomh Pádraig



Cuan carries out of defence against Naomh Pádraig

We would like to thank our sponsors ESS and Gaelicsite.

Many thanks to our coaches Darren, Gareth, Paul, Pól, Pat and Frank for the constant guidance, encouragement and patience. Thanks also to the players' parents and relatives who were a constant supportive presence at all the games.

Acknowledgement and thanks to Mark Marlow for the fantastic photography.

U16 Hurling (Ard na Ri)

2024 was an outstanding year for St Brigid's U16 Hurlers, showcasing the dedication, skill, and commitment of this talented group. With the return to even-numbered age groups, this season offered a unique opportunity to build



on the strong foundation laid by last year's U15 squad, which narrowly missed out on the A championship final after a tight semi-final match against Dunloy.



Our U16 team is joined with St Gall's to form Ard na Rí, an amalgamation that brought together talent, teamwork, and a shared drive for success. The season began with essential strength and conditioning sessions, followed by focused stickwork practices at Woodlands starting in early February. By March, we were ready to put in the work with a series of friendly matches that set a high standard for the rest of the year.



League and Championship Campaign

The All-County Division 1 league kicked off on April 16th, with our coaches placing a strong emphasis on maximising game time, fostering team cohesion, and building toward a successful championship run. The league saw ups and downs, but the growth and resilience of our team were undeniable, laying a solid foundation for our championship ambitions.



In the championship, Ard na Rí's campaign got off to a fantastic start. Our first-round win against St. Paul's showcased the depth and determination of our squad, securing a hard-fought victory with a one-goal margin. The semi-final, held on September 10th, was another impressive performance, as we doubled the score of Loughgiel, winning 2-12 and earning our place in the championship final.



The final at Dunsilly was a closely contested battle against St Enda's. Despite leading at halftime, 0-10 to 1-4, St Enda's rallied in the second half, ultimately edging us out by just two points. Though it was a challenging



outcome, this final highlighted the skill, grit, and sportsmanship of our squad.



Looking Ahead with Optimism

As we look forward to the 2025 season, we have every reason to be excited. With nine of our championship starting lineup still eligible to play at U16, the potential for growth and success is immense. We are confident that this team will continue to build on this year's experiences, learning from both victories and challenges, and aiming high for next year's championship.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to those players who will be moving up to the Minor panel. Your dedication and hard work have not only inspired the U16 squad but have set a standard for the teams to come. Good luck as you take this next step—your contributions will undoubtedly continue to make a positive impact at Minor level.

Thank You to Our Coaches and Supporters

A huge thank you to our coaching team for their dedication, expertise, and encouragement. The boys were privileged to be coached by Tony McEwan from St Brigid's, alongside Dave Sheehan, Marty McKeown, and Ollie Bellew from St Gall's. Their commitment and guidance have been instrumental in developing not only skilled players but confident and resilient young athletes.

To the entire St Brigid's and St Gall's communities—parents, families, and fans—thank you for your unwavering support throughout the season. Together, we look forward to a bright future for St Brigid's U16 Hurling, and here's to an incredible 2025 season filled with passion, teamwork, and success!

Let's bring the spirit, skill, and determination that defined this year into the coming season. Naomh Brid Abu!



U14 Hurling

U14 Hurling - Brid Og (Amalgamation with Ardoyne)



The U14 hurlers operate as an amalgamation with Ardoyne under the Brid Óg banner, but with 16 of the players from St. Brigid's, there appears to be a very bright future for underage and senior hurling at our club.

The U14 hurlers enjoyed a very successful year, winning South Antrim Division 2 without losing a single match, meaning that next year



they will be playing in Division one.

In the Championship semi-final they lost to St Pauls by a single point after a strong and spirited display.

Darran Hamill joined the coaching set-up this year, bringing many years of experience to the training field, which led to huge improvements in the team over the course of the season. Gerry Gallagher and Declan Lawn are also coaches, and next year the U14s will be joined by current U12 coach Shane McCusker.

The team also managed to attract four new players this year who were interested in hurling, which is something we are keen to encourage, especially from those players who have traditionally played only football.

The U14 hurlers are in a great position to challenge for honours in Division One next year, and at this age level hurling at our club is thriving.

U12 Hurling

The hurling year started early in January for our U12 squad with Saturday training at Cherryvale and mid-week ball wall sessions at St Mary's CBS. The latter was combined with the U14 squad & the camogs and despite the sometimes-wintery conditions, they were high intensity, high energy sessions. The ball wall is a great way to maximise strikes in a short period of time – and the progression in the boys over the course of the sessions was wonderful to see. The progression in our team communication was also clear with coach Gerry Monaghan taking the team Whatapps to a whole new level with videos and flyers:





As the weather improved, we resumed our regular Monday evening training slot at Harlequins and the start of the U12 league go games. The boys competed well in the series, having several very competitive games. In training, the coaches could also measure the improvement as better striking meant more sliotars sailing over the pitch boundary and into the sliotar graveyard that is Harlequins hedgerow.

We also saw a marked increase in the number of boys coming to hurling thanks in no small part to the tireless recruitment activities of Gerry Gallagher. New joiners always welcome!

In June, we had an anti-discrimination workshop with other St Brigid's teams to reinforce the need for inclusivity in all that we do. It was heartening to see such a strong attendance and wholehearted participation from the boys.

In August we once again had the opportunity to bring some of the squad to play at Croke Park in the U12 go games. It truly was a day to remember, with 3 games on the hallowed turf and a tour of the Stadium. Something for the boys to look back on in years to come!



We continued training at Harlequins in the Autumn as the nights drew in, with the coaching squad of Gerry Monaghan, Gerry Gallagher, Gerry Mulholland, Stephen Couser and Peter Rice being joined by Darren Hamil from the U14 coaching team, to help get the boys ready for the transition to U14 next year. Many, many thanks to the coaching team for your tireless dedication this year.

Finally, thank you to all the boys for their



participation and commitment throughout the year. It has been an absolute pleasure to train and coach them all year. Looking forward to

the next chapter in their hurling journey in 2025

Ladies Football

Senior Ladies



Early preseason training at Harlequins on Sunday afternoons attracted reasonable numbers and when the minor and senior squads were combined for most of January and February sessions regularly included 25 plus players. Then, as January drew to a close the girls added Saturday morning Runs with Brendan Mulgrew alongside Wednesday training at Harlequins and Monday gym sessions under the pupilage of Kelly who took the girls through on field and indoor strength and conditioning. This intensive training positioned the girls well for the start of the Division league in March.

This season we started our league campaign with an away game victory against league newcomers Lamh Dhearg As we headed into the start of the league campaign, we then travelled to St Galls and recorded a narrow league victory. However, our 1st 2 home games had to be postponed due to a waterlogged Musgrave Park. The girls then travelled over to

the west for a game against Sarsfields. It was not until late May before we had our first home game against Con Magees. This was followed with a further home game v Moneyglass where our girls came up short against the league and championship winners however there were clear signs that the team had been improving and significantly reduced the scoring gap against previously years. Unfortunately, when it came to mid-June the team struggled to get numbers out to play the league game against St John's. In the end St John's came away with an 'unexpected' victory and these back-to-back defeats dropped our girls away from the 2nd spot in the league table. So, with St Paul's up next the girls knew a win was crucial in their drive to achieve the team's best ever league finishing position. St Paul's came to Musgrave park on 1st July with history firmly parked on side however, our girls played magnificently and finally came away with our first ever victory over the west Belfast rivals.

By the split in the league our senior ladies were sitting in 2nd place, and we carried this through to the conclusion of the league campaign.

