

TOWN TATTLER

Vol 5 - Issue 12





Chair's Address

As he reflects on five years at the helm of Portlaoise GAA Club, Club Chair Eamon Fennelly sits down to look back on a period of significant progress, challenge and change. In this interview, Eamon reflects on his time in the role, the key moments and milestones of 2025, and the collective effort that has driven the club forward both on and off the field. He also casts an eye to 2026 and beyond, sharing his thoughts on the future direction of the club and the opportunities that lie ahead for Portlaoise GAA and its wider community.

As you enter your sixth year as Chairperson of Portlaoise GAA, what do you remember most about taking on the role initially?

The reason I took the role on, fairly nervously and reluctantly initially, was because I felt that the next generation of townies needed to start putting their shoulder to the wheel. I felt that my own generation, while of course we would follow the teams and hope to be winning championships etc, were a bit disengaged from the day to day goings on in the club. My main motivation was to try to get more people involved to try to push things on in a positive direction. To try bring a new energy and some new ideas. Great people have always been involved in the club thankfully but the club had gone through some trauma and certain aspects had stagnated so it really needed a new wave of people to hop on board and get behind the stalwarts who were already involved. And all these years later – this is exactly what we need again!!

When you reflect on the past number of years, what moments or milestones stand out as particularly significant for you?

From a playing point of view it was really obvious that the club was entering into a period of rebuilding. As a club the focus on the all-important juvenile end had certainly waned. Something was not right structurally as there were years

that were pretty barren from a playing numbers point of view, in both hurling and football. We were not winning championships at juvenile level and this was bound to have an affect on the senior end.

Some of the problem may have been the sheer size of the juvenile section and the amount of work needed to manage all of that. We made structural changes by dividing this into three distinct sections – Town Tigers (Nursery); Town Og (non competitive years after nursery but before U13 competitions; and Town Youth which is our competitive teams from U13 to Minor. This change has helped to make the section more manageable and sharpened the focus as to what we need at all of the different age categories.

Last year's minor football championship win was the first since 2012, the hurlers have not won the minor since 2001 – how can we seriously expect to be winning senior championships if we are not seriously competitive at juvenile level.

The work that has been going on in recent years, and is ongoing is immense at juvenile level. The best of club people are immersed there – and it is the most important place for them to be. I won't start naming people for fear of leaving people out but the contribution of coaches and the people involved there is admirable and greatly respected by people who know what is going on.

There are green shoots appearing again thankfully. In football the club is bouncing back strongly and consistently and featured in the U13, U15 and U17 finals this year – winning two and a very narrow defeat in the third. The club had won the U13 and U17 the year before too. There is momentum now but the lesson is to never take that for granted and to ensure that each year is healthy numbers-wise and well coached. The U15 win was one that was won against the head and a real throwback to the never say die reputation that is synonymous with the club down through the years. How lucky are we to have such a calibre of coaches there too – guys who have managed and played at the very highest levels.

In hurling there is fantastic work going on also and from U15

down we should be very competitive from now. We are back competing strongly and consistently in A competitions – our U13s were narrowly defeated by Camross in the county final last year, while they were beaten in the semi-final this year by the favourites for the competition Mountrath. We are getting closer and a breakthrough will come. There is no reason we cannot get back to winning hurling championships in Portlaoise. We should never underestimate the pride and tradition of hurling in the town and our aspiration is to be an excellent dual club.

On the ladies end the footballers are the dominant force at underage levels in Laois and this augurs brilliantly for the future. Camogie has come from a low base but the numbers who are competing at underage level have increased significantly and there are some brilliant coaches involved. This will come through over the next few years and Portlaoise will be a force to be reckoned with.

At senior level our footballers are there or thereabouts and have gained valuable experience in recent years. With the right attitude and application this group can certainly win the championship. Our hurlers competed well this year too and a real regret of the year was losing a game we should have won to Castletown in OMP. A win in that had us in a quarter final and top of our group – the defeat sent us in the other direction. But a super display against the same opposition consigned Castletown to relegation and preserved our status. The margins are thin – but both senior sides have undoubted potential.

The ladies senior footballers have been the flag-bearers for the club in recent years and are champions again having dethroned their big rivals St Conleths in a brilliant performance in the county final. Our camogs had a tough year having won the Junior the year previously and this step up, allied to fixture clashes which affected key players, added up to a really challenging year.

An early initiative we had was to set up a Games Committee and the idea of this group was to take a strategic view of coaching in the club including player development, pathways, coaching education and lots more. The Games



Committee, while a good idea in so many ways, was difficult to sustain in the longer terms as the coaches involved in it were arguably the elite coaches in the club and almost all of them were going to be involved in coaching of different teams etc as the years went on.

From a development perspective the energy, imagination, and determination of a fundraising and development group who started Club Bingo and Town 25 was very significant I feel. In Covid times this group did amazing work for over 2 years and raised about €500K for the club – a portion of which went directly into the day to day running of the club with the remainder ringfenced for development. This, allied to grant applications, saw Town25 being created with a vision to get a development off the ground. This work gave hope to the club that something positive was going to be done.

What is coming now is unprecedented. It is hard to fathom the generosity of a family who at a time of overwhelming grief reached out to the club offering to help with our development plans. The generosity and spirit of the Knight and Fitzpatrick families, in getting behind the club plans and taking them to a level that is beyond the imagination, will create one of the most wonderful community and sporting venues in the country. As a club we will never be able to properly thank the family of Eoin and Dylan – but we understand the magnitude of what is being done and we are humbled by the generosity of it. We will always respect the legacy of what is being put in place for our club and our community, and we can never forget that this project is borne from great personal tragedy. I hope the family get real comfort and joy in what Maryse and Travis are putting in place in the memory of Eoin and Dylan.

What achievements—on or off the field—give you the greatest sense of pride during your time as Chairperson?

Besides the work at juvenile level and with the development there are a number of things that are good and positive I feel.

Apart from the main development there has been steady

facilities progress in recent years. Pitch 5 has been developed and drained thanks to a contribution of club funds and Sports Capital grants. Some big money has gone into drainage which is vital but people don't necessarily see it as its below eye level in the ground. The Knight and Fitzpatrick family helped hugely with upgrades to Pitch 6 and Pitch 1 – which now means that we have 4 pitches out of 6 that are fully drained and in excellent condition. Huge credit as always to the legendary grounds committee in Rathleague for their hard work on a daily basis in keeping our pitches cut and in great condition.

The addition of the walking track has been a great addition also and when things are in full flow during training and matches in Rathleague this is a hive of activity with people walking and jogging on it. What great use of an hour for a parent while waiting for their child to finish their session. We have a monthly newsletter, The Town Tattler, which is now entering into its 6th year and has become part of the tapestry of the club. As well as keeping everyone fully abreast of all aspects of the club, it also serves as an important source of history, sporting and social, when we start to look back on times gone by. Richie Coss, a townie living in Southport UK is the driving force behind this in recent years – but this is only one strand of the immense work he does for the club. Thanks to Richie our website is one of the best in the country and he is the expert on all things design-wise and marketing wise. I would need a good few pages to outline the scope of his work on behalf of the club.

The Portlaoise GAA app has been a fantastic addition to the club also. It really is a one stop shop. Communication, lotto, membership – almost everything can be done via the app and we have over 2000 people signed up to this now.

The lotto has improved significantly in recent years – some of this as a result of the online being much easier to use through the app. The regular sellers and organisers of the lotto each week in Peigs are unbelievable club stalwarts. We feel that the lotto, such a vital income stream on a weekly basis for the club, needs to go to a better level again

however and if our entire club got behind this it would sustain the day to day running of the club comfortably. The Walk for the Town has proven to be a great success in recent years also – both from a fundraising perspective and as a social get together. It shows the united nature of the club when we march together as club and indeed as family. The club is vast and there is so much going on. Not everything is right or perfect but there is so much positive work ongoing. And its important to remind ourselves that everybody is a volunteer and trying to juggle club duties with everyday family, work and life commitments.

Portlaoise have been on the One-Club road for the past number of years – Can you tell how this is going?

The sole motivation for us as a club to embrace One-Club is equality. And for every man, woman and child to be treated absolutely equally in Portlaoise GAA.

A few short years ago a dual player on the ladies side had to pay LGFA membership and camogie membership separately and still, technically, they weren't a member of the actual club whose facilities they availed of. Portlaoise GAA club, working with representatives on the ladies side, changed this and agreed that once a player on the ladies side paid their club membership, we would ensure they had membership of LGFA or Camogie or both and absorb the shortfall that this approach would bring. This was the right and fair thing to do – and it ensured equal rights to everything in Rathleague for all members.

The One Club adoption hasn't been without nuances and complications, but we are determined to keep finding solutions so that we are all together and on the one page. One example of this was when Laois LGFA decided to change the cost of the levy due to them from clubs for players. They moved to a cost per player model rather than per club, and increased the cost per player by a multiple of where this had been set. The impact for Portlaoise was significant and just meant that the cost of running this section increased and left the finances generally under increased pressure.



In fairness to our club LGFA section they rallied around the Walk for the Town and were the standout performers this year and that gave the club great heart that everybody was pulling together in a practical and sensible way to find solutions and not just focus on problems.

Other teething issues were about co-ordinated training between football, hurling, camogie at the youngest years – to try to work out a smart approach so that parents didn't have to drive to Rathleague 6 or 7 times each week.

People don't always fully appreciate or understand what goes on behind the scenes but everyone needs to know that the motives behind one club are pure and we will find solutions to any and all problems as we go.

Overall I feel that we are way further down the road than most clubs in relation to One Club because of the efforts that have been put in. We have a One Club membership, finances, PR – and we are all working together in relation to coaching and all other club aspects.

I think we will solve most other little issues over the coming year or two and the sooner the better the three associations are amalgamated at national level also which will make things easier again.

But certainly as a club, and recognising the each section needs their own committee because of obligations to the different associations, we are all working together now in an integrated way and this will only improve over the coming years.

The ladies have added a fantastic dimension to Portlaoise since they got up and running. Our senior ladies footballers have been flying the flag for the whole club at a time when our other senior teams haven't gotten across the line. They are a credit to themselves and have been brilliant to watch in action since they made their breakthrough back in Covid times.

Our camogs too have won a few junior championships and while the step up has been steep there is great work been done at underage level which will reap dividends in the coming years.

At juvenile level the growth in ladies football and camogie

has been phenomenal and this is brilliant to see. On the football side the girls have been the dominant force in the county for a number of years now, and on the Camogie side the numbers have really grown and there are exciting times ahead.

So many brilliant women have gotten involved in the club – and the more the better in the coming years.

How would you describe the current health of Portlaoise GAA as a club, both in terms of participation and organisation?

I think the club is in a really healthy state just now – which may not be as obvious from the outside looking in. But anyone who is involved in Portlaoise can sense that something is stirring. There is a massive energy and positivity within the club. There'll always be challenges and issues but with a positive attitude there are no obstacles we cannot climb.

Our membership has grown significantly, we have healthy numbers at juvenile level and a great quality of coaching; Rathleague is about to be transformed into one of the best sporting campuses in Ireland; At administration level there are really competent people who care involved in all the key aspects of the running of the club. Overall, I think this is one of the most exciting times in the history of our club. There are so many good people who care involved, exciting things are happening on and off the pitch. We always want to win and be winning – but we can't always win and be winning – how we behave and react in the times when we are not winning is just as important. I feel the future is very bright for Portlaoise GAA.

A real highlight of 2025 in the club has been the advent of the Fir and Mná Aclaí groups. These are male and female groups, made up of non-players, supporters, those who may be retired from playing etc, and are training in scheduled classes in the gym three times per week. The sessions are led by club volunteers and the classes are free to full members of the club. The feedback on them has been exceptional and lots of former players and members have re-joined the club

because of these classes. Well done to Ed O Dwyer, Brian Devaney, Claire O Gorman, Karen Monaghan and all of their coaches for leading this fantastic health and wellbeing initiative in Portlaoise GAA.

What do you see as the club's greatest strengths at the moment?

The club's greatest strength is its people. People can sometimes underestimate how connected an urban club like Portlaoise is. But the pride and love that Portlaoise GAA people have in their club is massive – and this is because of the proud tradition that was created by those who went before us, and also by the work that is being done by so many people today.

Challenges?

As a club we have to aspire to being an excellent club in football, hurling and camogie. I am very confident that football is on a healthy footing again on the boys end and this will continue to flourish in coming years. On the girls end things are looking very healthy thankfully.

Hurling and Camogie is a tougher challenge and we are certainly making progress. I think our culture of promoting both codes to our juvenile players is essential and while I acknowledge that is becoming more difficult to sustain at senior levels – I still think it is more than possible at club level.

But the key thing is to have our numbers healthy at the juvenile end, with good quality coaching and conditioning – this will ensure that all codes will have a healthy stock of good players to work with.

As a dual club I would encourage all players to embrace the fact that we are a dual club and to have a mentality of helping out where help is needed, wherever that is possible for you.

As you look ahead to the coming year, what are the main priorities for you and the club committee?

The main priorities for the club in the coming year are to



give our teams the best chance in terms of preparation and support; to be prudent in our finances on behalf of all stakeholders of the club; to work with the project team in delivering the development; To prepare for what's coming in terms of what we need income-wise to pay for our outgoings, what we need volunteer-wise to run what is coming; and to foster a great One-Club mentality within all sections of the club.

