

Tuarascáil an Oifigeach Chaidrimh Phoiblí



PRO Report 2022

Introduction

My fourth (and final) year as Oifigeach Chaidrimh Phoiblí marked a return to normal PRO duties following two years wrestling with Covid restrictions. Largely dis-appointing for Donegal on the field of play, there were some successes eg. the Leo Murphy Cup and our footballers and hurlers retained Allianz Division 1 and 2B status, respectively - Setanta also won the Ulster 2022 Junior Hurling Championship, although technically in 2022/23 year. Nevertheless it was a busy one as PRO. It is with regret I leave the post as it brings its own rewards, tempered this year by projects that did not get enough attention - specifically the new website got too little time and a planned 2022 Donegal Annual did not happen. The pressures of combining increased business duties and PRO work squeezed time availability. As such, it is sensible to handover to someone with more time and/or a bigger PRO team. I am very much indebted to all that I have worked with in my role over the last four years across all units of the GAA – clubs, County Boards, the Ulster Council and GAA HQ in Croke Park – as well as those on the PR and Marketing Committee.

Social Media DonegalGAA.ie

The official Donegal website - www.DonegalGAA.ie – is the cornerstone of CLG Dhún na nGall communications. It was substantially revamped by Spence Digital at the start of 2022. The new site went live in March. The main “tabs” are largely as was but presentation has changed. There were also technical reasons for the revamp. The website was six years old, had been added to an on ad-hoc basis since 2016, was running out of memory and was using outdated technology. The new website is easier to update and uses less resources, making it lot quicker for users. The new Cloudways server is far superior to the original Siteground one and allows us to easily add memory if the site starts getting a lot more traffic.

The landing pages on both the mobile device and desktop versions were re-designed. There is now an image, and a links to the recent news developments, on the landing page. This image and the content change regularly. Since August, however, the graphic is the same but news when clicked– championship fixtures and results – is constantly updated. By December 14th, Convention night, I hope to replace graphic/content



Website Home Page Desktop



with upcoming matches for the first quarter of 2023 – McKenna Cup, McGurk Cup and Allianz Leagues.

The site retains links to our other social media channels (in the top right corner and under the main image), the same tabs as previously and the sponsors, contact details and site maps at the bottom of the opening page. Scrolling down there are shortcuts to fixtures, and ticket sales, a second key news item (Michael Murphy’s retirement on the graphic but currently Setanta’s Ulster triumph), the last five weblogs posted and buttons to two recent and important topics

Another innovation is club PRO’s, with @GAA.ie addresses, now have access to their club sites to change and update specific content, while the coaching officer, Irish Cultural officer and Children’s officer also have access to their specialised pages to update or add content.

Most visits to Donegal GAA’s website are via mobile devices although the share actually fell in the last year with just slightly over half of visitors using Apple devices and a much smaller share using other mobile devices. Visits were up by well over a third on the corresponding 12 months in 2021/22 at over 600,000.

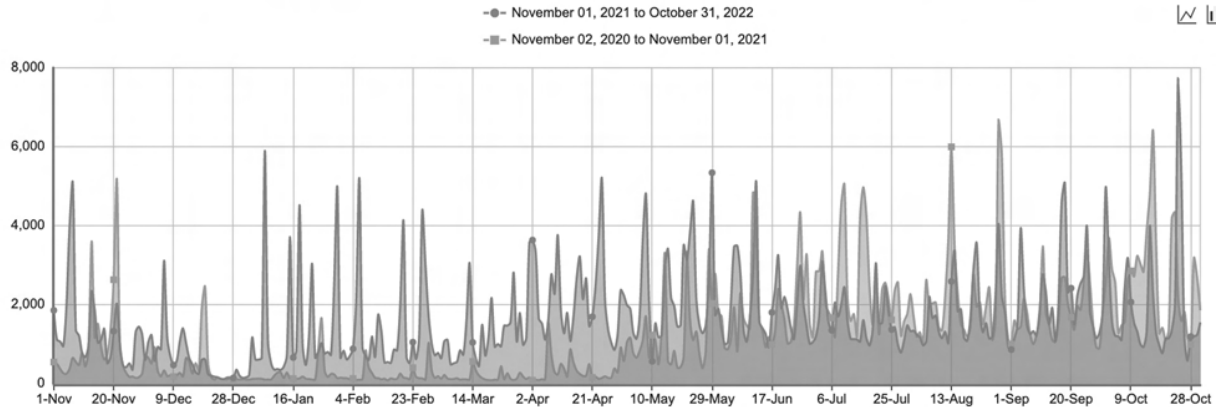
Many Donegal GAA’s “followers” get their information from our Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn



603.14k vs 442.68k

Months

Ye



feeds. With the exception of result updates, almost everything first appears on the “News” section of the website and other @officialdonegal social media all link back to the site for more detailed information. Most weblogs related to club league and championship games with more than 100 also for hurling and for County football.

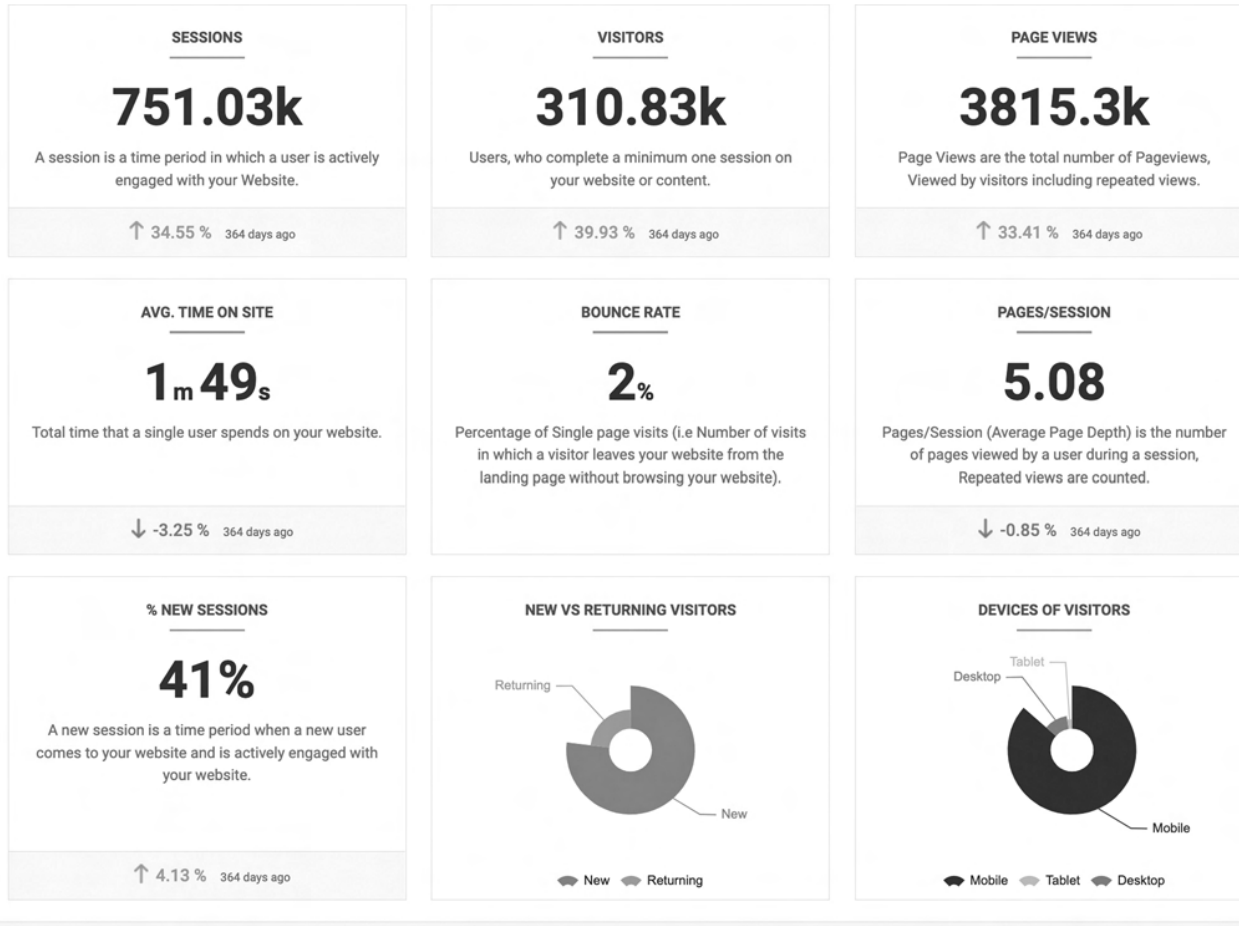
News items are posted on an almost daily basis with an average of over two per day. An increase in weblogs to 779 reflects the much higher level of on field activity during the year to end-October 2022 (499 in 2021) and would have contributed to the growth in number of sessions on the site.