After the league campaign the team prepared for our 1st Senior Championship game. This was to be a round robin with ourselves, St Paul's, Con Magee's, Glenavy and Moneyglass. First up was a home fixture against St Paul's at Musgrave Park.

So, on 1st September the girls, buoyed by the league victory, turned out on a beautiful Musgrave park and played a very tense opening group game. On this occasion St Paul's



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got the better of us by 5 points but while this was disappointing, it was only the first game of a 4-game schedule. Next up, again at Musgrave, were newly promoted Glenavy. Our opponents had had a great run to the Ulster Intermediate final in 2023 and were clearly going to be strong opponents. Our ladies came through this round with a 6 point surplus and followed this with a significant victory away to Glenravel and a narrow defeat away to Moneyglass in the last group game.

With the top four teams from the group contesting the semi finals we once again came up against St Paul's at Musgrave Park. Although we had overcome St Paul's in the league, they had regained the upper hand in the early rounds of the championship. And so it was, this game turned out to be an epic encounter with two teams very evenly matched battling for every single ball and watched by a very big home support. As the game progressed each team was matching each other point for point and the crowd could sense that this will go down to the last kick of the game. Our Senior Ladies dug deep into their reserves and finished the game with immense determination and came away with an historic single point victory that would see us play in the club's first ever adult all county final.



The following week we travelled to Glenavy to play Moneyglass in the County Final. Although the gap between the semi final and final was just one week, the whole of the club got behind our girls as the excitement and anticipation grew. An early goal in the first half settled our players and overwhelming favourites, Moneyglass, knew they were in game. In the second half Moneyglass were able to pull away in the final quarter to lift the cup, but our St Brigid's ladies showed the sort of fantastic determination and drive that I am sure will see this squad of players achieve championship success in the near future.

Although I must thank Anthony, Jim, Noreen, Steve and Brendan for all their work this season, my biggest thanks must go to the Senior Ladies squad that marked another very significant milestone in the progression of our club toward achieving our ambition of Championship success at Senior level.



Minor Ladies



As in other years, the Minors team is well supported with players from the U16. A great bunch of young ladies.

The Minors panel also supported the Senior team in their journey to make the Championship A final. A first in the Club's history.

The League challenge started with a convincing win against Ciceam Ard Eoin.



With a depleted team, we then lost against Naomh Eanna but came back to win a competitive game against Gort na Mona. The winning streak continued against All Saints Ballymena and then also Lamh Dhearg. Another convincing win against Naomh Gall finished off the League matches and the girls secured the League title. Well done ladies!!



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Huge thank you to 26 West Bar and Grill for hosting breakfast for the girls as a celebration for the teams' success and end of year celebration.



The coaches would like to pass on their thanks to the players for a great season. These are a great bunch of young ladies, a pleasure to coach and we have enjoyed the craic immensely with this team.

Of course, a huge thanks also goes to the parents who have continued to support both girls and coaches throughout the season. And I'd like to thank all the minor ladies coaches, Noreen, Charlie-Pat, Jim and Niall. Special thanks to Anthony Carlton as well.



In our Championship challenge, the girls had a nail-biting game against St Galls, winning the game deservedly in extra time. Unfortunately, a midweek replay didn't yield the same result and we conceded to St Galls. Nonetheless, these young ladies should be very proud of the progress and their successes in 2024.





U16 Ladies

The U16s faced a challenging 2024 season. It began with the winter league in Woodland, where the girls performed admirably, finishing in the top group and narrowly missing out on bringing home some silverware.



matches. A six-week break in the league for GCSE exams made it difficult to get many players back to training or games. However, with strong support from our U14s, we managed to field teams for the latter half of our league games and championship, many of which were closely contested.



Training sessions started at Harlequins on Sunday evenings, combining efforts with the Seniors and Minors. This joint training aimed to build relationships, increase participation, and alleviate the apprehension some of our girls felt about playing with the seniors. This approach proved successful and continued at Musgrave when the pitches opened at the end of March.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the parents for encouraging their daughters to attend training and supporting the team at matches. We also thank the girls for their dedication and hard work each week, playing to the best of their abilities. Special thanks go to the U14 players and their parents for their invaluable support throughout the season. Without them, we wouldn't have been able to compete in the league or championship.



The league commenced in March, but as in previous years, attendance at training and games significantly dropped, leading to the unfortunate necessity of conceding some



Lastly, we express our gratitude to the U16 coaches Jim Molloy, Jim Magee, Niall Mitchell,



and Liz McAree for their unwavering commitment to motivating and encouraging the girls week after week.



U14 Girls Football

Winter league got off to a slow start with the girls not taking shots at all during early games. However, after streaming we ended up with several wins in a row and lost in the final.

To get ready for league, we may have started to concentrate too much on gameplay, neglecting some basic skills. We had good attendance throughout the year but failed to win any games in the league. Towards the end of the league, we met some other teams closer to our standard and start to compete but still no win. We lost the first/only game of the championship.

We trained on a Monday night, mixed between Musgrave and Harlequins. We didn't have a lot of time on full size pitches. We also had a social game on Friday nights for any of the girls to turn up, turnout was low though (max 12-14).

The girls were great throughout the year, kept playing to the end of every game even when it was beyond reach. I think there is a big difference in ability in Group B which could have been demoralising.

We had a friendly with a team from the Glens (Group C) which we won in September and then were invited to Colin Gael's memorial one-day tournament. We won the shield at that.

We had great support from Tara doing the Admin and many of the mothers who turned up to chaperone - some also got involved in the training sessions and also to several of the dads who also helped out.

Thanks especially to Eamon Tara and Miceal who were dedicated throughout the year.

U12 Girls Football

Firstly a big thanks to all the coaches who helped out during the year – Michael Burke, Clíodhna McAreevey, Enya Boyce and Brian Bourke. Also, thanks to the parents who helped out moving goals, lining pitches, collecting footballs, refereeing matches or in any other way- it is greatly appreciated.

Highlights

- Very positive year overall with a noticeable improvement in player's skills.
- Successful home blitz held at Musgrave hosting 4 other teams.
- Away bus trip to Cooley tournament for 18 players & 10 supporters was enjoyed by all. The outburst of happiness when we won our last group game scoring 1-2 in the last minute was one of the season's highlights.
- Some new players joined mid-season and are progressing really well.
- Four coaching sessions by games promotion officer Joe McCarney during September/October were very helpful and visibly enjoyed by coaches and players.
- Positive engagement with u12 camogie



to avoid overlaps as much as possible.
Areas to work on for 2025

- Basic skills improvement is still the main focus, to get everyone to the minimum expected level for u12 (comfortably solo, bounce, kick pass, handpass, tackle & catch).
- More focus on game awareness/positioning/strategy for girls moving up to u14.
- Encourage higher player turnout for training during the core season in Spring & Summer.
- Encourage higher player turnout for matches – this is ultimately why we train! Numbers were borderline for most 13-aside games. It was particularly hard to field a team June-August. Some of our best performances were in 9-aside blitzes where the numbers deficit had less impact.
- Encourage older players to play with their age group. It negatively impacts the team when opposing teams often have all their older players and our team does not. Even though scores are not kept in u12 Go-Games, one sided contests are not really enjoyable for players.
- Mitigate cancellation of training due to weather conditions– e.g. 4G training facility, particularly for early months of the year.
- Foster increased parental involvement in coaching and helping out.

Statistics

- 22 training sessions held (19th Feb-21st Oct), with 7 further sessions rained off over the course of the year (mid-March to mid-April particularly badly hit).
- 12 matches, 4 blitzes & 1 tournament

attended.