What is your longer-term vision for Portlaoise GAA over the next number of years?

When I started in this role just over 5 years ago I said the aspiration for the Portlaoise GAA should be to be the best dual club in Ireland. 'Best' is not just measured by on field success (although at its most basic, this is what we all want as a sporting club) but also by how united we are as a community within a community. I would like to see the club being competitive from a playing point of view at all levels, aspiring to win at provincial and national levels as well as within the county, being a vibrant club from a social perspective, and having real heart and conscience within the wider community.

What message would you like to share with club members, players, and supporters?

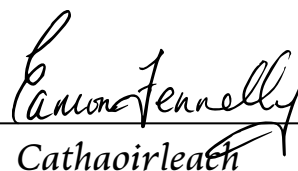
In the coming months we are planning on trying to mobilise all Portlaoise people into a big room in a local hotel with volunteer recruitment in mind. The coming development is sharpening our focus as is the fatigue that may be setting in on people who have been deeply involved over the past number of years. We need to make roles within our club possible for people from a time perspective. Most clubs are saying its getting harder and harder to get people to help. We need to find the solution to this and we are working on it in the background right now. On top of what is there today, soon we will have 12 dressing rooms, meeting rooms, a new gym, a coffee shop, a merchandise shop, a bar, a viewing stand, a function room, extra floodlights, new walking track, a playground, a full length outdoor astro, a huge indoor

training arena etc to manage. That's just one aspect. We have to ensure our teams are set up well coaching wise, playing numbers are strong, strength and conditioning is in place, injury prevention, player pathways, coach education etc The list is endless.....

WE NEED HELP. WE NEED AN ARMY.

We are currently looking at all of our different aspects and what we need there in terms of man hours. We want our people to embrace what's coming and get in behind it. Is there 1 hour a week, or 1 hour a month that you can give to the club – if so we will take that but in return we need to have it mapped out for you also.

I am asking for people not to go hiding when we put out the call on this meeting – one of the most important ones that we will ever have. There's a place for everyone to be involved and to help within our club – and if ever there was a time when your club needs you – it is coming very soon. Please jump on board. In a way that suits you and your life. The club belongs to all the people who care about it. C'mon the Town!



Cathaoirleach

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2026



CLG PHORT LAOISE MEMBERSHIP



FULL ADULT MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES ENTRY TO



Membership 2026

As we gear up for another year of Gaelic games, we want to ensure that every member is fully covered.

Our 2026 Club Membership options for Adults, Juveniles and Families are now live and available for purchase through the club app.

Search 'Portlaoise GAA' wherever you get your apps or download from the Apple App Store [here](#) or the Google play store [here](#)

In the app go to the "Menu" at the bottom of the screen and from there select "Memberships". Then choose the membership option which applies to you.

When choosing your membership make sure to select the association which applies to you.

What your membership gets you:

Play and Train: Your membership covers you to play and train with CLG Phort Laoise, giving you access to our facilities at Rathleague including our new walking track.

Laois GAA All County Club Draws: All Full Adult club memberships automatically includes you in the 4 Laois GAA County Board Monster Draws valued at €130.

It's your chance to be part of something big and potentially win fantastic prizes! Over €125k total prize money and €31.5k in Cash prizes to be won every 4 weeks.

Your support through membership directly contributes to the success and growth of our club.

If you would prefer to purchase through Foireann the link is [here](#).



U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





U15 and U13 Football Awards Night





Looking Back on
2025



February



2025 Dinner Dance





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2025 Dinner Dance





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2025 Dinner Dance





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St Patrick's Day Parade 2025





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St Patrick's Day Parade 2025





April



David Brown Remembrance Day

There was a big crowd in Rathleague on Easter Sunda in remembrance of David Brown. It's hard to believe it's two years since David sadly passed, an event that devastated his family, friends, and so many people across the club and county.

Our juvenile teams filled the pitches of Rathleague, and afterwards, the first-ever Laois GAA David Brown Award was presented. This new award honours an underage player in Laois who exemplifies commitment, good attitude, determination, and respect.

James Brown, David's dad, presented the first award in hurling, and the winner was a young Borris-Kilcotton hurler, Frankie McGovern. Well done to Frankie. A deserving recipient.

Thanks to everyone who turned out in Rathleague. It was good to take time to reflect on the memory of David, a young player who was not only talented in both codes but who also stood out for his attitude, commitment, and love for the game.

No doubt David's legacy will continue to inspire our younger players and the wider club community. He will always be remembered.

David Brown – Forever Young.



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Town Lotto Cheque Presentation





Joe Daly

We had the pleasure recently of sitting down with Joe Daly, who has been involved in some capacity with the Portlaoise club since 1989. A proud Cork man, Joe first came to Portlaoise in 1974 as a newly qualified Garda. Over the following 51 years, he wrote his own chapter in terms of his legacy and involvement with Portlaoise GAA. A character through and through, Joe's love for the GAA and passion for the Town shone brightly throughout our chat. The service he has given to the club since first becoming involved in 1989 is second to none. He is one of the many club greats who was not born and reared in Portlaoise, but instead came to the town and got involved with the club, leaving a lasting impact and legacy through sheer dedication and commitment.

Growing up in West Cork and playing career.

I grew up in Leap, West Cork, a footballing stronghold! I started playing football at under-14, as that was the first underage competition available at that time. I played with my club, Kilmacabea, and I won a West-Cork under-14 medal in 1965. 2 years later, I won an under-16 medal, when we were amalgamated with Castlehaven. One of the biggest disappointments I had as a player came in 1969 with my own club, Kilmacabea, when we lost the West-Cork minor football final. I was captain that year. We were 2 points up and they got a goal with the last kick of the game to win by a point.

I won a West-Cork junior hurling medal with Kilmacabea in 1971. Again we were amalgamated with Castlehaven. The standard wouldn't have been too hectic, but we won a county title nonetheless! So I had a reasonably good career down in Cork, before I went on to join the Guards.

Becoming a Garda and moving to Portlaoise.

I joined the Guards in 1974 and I moved to Portlaoise then as newly qualified Garda in August 1974. I continued to play

down home for a few years, but then one of the sergeants in the station in Portlaoise convinced myself and a few of the other lads to go and play football for Durrow! I wasn't playing any football at the time, so I got a transfer. We went on and we won a county Junior football title then! The biggest part of my career though, between 1976 and 1992/1993, was through rugby. I played rugby for 17 years with Portlaoise as a prop forward. I played with the first, seconds, thirds, every team Portlaoise had! We won a Town's Cup in 1984/85. I won a seconds Leinster plate with the club, a Towns' Plate with the seconds, a Hosey Cup with the firsts and a few league titles as well. It was a wonderful time. I made some great friends along the way, lads I'd still be very friendly with to this day. Great memories. We had a good rugby team with the guards at the time too. We won 2 Garda All-Irelands. We had a great crop of players at the time. They were very enjoyable times.

Getting Involved with the GAA Club.

Then, in 1989, the Portlaoise club reformed the juvenile GAA club. I'd always followed the club since I'd arrived in Portlaoise and got to see the great hurling and football teams of the 80's when they were at their peak. From 1989 onwards, I became involved with the underage set-up in the club. Ned Murphy, Sean Mullins and Mick Reynolds, amongst others, did great work at that time.

My own 2 sons, Allan and Kieran were starting to play as well at that time. We used to have league matches on Sunday morning. It was fantastic and a wonderful way to become involved with the club. I ended up having great success with underage football teams in the club then, along with John Mulligan and Ollie Hughes. We had a fantastic crop of players at the time. We won everything from under-14 onwards, including, x2 under14 titles, x2 under-16 titles, x2 Minor titles and x3 under-21 titles. We were very dominant, but we had a great crop of players, a lot of whom went on to have great success with the senior footballers.

Martin Parkinson and Brian Delaney had brought through a great underage group a few years before us, and between their group and ours, that laid the foundations for the great Portlaoise team that came after.

After underage, I then got involved with the senior footballers with Mick Lillis and Mark Kavanagh. We won a senior football title in 2002, beating St. Joseph's in the final. In 2004, Mark and Mick stepped away, but I stayed on and was involved with Tommy Conroy and Niall Tully. We won the county final in 2004, though we made hard work of it. We won it anyhow, and then went on to win the Leinster Final in Newbridge, beating Skryne of Meath in the final.





That was a fantastic day. We'd played Rhode in the first round in Leinster. Niall McNamee was their rising star at the time. But we had a star of our own that day, in the shape of Tommy Fitzgerald, who had come up from playing junior football to senior football. He did a wonderful job marking McNamee. The day we won the final, Bruno won man of the match, and the Doc Fitz got the singing award for his rendition of the Portlaoise Queen!

The highlight of that time was beating the great Crossmaglen Rangers in Parnell Park. That was something else. Oisin McConville was on fire at the time, but Eoin Bland went in and did a fantastic job marking him. Unfortunately, we just didn't play as well as we could have in the final and we lost. It just didn't click for us on the day. I honestly believe if we'd played that game another 10 times, we'd have won every time. It just didn't click for us on the day. It was a huge disappointment.

They were great years. It would be wrong of me to single out individual players, we just had a great team and a great hunger to win. In 2006, I stepped away from the Senior footballers, but I stayed involved, taking on an Intermediate team with Noel Tynan, Eddie McCormack and George Plunkett. We won the Division 2 league title, and we were beaten in the Intermediate final by a Timahoe team who had contested the senior football final only a few years previously. The club was flying it at that time. It was a huge pity we didn't win that final. We had a few great years though, and we had great craic together.

In 2008-09, I was also involved with Mick Nerney and Tommy Conroy with the under-16 footballers. We won x2 under-16 titles, and then went on to win x2 Minor titles as well.

After that I took a break, but in 2020 I got involved with the Junior footballers along with Ronan Molloy, Adrian Kelly

and Sean Brown. We reached a county final, and were beaten by a very good Park-Ratheniska team. Last year then, I was involved with the Junior B footballers. I stood away from it this year, after 36 years. I loved every minute of it though. It wasn't just being involved with teams, but the social aspect of it was fantastic.

The old club house was always great spot, full of characters and craic. It was the most enjoyable place to be. Even being involved with looking after the car parking on match days was great, and we'd often have a get-together after matches. Andy Molly, God rest him, was a great man. He could nearly charge you going out the gate as well as coming in!

In the 51 years I've been in Portlaoise, sport has played a huge role in my life. Being involved with the club over the past 36 years has been fantastic. Allan is heavily involved with the club, and has been involved as a coach/selector since 2009. He's a great coach and has put a lot into it. Kieran is also getting involved now with the underage set-up which is fantastic. It's great to see them involved. They always gave me good support, as did my wife, Marie.

Best games you've seen/been involved in.

I suppose the Crossmaglen game in 2005 always stands out, but winning the County final in 2002 was very special. That would probably be my favourite game, as it was the first time I'd been involved with a winning Senior Football team. At half-time that day, Dick Sydes gave a magnificent speech in the dressing room. I'll never forget it. There was fire in what he said and the lads went out in the second half and put in a great display.

What the club means to you:

The club means an awful lot to me. It was a great way of meeting up with people and making friends. The social side of it and the friendship side of it is what really stands out to me. I've made great friends and great memories over the



years. I was Juvenile chairman from 1997-2000 which I'm very proud of and that means a lot to me. And obviously having some success with the club over the years was brilliant too.

Hopes for the club going forward.

There's been great progress made out in Rathleague over the years, and to see the club moving in the direction it's going in relation to the new club house is fantastic. When all that is in place it will provide a very solid foundation for the club going forward. What has been done and what's there in Rathleague now has served the club very well. Men like Sonny Keogh, JP Cahillane, Ollie Byrne and Liam Breen are worth their weight in gold for the work they do. We won't see their likes again. In recent times, a few more volunteers have joined the workforce out in Rathleague. Interviews are ongoing at the minute for any more potential applicants!

For the past 36 years, Joe has given phenomenal service to the club. With an honours list that covers all grades from under-14 to senior football, he has won practically everything there is to win with the club. From West Cork to Portlaoise, Joe has imbedded himself within the foundations of the town over the past 51 years, and made Portlaoise his home. His voluntary work and commitment to the club and the town have been second to none. As a club, we are blessed to have had men like Joe involved. They have played a huge role in making the Portlaoise club what it is today, and we are forever indebted to them for their continued commitment and dedication. C'mon the Town.





Well done to Susie Delaney and Kirsten Keenan

Well done to Susie Delaney, Kirsten Keenan and the entire Laois Camogie team on a brilliant win in this month's league final against Roscommon in Kinnegad.

Both girls performed to the highest levels and Susie had the game high scoring tally of 5 points to push Laois over the line.

A strong performance all round and a well-earned victory. Great to see the county get the deserved win.

Final score: Laois 0-14, Roscommon 1-6





Leinster Minor 'B' Final: Laois 3-10 v 1-10 Wexford

A massive well done to the Laois team and management after a brilliant battle against Wexford this past weekend, and especially to our own contingent of Sarah McDonald, Lara Culleton, Faye Brown, Anna Mulligan, Leah Brennan, Ellen Bergin, Lilly Gavin, and Abbey Louise Byrne. In what was a tense and thrilling finish, second-half goals from Killeshin's Aisling Cawley and Niamh Dundon from Timahoe secured Laois' victory.

