

Vol. 1 Issue 1 January 2021

# Portlaoise GAA Club Newsletter

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# TOWN TATTLER



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# Welcome

Hello and welcome to the 1st issue of Portlaoise GAA Club's new newsletter, Town Tattler. The newsletter was created to act as a focal point for information and increase engagement in our club. At a time when we are currently unable to meet in person in Rathleague, we also hope this will fill the void of GAA in our lives at the moment. We have loads planned for future issues and we hope you all will get involved in some of the fun and spread the word. Most importantly, remember #ClubFamily and we will be reunited before long, but for now, take a look inside the first issue of Town Tattler.

## Membership

Membership Forms can be found on our new and improved website [www.portlaoisegaa.ie](http://www.portlaoisegaa.ie)

Our full adult membership is aligned with the County Board Monster Draw again this year. €130 entitles you to full membership - plus a ticket to the value of €130, and a chance to win major cash prizes in four separate monthly draws. Plus entry into a new club Christmas draw with great cash prizes. Our Juvenile membership prices have been reduced by 25% - this will be communicated in more detail by our Juvenile section very soon. Our Student/Unemployed membership option has been reduced also - this is now €50. And our Supporters/Social Membership is also €50 - the launch of our new Supporters Club soon will be working on making this a very attractive option. Family membership option is badly needed and was hard to get sorted for 2021 but the club intend to be proactive in reaching out to families who have big costs due to different sets of circumstances - such as LGFA and Camogie considerations, number of children etc. We thank all of our members for their continued support of our great club.

### Payment Options for County Board Tickets/General Membership as follows

1. <https://laoisgaa.ie/product/county-draw/> (full membership via CB ticket)
2. <https://returntoplay.gaa.ie/> (full membership €130 - which includes CB ticket - which club will send to you)
3. Cash payment to member of Portlaoise GAA executive

Your Club  
Your County  
Your Community





## Club AGM Report

The club AGM was held in surreal circumstances on Friday night 11th December in the Killeshin Hotel. Due to the prevailing Covid-19 circumstances only a small number could physically attend and all the guidelines were strictly adhered to.

Members who couldn't attend in person had the option of attending via Zoom, over 20 members availed of this option.

The main news from the meeting was that a new chairperson was elected - former player and mentor Eamon Fennelly. Outgoing chairperson Jaz O Reilly, stalwart of the club for many decades, stepped aside having served his second term in the position. There were a number of presentations to Jaz on the night and widespread praise and acknowledgement for his tireless and selfless work on behalf of the club from all in attendance.

Jaz assured all present he would continue to be involved and looks forward to helping move the club forward in the coming years. Jaz opened proceedings and thanked all members, players,

mentors, supporters and sponsors for their hard work and support during the strange year that was 2020.

JP Cahillane was elected as County Board Delegate in the only vote of the night and there were several new names proposed to serve on committee/sub-committees for 2021.

In his secretary's report, Malcolm Nealon, reserved special mention for those who took up Covid Supervisor roles in the club during the year - it wouldn't have been possible without these people. He also praised the work of the grounds committee who spend so much time in Rathleague making sure the facilities and pitches are up to standard. He mentioned the ongoing development plans and hoped that progress could be made in this regard in 2021.

Also mentioned was the One Club model - a model for the smooth integration of LGFA and Camogie Associations into the structures of the GAA and this is something the club wishes to embrace - all of our people and players under the one umbrella of Portlaoise GAA. Declan McEvoy also introduced his first Treasurer's

report.

Income was down due to the year that was in it and the lack of opportunity to fundraiser in the normal manner.

