

AN CHRAOBH NA CLAIRSEACHA CLG

STEWARTSTOWN HARPS GAC

AGM MONDAY 11TH JANUARY 2015

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Introduction

A chairde gael,I would like to welcome and to thank you for attending our annual convention on this January night when we will review the season past both on and off the playing fields.It was a very busy year on the field with participation in every competition in mens and youth football and we fielded 4/5 youth teams in ladies football,details of which will be outlined in the ladies report.There were definite signs of improvement in many areas especially our senior mens team but the only team to bring tangible success was our u14 ladies who won the grade 3 league title.

Off the field we made good progress with our debt repayment and thanks to the great work of our chairman Sean Gallagher and financial advisor Brendan Kelly we were successful in getting a sizeable VAT refund from our pitch development.This has enabled us to pay off the remaining loan account and we start the new season free of debt!!

Our playing facilities are well respected and sought after by the CCC in mens and ladies as well as the Ulster Colleges and we have hosted a wide variety of games over the season.I will return to the grounds work later on.

Senior team

With negotiations completed early in December we had a new team manager in place in Pdraig O'Kane ,former Derry and Loup player ,who was later joined by Brendan Kelly as assistant and joint reserve team manager.Training began in mid January with gym sessions and outdoors on Sunday mornings at the pitch.We entered the Ulster Intermediate league and began our campaign with a long away journey to Drumaness in east Down.After an experimental campaign we qualified for the semi final where we won a tight game away to Pomeroy and then faced fellow Tyrone rivals Galbally in the Ulster Intermediate league final.This was to be a game decided by the outcome of two penalty decisions,Galbally scored theirs and we missed ours and were beaten by 3 points at the finish.Nevertheless it was a good foundation for the upcoming Division Two campaign.

We made a very good start to the league winning both home and away games.However we had a poor middle to the league and lost our place in the top four with some poor performances both home and away.Late summer saw an improvement in our performances and we had a good finish to the league just missing out on a promotion play-off after a close defeat in our last game at Cookstown.When you

consider that we defeated or drew with all 3 teams who were promoted to division 1 you can see many grounds for optimism. I will not dwell on our IFC first round defeat by Cookstown in late May when we threw away a 5 point half time lead to be caught with a late one point defeat in extra time.

Reserves

Numbers were healthy at training and we started well in the league and were able to field teams for most of the season. We finished just below mid table but did not get our full quota of games due to some teams being unable/unwilling to field. It is vital that all of our older minors and u21 players are available and training for our reserve team as a strong reserve panel is vital for the health of our senior team.

One of our best performances was in the IRFC away to a strong Cookstown team who went on to contest the final. The boys put in a very committed and skilful performance and were unlucky to lose by 3 points at the finish. I would safely say that this attitude permeated to our senior team at this time and improved their results.

U21 league

We entered a team at grade 2 level on the strength of double success at grades 1 and 2 in minors. We reached the semi final and lost by two points to Greencastle after a controversial penalty decision late in the game. We will be entering a team again this year and hope that we can go all the way this time! It is vital that all players make themselves available for this level.

Youth teams(Boys)

Despite operating with limited numbers in most age groups we entered teams in all competitions from u8 through to u21 level. The hard work and commitment of our youth officer Rory O'Neill cannot be praised enough and indeed Rory stepped in to help with most teams when needed.

The minor boys played in grade 3 with a limited panel of 15 players for a 13 a side competition. We had a good league campaign and reached the semi final against Drumragh where the absence of 2 key players cost us a place in the final. After a first round replay win over Greencastle we lost a close quarter final at home to Loughmacrory. We are only losing 2 players from this team so we have good potential to push for honours at grade 3 in 2016.

The u16 boys had a good league campaign and defeated Castlederg in the q-final and then faced double winners Eglis in the semi final. It was unfortunate that Eglis were allowed to compete in grade 3 as they were far too strong for all other teams. We lost the c'ship at semi final stage with a narrow defeat by Drumragh.

We hosted a group stage of the Og Sport grade 2 and won our group which qualified us for the county semi final at Garvaghey. The boys performed very well and lost a close encounter to eventual winners Strabane.

The u14 league began in Mid March as we competed in grade 3 having moved up from grade 4 at u13 level. The boys found it tough with a very young team but reached the league q-final where they performed well in defeat to Newtown Stewart. With most of this team available for next season prospects are good for grade 3 success.

We played in u13 grade 3 league in the months of September and October and won all 5 games in our section. This gave us a home semi final to Aghyaran which was delayed due to some of our boys being on the u16 panel in their semi final. Unfortunately we didn't perform as well as expected and lost our last chance of silverware for the season as Aghyaran won by 3 points. However this will stand the lads in good stead for 2016 at u14.

We competed very well in the u12 league and in the u8 and u10 blitzes where our boys gained valuable experience and enjoyment. We did over our quota by hosting 2 blitzes at both u8 and 10s.

All this activity would not be possible without the hard work, skill and commitment of our youth managers and the support of parents in providing transport and assistance at games. It is essential that all parents help in whatever way they can and not stand back and leave it up to others to work with their children.

Ladies football

We continue to make good progress and the coaching team is growing with good parental support.

Report to be read out at this point by Emma Park.

Culture

With an enthusiastic Tony Donnelly as cultural officer we entered senior scor in 4 events in the first round in late January in Cookstown. We got to the semi final in instrumental and quiz teams with the music group getting to a first ever county final for the club where they performed very well. It is great to report renewed interest and enthusiasm generated by a new group of young members. Unfortunately we couldn't get enough entries/interest at scor na nOg this year.

We are hosting a first round of Scor Sinsear for the first time in many years on Sunday 17th Jan at 5 pm in St Marys hall and we hope you will come along and enjoy the competition and support our acts!!

Thanks

There are a wide variety of people who deserve our sincere thanks for their contribution to the running of our club this past year;

- All our coaches
- My fellow committee members
- County board rep Declan Lavery who attended all meetings
- Our referees, Martin Devlin, Stephen Campbell and Gerard Devlin
- Club na Claireseacha members

- Our sponsor Keystone Group
- Lotto sellers and draw administrators
- Our Groundsmen led by Rory O'Neill
- Finally anyone I have forgotten to thank, your help is greatly appreciated

Summary

As we gather here tonight or as you read this report on the website I would appeal to you to do your best to support the club in as many ways as you can in 2016. There is great potential for success by our senior team and our target is senior football in 2017!! This is realistic but will not be achieved without everyone pulling together in whatever ways are needed from u8 to senior teams. As the old saying goes,

United we stand divided we fall! So let's do our best for this fine club!

Another issue which we all need to be aware of are the low numbers in the local St. Mary's primary school from P5 downwards. As a consequence we will have difficulty in fielding u8 in the coming season and just about field at u10. Some of our former players with young families are now living in other areas and their children are with their local clubs. If the situation continues we will have to consider amalgamating with another club to provide football at youth levels in the very near future. So I appeal to you to help increase our local population!!

Finally I would like to thank Maura and Sean Gallagher for their great friendship, loyalty and sacrifice over twenty plus years in their posts and hope that they both remain on the committee for many years to come.

I am stepping down as secretary this year in my third stint in this role. I am willing to remain as assistant secretary if needed in 2016.

Go raibh maith agaibh go leir.

Damien Mac conmhaoil