A special mention to our own Faye Brown who lifted the trophy as joint captain.

Girls all over the pitch were immense.



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 14



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 14



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 14



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 14



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 15



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 15





May



Kean Kavanagh

Portlaoise GAA has always been about more than just sport. It's a community, a home, a heartbeat for many. And few capture that spirit better than Kean Kavanagh.

A former underage footballer and hurler who wore the white and green with pride, Kean is now forging a path in the Irish and UK music scenes. With a string of well-received singles and an eagerly anticipated new album, *The County Star*, due out on 6 June, the Portlaoise native is making waves far beyond the county bounds.

We caught up with Kean to talk club memories, songwriting, and how growing up around Fr. Brown Avenue and Rathleague helped shape his journey, both on and off the pitch.

Kean is a singer, songwriter and producer. A founding member of the Soft Boy Records collective, he's known for blending genres and storytelling in a style that's distinctly his own. Before stepping onto music stages across Ireland and beyond, Kean spent his youth on the fields of Laois, lining out for Portlaoise in both football and hurling. He won county titles at U14, U16, Minor and U21 level, and remains a proud Town man through and through.



Tell us about the new album. What can people expect from it?

It's a bit of a story of this character, the County Star, who's a little bit me and a little bit an exaggeration of me I think. I would have been born in Texas where my parents had emigrated and we moved home to Portlaoise when me and my sister were very young, so there's a mixture of the reality of those actual stories of my life and growing up in Portlaoise and the fantasy of this far away place that influences the sound of the music.

How does it feel to be releasing new music this summer?

I'm buzzing. I've been working really hard the last year and a half in particular on all of this so it's really satisfying seeing it all come together and I'm getting really excited about starting the next album now!

You did a great version of the Christy Conroy classic *The Portlaoise Queen*. Do you have many memories of this being sung after club victories?

Yeah, specifically the first time I and probably a lot of people my age would have heard it sung, which was after the Leinster final win in 2004 in Newbridge. The Doc Fitz was brought up after the cup was presented and sang his heart out; ambitious to sing a song with 5 verses to a pitch full of people, most of whom have never heard it. After releasing my version of the song, it was great to hear lots more stories from other people about their own personal lore with the song. My Da, who grew up a few houses away from the Doc on the Borris Road, told us a few stories of getting dragged downstairs in the middle of the night after the men had come back from the pub to hear Doc singing it, and Connie Conroy sent me a lovely message about hearing the song and his own memories of his father Christy singing it to him. All of these types of things are really important to me because it's a song about people from the town and it continues to connect people. It's really important that we cherish the stories and songs that we have because what else do we have of people after they're gone.



*Doc Fitz belting out *The Portlaoise Queen* after the 2004 Leinster Club Football Final win in Newbridge - 5th Dec, 2004*

You've a deep connection to the club. What are your earliest memories of Portlaoise GAA?

Probably running around the hall of the old clubhouse with all our cousins and friends while the adults drank pints in the bar after a game. I loved that clubhouse and I loved being so close to the pitch, it took no time at all to walk up and hop the gate into the grounds so we were up there doing our own training all the time. Also eating packets of wine gums in the back of Mick Nerney's car as he was bringing us to a blitz every other weekend in the summer.

Your songs *The Whistle* and *A Cowboy Song* aren't just great tracks, they've also got brilliant videos. There's a strong nod to your roots too, with Portlaoise GAA featuring heavily in both. How important is it for you to reflect where you come from in your music and visuals?
Well, the lyrics of the album are pretty direct about the GAA I suppose, this idea of the character of the "County Star", and in the song *Father Brown's* it's very literally set in that location, so I always knew that I wanted the videos to be done at home. We had a fairly specific idea for "*A Cowboy Song*" that it would feature my band playing on the field in O'Moore Park under the floodlights. I called Sonny Keogh a week before I came home to see if we could get a lend of a bag or two of jerseys; Sonny seen my London number and thought I was a scam caller, but once I got through to him he sorted us out big time with all the gear we



Kean and his band in O'Moore Park during the video shoot for A Cowboy Song could need. Have to give a massive thank you to everyone who came through to play the part of the players and the supporters in the videos as well. One of the best things about filming at home was the amount of generosity we received from every single person we asked anything of; a lot of the film crew were from Dublin and just couldn't believe how generous everyone in Portlaoise was, from Sonny to Mick Ryan giving us the run of his pub on a Sunday morning to Laois GAA allowing us the use of O'Moore Park. Everyone wanted to help us which reaffirmed all the beliefs I had had about the community in Portlaoise.

Pa Champion is a great character. Is he based on anyone in particular, or is he a mix of a few familiar faces from around the Town? 😊

There have definitely been a few Elvis lookalikes to grace the Town but there are these Elvis characters all over

Ireland, although they're sadly probably a dying breed! The character tied together the Irish/American connection in the music really beautifully and I think we were able to tell a really good story with Pa; he's a man who's dedicated his club to a fault, and has sacrificed his family and quite possibly his life for it. There's pure comedy there but there's also a very real darkness and loneliness too.



Kean aged 4 decked out in his cowboy boots to watch the football county final in 1997 with his cousin Fiachra

You've plenty of silverware from your time in the white and green, Féile hurling and football in 2008, U16 football titles 2009 and 2010, Minor in 2011 and 2012, and U21 in 2013. Any standout moments from those days?

The Minor final in 2012 would be the big one I'd say; Mountmellick were our rivals since we were 12 years old and there was a healthy bit of hatred from both sides I think. We both really, really wanted to win that match, it was the most important thing in our lives and I remember being a little bit obsessed with it. There was something so special about winning the last real underage final you'll have with the team you grew up playing with, and to win with a goal in the last minute as well from Aaron Rafter was cinema. That's probably my last memory of the clubhouse in Father

Brown's as well, us all celebrating together there after the match. The end of an era in many ways.

Your dad (Niall) was club chairman for 7 years, from 1999 to 2005. What was it like growing up in a household so closely linked with the club?

I think that that was a really exciting time in the club's history and it's something I've been thinking about more recently - Portlaoise and Laois were really on the up and it felt we were up and down to Croke Park all the time; there was a spotlight on the club in a way and a fair bit of media interest all round. I was a waterboy for the senior team so I'd head out to a lot of the trainings and all the matches with my Da and got to see the inside of the dressing room before the matches; I remember being up in a function room in Dublin with my Da and the team the day before the All Ireland final in 2005. Everyone had on new Adidas runners that had been gifted to the team and the selectors; there was a bit of glamour about the whole thing, everyone seemed to be operating at a very high level, and looking back I think it was great to see that so young, I think seeing that level of success and approach to preparation highers your horizons a bit and makes you more ambitious whether it's in sport or whatever else.



Kean (3rd from right) and the 2006 U12s taking instruction from Mick Nerney at Fr Brown Avenue



Do you keep an eye on how the club is getting on nowadays and if so where would you like to see the club in the future?

I try to get to any matches that I can when I'm home. I loved seeing the Minors win the final last year, think it was the first time since it was our team back in 2012 so that was a long overdue one. I'm really excited, as everyone probably is, about the new plans for Rathleague; I think they look amazing and it's so needed in terms of there being a place that people involved with the club can go and meet and there being a centrepiece in the same way that the old clubhouse was, making it a place that people are excited to be heading out to. I think that the community effect of that will have a natural effect on the actual success of Portlaoise, here's hoping anyway.

If you could give a message to young Town players chasing their own dreams, whether in sport, music or anything else, what would it be?

Study the greats and play with confidence.

And finally... any chance of a future gig in Rathleague?

That sounds perfect to me!



2012 Minor 'A' Football Champions. Kean is at the back (7th from left) - 15th Sept, 2012



Kean (5th from right) and the 2006 U12s prior to the Drawn 2006 U12 'A' Championship final v Mountmellick at O'Moore Park - 23rd Sept, 2006



2011 Minor 'A' Football Champions. Kean is at the back (3rd from left) - 24th Aug, 2011

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TOWN25 Update Presentation Night

There was a fantastic turnout for the development plans presentation in the Midlands Park Hotel on Bank Holiday Monday May 5th, where members were provided with a meaningful update on plans to develop the clubs grounds in Rathleague.

The presentation night was a landmark moment for Portlaoise GAA, where club members finally got an idea of the scale and detail of what Rathleague will become in the next few years.

It is not just the construction of a state of the art clubhouse - it is the transformation of the entire site into a modern and top level sports campus.

Speakers on the night included Eamon Fennelly, who welcomed everyone and gave a quick synopsis of how things had progressed to this point.

Jason Lalor gave a talk on Town 25 - its genesis and signposted the timeline to completion from here.

Dermot Costelloe described the construction plans and gave technical detail of the development.

Gareth Keogh and Shane Keane gave an indication of running costs of the new build, while Philip Scully explained the plans to generate income to ensure the successful running of it.

As a club we are acutely aware that this development, exciting as it is for all members and supporters of the club, is borne out of awful tragedy.

The generosity of Maryse, Travis and the Fitzpatrick and Knight families is far beyond anything the club could ever have hoped for. As a club we fervently hope that the family get some comfort over time from this legacy project which serves to commemorate Eoin and Dylan, but which is also the most unbelievable contribution to Maryse's home club, home town and county.



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



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TOWN25 Update Presentation Night



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



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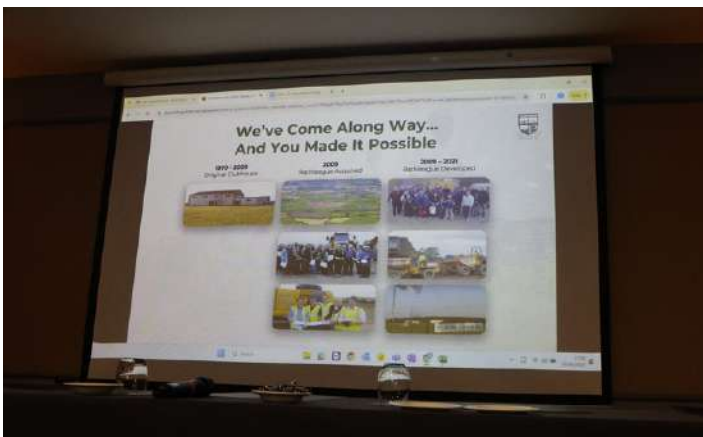
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TOWN25 Update Presentation Night



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



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TOWN25 Update Presentation Night



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



Press Release

Portlaoise GAA Club Moves to Next Phase of Redevelopment Project with Planning Application Submission

Portlaoise GAA Club is delighted to announce a major milestone in the redevelopment of its Rathleague facilities, with a planning application set to be submitted to Laois County Council this week. This marks the next phase of an exciting programme to improve the club's grounds, further strengthening its role as a hub for sporting and community life in Portlaoise.

The planning application includes the construction of a new clubhouse and indoor training facility, a viewing stand, as well as pitch and floodlight enhancements. This will provide high quality facilities for club members, players, and the wider Portlaoise community, from young athletes to lifelong supporters.

The plans were presented to club members at a meeting on Monday evening (5th May) and pending planning approval, work on-site is expected to commence later this year, with completion projected for Summer 2027. The appointment of contractors will support local employment during the construction phase.

The redevelopment of the club is supported by Travis and Maryse Knight (née Fitzpatrick) in commemoration of Maryse's beloved brother and nephew, Eoin and Dylan Fitzpatrick. The boys tragically lost their lives in a road traffic accident in Turkey in July 2023.

Eamon Fennelly and Dermot Costelloe, joint Chairperson of Portlaoise GAA Club, commented: *"This is an important day for Portlaoise GAA, the Fitzpatrick family and for the entire community. The submission of our planning application is a testament to the incredible work that has already taken place at Rathleague and reflects our commitment to providing a top-class facility. Pending planning approval, this redevelopment would not only enhance our club's sporting infrastructure but also provide the town's young people with resources and facilities to help them reach their full potential. The redevelopment would represent a significant contribution to the sporting and social fabric of Portlaoise and we are incredibly grateful to Maryse and Travis whose support enables this."*

Maryse and Travis Knight (née Fitzpatrick) also reflected on the importance of reaching this phase of the development: *"It's been incredibly heartening to see the passion and commitment displayed by everyone involved in this project to date. It further demonstrates the sense of community and togetherness that has helped our family immeasurably over the past two years. It also reinforces our belief that this is the right way to honour Eoin and Dylan in a meaningful and enduring way."*



Eoin, Dylan and Cian Fitzpatrick pictured after a Portlaoise GAA hurling final



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Exterior view from Pitch 1 Dugout



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Approach From Car Park to Main Entrance



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View across pitch five to the clubhouse



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PORTLAOISE 0-05
VISITOR 0-00

64:12 PORTLAOISE 3:10 (19)
VISITOR 1:06 (9)

Field and main stand view



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Night profile view of clubhouse from the road



2025 Golf Classic

A massive thank you to all our amazing club volunteers who made this years Golf Classic such a success.

Leading the charge once again was Jas O'Reilly, whose energy and drive continue to power this great event every year. A special word also for John O'Reilly, who was immense in chasing sponsorship, fixing tee boxes, and tackling countless other jobs behind the scenes.

Thanks also to Pat Loughman for his early morning help erecting the sponsor signage, and to JP Cahillane, Frank Fitzpatrick, Barry Larkin and John Fennell for their invaluable support on the admin side throughout the day.