Activity on the website rose sharply in 2022 having fallen with the advent of Covid. Over the course of the 12 months from Nov 1, 2021 to Oct 31, 2022 there were 3.8 mn page views on DonegalGAA.ie, almost a million higher than during the prior 12 months and two and a half times more than in 2020 (1.6 mn views). Sessions were also up - 751,000 compared to 561,000 in 2020/21.










The share using mobile phones to access the site continues to edge upwards and is over 80%, which will be addressed in our re-design of the site next year, in particular making it faster to operate and more focused on user requirements. Currently, the mobile site prioritises access to particular areas of the site rather than the 10 tabs (which are accessed via a dropdown menu) namely News, Clubs Fixtures and Results. Donegal GAA TV and Safeguarding. Scrolling down it also provides immediate access to the key message bars of the landing page and the O’Neill’s shop as well as links to our sponsor websites. One in two sessions on our website originated in Dublin and one in ten in the UK.

Visits via other Social Media Channels was at its highest level yet but as a share of the total, around a third, was similar to last year. This reflects our practice of directing visits to our news blog via these channels, as well as slightly more social media followers. In the 12 months to end October 2022 there were 242,000 visits via other social media channels, mainly Facebook, compared to just 33,000 in 2018 (before this strategy was implemented).

Weblogs - November 2021 to October 2022								
	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	July-Aug	Sept-Oct	2022	2021
County Football	5	36	49	18	2	4	114	65
Club Leagues	0	5	40	63	38	2	148	112
Championship	60	0	0	6	28	68	162	54
Hurling	13	25	37	31	16	4	126	79
Youth	2	3	26	22	8	25	86	76
Culture	4	7	12	6	7	10	46	9
National/Ulster/Admin	5	7	3	7	8	6	36	29
Health and Wellness	1	1	5	2	2	3	14	25
Coaching	3	7	3	1	2	7	23	26
Other	3	0	6	3	6	6	24	24
Total	96	91	181	159	117	135	779	499



The most popular pages on the website remains those relating to fixtures and results – three of the top five. Visitor numbers were well up on last year, particularly for the landing page, hopefully a reflection of the considerable work that went into making it more visually attractive, more user-friendly and more informative. Results and fixtures are not updated by the PRO – rather they update automatically via referee texts and the pages are managed and amended by Ed Byrne (Secretary of the CCC), Sharon McGinty, Jim Gillan and Lisa McTernan (Minor Boards) and Elizabeth Doherty (Hurling Board).

Social Network  	Total Visits
 Facebook	158.08k
 Twitter	74.91k
 LinkedIn	6,794
 Instagram	1,642
 Snapchat	133
 Instagram Stories	109
 Google Groups	4

Twitter

The @OfficialDonegal Twitter account currently has 60,500 followers, up almost 4,000 in the last year. Man of the match tweets tend to be among the most popular a reflection of people's good mood following wins.