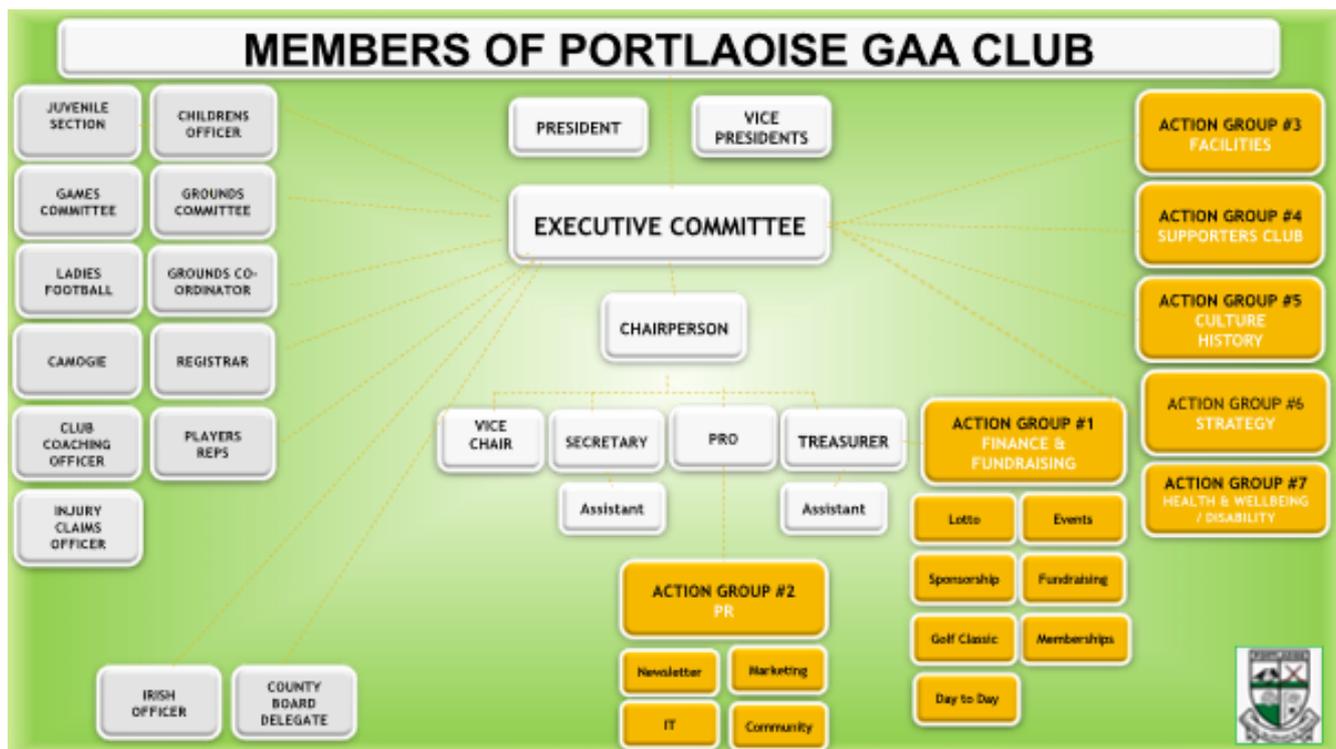
Expenditure was also down in tandem with this and overall there was a surplus in the accounts of the year. Declan spoke about the club becoming more streamlined in its financial management and also in how it approaches fundraising.

Incoming chairperson Eamon Fennelly was fulsome in his praise of club legend Jaz and said he looked forward to working closely with him as he takes up the new role. He said his primary motivation in taking up the role was to encourage more new blood to similarly get on-board and

help in driving the club in a positive direction into the future. He spoke of key aspirations such as connecting more with the community, energising, and strengthening the support /membership base, aspiring to be a strong dual club - men and ladies, and working together to develop club physical facilities to modern standards. He concluded by saying that post-Covid a meeting for all Portlaoise GAA people would be held as part of shaping the future direction of the club. Sympathies were extended to all Portlaoise people who had suffered the loss of loved ones during the year and best wishes were forwarded to those who are unwell.