- 28 players in Heja squad, including 4 players who joined from mid-season onwards.
- Overall average attendance at training: 15
- Average attendance at training in July & August: 12
- Average attendance at training September & October: 20!
- Average attendance at matches: 13
- Next year's u14 squad – approx. 28 players (~14 from u12 moving up)



Home Blitz 17/05/24



Cooley Tournament 09/06/24



Last game of the season vs Davitts 21/10/24

Under 10 Girls Football

The under 10 Girls football had another very successful year. For many of the girls this was their second year in under 10s, for some this was their first year to the GAA.

On average we had 20+ girls at training every Sunday. We entered the Go Games with initially 1 team and half way through the year we had 2 teams participating. We were very competitive throughout, with one team commenting that we were the strongest team they had played all year.

I would like to thank fellow coaches Claire McAleenan, Barry-John Kelly, Peter Ferris, Bertie Fulton, James McNamee and Gareth Loye for all their help and commitment throughout the year.

U8 Girls Football

U8 Girls had a fantastic year with plenty of new faces coming along to training and joining in the fun of the games and team events.

The u8 girls participated in a number of Football blitzes and the girls were a credit to the club. Big thank you to all the clubs who hosted us throughout the year.

Undoubtedly the u8 girls highlight of the year was the hosting of the Festival of Football at HQ. We had 32 teams in attendance from over

16 different clubs coming as far from Dublin and Derry. St Brigid's girls were out in force with over 30 girls participating in 3 teams. It was a very special day and one that the girls will never forget. A big thank you must go out to all the parents, sponsors and our own club MC Muiris who made sure the day ran like clockwork. Without their help we would not of been able to pull it off. We hope to be able to run the same type of event next year.



Our u8 girls were given the opportunity to play at halftime at the County Senior Ladies Final. 18 girls showed up in horrible conditions and once again thoroughly enjoyed the occasion or maybe that was just the party bags supplied by the County! A big thank you to our own Liz and the county board for giving the girls a great experience. Our Seniors Girls are a credit to club and the u8 girls will hopefully follow in their footsteps in a few years time. Events like should be used to build



to the links between the Senior and Junior side going forward.



Looking ahead to next year we should have around 25-30 girls and we will try and build on the success of this year.



Thank you to all the U8 coaches
Ronan, Conor , Chris, James , Killian, Ciara,
Leona, Paul & Paul



Gaelic for Mothers and Others

The playing season for 2024 ended with the G4MOs hosting their usual Christmas blitz. This event is now firmly fixed in the club calendar and is a great way to close off the season.

Once the short Christmas break concluded the ladies continued their regular Monday night training schedule only occasionally interrupted by the weather. As well as their on field activities our G4MOs were very active in



leading and organising many club funding raising events and initiatives particularly in the early part of the year.

As soon as the winter months passed the ladies turned their efforts to the annual MAY blitz.



Once again, this event attracted 10 visiting teams enjoying the spender of a glorious sunny and immaculate Musgrave Park. The games were played in accordance with the G4MO ethos of enjoyment and fun first and foremost and we received many compliments for the hospitality and camaraderie on display. In what now seems to be the 'usual' the sun shone all day and indeed just kept on shinning well into the evening with 'tidying up squad' working tirelessly to ensure that Musgrave was left in tip top order following the blitz.

I am delighted to see event in our Naomh Brid calendar.



The summer months always seem to bit quite however we were able to get across to Rossa for their splendid blitz.



Unfortunately, this year we not 'drawn out of the hat' for the Portmarnock blitz and the ladies, I know, were desperately disappointed. However as the season moved on we were delighted to attend the St Paul's Hollywood blitz, where not only where the significant skills of the G4MOs in display but also the true character fun and laughter were on display.





and then the finished up the season with the annual blitz over at near neighbours Bredagh



I know the ladies are looking forward to this year's Christmas blitz on 9th December as good way to finish 2023 and get a well-earned 2 weeks break from training.

Again, it was great to see that, Elaine and Aoife were able to step in and lead sessions while Anthony was away on duty with the Senior team and I know he is very grateful.

As usual I wish to thank, Mary, Elaine, and Emma who have continued to coordinate and lead the development of the G4MOs and of course Anthony Carleton who continues to support this fantastic and important section of our club.

Camogie

Another great year for camogie at Naomh Brid! Camogie continues to grow at all levels, as more girls take up the game.

U12 Camogie

2024 was a good year for St Brigid's U12 camogie!

Our season kicked off with training at the start of February at Harlequins with Coaches John and Tony with help through the year from Barry and Daniel bringing the girls back to basic skills: How to protect yourself, holding the hurl with a strong grip, ground striking, controlling the ball and a focus on player positions.



As training progressed over the months of March and April, training moved on to Air Striking, Catching, Blocking, Hand passing and Tackling. Lots of competitive training with backs and forwards, 1-1 tackling and controlling the ball on the move.

Our season opened with a tough away fixture against St Enda's at Hightown but the girls battled well and secured a draw.



The season continued with games against Sarsfields, Gort Na Mona (two teams), Lamh Dhearg , Davitts, St Galls, St Pauls, Ahoghill



among others.



Training continued over the summer months with Coaches focus drills building a style of play. Our goal was to develop skills that allowed our players to protect the ball, win the ball and understand when and how to pass the ball.



The girls played in two tournaments during the year – one at St Paul's in May and one at Gort Na Mona in September acquitting themselves well in both against strong opposition – all teams got to hold the trophies...!





We definitely won the handstand competition...

We have closed out the year with games against Brigini Og and Rossa and continue to train on a Monday night.



Our biggest objectives of 2024 were achieved:

- Squad size – this was increased to 23 and we regularly had 16/18 at training and matches. This group has a lot of potential.
- We were competitive in most matches.

- Build a solid platform for progression to U14 for the older girls and for the younger girls all have the basic skills to become leaders at U12.
- Buy in from mothers – Orlagh, Emma D, Emma T and Sinead were very helpful in attending training and matches. More needed as coaches and helpers but a great start.
- **We had a lot of fun.**

Aims / things to improve

- There is still a lot of work to be done – hopefully with a lot of the girls in “big school” now there will be exposure to playing for the school and, most importantly, more practice. Fitting two training sessions a week in with many other activities is hard but there is a real requirement for girls to have a hurl in their hand more than once a week.
- Buy in from parents to both practice with their daughters and actually attending matches would be super – it is a little heartbreaking when we play home matches and our supporters are generally outnumbered by quite a bit.
- Access to indoor/all weather facilities – a considerable number of Monday night training sessions had to be cancelled due to the weather. I know efforts are under way to organise other facilities.

Coaches: John McGuckian, Tony McEwan, Barry Delargy and Daniel Burke

U14 Camogie

2024 was a year for growth. The 2024 camogie squad was comprised of a solid core of 13-14 girls. Most of the girls were all first year u14s – which meant this year would be



the first year of 15 v 15 and playing on a full pitch. Additionally, the girls transitioned from the smart touch ball to a size 4 sliotar. Knowing the challenges ahead, we began training in February. Weekly ball-wall sessions and full pitch training on artificial turf, got our season off fast. We also made the decision to train as much as possible with the u16 camogie squad. This allowed for greater numbers for drills, small-sided games, and matches. Most training sessions focused on first touch drills, striking on the move, tackling, and playing with more physicality.



League play was challenging, due to uncooperative weather and difficulty fielding teams (both St Brigids and our opponents). Several games were forced to be refixed, and some were abandoned altogether. Due to challenges with getting a full squad out on the pitch, the u14 squad called on several u12 players to “play up” and help support the older squad. As a result, the younger girls got excellent experience playing full pitch camogie, and some became regular fixtures at training sessions as well. Our matches were all extremely competitive, with our girls displaying several skills honed throughout the year from training. We were very proud of the effort and commitment displayed by the girls that continually showed up and battled regardless of numbers or who was the opponent. A few of our u14 girls also were regular players for our u16 camogie squad as well.