A sincere thank you to all our players, supporters and sponsors for creating such a brilliant day's entertainment.

More than just a day out, the Golf Classic remains a vital fundraiser for the club's ongoing work.

Golf Classic Results

- **1st Place:** Mick Lillis, Martin Morrissey, Ann Murphy & Pat Murphy – 100 points
- **2nd Place:** Colm O'Reilly, Ben O'Reilly, John Conroy & Cathal Grant – 99 points (back nine)
- **3rd Place:** Teddy McCormack, Brian McCormack, Ivan Byrne & John Burke – 99 points
- **4th Place:** Peter Booth, Donal Booth, John Booth & Cormac Beere – 98 points
- **Non-GUI Winner:** Dean Cullen, James Conroy, Chris Finn & Jason Maher – 87 points
- **Card Winner:** John Croke

Well done to all involved.





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2025 Golf Classic





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2025 Golf Classic



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2025 Golf Classic





Portlaoise 2-8 v 0-7 Sarsfields

Back (l. to r.): Alix Culleton, Kara Phelan, Molly Jane Dempsey, Leah Brophy, Caitlin Fitzpatrick, Ellen Fitzpatrick, Gráinne Coleman, Aishling Dowling, Clodagh Delaney, Emma Scully, Ruby Coyle, Katie Moore, Kate Scully;
Front (l. to r.): Sarah Donoghue, Adella Jacob, Amarachi Obi (Capt.), Lucy Mulhall, Kara Powders, Abbey Thompson, Emma Glennon, Sarah Walsh, Kayleigh O Callaghan, Emily Kelly, Rachael Kelly;

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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 16





June



Laura Bergin

In 1988, Laura Bergin made history by becoming the first female club secretary in the GAA in Ireland, serving here in Portlaoise. While she'll tell you herself that she didn't play much, the GAA was always in her blood. Her father, Billy Bergin, was a well-known footballer with both Park and Laois.

Today, Laura continues to give her time to the club, focusing on archiving and club history alongside fellow stalwarts like Teddy Fennelly Snr, Brian Delaney, and Dennis Tynan.

Laura shares some memories from over the years. We hope you enjoy the read.

First involvements in GAA

I had no interest in GAA or any other sports and only went to help out Margaret Conroy, who wanted to start a Ladies Football team. When she first asked, I said no but then said look I'll be the goal till you get somebody to take my place and that was the deal and exactly what happened.

Administration

I then took the job as Chairperson and Margaret did Secretary, and Anne Byrne was Treasurer. We asked the club if we could use a pitch, and they were very accommodating. They let us use the dressing rooms too. Peadar Molloy's wife, Liz, washed the Jerseys.

Playing Career cut short – but a love of the game was born!

We ran an American Tea Party to raise funds for the jerseys. I only played about 2 games, and then Paula Kelly took over. However, it was a year that changed my life and love for the games with both the senior and minor teams winning the county finals. Fantastic excitement all round. We had a great Sports Day and wheel of fortune, etc. organised by Jas for everybody in the town. The ladies set up a number of 7-a-side teams, and Margaret and I visited all the housing

estates and factories to see if anybody else would be interested. Ursula O Malley entered one from Beladd.

Funny Memories

I remember we organised a fancy dress with funny names like The Unsquashables, and we were The Slippery Diddies (we wore bras on our backs) - probably unprintable now!! All of this created a great atmosphere between the girls, and it wasn't long before the lads joined in the club activities with us eg. indoor circuit training in winter and table tennis in the hall.

One St Stephens Day Ollie Plunkett organised a basketball blitz in the club with pin the tail on the donkey. I was on a team with Bill Phelan, and we played Clonad, all the tall Norton men. At one stage, Bill swung around and whack I had a broken nose. Ned Murphy was there, thank God, and he looked after me. "*Not much point going to the hospital with that*", he said, so it was ice and 2 black eyes instead!

Great Nights in the GAA Centre

Cheddar and Co organised some great nights like *The Crazy Hat Night*, which Peter Fennell and I won. Also the *Toga Party* night and *Bogman's Ball* and finished it with *The Wild Auld Night* a comedy sketch on stage with Micky Bohane, Madness Maher, John Styles, Frank McGowan, Pat Critchley and Bush Dollard to name a few.

Aslan & Co..

I moved over to the Catering Section, which Dick Sides had nabbed me for and ordered the food, did up the bills, and catered for Laois Teams four nights a week along with Margaret and Anne. The bigger panel catered for 21sts, wedding anniversaries, funerals, and even a wedding. Cheddar organised big bands to play, which the three of us girlies catered for, the likes of *In Tua Nua*, *The Hot House Flowers*, and *Aslan* to name a few.



Laura Bergin circa 1988

Secretary

So you see, I was more on that side of it than the football, which, by the way, I had come to love. Pity I hadn't been involved in any sport when younger. It was when the football girls decided to go to the AGM, to see what took place, that my life too would change as one of the women - totally without my knowledge - shouted out my name when vote came for Ass Sec. I was stuck to the floor with only seconds to decide. Well, I suppose I had been a secretary all my working life and it can't be much different, so I said yes.

Museum in the GAA Centre

This led to my being asked to organise a museum with people not involved in the club and how exciting was this.



Laura Bergin Secretary and Organiser of the Club Museum in 1987 along with Kevin Croke former Portlaoise great of the 30s and 40s and Councillor (now TD) Willie Aird with John Gorman in the left background

I travelled the town from house to house for photos, medals, and any other memorabilia. So many people volunteered like my dad, Billy, Uncle Larry McEvoy, and PJ Nealon to paint it. Jim Lawlor made the gorgeous display cabinet. Micky Bohane, and Paddy Haslam made up the large frames for the photos to be displayed.

Greats like Kevin Croke donated a medal belonging to his uncle Tim Fennelly, Paddy Conroy (Ballyfin), another medal, Jack Delaney, his boots, and a very precious football that had a pigs bladder and was laced up - one of the earliest types of football that was made. The Christian Brothers came back for the opening night to recall pupils they taught,

and players from all over the country came to meet old friends and teammates. We had no shortage of trophies won by our teams that year, and old and young came together to celebrate the night with music for the older people who liked to waltz till 11pm, and there was a pop band for the youth.

The meaning of Club

It's so very, very important to achieve and display a history of the wonderful accolades won by our club in all genres and ages. As the famous saying goes "if you have no history, you have no past" Being part of a club is part of it's history - no matter what capacity you are involved with, be it a player,

manager, trainer, selector, volunteer etc. It tells a story of how the games themselves have changed and developed over the years, how the methods of training have changed, how everything is analysed in dept now, whether that be for better or worse, how involving children from a very young age is a fantastic outlet for them to both develop themselves physically and to make friends and have fun. They look up to their own heroes who play the game. They now play, and the archives might even see their own family members there. We always say Club is family. We have pride in who we are as a club. We work together, play together, laugh and cry together but the club's there when you need it.

Early Heroes

Jack O'Shea, and Eamon Whelan (the only 2 men I've ever seen turn their back to a goal post and score points) and John O'Leary Dublin Goalie. I admired John so much that I actually drove to Moate in Westmeath alone when the Dubs were playing and sat on the grass bank behind the goals watching him. I well remember Tommy Conroy, Barney Rock, and Brian Mullins, and I loved Kieran Duff as he was that bit dirty. As I was in goals at the time myself, I suppose I appreciated John's job.

People I admire

Sean Boylan, the Meath trainer. Kieran McGeeney from Armagh. Mícheál Ó Muirheartaigh the Kerry Commentator.

Most memorable match seen

Laois winning the National Football League in 1986 against Monaghan.

One to forget

Laois losing to Wicklow in Aughrim in 1986.

Hopes for the Club for the Future

For another Club All-Ireland to be won, and for generations to come to enjoy, take pride in and be part of our wonderful club



and for them to have the wonderful memories of it we have.

Favourite Expression

"That's Life" - Esther Rantzen. (or *'That's shocking'* or *'Old Magoo you done it again'*

Wise words

'If you want a job done right do it yourself' or 'longest way round is the shortest way home' or 'Enjoy life, don't worry about what people think or say about you, they'll think and say it anyway so have fun, smile when your feel low and get up and get out, you only have one life, live it and enjoy it'.

Funny story

Well a very famous Portlaoise and Laois hurler/footballer came to one of the fancy dress nights in the old club house. He was later found by Dick Sides R.I.P. more than a little under the weather, shall we say, up in the Museum. Dick came back down and said to Tommy Keogh R.I.P. who was on the door. *"God Tommy what's the world coming to! There's a nurse up in the Museum fast asleep snoring her head off."*

Or we had people watching Eddie Kinsella one night getting very frustrated playing pool. Couldn't understand what was wrong with the black ball it was barely moving. Seems Joe Ryan had a metal ball painted black and had replaced it on the table for the craic!

Other sports I enjoy to watch

I love table tennis and boxing especially heavy weight and of course Katie Taylor. I also like showjumping, Rugby, and the 100 meter sprint in athletics.

Other teams I support

Kerry in football, I thought Meath or Mayo might achieve something over the past few years but no.

Dad

I remember my dad brought me up to practice one day, and

the ball was wet, and he sent in a drop kick to me. I saved it, but he had kicked it so hard it really really hurt my hands. I wasn't impressed. He roared laughing and said *"now next time you'll jump for it, it won't hurt if your off the ground"*

Dad played for Park and Laois along with the great Tommy Murphy, Jack Kenna, Mick Haughney Paddy Dunne etc.



The 1952 & 1953 back to back winning Park Football team. Billy Bergin second from right in the middle row

the ball was wet, and he sent in a drop kick to me. I saved it, but he had kicked it so hard it really really hurt my hands. I wasn't impressed. He roared laughing and said *"now next time you'll jump for it, it won't hurt if your off the ground"*

Dad played for Park and Laois along with the great Tommy Murphy, Jack Kenna, Mick Haughney Paddy Dunne etc.

Jack Delaney

I used to have chats with Jack Delaney when Laois were going for the League Final. I used to fill out his tickets for the draw for him on a Thursday night *"here Sec come over here I've a job for you"*, he'd say.

He loved John Costello and his high fielding. Of course, Jack played on the 1926 League Team that won, and here we were in 1986.

Love for Football

I was over at a special presentation night for the great Tommy Murphy in the Glenside Pub in Killeshin. He wasn't well at the time with cancer, and dad wanted me to drive him. Lots of the old timers of Laois greats there that night, and I had the pleasure of shaking hands with him. Jack Kenna only died quite recently. So, I suppose that's where I got my love of football more so than hurling.

Fantastic teams like Kerry, Meath and Dublin being are such a joy to watch and there were so many great players on those teams that we still talk about today.



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Walk For The Town 2025

Thanks to everyone who made Walk for the Town 2025 a great success. Each section of the club was represented and the leaders worked hard to drive engagement within their teams.

Some of our far flung, but closely connected, ex-pats helped us out with some middle of the night walks.

Thanks to Mickey Bohane, Cian Taylor, Niall Gleeson and Scott Lawless in USA, Dubai and Australia. Great to see ye taking part guys.

We are delighted to be able to help our Town All Stars as part of this fundraising initiative. A special group of people who help define the meaning of club.

Special thanks to our organisers, our leaders, everyone who walked and everyone who sold lines, and who donated. Without your help it would be very difficult to run our club.





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Walk For The Town 2025





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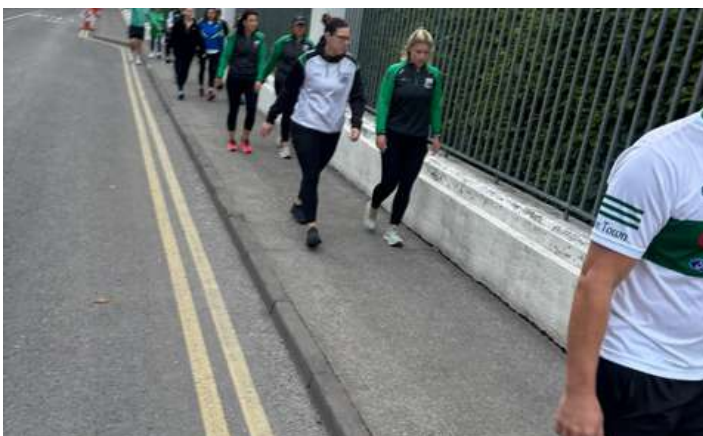
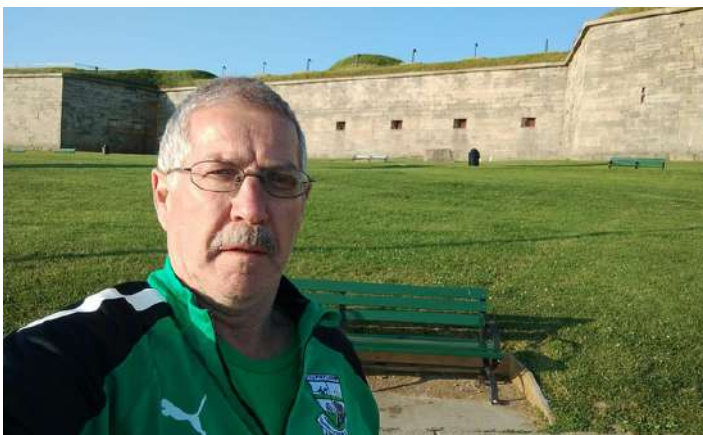
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Walk For The Town 2025