**Officers elected as follows: President: Dick Sides; Vice Presidents: Jas O Reilly added; Chairperson: Eamon Fennelly; Vice-Chair: Catherine Fitzgerald; Secretary: Malcolm Nealon; Treasurer: Declan McEvoy; PRO: Jennifer Fitzpatrick; Registrar: Olga Loughman; Childrens Officer: Kevin Gorman; Health/Wellbeing & Disability Officer: Catherine Doyle; County Board Delegate: JP Cahillane; Coaching Officer: Pat Critchley; Hurling Secretary: Malcolm Nealon; Football Secretary: David Maher; Injury Claims Officer: Ken Hickey; Grounds Manager: Liam Breen; Camogie Reps: Mick Ryan, Teresa O Reilly; Ladies Football Reps: Cyril Mulligan, Ray Hanamy; Juvenile Chairperson; David Powders; Assistant Secretary: Ken Hickey; Assistant Treasurer: Dick Finnegan; Assistant Registrar: David Maher; Committee: Brian Scully, Donal O Connor, Kieran Lillis, Niall Rigney, Aidan Fennelly, Derek Delaney, Greg Dunne, Mick O Connell, Dermot Costelloe, Richie Downey Jnr, Tommy Fitzgerald, Mick Nerney, Noel Costelloe, Jason Lalor, David Fitzpatrick, Ollie Byrne, Joe Daly, Brian Delaney, Brendan Keogh, Paul Conroy, Paul O Connell.**

# New Organisational Structure of our Club



This is a work in progress, but an attempt at putting the organisational structure of our club down on paper. The club belongs to the members of Portlaoise GAA Club. From first committee meeting the club proposes to create 'Action' Groups. We are looking for our people to come on board and get involved in whatever way you feel you can. We want to get away from the feeling that if you are on a committee you are lumbered with work - many hands will make light work and we want you to have the flexibility to be involved whenever it really suits you. If you are interested in being involved in any of our action groups please let any committee member know or email us here directly at [info@portlaoisegaa.ie](mailto:info@portlaoisegaa.ie). We will elaborate more on email to all of our members but please jump aboard - Your town needs you!!



**\*\* ATTENTION \*\***

**We would really love everyone to get involved in the club this year in any capacity! Any contribution or a simple helping hand would be greatly appreciated. In a time when we cannot meet in Rathleague, we would love to see faces old and new get back involved with the club as we aim to make Portlaoise GAA the talk of the town once again.**

**#SupportYourClub**

## In Conversation With: Declan McEvoy

To Portlaoise GAA people Declan McEvoy is often referred to as Maka's dad. But with the impression the man is making as new Club Treasurer since 2020 they'll soon be referring to Maka as Declan's son

### So who is Declan McEvoy?

Born and bred in Portlaoise. I lived in Coote Street, where the entrance to the Midlands Park Hotel is, beside the old Leinster Express. I moved to Kilminchy and still live there today. I also lived in Carlow, and when I met Sadie and we married moved back to Portlaoise. I have a passion for politics and current affairs, and sport.

A motor car nut too, especially fan of German BMW/Audi and Italian supercars. I have three children; Ciaran (Maka), Cathal, and Aoife. I went to college in Carlow and Dublin and am now head of tax with IFAC - based out of Dublin. My uncles were the Murphy's of Clondouglas, all whom played with Portlaoise and my earliest memory was my uncle Mick winning a county title with the Town in the 70's.

### Earliest memories of Portlaoise GAA?

I grew up watching those super dual teams and in football no favourite - like everyone adored the team. In hurling that famous match v Camross still is remembered (we take it Declan is referring the year of the 'row' -

1989!!) Why did you decide to get involved? With supporting the club and with Ciaran involved, I felt it was time to contribute something myself. I felt the club needed new blood and felt I could make a difference Are you enjoying being involved? Yes absolutely. But

COVID has limited what can be done in 2020/21. What are your hopes for the club in the short, medium and long term? We need to be open, communicate better, and promote the history of one of the

best and most successful dual clubs in Ireland. Financially we need to put a better secure source of income into the club to develop the grounds In addition we need to invest in player development and facilities What are the clubs greatest challenges going forward. We need to increase our number of members - failure to do this will make the everyday running of the club a huge challenge.