Tragically, the top tweet of the year related to the terrible tragedy in Creeslough – “Ba mhaith linn ár mbeannachtaí a sheoladh chuig gach duine atá buailte mar gheall ar an tragóid seo ar an Chraoslach. Suaimhneas síoraí daofa uilig.” This record number of impressions will be surpassed again next year with the November 2022 announcement of Michael Murphy’s retirement from inter-county GAA – “ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann” -already racking up 462,000 impressions.

Donegal GAA tweeted 3,400 (2,600 in 2021) times over the twelve months to end-October and our profile was viewed 7.4 mn times (1.5 mn in 2021). September, during the championship knock-out rounds, was the busiest month with 450 tweets and 1.28 mn visits to or profile and 1.5 mn impressions.

Communication via Twitter is not simply a matter of Donegal GAA tweeting information or links. Just as important are re-tweets by @ OfficialDonegal. In particular, I am heavily reliant on half-time updates and full-time results, of club matches tweeted by the PRO’s of Donegal clubs to keep fans informed. This applies to underage as well as adult games. Thus, the more clubs that have Twitter accounts – a few don’t and some others are dormant - and the more regularly they use them the easier it is to communicate up-to-date information. Finally, special thanks to Damian Carr from Naomh Columba who tweets in-match from most Donegal County games and many knock-out club championship matches. Go raibh míle maith agat Damien and I hope the incoming PRO avails of your dedication and expertise.

Top Tweets Nov 2021 - Oct 2022			
	New Followers	Top Tweet	Tweets
Nov 2021	198	3rd time lucky for Cloughaneely (32,000 impressions)	380
Dec 2021	183	Tobin’s MotM for St Eunans (14,000)	85
January	441	Comhghairdeas Caolan @buncranagaa MotM (40,000)	339
February	537	A Happy Conor O’Donnell Allianz MotM (58,000)	256
March	558	Happy u21 Donegal Squad (16,000)	314
April	478	Here he is MotM, Ryan (63,000)	382
May	224	RTE MotM, Eoghan Ban (39,000)	356
June	341	Donegal Squad arrive in Clones (24,000)	141
July	172	Declan Bonner Steps Down (57,000)	229
August	99	17 Games this weekend in Championship(12,000)	142
September	127	Go raibh maith agat Neil @ gaothdobhaircglg (19,000)	450
October	300	Ba mhaith linn ár mbeannachtaí a sheoladh (222,000)	301

Analytics Home Tweets More

Official Donegal GAA Sign up for

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 19.1K impressions
Go raibh maith agat Neil @gaothdobhaircglg donegalgaa.ie/go-raibh-maith... pic.twitter.com/23oxhNozz8