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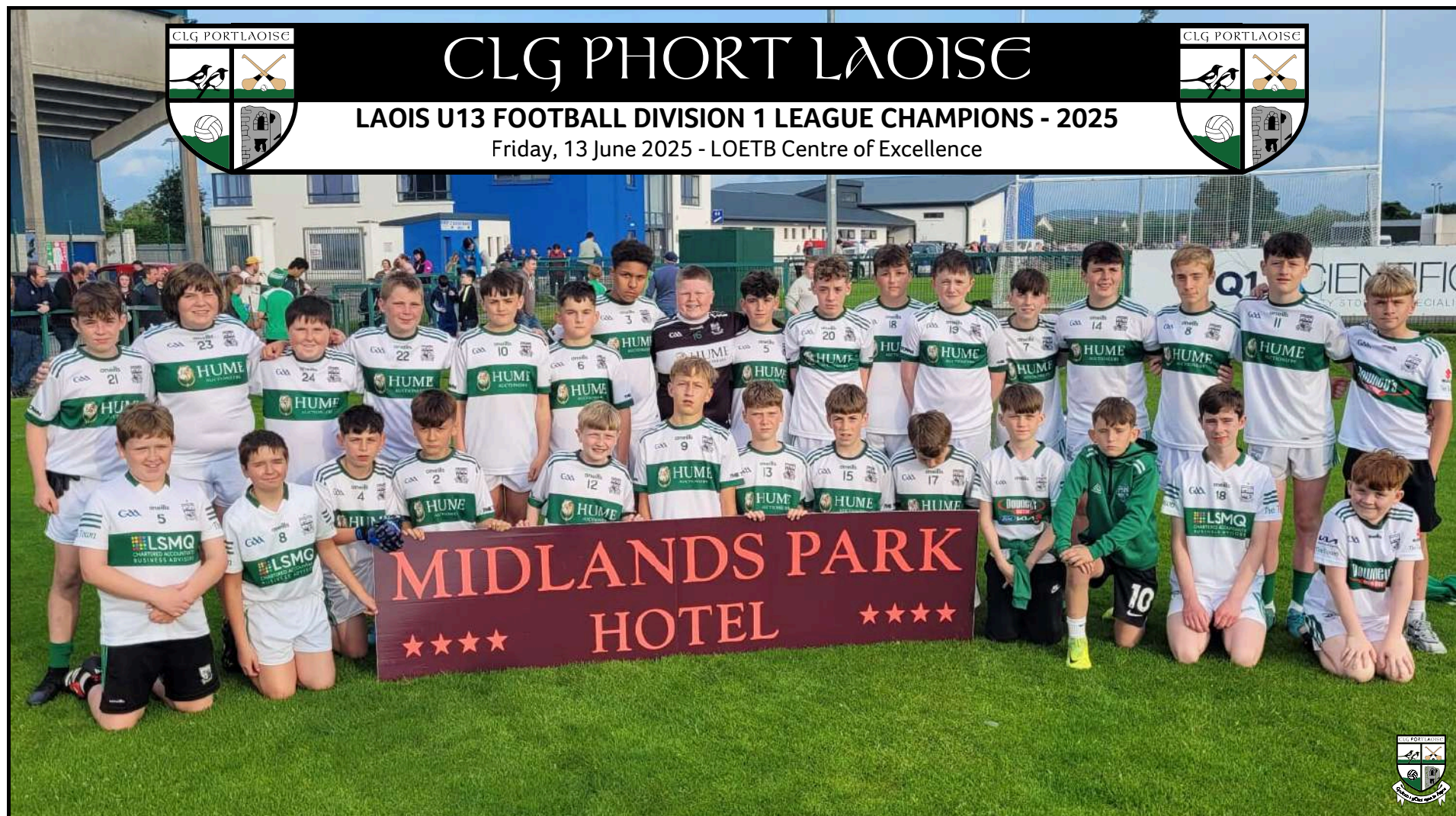
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Portlaoise 6-9 v 3-10 Na Fianna Óg

Back (l. to r.): Conor Kavanagh, Harry O'Dwyer, Adam Keogh, Eoin McNamara, Padraig Fox, Tom Priede, Tyrone Okafor, Danny Kerry, Harry Marum, Logan Peters Fitzpatrick, Fionn Trotman, Sam York, Ronan O'Gorman, Lorcan McBride, Ned Fox, Tyler Whelan, Sam Brown;
 Front (l. to r.): Max Green, Ivan Perepecajs, Aiden Scully, Lennon Brown, Zac Bowe, Mikuss Simmons (Capt.), Noah Clear, Tadgh Bohan, Finn Byrne, Conor Fitzgerald (mascot), Sean Daly (mascot), Sam Breen, Dylan Fitzgerald (mascot);

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July



Tadgh O'Dwyer

This month, we catch up with Tadgh O'Dwyer, former underage player with the club, who's now making waves on the Irish music scene as frontman of local band BYRO (formerly known as Coolboy). From kicking ball in Rathleague to headlining gigs and appearing on RTÉ, Tadgh chats to us about his musical journey, the band's rapid rise, and why he still holds a soft spot for the Town.

A bit about yourself.

My name is Tadgh and I'm 20 years old. I'm a musician and a proud member of Portlaoise GAA.

What are your earliest memories of being involved with the club?

I was sort of a late bloomer when it came to sports if I'm honest. I joined Portlaoise GAA when I was around 12 years old playing both hurling and football, having never played either before. I suppose I joined because I had mates playing. Also my dad (Ed) has always been stonewall mad about GAA (particularly hurling) which definitely made me want to play it that bit more.



Tadgh and his dad Ed post Minor 'B' Hurling Championship win - Oct 2022

Do you remember your first time pulling on the club jersey?

I can't say I remember exactly the first time but the earliest time that sticks out to me was in the U12 'B' football final against Castletown. It was in the LOETB Centre of Excellence on the second pitch. I remember how much bigger and stronger they were compared to us and how terrified I was of them at the time. We did end up winning the game and had a feast in Supermacs afterwards.

Who or what has the biggest influence on your music?

In general I take inspiration from so many different people, places, things. I think when writing the most important thing is to be observant in your daily life. When you're taking in what's going on around you there's never a scarcity of things to write about. When it comes to the music side of things it's genuinely just years of practice and listening to great music growing up (thanks to dad for that).

Your band recently featured on the RTÉ Irish language programme An Ghig Mhór, how did that opportunity come about?

That opportunity was presented to us by the wonderful people at Music Generation Laois. I was a student there for years and I owe them everything really. If I hadn't joined them chances are I wouldn't be in the band today. We had a few meetings with the team at RTÉ and they came down to see us practicing etc. Within a month of our first time meeting we were already filming and planning our hometown headline show.

The show had a strong focus on Gaeilge. What's your own relationship with the Irish language?

The Irish language is something I always have been and always will be extremely proud of. I did all 15 years of schooling from pre school to leaving cert through Irish and still to this day speak it regularly. It's a skill that's gotten me so many opportunities and opened so many doors for me. I really do think it's a special thing to be able to converse with

other people in your mother tongue and it's something that's thankfully being done more and more nowadays.

For those who haven't heard you yet, how would you describe BYRO's sound?

Our sound is a concoction of all of our favourite artists. Imagine throwing artists like The Strokes, Radiohead, Fleetwood Mac and Nirvana into a big witches cauldron. That's pretty much what you're getting with us, a genuine mixture of all of our favourite things about music. I think the most important thing for us is that we have a sound that's recognisable. It's something we've been working on tirelessly for the last 18 months and are now really confident in.

Who are the other members of the band and how did you all come together?

I've been friends with Fionn (lead guitar) for years. We bonded over guitar and started playing together in our bedrooms one summer. From there we reached out to two great Mountrath men who I knew were music mad and the rest is history really. It just worked from the start.

What's been the highlight for you as a band so far?

We're extremely lucky to have had so many cool things happen in such a short period of time. If I had to choose one thing I reckon it would be the show we put on in Kavanagh's, Portlaoise last August. I don't think there's a word to accurately depict how that night felt. It was right off the back of our first single release and the whole room screamed every single word back to us. Dancing, mosh pits, crowd surfing and all sorts. A really special moment for us all.

Is there a dream venue or festival you'd love to play?

As a man from Laois, headlining Electric Picnic is something that I've wanted to do since the first time I attended the festival. I was lucky enough to play at it in 2019 when I was 14 on a smaller stage, however I still have hope that the



main stage slot is going to happen. Another dream of mine is to play in O'Moore Park. I'm not sure if that's even something that can be done but it's something that I want and I don't plan to stop until it happens. Anything outside of those two is a bonus really.

Do you see yourself writing or performing anything as Gaeilge?

I have written as Gaeilge before and it's definitely something I plan to do for future projects. At the moment we're doing the bulk of our writing through English but that's not to say we won't dabble in some Gaeilge in the future. For any

Electric Picnic goers keep an eye out on our socials (@byro.band), we might just make an appearance at this years festival.

What's next for BYRO, any gigs, new music, or big plans we should keep an eye out for?

We've been really busy the last few months working on new music and we hope to have something out for everyone to sink their teeth into soon. We're playing a lot of shows next month so keep your eyes peeled for show announcements and definitely come and see one if you can. Every single bit of support helps us four eejits so much.

Last but not least, where do you see the future of Portlaoise GAA Club heading?

Honestly I think the future of the club has never looked brighter. I've seen so many plans that are undoubtedly going to send the club in a positive direction and I'm seriously excited about what the future holds. Regardless of anything else I always have been and always will be a proud Portlaoise man.





Donal O'Neill Memorial Shield

What a brilliant game in Rathleague earlier this month as both Edenderry and Portlaoise battled it out in the annual Donal O'Neill Memorial Shield game.

Edenderry led for large parts of the game but the Town lads never gave up and manage to claim the spoils with a late score to seal this very special shield win by the narrowest of margins.

After the game Donal's brother Peter - our own clubman - presented the shield to Kevin Swayne, town captain on the night.

This special fixture honours the memory of Donal O'Neill, a hugely respected figure in Offaly and Edenderry GAA, and brother of our aforementioned clubman and former Laois GAA Chairperson Peter O'Neill.

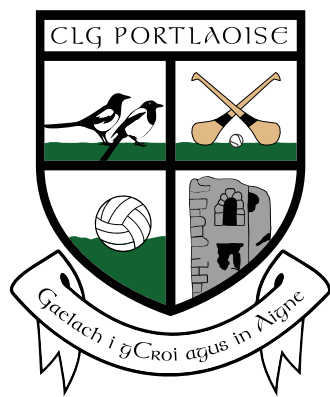
Donal sadly passed away in October 2023 after a short illness. His impact on the game was immense. He won two Leinster U21 titles with Offaly in 1986 and 1988, and went on to help the Faithful county beat Cavan in the 1988 All-Ireland U21 final.

At club level, Donal won multiple Dowling Cups with Edenderry between 1995 and 2001. He represented his county at minor, U21 and senior level, and remained committed to the sport throughout his life. He later coached Maynooth and Kildare underage camogie, where his three daughters played.

We were delighted to welcome Edenderry to Rathleague for what was a meaningful and competitive evening of football in memory of a great GAA man.



Peter O'Neill presenting Kevin Swayne with the Donal O'Neill Memorial Shield





CLG PHORT LAOISE

LAOIS LGFA DIVISION 2 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS - 2025

Sunday, 20 July 2025 - LOETB Centre of Excellence



Portlaoise 3-12 v 0-13 St. Conleth's

Back (l. to r.): Amy Walsh, Sophie Deegan, Tory Byrne, Charlie Walsh, Sarah Fleming, Aine Cuddy, Aoibheann Dalton, Rebecca Keane, Sarah Corrigan, Faye Byrne, Aoife Morris, Shauna Dooley, Grainne O'Reilly, Aisling Keegan, Rachel Byrne;

Front (l. to r.): Jasmine Burke, Faye Brown, Ellen Bergin, Sarah McDonald, Faydagha Dunne, Doireann Brennan, Anna Mulligan, Ailbhe Carroll, Emma Dunne, Amy Byrne, Leah Brophy, Leah Brennan, Ella McNulty;

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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 8



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Crocky Maher
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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 17



Crocky Maher
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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 17





August



Susie Delaney

Susie, first off, congratulations again on the All-Ireland win. Can you put into words what it meant to you to be part of such a historic moment for Laois Camogie?

It's hard to put into words what it means. Being part of such a big moment for Laois Camogie is something I'll never forget. We all dreamed of days like this growing up, and to actually be out there, wearing the Laois jersey and making history, was really special.

Let's bring it back to the start. How did you first get involved with Portlaoise GAA and camogie? Do you remember those early days with the club?

I started playing camogie with Portlaoise when I was about eight, and I loved it straight away. We had a great group coming up through the underage teams and had loads of success. We qualified for 2 Féiles in Waterford and Wexford when I was u14, which stand out as good memories of my early camogie career

You come from a family with a strong sporting background. How important was that support at home in shaping your love for camogie and GAA?

I'm very lucky to come from a strong hurling family, there has always been great support at home. From a young age, camogie and the GAA were just part of everyday life. There was always hurling talk at the kitchen table, whether it was after a match, training, or the next upcoming game. My two brothers, Davy and Fionn, are also heavily involved and doing really well with Portlaoise, so it's something we all share. The support and love for the game at home definitely helped shape my passion for camogie

Winning an All-Ireland is something every player dreams of. What was going through your head when the final whistle went in Croke Park?