### Quickfire Questionnaire:

Book - The Shankill Butchers

TV Series - House of Cards

TV - Top Gear

Food - Steak

To relax - Walk with Theo, the dog - a great stress reliever. I am also an avid reader

Music - a Bruce Springsteen and Dire Straits nut

Holiday - 100% Italy - you cannot beat Tuscany - and in Ireland, Donegal.

Pet hates - Wafflers and people who are indecisive.



## #CmonTheTown

### Leinster club final awaits Portlaoise Ladies when normality resumes

The 26th of September was a day we won't forget for years to come. Our very own senior women made history with an incredible win over Sarsfields to lift the LuLu Carroll Cup for the first time, stopping Sarfields on their bid to eight consecutive titles in a row. It was a brilliant season from The Town and we couldn't be prouder of their performance on the day with a 1-12 to 0-12 win. Aisling Kehoe was the top scorer on the tip with a tally of 1-3 to her name at the final whistle. Just eight days later, the girls took on Offaly champions, Naomh Chiaran in another brilliant clash and came out on top after a three point victory in Rathleague. Sarah Anne Fitzgerald, Leah Loughman, Alison Taylor, Aisling Kehoe, Ellen Healy and Grainne Moran were all on hand kick scores to book a place in the Leinster final.

That brings us up to today and after the rescheduling of the game twice, the girls are eagerly awaiting their chance to being home more silverware and their first Leinster title. They will face Dublin's Foxrock-Cabinteely, who are aiming for their sixth Leinster title in a row and is the club of former Portlaoise ladies footballer, Laura Nerney. We can't wait to cheer on the girls when it is safe to do so. A brilliant team with huge potential. We really are #ProudTownies





## Out of Town with Diarmuid Mullins

We caught up with Diarmuid Mullins, former dual player with the Town, and the manager of double Munster minor champions, Limerick. He has recently been appointed Limerick U20 Hurling manager. He is also the principal of Crescent College Comprehensive in the city. Diarmuid's Dad, Sean (RIP), was also a great Portlaoise clubman and sadly passed away last August after a short illness.



### Earliest Memories of Portlaoise GAA:

Games that I attended with my Dad when he was managing underage club teams in the late 1980s. He tended to be involved with less successful teams as far as I remember. Footballers such as 'Flicker' at corner back, Doc Fitz, Nocky Kerry, Mossy McDonald, Fergie Morrin were names I remember in underage games. I also vividly remember the Leinster club hurling final in 1987 vs Rathnure, and Jimmy Houlihan hitting close in frees miles over the bar and the drama at the end of the game as Rathnure stole the win. Portlaoise had one last chance in the last moments to claim a draw and I remember a conversation on the way home about how Portlaoise were the better team. The football replay vs Parnell's in Newbridge stands out too and I remember the semi vs The Burren in O'Moore Park. Those days sewed the seeds for the Sunday morning underage leagues and training that soon began. Football and Hurling every second Sunday was a great start as a player but more importantly long-lasting friendships were developed.

### Biggest Influences:

Outside of my Dad, who encouraged me but also didn't suffocate me with advice, (Indeed he used to predict my many mistakes down through the years in a funny way!) there were so many people who gave of their time to young players. Jimmy Wrest, P.J.O'Brien, Ollie Byrne were the hurling coaches. Ollie had a Cody-esque element of managing and we had great days from U12 to Minor winning plenty, learning loads and travelling the county and beyond. In football; John Mulligan, Ollie Hughes, Joe Daly and the duo of Murt Parkinson and Brian Delaney led the way for us in football. Great days and plenty of good advice. All of these men wanted us to play hurling and football the right way and were always willing to allow players to express themselves as much as possible. I think we were fortunate to have such people involved. Central to this success was the administration of the club with John Costelloe (Sec) and Joe Phelan Snr - great chairmen and secretaries who gave their time. Fun was the name of the game! At senior level in hurling Cheddar, John Taylor and Damien Fox all were involved along with Atch, Mark Kavanagh, Mick Lillis, Tommy Conroy and Niall Tully in football. All different approaches and plenty of learning that I have taken forward.