Special recognition to Siofra Wall for her making the U14 Antrim Camogie panel. What an achievement!



2025 should be a great year for our u14 camogie squad as most of the players will be returning with a full year of experience.

The coaches would like to thank all the players, parents, and supporters for all their efforts this year.

U14 Coaches

- Todd Engman (Co-Lead)
- Maeve Monaghan (Co-Lead)
- Barry Delargy
- Daniel Burke
- Paul McCrudden



U16 Camogie



The season began with Winter League matches. These were 7-9 a side short games, played on Saturdays during March. At the end St Brigid's had only lost one game (by 1 point). The performances from the girls suggested we were one of the best teams in Belfast, and indicated that we should be able to compete well in Division 2 of the All County League. The league started soon after and our first game was a trip to Ahoghill, where we came away with a victory by 1 goal. At this time, concerns were raised by some other clubs that they had been graded in Division 1 and were not happy because they faced the likelihood of being beaten heavily by the top teams and therefore wanted to be dropped down to Division 2. This would have resulted in a small Division 1, with 4 or 5 teams and a large Division 2. After discussions, Antrim decided to split the 16 clubs into 2 separate 8 team leagues with the top 4 in each then playing in Division 1. We had defeats against the two best teams - Loughgeil and Geraldine's, Portglenone, but wins over St John's, St Endas and Creggan along with a draw at Cargin meant St Brigid's finished third in the table and qualified for the Division 1 league. This was the first time a St Brigid's camogie team were competing in Division 1 and we knew it was going to be a tough task. Unfortunately, we didn't win any games, though Ballycastle only came away from

Musgrave with a 1 point win in controversial circumstances.

We finished in 7th out of the 8 teams which meant we were placed in the 1B championship. We lost out in the semi final to St Paul's. The game was close for most of the 60 minutes. St Paul's made better use of the wind in the second half and got goals at crucial times to win the match.

Most of the squad were also playing for their school teams with girls representing St Dominic's, Rathmore and Aquinas. Rathmore won an Ulster title with 9 St Brigid's girls in that squad. Additionally, Rionach MacElhatton was in the St Dominic's squad that won the Ulster 7s Championship recently and went on to reach the All Ireland final.

We also had representation at county and provincial level, as Mary-Angela Nic Carthaigh was selected in the Antrim squad for this year's campaign and, after trials, played for Ulster U16s against Dublin.



2024 has been another successful year for this squad. Yet again they were pioneers. They are continually reaching heights we have never reached before. We played Division 1 for the first time. Unlike some other clubs, we didn't hide when we had games where we were likely to get beaten badly. We fulfilled every fixture and finished as the 7th best team in the county. In 4 years this squad have gone from playing in Division 3 and the C



Championship to Divison 1 league and championship.

We had 21 players at our semi final.

We had at least 15 girls for each match. The only games which were not 15 a side were due to our opponents not having enough players. Additionally, we could field a full U16 team. The squad is as big as it was last year. We have had new players join and we want to continue to grow.

We have a number of girls moving out of U16 and into minor. Again this is uncharted territory. We do not have enough full minors, but with support from our talented U16s we will be fielding a minor team for the first time ever.

Thanks to the players for their commitment to the team this year and also to their parents and other supporters for their support throughout 2024, especially our shirt sponsor Justin Rush of Abacus Recruitment.



U16 coaching team: Catriona McKavanagh, Ciaran Grant, Frank MacElhatton, Muiris Mac Carthaigh, Todd Engman

Fun Sunday

In addition to the normal business of running Fun Sunday, participating in go-games and continuing to grow our young membership, we committed to a renewed focus of FUN at Fun Sunday and an ambitious goal of hosting 4

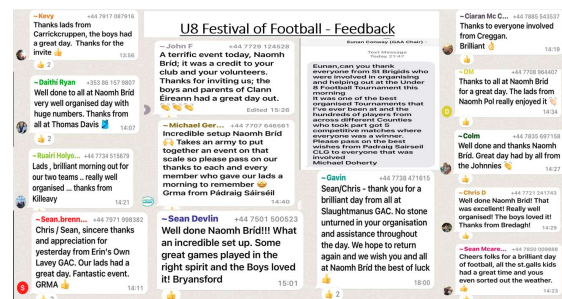
U8 Festivals across Football + Hurling/Camogie for the Girls & Boys respectively.

As for the Fun, we have had SuperHero Strength and Conditioning in January and February. Followed by trips to watch Antrim games at Corrigan park. And team building events such as the high wire, pizza nights and a planned cinema night for the u10 girls. We finished the year with (an inaugural?) camogie match between the U10 girls and their parents – this was great for team spirit and a great success. All the events have helped bring out teammates closer together as friends – thank you to all our coaches who continue to go above and beyond by giving up their free time to not just coach, but putting on these events to make sure we are the best show in town.

We successfully hosted 3 of our 4 festivals this year at u8. The u8 boys football festival in April, boys Hurling in June and the girls football festival in September.

At each festival we had over 340 kids, meaning we hosted over 1000 kids at the 3 festivals. We played games against teams from the length and breadth of Ireland, creating memories that will last forever.

Below is for the football festival and we received similar praise after the other two, and then as we attended games and events across the rest of the year.



U 6 Girls

Few key highlights for year.



- Consistently getting 15+ girls every week including a lot of new faces compared to last year.
- Camogie had 26 girls at the first session this year and girls are looking forward to having their first camogie match next year.
- Girls got to play at half time of the senior ladies semi final match at Musgrave v St Paul's which they all loved and great for them to watch some amazing role models.
- Participated in about 6 matches/ mini blitz's over the course of last 4 months with at least 2-3 teams at each match.
- Key thing is that the girls are consistently showing up and coming back week on week, we have 5 great coaches including three ladies and the offer from a few of the senior girls to come and help as well.
- The girls key skills are really coming on with some of them now consistently kicking the ball and attempting to solo it which is great.

Thanks to the committee for all their support throughout the year.

U6 Boys Football & Hurling

2024 was a successful year as we have now a strong regular attendance in all weather conditions of 25 plus enthusiastic boys and growing each week. This year we have continued and built on the fundamentals and began some blitz action in Bredagh with some boys also attending u7 blitzes. The boys really enjoys these and are eager to play together against more opposition when Go-Games commence in 2025 . Hurling is now a regular feature on alternate weeks with equal turnouts and enthusiasm. There is a solid panel of coaches each week to help with both codes.

Coaches:

James McNamee, Paul O'Hara, Matt Cosgrave, Brendan Quigley, John McManus, Eddie McKeever, Aaron Campbell, Chris Storey,

Jimmy King, Joe McKeever, Matthew Howse, John McGuckian, Paul Spray

U7 boys

It has been a fantastic year for our U-7 boys, who have been working hard on basic skills and transitioning these to the playing pitch. The boys have made great progress last year and the coaches have thoroughly enjoyed coaching them. Throughout the year, attendance has gradually increased, and we are now averaging 25 boys at training. They are a great bunch of boys with fantastic spirit and ethos at training, and we hope this is something we can build on further in 2024.

The boys did well at various blitzes and tournaments this year, including the Creggan Blitz where we got to 2 finals. In addition, the boys played in the go games every fortnight throughout the year and consistently showed up and played some excellent football.

A special thanks to all the coaches who have devoted considerable time and effort in the past year. We would also like to thank the parents who have always been excellent transporting the boys to matches and blitzes.