When the final whistle blew, it was surreal, like a dream in

come true. Also pure relief to finally get over the line after last year's one-point defeat. All the hard work was worth it for that moment

Looking ahead, Laois now move up to Intermediate level in 2026. Where do you see this team going over the next few years, and how far do you think this group can go?

Moving into Intermediate in 2026, we'll carry all the momentum from our Junior All-Ireland win. Hopefully the group sticks together, I see us being competitive. The fact that our U16 and Minor sides both got All-Ireland finals this year shows the depth coming through.

You've been a huge role model for young girls in Portlaoise. What are your hopes for the future of camogie here in the club?

The support in Portlaoise has been incredible, and seeing the number of young girls playing camogie and football in the club is promising. I hope they stick with camogie, keep improving, and work their way up through the club and county team. No doubt they will be an addition to Camogie the club in the years to come.

What advice would you give to the younger players coming through who dream of following in your footsteps and wearing the Laois or Portlaoise jersey at the highest level?

I would advise to turn practicing into a habit, pick up your hurley whenever you have a spare minute. Attend training and matches as often as possible and work on your weaknesses, whether that be your weak side or first touch

And finally, on a personal note, what's next for you both with Laois and with Portlaoise? Any goals you've set yourself after this All-Ireland success?

With Portlaoise, the jump to intermediate this year has been a big step, results haven't always gone our way, but our performances are improving every match and hopefully we'll soon be competitive.

Laois faces a similar challenge moving up a grade, however I am optimistic that we can go far from the start. But my focus is solely on the next game and the task at hand, nothing is going to change overnight.



Susie on the attack in the All-Ireland Junior Final



Susie Delaney raises the cup





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All-Ireland Trophy in Rathleague





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All-Ireland Trophy in Rathleague





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A busy August evening in Rathleague



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



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A busy August evening in Rathleague



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



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A busy August evening in Rathleague



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



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A busy August evening in Rathleague



Photos: David 'Crocky' Maher



CLG PHORT LAOISE

LAOIS COISTE NA NÓG - U15 DEVELOPMENT FÉILE CHAMPIONS - 2025

Sunday, 24 August 2025 - LOETB Centre of Excellence



Portlaoise 9-8 v 1-2 Portarlington

Back (l. to r.): Conall Lalor, Oisín Reddin, David Tiwo, Nathan Place, Thomas Brennan, Dylan Fitzpatrick, Noah Finn, Lee McStay, Tadhg Graham, Eoghan Dunne, Fionn Delaney, Tadas Sirvaitis, Tiernan O'Dwyer ;

Front (l. to r.): Dillon Gunn, Luke Devaney, Brooklyn McCarthy, Conor O'Reilly, Max Place, Ryan Fennell, Oisín O'Reilly, Max Whelan, Cillian McCausland, Darren O'Brien, Craig Dunne;

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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 8



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 16





September



David 'Crocky' Maher

David "Crocky" Maher is our resident photographer and social historian, a man who has spent a lifetime steeped in the white and green of Portlaoise. We all know his work from the pitch, those sharp action shots that catch the heart of a game, and the quiet gems he finds away from the sporting setting. With a camera in hand and the club in his heart, Crocky has documented our town, our club, our places and our pride. This month he sat down with us to share what the club means to him, and where he hopes to see it go in the years ahead.

What is your first memory of Portlaoise GAA?

When I was very young, my father brought me to the Portlaoise matches. Later I was dropped up to Father Browne Avenue where we did hurling and football with the late Bill Phelan and Ollie Byrne.

When did the club shift from a place you visited to a place you felt you belonged?

After we won the National Football Féile, we had great memories of going on those trips, both football and hurling. Great lads like Johnny Keenan, Brian Rodgers and many more, and we are all still great friends today.

Who were the early people who shaped how you see the club?

The people who I think shaped the club back then, outside of the players, were the likes of Tommy Keogh, Bill Phelan, Dick Sides, Teddy Fennelly, Peadar Molloy, John Hanniffy, Niall Kavanagh, Vinny Dowling and Peter O'Neill, and many more too many to mention.

What small moments still stick with you?

The small moments that stick with me were after the Town won a county final, the great nights in the clubhouse on Father Browne Avenue. The stories from Doc Fitz, Paddy Fitz, Bill Murphy and Dinny Bowe. God, they were some

characters. And winning the Junior 'A' football back in '92. Some great lads back then: Grellan Delaney, Joe Walsh, Pat O'Brien, Ger O'Brien (RIP), John Taylor, Fats Brown, Barry Kavanagh, the Rake, my own brother Anthony and many more. A crazy bunch but some talent. Don't ever mention that to Fats.

Which Portlaoise teams through the years have given you the most joy to watch and or to photograph?

I love watching all the club matches, hurling, football and camogie. Once it's the Town. I have to say my favourite matches to photograph are the hurling ones. Some belts going on there.

Is there a side that never won the a league or a county final but earned a special place for you because of how they played or how they carried themselves?

We were a bit barren in the nineties, but contrary to what some people say, all those players trained as hard as anyone and gave 100 percent commitment to the Portlaoise jersey.

Who are the standard bearers you point to when talking to younger players about Portlaoise at its best?

Standard bearers for me are every player that put on the Town jersey, not just the winners.



Crocky pictured with Gavin Fitzpatrick, Aaron Feane and Jason Maher at the launch event for the 2012 Féile Peile na nÓg

What drew you into the juvenile section of the club?

I got involved in the Juvenile Section many years ago. I suppose like most clubs, volunteers were scarce, so I did my duty, got all my coaching badges and never looked back. I worked with great people like Malcolm Nealon, Paul O'Connell and Dick Finnegan on the committees.



Crocky pictured with, Kieran Lillis, Niall Rigney, Liam 'Stapo' Brown, Mick Nerney, Paul O'Connell and Terry Swayne in June 2014

Tell us a bit about your time with the ladies section?

At a committee meeting one night there was no coach for the Ladies Junior team. I couldn't believe that people would not step forward for a club our size. I had managed underage teams and also junior and intermediate men's teams, so I said I'd give this a go. I did one year, got beaten in a semi-final of the championship. No regrets. Great bunch of ladies. Some of them are representing the senior ladies in the county final shortly. All the best to them.

How did you get into photography?

I always loved the old black-and-white photographs. I made the move to the Portlaoise Camera Club with no clue how to do photography. A couple of years later, here I am, a qualified photographer. Back in my day there weren't too many photographs of players unless you won something, and I played with some great players. So now I think I have



every player in the club photographed. For reference, people who are at matches, do not be afraid to ask me to photograph their son or daughter.

Tell us about one photograph that means the most to you and the story around it?

I have a lot of photographs that people don't see, but one I have of the late Eoin "Rake" McDonald, who played in goals for our winning junior team back in the nineties, is special.

What are your hopes for the club over the next few years?

Hopes for the club are to get back to winning county finals in both football and hurling. When you're winning there's some buzz. There's some amount of talent in the underage section from what I see. It won't be long before we're back to winning ways.

Most photogenic place in the world?

Most photogenic place, and I have done some places, is on our doorstep: the Rock of Dunamase at sunset.

One match you wish you could have shot from the sideline in any era?

The 1983 All-Ireland winning match. My dad was a selector on that team. I would have some photos of him.

A picture you still want to take that has not happened yet?

A picture I would like to take that has not happened yet: my granddaughter lifting the cup in a county final in the Town jersey.

I apologise if I've left people out. A big thanks to Teddy Jr. for a super job as chair and all the lads behind the scenes doing the financial end of things. The people on the club committee. The crazy gang out in the grounds committee they are the fabric of the club, if your ever feeling down go out for tea in the morning with those lads it's some craic.. Not least to mention Richie Coss in England, how he does the club page is beyond me. Thanks again. - Crocky.



Tony Maher and Bernie Conroy prior to the All-Ireland Club Final, March 1983



Crocky pictured with, Claire Dunne, Joe Phelan, Lorraine McCormack and Liam Breen in September 2011



With Cahir Healy and Kevin Fitzpatrick in 2009



LGFA & Camogie fixture clash update and next steps for our dual players

On Saturday 13 September 2025 our Junior Ladies Football team and Senior Camogie teams were scheduled to play championship games at the same time. The respective fixture schedules were ratified by both the Camogie Association and LGFA County Executives prior to the championship beginning. We worked hard to find alternative times or dates so that both fixtures could still go ahead. When it became clear that no change was possible, a difficult decision was made: that the Junior footballers would proceed with their championship semi final, which they won with the help of their dual players. As a consequence, the Camogie Intermediate third round fixture against The Harps had to be conceded. That concession resulted in our Camogie team no longer being permitted to take part in the remainder of the 2025 championship. This was deeply frustrating and upsetting for all involved. The club committee was also very focused on the younger teams coming up through the club who should not have to face such inequitable challenges to physical activity and competition.

Whilst such an outcome is avoidable at the scheduling stage, without open dialogue, coordination and collaboration between the Camogie Association and LGFA, the likelihood of such unfair outcomes increase significantly. At our September committee meeting, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that an appropriate course of action was to form a working sub committee to liaise with both county executives for the LGFA and Camogie associations. This sub-committee was constituted by members of the club executive, the club committee, including representatives from both codes. The core mission: protect player welfare, promote the coordination of fixtures effectively, and ensure that dual players can represent their teams without being forced to choose, which, unfairly causes significant anxiety. The sub committee has begun its work and will continue to engage constructively with both associations in the best interests of current and future players.

These issues affect more than Portlaoise. Other dual clubs in Laois are facing the same pressures. Declan Egan, Treasurer of O'Moore's Camogie Club, put it plainly in a recent email to the Leinster Express. Dual players across Laois are being put under "*unsustainable pressure*." He wrote, "*I am shocked at how ladies are made to play a football fixture one day and less than 24 hours later are made to play a camogie fixture, or vice versa. This has been a constant thread over the last three years at all female age groups in Laois. How can this be allowed to happen in 2025. Then again, it's only this year that women in camogie were finally allowed to wear shorts and that only came about when the most important people of all stood up, the players themselves.*"

He also noted, "*It was not Portlaoise's fault that they have dual players and needed to prioritise in the best interest of the players' welfare and wellbeing. If this had been a men's team unable to field, it would have made the headlines.*" His suggestion is clear and practical. "*All the girls are asking is to*

camogie and football on alternate [weeks]. It will give proper rest time to prepare and recover for your next fixture. This was trialled in Offaly two years ago and has been a resounding success."

We thank our players, coaches and volunteers for how they handled a tough situation with respect and care for each other. We will keep members updated on progress as the sub committee continues its work with both county bodies. Our goal is a fair, sensible fixture plan that respect and supports dual players and strengthens Gaelic games across the county.

Club Statement from 13th September 2025

Unfortunately our Junior Ladies Footballers and Senior Camogie teams are fixed at the same time tonight, creating a clash for dual players and supporters.

We have reached out to both county associations to express our disappointment that no alternative arrangements could be made. While this will not change tonight's clash, we hope to open constructive dialogue with both bodies to avoid clashes across the codes in future.

We understand the calendar is tight. As a dual club, we are concerned that further clashes will force players to choose one code over another. That is a disservice to players who give huge effort to represent Portlaoise in both codes. This is not unique to our club and reflects the reality of dual participation across the county. We would welcome sensible accommodation when clashes arise.

As a result of the clash, our Senior Camogie team will not be able to fulfil their Laois Camogie Intermediate Championship fixture tonight. This decision was taken with a heavy heart. There is significant crossover between both squads and, with our Junior Ladies Footballers playing a county semi final this evening, the club has prioritised that fixture.

We're very disappointed as a club for our players, mentors and supporters. Thank you for your understanding and for continuing to support both squads.

C'mon The Town.



All-Stars End of Year





All-Stars End of Year





All-Stars End of Year





All-Stars End of Year





All-Stars End of Year





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All-Stars End of Year





All-Stars End of Year



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All-Stars End of Year



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Camogs Meet Ashling Thompson

A fun night was had in Rathleague this month when our U8 and U12 girls met Cork Camogie star & All Ireland winner Ashling Thompson.

Ashling spent some time with girls answering their questions and giving them some tips on Camogie.





Back (l. to r.): Sean Lalor, David Fitzpatrick, Jack Costelloe, Lorcan O'Brien, Sean Óg Brown, Aaron Scully, Daniel Bockariov, Jake Conroy;
 Front (l. to r.): Cian Reddington, Oran Byrne, Sean Daly, Aodhán Kelly, Conor Fitzgerald, Ruairí Bannon;

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U9 Mini All Ireland - St Jude's

We entered three teams and played a total of 16 games. The boys represented the club with distinction throughout, narrowly losing out in a final.

This was a very well run tournament by St.Judes. Some extremely talented teams from all over the country and the boys held their own.



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Town Tigers End of Year



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Town Tigers End of Year



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Town Tigers End of Year



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Town Tigers End of Year



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Town Tigers End of Year



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 7



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 7



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 7



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 7



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 7



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 8



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 8



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 8



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 9



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 9



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 9



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11 & U12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 13



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 14



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 14



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 15



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 15





October



Josh Hogan - Club GPO

Josh Hogan has worn the green and white for as long as he can remember. A Laois footballer and a proud Portlaoise man, he has come through the club the whole way and is now taking on a new role off the pitch as Portlaoise GAA's Games Participation Officer. It is a natural fit. Josh knows the club, he knows the town and he knows what young players need to enjoy their football and hurling. In this piece we look at the journey of a current senior footballer who is now stepping into a job that will link the schools, the nursery, Town Tigers and Town Óg with the wider club.