### Hurling or Football:

Portlaoise was and should always be a top dual club. I loved playing both codes and despite the success at minor level in football in 1996 and 97, I enjoyed hurling more but only just! I think in my time the real GAA person in Portlaoise supported both codes and the need to divide both codes needs to be always discouraged, although I used to enjoy Cheddar as senior manager debating training schedules with Mark Kavanagh, and Peadar Molloy as chairman hopping onto his tractor to avoid mediation! I still think playing both must be encouraged at least until senior - until players may wish to concentrate on one or another. I enjoyed training most nights and playing loads of games as a dual player. Portlaoise have had really the top hurlers and footballers in Laois down through my years...John Taylor, Pat Critchley, Niall Rigney...Colm Browne, Tom Prendergast, Atch, Kevin Fitz, Ian Fitz, Kieran Lillis etc. and the ultimate dual player in Cahir! So dual is the way to go and plenty of players to look up to for young players.

### Biggest Disappointment:

There was plenty, but probably losing the minor football final in 1996 with 6 of the All-Ireland winning panel. Ballylinan Gaels scored a last-minute goal. We also lost a few hurling finals and semi-finals to a good Castletown team in 1999-2002 which we could have won after beating them in 1998. Obviously as a panel member in 2004 in the All-Ireland Club was a disappointment as the lads played such great football vs. Kilmacud in the Leinster semi and vs Crossmaglen in the All-Ireland semi. Generally, I used to move on after a loss fairly quickly, maybe I didn't invest enough as player in my latter years.

### Biggest Thrill:

Definitely the double minor hurling win in 1996 and 1997. Great games vs Camross and The Harps. The first senior football championship final win vs. St Josephs was great as we hadn't won one in 9 years and the hurling final win in 1998 was great. Beating Graigue/Ballycallan in the Leinster semi-final and the fun after those wins was great also. At a really young age the Feile Hurling and Football All Ireland wins were fantastic fun also. Winning 5 U21 championships in a row was great too.

## **Feelings after you transferred:**

Obviously, a sense of sadness. However, the travel was tough and also I had really enjoyed Limerick since I started college at 18. It was time to make it easier for myself to enjoy GAA locally and it wasn't possible to commit to Portlaoise. Despite transferring Portlaoise will always be where I learned to play and it is the club that I still look out for. I don't think I was missed that much!

## **Playing Days in Limerick:**

I had coached Mungret in my last year with Portlaoise so I transferred to them. I really enjoyed my time with Mungret winning a few county titles in football and hurling. More importantly I found a great outlet for my interest in GAA Coaching & Management: By chance I got involved with Mungret in 2004 training the footballers. After that I had stints with Ballysteen, Limerick U21s, Burgess, Kilmallock, Limerick Senior Footballers, UL Sigerson, Mungret Hurlers and Limerick Minor Hurlers. Some success but really I think coaching is all about improving players and making sure that the club teams are in a better place than before I got involved. It's a hugely satisfying experience learning from players and developing different systems of play for different challenges, etc. The key also I think is to maintain the fun element and positive relationships are vital.



## **Structures in Limerick v Laois:**

The Limerick structures in the underage academy are very good. Each age group is working to an overall ethos and plan. The decision, by agreement with clubs, that Saturday is strictly an academy training day with no club fixtures has worked. All the coaching teams work in unison, all are volunteers contrary to a perception of huge investment in Limerick. The investment is in people and time. The onus is on developing players for senior and success at underage is a bonus. Culture and skill development is the key. I can't comment hugely on Laois but it would appear that a more coherent plan is needed. I think some counties look for short term fixes, for example recruiting Derek McGrath for just a minor team when maybe a 3 to 5 year plan to allow Derek to assess and guide development at all levels etc is what's needed. But one area Laois has a definite edge is the superb Centre of Excellence that they have. Limerick have no such excellent facilities so credit to the county board there. Maybe we shouldn't have moved!