Under 8 Football



Over the past year, we have seen incredible progress in our football group's development and participation. Our active membership on Heja stands at around 43 boys, with an average of 34 attending most training sessions.

Throughout the year, the boys played approximately 10 GoGames and several challenge games. The highlights included hosting 14 clubs (28 teams) from across Ireland at our Festival of Football. The memory of our young Gaels leading the parade around HQ will remain with the boys, coaches, and parents for years to come.

This year, our boys were again invited to the Greenlough Football Blitz, which included 24 clubs and 48 teams across A and B sections. Both our A and B teams performed admirably, with the A team reaching the Cup semi-final (losing narrowly by just one point) and the B team making it to the Shield semi-final. A special mention goes to the A team's quarter-final victory over Lamh Derg. After drawing in normal time and falling behind in extra time in what can only be described as a monsoon, the boys dug deep, found an equaliser, and triumphed in a penalty shootout, scoring all three penalties. The coaches and parents nerves were wrecked, but the boys strangely enjoyed the experience – we are hoping this is not going to be a regular occurrence for this group in the years to come!

After inviting Killeavy to our Festival of Football, we were then invited to a blitz in South Armagh, where the boys had a fantastic time playing against clubs from across Ulster. It was particularly rewarding to hear comments from coaches of other clubs praising our boys' skill levels, with special mention given to those using both feet, and, more importantly, their behaviour.

While the results are a pleasing measure of their progress, the way the boys represented

the club at the tournaments was exceptional. They demonstrated great discipline during the games and continued to work hard on their skills.

Looking ahead to 2025, this group of young men continues to impress their coaches and has the potential to achieve even greater success. A big thank you to all the coaches – Chris Owers, Raymond Tiffney, Matt Galway, Ryan O'Hagan, Kevin Kerr, John Canning, Liam Morrow, Paul Tynan, and Barry McMahon – and to all the parents who supported us throughout the year.

U8 Hurling

The Under 8 hurlers have had another very successful year. We have regularly had 15-20 boys at training on Monday nights. We have been able to field at least two teams every GoGames and are able to compete well in these matches. There has been a huge improvement in the skill levels of the boys especially over the last few weeks.

We started the year with an indoor hurling tournament in Dundalk. We had quite several of the boys make their way down on a Friday night and compete well by winning all games.

The club was able to host a hurling blitz for the boys with clubs from all over Ulster and Dublin competing. This was a very successful day, and the boys really enjoyed it. Prior to this we had a block of FunSunday hurling training sessions which took place early on Sunday mornings. This was then followed by Parkrun for some extra training for the boys. This helped their team spirit as well as their stamina.

The boys have competed in many blitz tournaments throughout the year both in North Antrim and Down. This has raised the skill levels of our young men.



We have had no problems with behaviour or sportsmanship and overall, the boys are very encouraging to each other. They are a credit to their parents.

I would like to thank all the parents without your continued support bringing the boys to games and training this team would not exist. I would also like to thank my fellow coaches, Ryan O'Hagan, Kevin Kerr, Sean Carter, Chris Owers, Matt Galway and Liam Morrow, who have work tirelessly to run training sessions and organise each competitive games for the boys.

A very special thank you should be extended to all those who volunteered to help put at the Festival of Hurling, especially those who do not have a child in this group. This festival would not have been successful without this help.

U8 Girls Football

U8 Girls had a fantastic year with plenty of new faces coming along to training and joining in the fun of the games and team events.

The u8 girls participated in a number of Football blitzes and the girls were a credit to the club. Big thank you to all the clubs who hosted us throughout the year.

Undoubtedly the u8 girls highlight of the year was the hosting of the Festival of Football at HQ. We had 32 teams in attendance from over 16 different clubs coming as far from Dublin and Derry. St Brigid's girls were out in force with over 30 girls participating in 3 teams. It was a very special day and one that the girls will never forget. A big thank you must go out to all the parents, sponsors and our own club MC Muiris who made sure the day ran like clockwork. Without their help we would not of been able to pull it off. We hope to be able to run the same type of event next year.

Our u8 girls were given the opportunity to play at halftime at the County Senior Ladies Final. 18 girls showed up in horrible conditions

and once again thoroughly enjoyed the occasion or maybe that was just the party bags supplied by the County ! A big thank you to our own Liz and the county board for giving the girls a great experience. Our Seniors Girls are a credit to club and the u8 girls will hopefully follow in their footsteps in a few years time. Events like should be used to build to the links between the Senior and Junior side going forward.

Looking ahead to next year we should have around 25-30 girls and we will try and build on the success of this year.

Please see photographs attached of the u8 girls.

Thank you

U8 coaches

Ronan, Conor , Chris, James , Killian, Ciara, Leona, Paul & Paul

U10 Hurling

The u10 hurlers played games against St Galls and Sarsfields. Both teams had players a bit older so games were one sided. We struggled to get large numbers all year with 8- 10 consistently training.

The training clashed with soccer and they also played soccer or another sport on Saturdays which ruled us out of Go Games. They made progression on their skills with one player playing up for the u12s. Overall kids enjoyed training but greater numbers are needed going forward to play more games and improve.

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U7 Hurling

In the absence of a dedicated lead for Hurling, we arranged for different coaches to assist throughout the year in keeping training on for the boys. Thanks to Gerry, Eoghan, Joe and Todd here. The lack of a lead has meant limited game time for the boys.

Post summer, we opened up Monday nights for 5 weeks, meaning the boys were training 3



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times every fortnight. We have a stable group of 10 attending and 5 of the dads are completing the required training to become coaches.

The boys completed their first game against St Davitts in November and loved it! Here is to a successful 2025!



U9 and U10 Boys Football

2024 has been a great year for this group which brought together the u9 (2015) boys and the u10 (2014) boys into one group. The younger 2015 boys have made great progress over the last year and the boys have really enjoyed playing together. This was a group of almost 50 boys and therefore a special thanks is extended to all of the coaches who also amalgamated and put in a massive amount of effort to coach such a large group of boys. A special thanks is extended to Colin McGuckin, Raymond Tiffney, Brendan Tabb, Damien Judge, David Conlon, Eamon Cullen, Jimmy King, John O'Connor, Kevin Gallagher, Paul Spray, Paul Turley, Raymond Gormley, Simon McDade, Stephen Gilmore and Stephen McGonagle. We would also like to thank the parents who have always been excellent transporting the boys to matches and blitzes.



The boys did well at various blitzes and tournaments this year, including our own u10.5 blitz at Musgrave Park which was a great success with teams attending from all over Ulster. The younger 2015 boys also played in several blitzes including Dromintee and they did exceptionally well. In addition the boys played in the go games every fortnight throughout the year and consistently showed up and played some excellent football. Next year the 2014 boys will move to the u12 group and the 2015 boys will remain together playing at u10 so it will be a split in this group but we will endeavour to keep them together at various stages during the season. The future is bright for these boys!





U10 Camogie

2024 was a fantastic year for St Brigid's U10 camogie!!

Development and gains were central themes of the season – development of a new coaching team (many of whom are new to coaching), gained new players who had never previously played camogie and an increase in the skills and confidence of the players.

Training sessions kicked off in February at HQ with a brand new coaching team in place as John and Tony moved up to U12. Most of the coaches were completely new to camogie, and indeed new to any form of coaching. Introducing new coaches and players is obviously vital to the ongoing development of camogie within the club so it was great to see so many new faces.

Attendance was excellent throughout the season with 20+ girls consistently at training. Numbers were also high for the matches and on occasion we were able to field 2 separate teams and run matches side-by-side. There were a significant number of girls who never missed a single training session or match, and this is testament to their commitment and evidence of how much they enjoyed the sport.