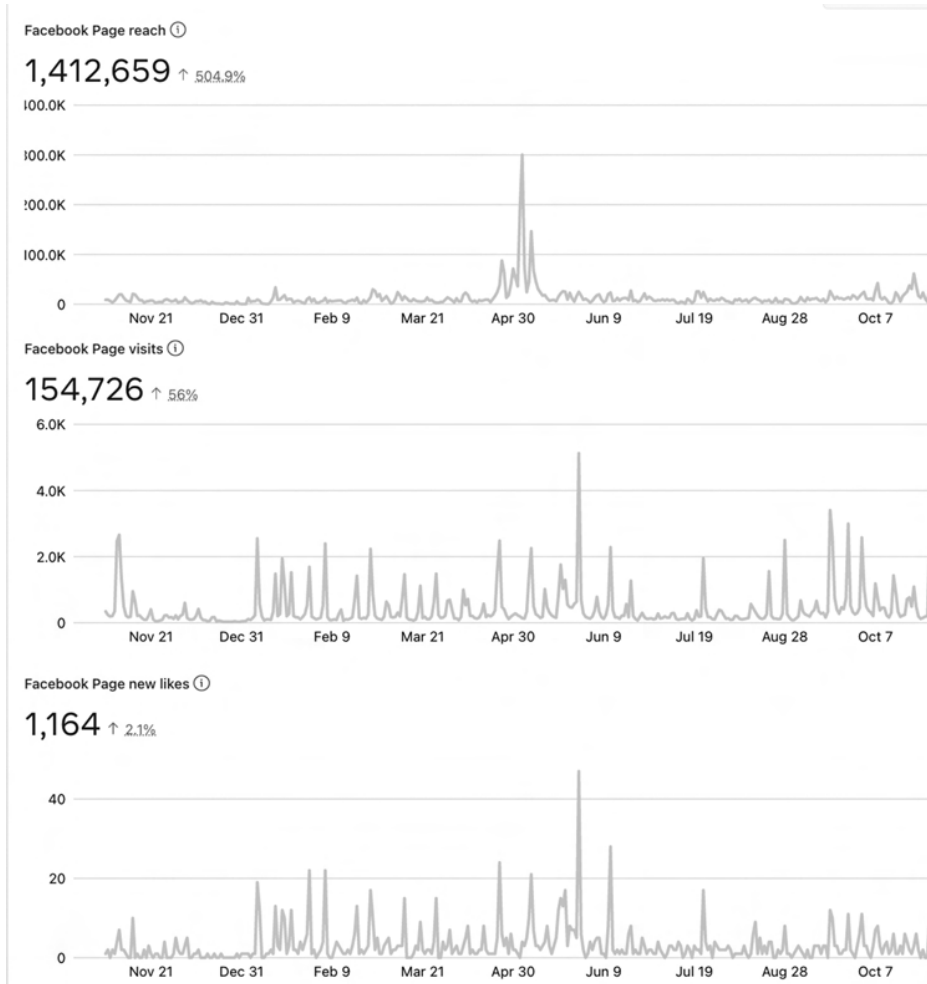
Top mention earned 10.4K engagements
Chris McNulty @ChrisMcNultyDgl · Sep 11
Match programmes were a handy invention.
Just the 22 alterations to the @buncranagaa team for today's @officialdonegal IFC quarter-final against @CLGNaomhColumba
Only goalkeeper @Harry_Doherty_ were the same number as listed pic.twitter.com/whtwHZQqYu

Top Follower followed by 5,854 people
Gary Twigg @twigg67 FOLLOWS YOU
View profile

Top media Tweet earned 11.9K impressions
Final Senior Championship tables pic.twitter.com/9xwFnthws

SEP 2022 SUMMARY

Tweets	450	Tweet Impressions	1.5M
Profile visits	1.28M	Mentions	469
New followers	127		



Facebook

The official Donegal Facebook page currently has over 35,300 followers, an increase of 2,400 in the last year with most new followers coming from Ireland. Almost 70% of followers are from the 26 counties, with one-fifth from the UK, followed by North America (4%), Australasia (2%) and 3% across the rest of the world. The graphs below show our Facebook reach across the year to Oct 31 2022, was 1.4 mn

There are generally three types of post – pictures or photo gallery's (usually uploaded by Geraldine Diver but also by the PRO), video clips (mostly by either Geraldine or Bradas O'Donnell but also live championship games. This year Realt na Mara's Shane Smyth and John Smith's fStop both streamed games live and free of charge on Facebook while other videos included Scór, hurling awards and the championship draws.

Instagram

Similar to last year, the Official Donegal GAA Instagram account added more than 2,000 followers over the course of the 12 months to end-October 2022 and now has over 13,300 followers. Our Instagram stories are primarily aimed at younger Donegal members and supporters

LinkedIn

There was a significant step-up on the use of LinkedIn as a medium of communication in 2021 and also as a means to promote our key sponsors (notably Circet, Abbey Hotels, Global Hydrate, Pod-Trak and ATU). The number of connections on LinkedIn is rising slowly with just 100 added in the last year to reach 1,389 but engagement with our posts are increasing with over twice as much traffic (6,794) to our website in the last year compared to 2020/21.