## **Keeping In touch with Portlaoise:**

My closest friends are still the Portlaoise lads but I don't meet them enough. The size of the town has changed but the decency of the great friends I played with is still there for me thankfully!

## **My Family:**

Busy times with my wife Davnet and 4 young kids, great days ahead watching the 4 of them playing GAA, I hope. And I recently was appointed principal of a great secondary school Crescent College Comprehensive and that's a great new challenge!

## **Limerick Minors:**

Two great years and hopefully an All-Ireland semi to come. It was a great experience to play in front of the seniors and to win the double in the Gaelic Grounds was a great day. Just privileged to be involved.

## **My Dad:**

Dad really enjoyed his second but longer life in Portlaoise, from playing in 1976 at the start of that great team and all his years involved in the club. He really enjoyed the characters of the club and believed that participation was the key. He would prioritize the 16B football team as more important than the marquee team and rightly so! Despite winning Leinster clubs with Vincent's and Portlaoise...hurling was his huge love really and he rarely missed a home Laois hurling game in recent years. A big loss to us but he lived his life well and Portlaoise GAA was one of his many passions.

## **Hopes for Portlaoise:**

I hope Portlaoise continues to be a flagship club in Leinster. However, it takes hard work to keep a big club like Portlaoise evolving and developing. Hurling appears to need work and a dedicated plan around primary schools might help. Portlaoise should always be aiming to produce top hurlers and footballers but also compete at the highest level. Central to this has to be a player development pathway which needs constant review and to be resourced in terms of quality coaching.

## **What Portlaoise GAA means to me:**

Fun, memories, great friends and a source of great pride to have played with this club.