Training

The initial training sessions focused on the basic skills such as roll lifts, jab lifts, dribbling and ground striking. We subsequently incorporated several drills with emphasis on

the physical side of the game to show the girls the importance of tackling, competing and fighting to win possession.

The essential requirement of hard work and battling for possession was highlighted and emphasised at every training session and match. The girls all bought into this and it was evident throughout the season as we were always physically competitive, and indeed this was commented on by a number of the opposition coaches.

A number of our U16 coaches and girls very kindly attended one of the early training sessions and the U10 girls really responded to learning new skills from their older club colleagues (and hopefully future teammates). It was a fantastic session and something that the U10 coaches are very keen to repeat.



As the season progressed, training focused more on Air Striking, Catching and Hand Passing. Many sessions were devoted to learning the basic techniques of air striking off both sides (eg, hand position, ball toss, wrist work) as these will be vital as the girls progress up to the higher age groups.

We also introduced fun games to improve reactions, hand-eye coordination, first touch, ball control and executing the basic skills at



pace and under pressure. Small sided games were also used to improve positional play, movement and supporting the player in possession.

The coaches also continually emphasized to the players (and parents) the importance of doing additional practice at home. To encourage this coach Geraldine introduced a fantastic idea to select girls each week to complete a 'homework' assignment. This involved the girl showcasing their skills and videoed by their parents. The videos were shown to the full group at the start of each training session and this encouraged a sense of camaraderie and healthy competition.

One negative note was that a significant number of training sessions had to be cancelled due to weather in the early part of the season. This was extremely frustrating for the coaches and players and made it difficult to establish any sort of rhythm. Securing alternative indoor facilities is vital to ensure we do not miss out on valuable training time in future seasons.

Games

Our season opened with games against Bredagh (home and away) and continued with further games against Davitts, Sarsfields (x2), Lamh Dhearg (x2), Glenavy, St Johns (x2), Rossa and St Galls, achieving a significant number of victories along the way.



The girls consistently showed tremendous commitment and desire and were always physically competitive. Their skill levels improved with every game and the coaches were delighted to see them execute in matches the skills they worked on in training. That is the objective of these games and the

girls were always encouraged to try new skills at pace and under pressure.



Key highlights from the year:

General Player / Personal Development

We have seen a massive change in the players throughout the season, in terms of their self-confidence in both training and matches. A prime example is Lana Woods who was extremely shy at the start of the year but is now probably our most physical and vocal defender and is happy to tackle with aggression to win possession for the team. The improvement in technical ability is impressive but what is more impressive is the personal development she has displayed. There are many other examples of players who have shown similar development.

Hand-Eye Coordination

The coaches identified that the girls needed to go back to basics in terms of air striking and hand passing. When we broke down the swing and ball toss, they were largely dependent on hand-eye coordination. We introduced fun games with tennis balls and sliotars specifically aimed at coordination and reactions. We also introduced drills which focused on holding the hurl in their dominant hand, concentrating on the ball toss with the non-dominant hand, where to place both hands on the hurl and catching the ball again without swinging. This massively improved the



girls ability in air striking, hand passing and gathering the ball on the run from a team mate.

Ball Wall

We also arranged a few sessions on the ball wall at Brooke Leisure Centre which were very valuable. The sessions allowed the girls to practice ground and air striking, general ball control, first touch and getting the ball into their hand quickly. We also used these sessions to demonstrate to the girls how they can easily do the same exercises at home and this undoubtedly resulted in additional practice. The added time of having a ball and hurl in hand greatly improved their basic skills and again this was evident in future matches and training sessions.

It would be very beneficial if the club were able to secure a regular ball wall session next season (in addition to the Monday night training) as this will undoubtedly enhance skill levels and encourage additional practice at home.

Weekly Homework

We realised that training once a week and a game every fortnight wasn't enough to progress at the rate we wanted. We therefore introduced weekly "homework" for the girls. Every week parents would send videos of the girls practicing a set skill of their choice in the garden or at home. We reviewed the videos as a team at the start of the next training session and used them as team bonding and encouragement for others to practice at home. It also engendered more buy-in from the parents.

Team Bonding

Fun games at training and a team lunch at McDonald's followed by a trip to watch the senior men's hurling final all helped to create a team bond. This day in particular helped to bring quieter players into the fold and created an environment where the girls got to know

each other outside camogie. This has greatly helped to develop a sense of camaraderie, introduced new friendships and developed the idea of everyone working for each other. This has been very noticeable in subsequent training sessions and matches.

General approach to conduct and expectations

All of the coaches were consistent in their approach with the girls in terms of expectations at training and matches. A key expectation was respect for each other and for the coaches and a consistent message was that when a coach is talking, the players are not. We introduced a sin-bin approach where frequent offenders would be asked to step out but fortunately this did not have to be used once during the year!

In matches we emphasised certain "non-negotiables", the key one of which was that we outwork the other team, regardless of how strong or skillful they may be. One particular example of this were the 2 games we played against St Johns – in the first game they outworked us and won the game quite easily but in the return game the girls really bought into the need for hard work and were much more competitive. The effort, commitment and desire was specifically mentioned by the St Johns coach, and indeed by numerous other coaches throughout the season.

Other key points to note

- Squad size – consistently 20+ at training and matches.
- Introduced 4 new coaches and 7 new players who were never previously involved in camogie
- Team was competitive in every game and achieved a number of victories
- Significant improvement in confidence and skill levels throughout the season
- Girls displayed leadership qualities and took responsibility to drive standards in training and matches.



- Those girls progressing to U12 all have a strong skill level and will become important members of that squad.
- Buy in from parents – attending matches and encouraging additional practice with the weekly 'homework' assignments.
- **Most importantly all coaches and players had a lot of fun.**

Overall, the coaches are delighted with the development that the girls have shown this year. We also truly believe that we have more camogie fans now than we did at the start of the year. The girls genuinely love coming to training, as evidenced by the consistently high numbers. The enthusiasm can also be seen by the support of their parents who take time to record and send in the videos and in the increased numbers coming to watch their games. There are hopefully great times ahead for this group.



U5 and Fundamentals

Our Nursery Fundamentals group is now entering its third year. It was established to create a fun and age-appropriate environment for nursery school children aged 3-4, helping them develop fundamental movement skills and fostering a sense of club identity. With an

average attendance of 20 children on Sunday mornings at Olympia, the group has seen great success.

We've been fortunate to have access to the indoor facility at Olympia, which has proven to be a significant asset. Being indoors has protected the children from unpredictable weather, allowing us to conduct enjoyable sessions almost every week. Another benefit of the Olympia hall is that it has encouraged greater parent involvement, as they are unable to leave the hall during sessions. This has resulted in a strong number of parent coaches for the 2019 nursery fundamentals graduates, with 2 lead coaches for the boys and 2 for the girls. Over the past two years, we've successfully spun out four groups, all led by motivated parent coaches who align with the club's dual-code ethos.

In September, the 2019 Fundamentals group joined Fun Sunday, and we've now started our 2020 cohort at Olympia.

This is the second consecutive year at Fun Sunday that we haven't had to borrow coaches from other age groups to manage the new intake. While there are some areas for improvement to ensure our Nursery Fundamentals program is self-sufficient, we have laid a solid foundation for future enjoyment, improved coaching structures, and further opportunities for family involvement.

Areas for improvement for the 2019 cohort include:

- Increasing the promotion of the nursery fundamentals program on social media.
- Identifying and recruiting a Nursery Fundamentals Ops Lead.
- Enhancing club support and involvement in the program.
- Acquiring necessary nursery and indoor equipment, such as nursery sponge footballs

We would like to express my gratitude to Liz McAree for organizing the Olympia bookings.