What is your new role with Portlaoise GAA, and what will it entail?

My new role with Portlaoise GAA is club GPO (Games Participation Officer). Among many things, I will support the coaches involved with our Town Tigers and Town Óg teams, co-ordinate coach education workshops, oversee club activities over the school breaks and holiday periods and provide a smooth pathway for players from school to club.

What do you see as the main challenges in the role?

The main challenges in this role I see are providing a smooth pathway for kids from school to club. So if a child does enjoy playing GAA in their school they are able to join their club and continue to have fun.

How will you measure success in it?

By the number of children I get involved and keep involved in the club over my time in this role.

What is your GAA background?

I'm a Portlaoise and Laois senior footballer.

What are your earliest GAA memories?

Going to watch Portlaoise win county titles with my Grandad and Uncle.

Who would you say were your biggest influences?

Joe O'Callaghan, Adrian White and Paul Cahillane.

Learned great lessons about life and GAA from all of them.

What are your greatest GAA memories?

Winning the Laois U14 A Féile Final (2017) and heading to Monaghan and Cavan that year for the Féile.

What does the GAA mean to you?

Portlaoise GAA for me is all about community and friendship. It's a place where I can compete as part of a team and also spend time with friends playing a game I love to play.



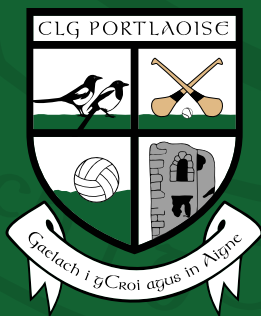
New club GPO - Josh Hogan



Laois Féile Peile na nÓg Champions - 2017.
Josh is pictured fourth from the left in the back row.

FIONA DOOLEY

**LAOIS LGFA
SENIOR PLAYER
OF THE YEAR**



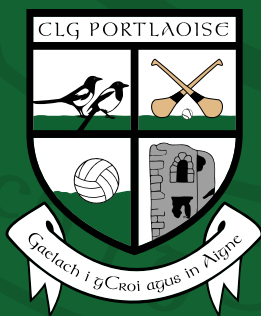
Congratulations to Fiona Dooley who has been named Laois LGFA Senior Championship Player of the Year.

A brilliant season from Fiona in the white and green and great to see her performances recognised at county level.

She will receive her award on Saturday 22 November in the Midlands Park Hotel.

LARA CULLETON

**LAOIS LGFA
MINOR LADIES
PLAYER OF THE YEAR**



Congratulations to Lara Culleton who has been named Laois LGFA Minor Player of the Year alongside Graiguecullen's Mia Branagan.

Well done Lara on a brilliant season.

Lara will receive her award on Saturday 22 November in the Midlands Park Hotel.

LAOIS SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM OF THE YEAR



Deirdre Phelan



Ellen Healy



Ciara Crowley



Fiona Dooley



Gráinne Moran



LAOIS JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM OF THE YEAR



Aoife Hyland Conlon



Amy Byrne



Sarah McDonald



Ann Mulligan



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LADIES GAEILIC FOOTBALL

Laois LGFA SFC Final: Portlaoise 3-11 v 1-11 St Conleth's

The Town are county champions again. Portlaoise claimed the Laois LGFA Senior title for the fourth time in six years after a strong win over holders St Conleth's in Stradbally earlier this month.

It's the fourth straight season the sides have met at this stage. We won in 2022 and 2023 and St Conleth's took it last year, and this time the Town finished the job.

St Conleth's opened with two points before Ellen Healy replied. From the kick-out Alison Taylor won possession, found Aisling Kehoe, and she set up Gráinne Moran to score the first goal. They levelled quickly and then hit 1-2 to edge ahead. We responded at once when a Moran free dropped into the square and Kehoe finished a goal. Moran added a free and it was tight to the break. Points from Taylor and Kehoe put us in front briefly before late St Conleth's points left it level at half time, 2-6 to 1-9.

We started the second half well. Healy and Kehoe landed points to push us two clear. St Conleth's cut it to one, but the next spell belonged to Portlaoise. Ciara Crowley, Fiona Dooley and Moran added points, and the defence held firm. Keeva O'Reilly dealt calmly with a dangerous ball, punching clear at a key moment. With St Conleth's down a player late on, Moran converted the free, then struck her second goal and another point to seal it.

Full time brought great scenes in white and green as the Town lifted the Lulu Carroll Cup once more.

Final score

Portlaoise 3-13

St Conleth's 1-11

Scorers

Portlaoise: Gráinne Moran 2-4 (0-2 frees), Aisling Kehoe 1-3, Fiona Dooley 0-2, Ciara Crowley 0-1, Alison Taylor 0-1.

St Conleth's: Aoibhe Byron 0-7 (0-3 frees), Claire Fox 1-0, Naomi Luttrell 0-2, Eva Galvin 0-1, Shifra Havill 0-1.

Portlaoise

Keeva O'Reilly; Ella McNulty, Deirdre Phelan, Sarah Fleming; Ciara Crowley, Aishling Saunders, Rebecca Reddin; Fiona Dooley, Ellen Healy; Alison Taylor, Aisling Kehoe, Grainne O'Reilly; Leah Loughman, Gráinne Moran, Suzie Delaney.

Subs: Lara Culleton for G O'Reilly half time, Shauna Dooley for Loughman 51, Faye Brown for Crowley 58.

St Conleth's

Claire O'Connell; Ola Haastrup, Fiona Dempsey, Gráinne Cotter; Aoife Cummins, Áine Haberlin, Mary Cotter; Shifra Havill, Aoife Kirrane; Marie Byrne, Eva Galvin, Naomi Luttrell; Aoibhe Byron, Claire Fox, Emma Lawlor.

Subs: Courtney Finlay for Lawlor 42, Becky Fenlon for Luttrell 57.



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LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL

Laois LGFA SFC Final: Portlaoise 3-11 v 1-11 St Conleth's



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LADIES GAEIL FOOTBALL

Laois LGFA SFC Final: Portlaoise 3-11 v 1-11 St Conleth's



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LADIES GAEILIC FOOTBALL

Laois LGFA SFC Final: Portlaoise 3-11 v 1-11 St Conleth's



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LADIES GAEIL FOOTBALL

Laois LGFA SFC Final: Portlaoise 3-11 v 1-11 St Conleth's



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LADIES GAEIC FOOTBALL

Laois LGFA SFC Final: Portlaoise 3-11 v 1-11 St Conleth's





CLG PHORT LAOISE

LAOIS LGFA SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS - 2025

Saturday, 11 October 2025 - Bill Delaney Park, Stradbally



Portlaoise 3-13 v 1-11 St Conleth's

Back (l. to r.): Emma Dunne, Amy Byrne, Aishling Saunders, Tory Byrne, Leah Loughman, Gráinne Moran, Keeva O'Reilly, Sarah Fleming, Alison Taylor, Ellen Healy, Ella McNulty, Lara Culleton, Abbey Louise Byrne, Gráinne O'Reilly, Doireann Brennan;

Front (l. to r.): Suzie Delaney, Deirdre Phelan, Rebecca Reddin, Fiona Dooley, Aisling Kehoe (Capt.), Shauna Dooley, Aoibhe O'Brien, Ciara Crowley, Leah Brennan, Sarah McDonald, Faye Brown;

Scorers: Gráinne Moran 2-4 (0-2 f), Aisling Kehoe 1-3, Fiona Dooley 0-2, Ellen Healy 0-2, Ciara Crowley 0-1, Alison Taylor 0-1;

Management: Kevin O'Grady, Ryan O'Grady, Lorraine McCormack, Mark Brophy, Eimear Kehoe, Alyssa Velles, Olive Murphy;

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Laois LGFA U16 'A' Final: Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska

Portlaoise are this year's Laois LGFA Under 16 A champions after a hard-fought win over Park Ratheniska in Stradbally earlier this month. The final was the curtain-raiser to the senior decider.

Park Ratheniska started the brighter and were three points up inside eight minutes, all from the boot of Mia Delaney, as they bossed early possession. Portlaoise settled when Molly Jane Dempsey clipped their first score off her left. Moments later came the game's turning point. Ellen Fitzpatrick slipped a clever pass to Leah Brophy and her shot flew into the top corner. Dempsey tagged on two more before the break and Portlaoise led by three at half time, Brophy's goal the difference.

Fitzpatrick stretched the lead on the restart and Portlaoise threatened another goal, with Dempsey just wide and Brophy striking a post. Park Ratheniska replied through Delaney to keep it a one-score game. When Park Ratheniska did break through, Portlaoise keeper Kate Scully stood tall with a brilliant save from Erin Kavanagh to preserve the clean sheet.

From there Portlaoise finished strongly. Sub Kayleigh O'Callaghan made an instant impact, winning a kick-out and setting up Kara Powders for a tidy point. Brophy added two more, one from play and one from a free, to bring her tally to 1-2. Kavanagh pulled one back with ten to play but Portlaoise's defence was rock solid, shutting down space and seeing it out to the whistle.

Final score

Portlaoise 1-7

Park Ratheniska 0-5

Scorers

Portlaoise: Leah Brophy 1-2 (0-2 frees), Molly Jane Dempsey 0-3, Ellen Fitzpatrick 0-1, Kara Powders 0-1.

Park Ratheniska: Mia Delaney 0-4 (0-2 frees), Erin Kavanagh 0-1.

Portlaoise

Kate Scully; Samantha Stalbe, Sarah Walsh, Lucy Mulhall; Kara Powders, Alix Cullenton, Caitlin Fitzpatrick; Grainne Coleman, Kara Phelan; Amarachi Obi, Ellen Fitzpatrick, Leah Brophy; Molly Jane Dempsey, Aishling Dowling, Sarah Donoghue.

Subs: Rachel Kelly for Walsh, Kayleigh O'Callaghan for Dowling (both 40), Emma Scully for Dempsey (61).

Park Ratheniska

Cara Deegan; Anna Szwaglis, Moya Ramsbottom, Kate Ging; Riona Dunne, Molly Fitzpatrick, Sarah Cunningham; Saffron Adams, Mary O'Hara; Adah Ramsbottom, Mia Delaney, Charlotte Lawlor; Erin Kavanagh, Maeve Kelly, Kate Conroy.

Subs: Grace Fennelly for Kelly (HT), Lily Reid for Szwaglis (40), Lucy Keenan for Lawlor (54).

Referee

Kevin Phelan, St Brigid's.



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Laois LGFA U16 'A' Final: Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska



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Laois LGFA U16 'A' Final: Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska



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Laois LGFA U16 'A' Final: Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska



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Laois LGFA U16 'A' Final: Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska



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Laois LGFA U16 'A' Final: Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska



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Laois LGFA U16 'A' Final: Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska





Portlaoise 1-7 v 0-5 Park Ratheniska

Back (l. to r.): Leah Brophy, Caitlin Fitzpatrick, Aoibhe Ging, Ashling Dowling (Capt.), Alix Culleton, Grainne Coleman, Kate Scully Maher, Emily Kelly, Rachel Kelly, Molly Jane Dempsey, Ellen Fitzpatrick, Abbie Thompson, Kara Phelan, Emma Glennon, Taylor Dowling, Freya Stanley;
Front (l. to r.): Eve O'Gorman, Beth Donoghue, Amarachi Obi, Sarah Donoghue, Sarah Walshe, Robyn Byrne, Kayleigh O'Callaghan, Kara Powders, Emma Scully, Samantha Stable, Lucy Mulhall, Katie Holland, Adela Jacob;

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Laois U15 'A' FC Final: Portlaoise 2-10 v 1-12 Mountmellick Parish Gaels

What a finish in O'Moore Park. The Town were crowned U15 county champions this month after a cracking game that went right to the wire. With the clock deep in injury time, Ethan O'Connor showed serious bottle to curl over a 63rd minute free and seal it for Portlaoise.

The lads flew out of the blocks. Danny Breen finished to the net early and O'Connor tapped over two frees to settle us. Mountmellick got on the board after 11 minutes, but scores from Noah Finn and Fionn Delaney pushed our lead to six. Mountmellick came roaring back with 1-2, their goal from Dan Blanc and points from Fionn Burke. We steadied. Maksymillian Piech clipped a point and then Delaney struck for our second goal to open daylight again. A Burke free and an O'Connor reply left it Portlaoise 2-6 to 1-4 at the break.

The second half started tight, no score for 11 minutes until Piech nudged us on. Mountmellick answered with a Burke two pointer to spark their purple patch. Though O'Connor hit back with a free, the momentum swung and Mountmellick reeled off six on the trot to edge one ahead entering the closing minutes.

The lads dug in. From the next kickout we won clean ball around the middle, worked it through the hands and found Breen for the equaliser. Extra time looked likely until O'Connor stepped up again and split the posts from distance to bring the cup back to the Town for the first time since 2022.

Final score

Portlaoise: 2-10

Mountmellick Parish Gaels: 1-12

Portlaoise scorers

Ethan O'Connor 0-5 (frees), Danny Breen 1-1, Fionn Delaney 1-1, Maksymillian Piech 0-2, Noah Finn 0-1.