# 2021 Juvenile Club Contact List

## U/7

Diarmuid Lalor,  
087 9874510

## U/10

Brian Devaney,  
087 7468771

## U/13

David Powders,  
087 9970329

## U/17

David Browne,  
Football,  
087 6558945

## U/8

Mark Mulligan,  
087 1257982

## U/11

Fearghal Fennell,  
fearghal.fennell2012@gmail.com  
086 8641135

## U/15

Kevin Gorman,  
Football,  
086 3652807

Damien Lynch,  
Hurling,  
087 6684446

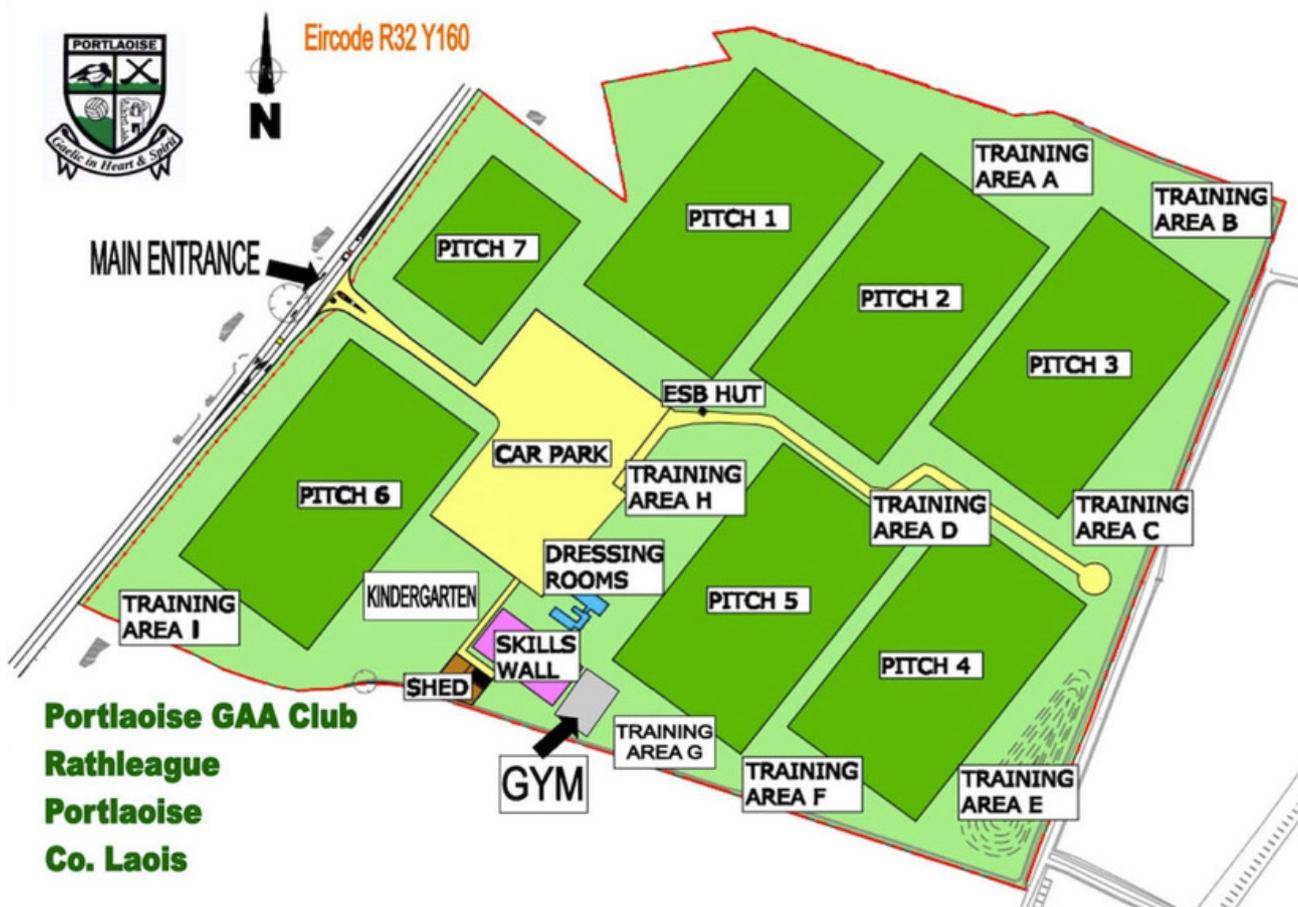
## U/9

Gareth Keogh,  
086 3815180

## U/12

Ray Hanamy,  
hanamyrh@gmail.com  
086 8365087

Brian Scully,  
Hurling,  
086 8177286



**Portlaoise GAA Club**  
**Rathleague**  
**Portlaoise**  
**Co. Laois**

# INTERESTED IN PLAYING FOOTBALL THIS YEAR FOR PORTLAOISE LGFA

Are you interested in starting to play football (senior or junior) as a new years resolution?

Haven't played in years and is looking to come back?

If you are any of the above and want to come and play with Portlaoise LGFA, contact 0838536051 for all details.



## PORTLAOISE CAMOGIE



**PLAYERS WANTED**



**Would you like to join Portlaoise Camogie?**

**Everyone Welcome!!**



**Teams Range from U8-Junior**

**Grab your hurls and helmets!!**



**Contact  
Amanda- 0864014538  
Damien- 0876684446**



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

## Call for Contributors!

The Team behind the Club Newsletter are very open to anyone who has ideas going forward, or would like to contribute an article or photograph for publication. No idea is too big or too small, we hope to use this as a platform to communicate club history, current news and some fun along the way. To get involved, simply email us at [info@portlaoisegaa.ie](mailto:info@portlaoisegaa.ie) or contact a member of the newsletter team. You can also contact us on our social media platforms, details of which you will find below. Thank you all for supporting this project.



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**THANK  
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