Special thanks to our fantastic 2019 parent coaches: Gary Laverty, Emma McCommiskey, Eamonn Carlin, and Nicky Murphy.

Additionally, a very special mention goes to our Participation Officer, Joe McCarney, who has been instrumental in increasing parent involvement each week since our 2020 group started back in September. With 4 new lead coaches, the group is progressing well.

GAA for All 2024 and the story so far

In the summer of 2023 a parent of one of our young players messaged the Naomh Bríd Facebook Page, asking if we had any plans to provide a GAA for All team. This message sparked a flame that would ultimately lead to one of the most exciting opportunities in our club for many years (for all involved).

Our Inclusion and Diversity officer sought out training opportunities within Ulster GAA and beyond, seeking any available help in setting up an All Stars team of our own. We asked advice of friends and neighbouring clubs who already had programmes in place or in development.



Fast forward to April 2024, and a meeting at Harlequins to discuss the formation of the GAA For All team was set up. Fliers were shared through club coms and on Social Media Platforms asking anyone who would be willing to help out or any parents that would like to know more to come along. This meeting drew a heart-warmingly large turnout of volunteers, which underlined the enthusiasm surrounding the initiative. The obligatory WhatsApp group was created, and the scene was set: GAA For



All was created from the core of the club, and the movement towards accessibility for all players hit a major milestone.

However, this was only the beginning.

The next few weeks we built momentum. We were very fortunate that our member David Doherty contacted us directly offering to be involved. David plays wheelchair hurling for Ulster, is a personal trainer for people with physical disabilities and has previously set up an all abilities soccer team from scratch. His experience and enthusiasm were invaluable.

We reached out to our friends in Bredagh GAC and arranged to visit one of their Sunday morning All Star sessions. This was a wonderful experience for all involved and really brought to life what we hoped to achieve. Development Officer in Ulster GAA, Shane McCann, has also been a superb support to us all. Shane ran a Thursday night training session in July 2024, explaining how we can adapt Gaelic drills to suit all abilities. He gave us the confidence we required to take the next step and open our gates and our hearts on 21st July for our first ever session. We were delighted to welcome primary aged children from our own club, and also neighbouring clubs, with a wide range of additional needs.

We learnt many things in the first few weeks. We mainly learnt that we had lots to learn!

We grew and developed as a group, trying new things, accepting not everything we tried would be successful but also knowing that provided all children and their families were having fun it is ok to make the odd mistake.

Over the following weeks, the Sunday session with GAA for All players at Naomh Bríd became the highlight of our week, for players, parents and volunteers alike. The opportunity to give our wonderful players the chance to represent the club became a point of pride for everyone involved.

Saturday the 7th of September marked another exciting first for the Naomh Bríd All Stars. We had the chance to attend the Ulster GAA for All Blitz, held at Kickham's GAC. A fantastic, sunny day filled with activities was enjoyed by all. Highlights included a highly competitive game of tug-of-war. Thankfully, despite the fierce tug-of-war, the day was successful and injury-free, excluding a minor rope burn injury suffered by an unnamed coaching individual (it was Michelle Toner). One notable attendee to the event was Sam Maguire, brought along by All-Ireland winning Armagh captain Aidan Forker.



As the season drew to an end, the final GAA for All session took place on the 13th of October. As a special surprise, the last session was also attended by players from the boys' football U14, U16 and Minor teams. The lads brought along their silverware from a successful season for the club and shared their joy with everyone in attendance. Tug-of-war made another appearance and following the All Stars success in the Blitz they had another comfortable victory over our boys footballers (thanks lads) and were presented with trophies to mark their success. There are only so many words to describe how positively events such as these impact the players involved, but the photos speak for themselves:

We look forward to building and growing in 2025 and beyond. We would like to thank all our wonderful players, parents and volunteers for an incredible first season. We would like to thank The Kingsbridge Foundation for kind sponsorship which has allowed us to order our kit for next year. We would like to extend an invitation and warm welcome to anyone who would like to be involved in any way in 2025. Please contact us via club secretary or on any of our social media platforms for details.

Further Diversity and Inclusion

Throughout 2023/24 Naomh Brid has continued developing a club that is open to all. Following the success of the Autism training for coaches in June of 2023 (with Sarah Cassidy, Educational Psychologist) Naomh Brid's coaches took part in a GAA vs Discrimination workshop, run by Croke Park in April 2024. This was open to all officers and coaches throughout the club, and was a great



learning experience for all involved. It focused on tackling racism and discrimination both on and off the pitch. Following this webinar we felt we could reach more members if we arranged some in-person training.

On Sunday 9th June over 50 children and coaches from across all codes gathered in St Bride's school for an interactive workshop. We welcomed a team from Sports Against Racism in Ireland (SARI), kindly funded by Croke Park. Children and coaches took part in drills and games focused on recognising and stamping out racism and other discrimination. The sheer numbers who turned up to the workshop on a Sunday afternoon showed that the commitment to Inclusion for All runs deeply through Naomh Bríd.

In the coming months we have further training planned for supporting players with autism. We would also like to encourage any members with experience in diversity and inclusion training to volunteer their time to support our coaches. Please contact us if you can offer help.

MEMBERSHIP

Naomh Bríd membership has remained high with 1,143 registered members in 2024. The club has continued to see the bulk of memberships coming from family groups, reflecting the ethos of our family oriented,

community Club, strengthened by the Mól an Óige seanfhocal. Naomh Bríd, once again, remained one of the largest clubs in the county. The club continues to register a growing percentage of adult members, reflecting the longstanding nature of membership across the codes, most of whom have been members throughout their juvenile playing careers.

The GAA/LGFA/Camogie Association single, integrated membership system of Foireann has continued to make registration a user-friendly method to ensure members are in control of their own data, including inputting all relevant medical information, and choosing to opt in or out of receipt of communications. The Foireann system continues to be the GAA preferred method for the collection of fees and allows the organisation to monitor membership, with enhanced methods for generating team sheets.

The membership of over 1,140 members comprised of more than 965 fully registered GAA (football and hurling) members; more than 165 LGFA members; and, more than 80 Camogie Association members. The growth in the camogie association numbers is a 25% increase in the membership from 2023 and it is anticipated this number will continue to grow.

Despite membership fees being collected through Foireann there is still a task for coaches to ensure their squads have registered and thanks must go to all the club coaches and team assistants who help with the collection of club of fees for the various playing squads, particularly as 2024 saw a new set of membership packages available to the members. It is essential that members are registered as players and coaches for insurance purposes and this takes effort and care by many individuals on behalf of each squad. Special thanks is due to the juvenile



coaches who have the added administrative task to ensure young people are encouraged to join and return each year.

Club membership rates were amended for 2024, with a greater range of membership packages available to household groups. The collection of membership fees was not adversely affected by those changes and the Club is very grateful to the ongoing support of our vast membership and the loyalty shown at a time when necessary increases had to be made.

PRO Report 2024

The PRO role in the club was unfilled at the last AGM, and Martin McCarney was asked to resume PRO role in March for the remainder of the year.

The club currently operated a club Website and three social media channels, and has the following “followers” on the following channels.

Facebook - 3,148

Twitter- 2,794

Instagram – 1,433

These channels prompt the Club and it's activities to both our members, and the wider public, and acts as an initial point of communication for the club.

Thanks go to Martin for his work in taking over the PRO role this year, and we would like to thank Liz McAree for a huge amount of help and assistance in the this role, providing some excellent graphics for our notifications for games and events.

Thanks also go to Stephen McKay and Niall Mitchell for providing match reports, and some excellent photographs from games throughout the year, and for Muiris MacCarthaigh for keeping everyone updated on Camogie.