Portlaoise Panel

Danny Breen, Thomas Brennan, Dylan Clear, Fionn Delaney, Luke Devaney, Tadgh Doheny, Eoghan Dunne, Aaron Egan, Eoghan Fennell, Ryan Fennell, Noah Finn, Dylan Fitzpatrick, Eoin Fitzpatrick, Darragh Ging, Tadgh Graham, Conall Lalor, Brooklyn McCarthy, Culainn McEvoy (Capt.), Lee McStay, Ethan O'Connor, Tiernan O'Dwyer, David Owuso, Maks Piech, Oisin Reddin, Tadas Sirvaitis, David Tiwo, Max Whelan;

Massive credit to both teams for a savage contest. Fair play to our lads and mentors.





CLG PHORT LAOISE

LAOIS U15 'A' FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS - 2025

Saturday, 18 October 2025 - O'Moore Park



Portlaoise 2-10 v 1-12 Mountmellick Parish Gaels

Back (l. to r.): Luke Devaney, Tiernan O'Dwyer, Conall Lalor, Maks Piech, David Tiwo, Max Whelan, Noah Finn, Lee McStay, Ethan O'Connor, Fionn Delaney, Tadas Sirvaitis, David Owuso, Dylan Clear, Culainn McEvoy (Capt.), Oisín Reddin;

Front (l. to r.): Eoghan Dunne, Tadgh Doheny, Ryan Fennell, Tadgh Graham, Danny Breen, Dylan Fitzpatrick, Aaron Egan, Eoghan Fennell, Darragh Ging, Brooklyn McCarthy, Thomas Brennan, Eoin Fitzpatrick;

Management: Kevin Fitzpatrick, Jason Lalor, Owen Delaney, Fearghal Fennell;

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Laois U13 'A' FC Final: Portlaoise 4-14 v 5-7 Na Fianna Óg

The Town are U13 county champions again after a thriller in O'Moore Park this month. Portlaoise led for long spells, soaked up a late surge, and finished four clear at the end.

We hit the ground running. Mikkus Simmons clipped the opener and soon after Ben McCormack buried our first goal. Sam Brown added from play and McCormack tapped a free. Na Fianna Óg steadied through Eoin McDonald, but McCormack answered in style with back to back two pointers, pushing us nine up at 1-7 to 0-1. The opposition rallied with a goal from Oisín Kerrigan and two McDonald frees to close the gap.

Just before the break Ben struck again. Another two pointer, then a superb finish for his second goal inside half a minute. We turned around in great shape, 2-9 to 1-3.

After the restart Lorcan McBride pointed and then cracked in our third goal to stretch it out again. Na Fianna Óg came hard. Goals from Conor Moore and Eoin McDonald had them right back in it, only for Kerry to stand tall with several sharp stops. We settled when Ned Fox finished a tidy move after a lovely pass from McCormack. They kept coming, picking off points, and we traded scores through a McCormack free and a Fitzpatrick two pointer. Two late goals for Na Fianna Óg from Charlie Conway and Luke McDonald cut it to four, but the clock was our friend and the lads saw it out.

Serious shift from the full panel, plenty of cool heads when it mattered, and back to back Under 13 championships for the Town.

Final score

Portlaoise: 4-14

Na Fianna: Óg 5-7

Portlaoise scorers

Ben McCormack 2-9 (three two pointers, 0-2 frees), Lorcan McBride 1-3 (one two pointer), Ned Fox 1-0, Sam Brown 0-1, Mikkus Simmons 0-1.

Portlaoise Panel

Tadhg Bohan, Zac Bowe, Sam Breen, Lennon Brown, Sam Brown, Noah Clear, Logan Peters Fitzpatrick, Ned Fox, Paudie Fox, Kian French Glynn, Danny Kerry, Sean Kitson, Harry Marum, Lórcan McBride, Ben McCormack, Ronan O'Gorman, Rian O'Sullivan, Tom Priede, Aiden Scully, Mikuss Simsons (Capt.), Tyler Whelan, Sam York;





Portlaoise 4-14 v 5-7 Na Fianna Óg

Back (l. to r.): Sam Breen, Ned Fox, Sam Brown, Ronan O'Gorman, Ben McCormack, Rian O'Sullivan, Tyler Whelan, Lórcan McBride, Mikuss Simsons (Capt.), Paudie Fox, Sam York, Sean Kitson;

Front (l. to r.): Aiden Scully, Tom Priede, Zac Bowe, Lennon Brown, Tadgh Bohan, Danny Kerry, Noah Clear, Kian French Glynn, Harry Marum, Logan Peters Fitzpatrick;

Management: Barry Fitzgerald, Brian Bohan, Brian McCormack, Mick Bowe;

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MFC Final: Portlaoise 1-11 v 1-12 Crettyard Spink



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 13



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 13



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 16



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Minor





November



Rathleague Development Update

Elliott Group, the main contractors of the upcoming development work out in Rathleague have moved on site and progress has been made to start works on the car park and all weather pitch.

We will keep you up to date over the coming months with progress on the project.



Tommy Griffin Over 35s Champions 2025

Our Legends did the club proud in Dingle in early November, winning the prestigious Tommy Griffin Tournament after a cracking day's football.

Route to the title

- Group stage: wins over Kerry Masters and Clann Éireann
- Semi final: beat fellow Laois side and great rivals Stradbally
- Final: defeated Crossmaglen Rangers, where captain Kevin Fitzpatrick lifted the cup to great scenes

It was a superb display across the panel and they have done themselves and the club proud. Paul Cahillane was deservedly voted Player of the Tournament.

Management on the day: Owen “Churtle” Delaney and Colm “Wooly” Parkinson.



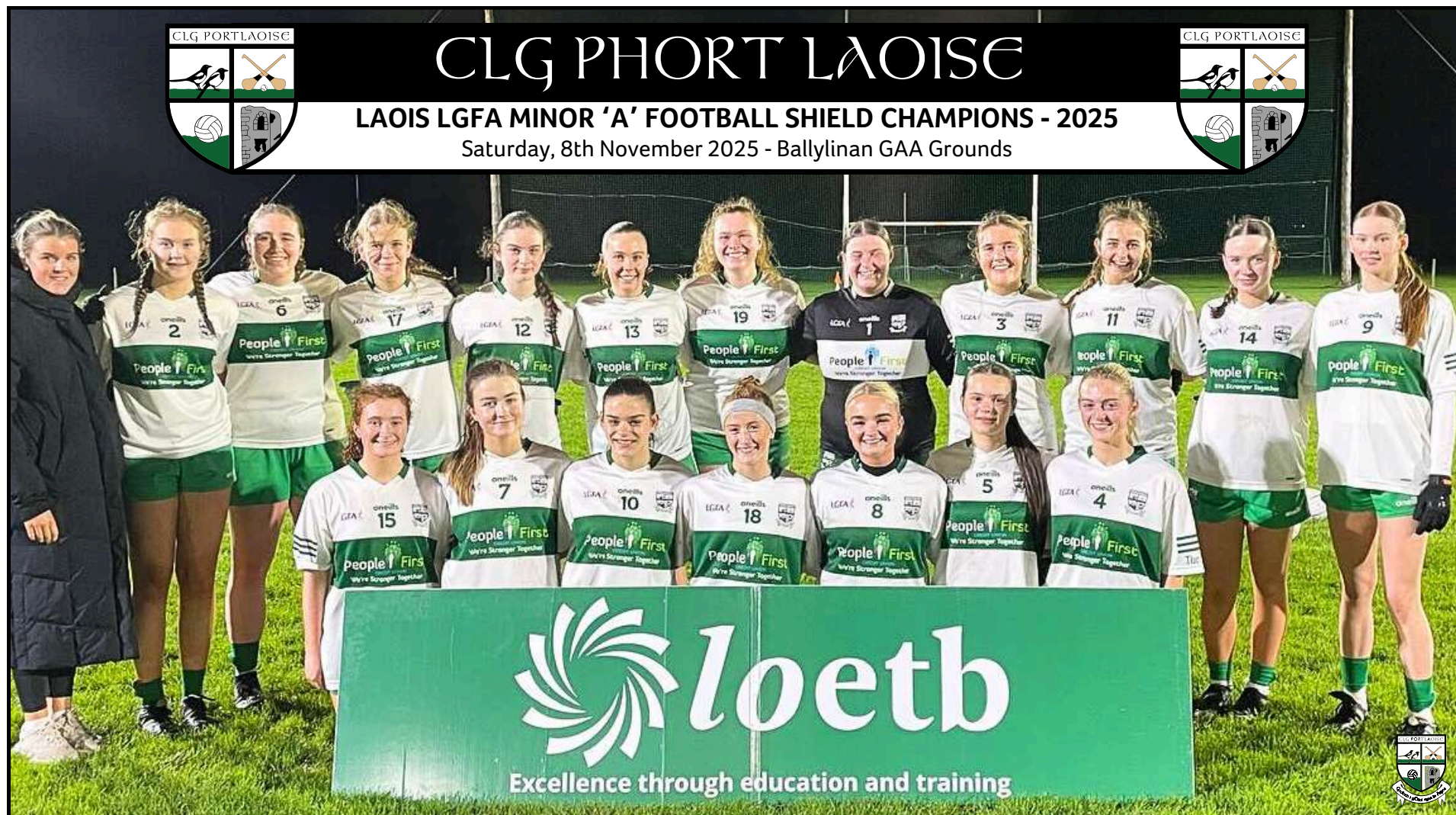
Laois LGFA MFC Shield Final: Portlaoise 5-7 v 2-8 St. Brigid's

A great win for our Minor ladies in the Laois LGFA Minor A Championship Shield Final, defeating St Brigid's by 5-7 to 2-8 in Ballylinan GAA Grounds.

It took a late surge to finish the job, with the girls pulling clear in the last ten minutes after a tight, exciting contest. It is a well earned reward at the end of a year where this group trained hard and competed strongly throughout.

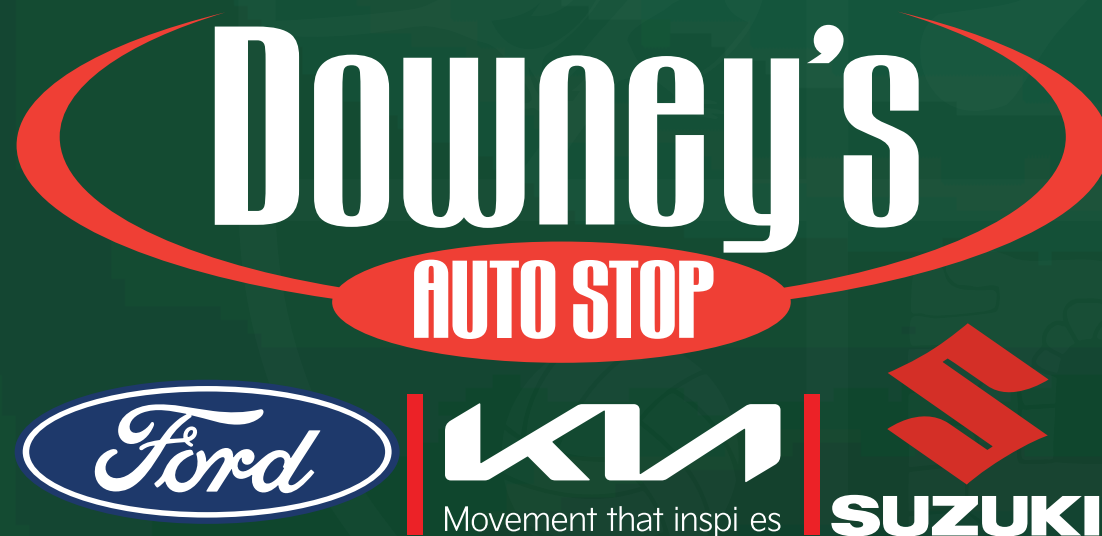
Congratulations to the players and mentors





Portlaoise 5-07 v 2-8 St. Brigid's

Back (l. to r.): Ellen Fitzpatrick, Ruby Doyle, Aoife Morris, Sarah Corrigan, Leah Brophy, Ailbhe Carroll, Cara Coleman, Kate Scully, Faye Byrne, Molly-Jane Dempsey, Leah Brennan, Lara Culleton;
Front (l. to r.): Gillian McEvoy, Ellen Bergin, Anna Mulligan, Sarah McDonald(Capt.), Faye Brown, Kara Phelan, Abbey-Louise Byrne;



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Sí an Nollaig í!
It's Christmas!

Cuir gothaí na Nollag ort féin!
Get into the spirit of Christmas!

Tá gach duine ag canadh carúil Nollaig
Everyone is singing Christmas carols.

CIORCAL COMHRÁ NOLLAIG

DECEMBER USEFUL PHRASES

Níl cead isteach gan geansaí Nollag!
No entry without a Christmas jumper!

Go mbeirimid beo ag an am seo arís!
May we be alive at this time again!

Nollaig faoi shéan agus faoi mhaise!
A prosperous and flourishing Christmas/Happy Christmas!

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Thanks to everyone who supports our fundraising efforts through the Town Lotto (day to day running costs), and Club Bingo (development). It is greatly appreciated.

If you have any feedback in relation to the newsletter, or if you would like to contribute to it, please contact info@portlaoisegaa.ie