As always the output from the club channels is dependant on coaches/mentors on providing “copy” for posting, If you believe there is a part of the club under represented on our social media channels, drop a DM to any of the channels or e mail the PRO email address. pro.stbrigidsbelfast.antrim@gaa.ie

Naomh Brid Culture & Irish Language

Prepared by Anne Marie Duffy

Summary - highpoints

The highpoint of the year in terms of Irish Language and Culture was a second St Brigid's Miscellany; the Scor Sinsir team claiming second place in the Co Antrim final – moving up from third place in 2023 - and the addition of a weekly Set Dancing class to our programme. The Miscellany attracted not only a loyal following of traditional culture enthusiasts but also political and civic representatives.

St Brigid's Miscellany

St Brigid's Miscellany is a celebration of Irish Culture in all its many forms and this year was no exception with 19 performances in dance, song, storytelling, music, poetry, arts and craft. For the second year running one of the star performances was Michael Longley, one of Ireland's foremost contemporary poets, who read a selection of his work.

Artists performing included members of the Ulster College of Music; Breslin Mc Laughlin Irish Dancers, Michelle Johnston Highland Dancers, Belfast Trad; Steve Lally Storyteller; Neil Leonard, cellist; James Carson Trad band; Emer Shearer, harpist and classic rock band Katmandu. Talks included 'Place Names of County Antrim' by Dr Frances Kane, QUB.



We were delighted to welcome Declan Lawn and Martin Mc Cann who shared their experiences of 'Blue Lights – Under the bonnet' with enthusiastic supporters of the series.

There was also a work shop on the making of St Brigid's crosses and many guests left with their own St Brigid's cross, marking the event in a very special way.

A big thanks to the pupils of St Bride's school who provided work for display and to the art students of Rathmore Grammar school and Victoria Grammar school who displayed their art work in the Higgins Gallery.

Thanks also to the Cultural sub-committee and all those from Naomh Bríd who helped on the night.

Scor Sinsir

2024 saw Naomh Bríd continuing to support Scor Sinsir through entry in the quiz. The event was held in St Olcan's Parish Centre, Rasharkin on 9 March and questions are asked in English and also 'as Gaeilge'.

Congratulations to quiz team members - Richard Walsh, Stephen O'Neill, Gerard Mulholland and Tom Walsh who made it through to the County Antrim final and claimed second place.

Classes – Tin Whistle and Conversation Irish [continuation]

We offered classes in both Tin Whistle and Irish Language on a weekly basis throughout the year. The Tin Whistle class took place by Zoom and the Adults Conversational Irish Language Class took place in person in St Brigid's Parish Hall. Both classes were offered in partnership with St Brigid's Parish Community Association. Thanks to the

Association and to Neil in the Parish Hall for the organisation.

Two after school Irish Language clubs also ran throughout the year in St Bride's Primary School. It was pleasing to see the numbers of children in the after school clubs.

The adult tin whistle class and adult conversation class commenced again in September. Due to late confirmation of tutor availability, the after school Irish Language classes will re-commence in St Bride's in the second school term ie January 2025. All the classes are self – financing.

Class – Set Dancing [new]

In September 2024, in partnership with St Brigid's Parish Community Association we established a weekly set dancing class [Wednesdays 11.15 am – Sr Brigid's sports hall]. The class continues to grow in popularity with at least three sets running at each class.

Diploma sa Ghaeilge [Diploma in Irish Language - University of Ulster]

Two members of Naomh Bríd have successfully completed the first year of a two year part- time Diploma in Irish Language at the University of Ulster. The first year of the Diploma was part funded by CLG. We wish both well in their second year of study.

'Ag caint as Gaeilge'

An event was held on 21 June 2024 in St Brigid's Parish hall promoting the language through a study of Irish place names alongside a conversation corner [ciorcaí comhrá] and display of books from An Cúlurlann. Thanks to all who participated in the morning workshops and to members of Ciorcal Comhrá, Café Nero, Lisburn Road who helped facilitate the comhrá.



St Brigid's Miscellany 2024





TREASURERS REPORT

As I reviewed the financial statements for this year, I noted once again how our club has grown so significantly in terms of membership, playing and non-playing, facilities and indeed finances. The reports from our Chairman and Secretary have highlighted how far we have come since those

early days and indeed both have spoken to our ambitious plans for the future.

Annual Operating Income and Expenditure

An important note to the accounts is that this year covers the 11 month period of November 2023 to end September 2024. The shortened timeframe has been introduced by all governing bodies to ensure consistency and alignment across all of the GAA family. To that extent this should be borne in mind when comparing the figures for 2024 against 2023.

The Club's operational Income and Expenditure account shows an overall surplus for the year of some £38K. This is an overall increase from the £17k of 2023 but includes a donation of £24k as part of the JP McManus donations to all the clubs throughout Ireland. During the year the club committee agreed to set this money into our restricted reserve and ring fence it for long term facilities development.

Membership revenue continued to grow showing an increase of circa 30% over 2023 which can be attributed to an increase in membership numbers as well the increase in fees agreed at the 2023 AGM.

This year, with the employment of our Club Participation Officer, we were able to extend the number of sporting camps to 4 in the summer and a further camp held in the autumn.

Once again, this year the club committed to updating the kit and equipment for a majority of our teams and alongside so good equipment control procedures have allowed us to keep these costs within manageable levels.

Income:



Membership for the year 2024, represents approx. 30% of our total income and remains our most significant single source of income. I pass on my thanks to every one of our members for their continued support. Similarly, my thanks must also be directed to those invaluable club members who devoted their time and energies to driving forward all our fundraising initiatives.

Our summer camps not only continue to provide a much sought after and welcome outlet for our younger members over the summer months but contribute to the financial strength of the club.

Our total for the year was bolstered a number of successful initiatives organised and delivered by our Senior Men such as the Cash Call, Last man standing , Golf event, Quiz etc. with these raising close to £20,000. Our Ladies football and Camogie team similarly undertook fundraising events. There were many other events and fundraisers throughout the year including the sale of national draw tickets, BBQ and club nights etc. however, it would be remiss of me if I were not to highlight the efforts of Fran Lloyd and her 'team' in pushing forward with our Club 300 that generates upwards of £20k.

Expenditure:

During this period the accounts have noted a significant increase in the cost of events and this is due to the Celebratory dance held to make our anniversary.

Our rent and maintenance costs have remained fairly similar (proportionately) to that of 2023.

Our senior teams training, management and physio costs have again increased since 2023. All areas of expenditure, Physio, Medical,

Management, S&C etc. have all increased for our footballers in particular.

Other major items of expenditure include equipment and team kits etc, which, although significant is an important element of expenditure needed to support all our coaches and players. That being said I do think that we should always look to ensure that kit and equipment is not being purchased unnecessarily.

Our club costs include those associated with employing our club Participation Officer as well as those associated with player insurance payouts for which we have a corresponding income line.

Current Account

As a result of the operational surplus this year, club bank funds have increased to c.£120k at the yearend inclusive of the restricted reserve of £24k set aside for physical infrastructure development.

This cash balance is required to sustain club operations through to the next membership collection cycle and I believe we are in a good position to meet any costs incurred, bearing in mind that the 2024 accounts shown are based upon 11 months.

Looking forward to the incoming year, the core financial objective as always is to maintain and probably increase our fundraising activity whilst ensuring that we manage our costs.

As we look forward to any possible infrastructure development, we need to look to fundraising specifically for the type of infrastructure development that we will and indeed do need to meet the needs of our playing teams.



Cumann Luthchleas Gael Naomh Brid Béal Feirste

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Is Mise

Anthony Carleton

An Cisteoir