YouTube

One of the small targets set for 2021 and 2022 was to make better use of Donegal GAA's YouTube. More and more videos have been uploaded to the site and in the last year the number of subscribers has grown very rapidly from 71 to 275. Our videos are being increasingly viewed. Of the more recent additions, the Grand Canal hotel Hurling Final has been viewed 975 times, the Donegal GAA Respect videos 737 times, the u13A final between Four Masters and MacCumhaills 712 times and the minor final between Glenswilly and Four Masters 353 times



Traditional Media

Press and Broadcast Media Relations

The appetite for information on Donegal GAA is considerable. The Donegal PRO function is as much, if not more, to facilitate our partners in locally-based multi-media organisations as it is to communicate directly with the public. Many rely totally on these outlets. Donegal GAA's communications channels informs our media partners through the same channels as it communicates with the public both also through targeted emails, a WhatsApp Group, press briefings, organised events and old fashioned phone calls. Local partners include the Donegal Democrat/ DonegalLiveSport, Donegal News, Donegal Post, Donegal SportsHub/ Donegal Daily, Highland Radio, Inish Times, Inishowen Independent, Ocean FM, Radio na Gaeltachta and Tir Conaill Tribune. Most of these organisations have moved beyond their traditional patch to include their own social media channels. Local journalists were once again very accommodating in providing content – both text and pictures for match programmes – and in helping with match commentary for the Donegal GAA TV Streams. I can't think of a single one who didn't help during the year, without question in all cases. Club officials, players and management personnel also co-operated with the Donegal Stream Team to add content to our match coverage by providing expert analysis before, during and after games. Go raibh mile maith agaibh go leir.

During 2021, Donegal lost the long-serving and much-loved Michael Jack O'Donnell. Fear uasal go smíor a chnámh a raibh fíor bhródúil as CLG Dhún na nGall i rith a shaol. Before our championship commenced



this year a plaque was unveiled in his memory in the Ballybofey Pressbox, next to the one for Séamus MacGéidigh.

Press requirements also include: provision of advance information before important games (including press briefings); ensuring media are facilitated at County and key championship ties; controlled access to team managers and players after games, as well as promotion of other events. For example, events in October included a press night for the Senior Championship, the official opening of the Donegal GAA Centre and a Press night for the Senior Championship.

Early in the year a much improved WiFi system was installed in Páirc Sheáin Mhic Cumhaill. The Press Overflow area in the stand, now has good quality WiFi and the signal in the Press Box on the Terrace side can now be confidently used to Stream matches.

Broadcasting and Streaming

The extent of our streaming activity contracted during 2022 as audiences returned to events and supporters to games. Nevertheless, a PRO's Brief is to promote our games. With a relatively high number from outside Donegal watching our games during Covid, and as it made some commercial sense with sponsors/advertisers, we continued to stream in 2022. In total 11 games (one double header) were streamed on a PPV basis and three were streamed free to air on Facebook. A further two - the Senior quarter-final between Naomh Conaill and Glenswilly and the Senior final between Naomh Conaill and St Eunans - were broadcast on TG4. Overall, close to 2,500 live streams were purchased, the most popular being the Kilcar v St Eunans Senior semi-final with well over 800 live viewers.

The vagaries of broadband coverage was a problem during 2020 and 2021 but there were virtually no problems during 2022 – the start of the Junior Hurling final was a bit dicey but soon rectified. Thank you as always to our core Stream Team of Bradas O'Donnell, Joe Brennan and Ciaran O'Donnell, which was augmented by three other "teams" C-Live (thanks Sean Quirke), fstop media (thank you John Conlon) and Realt na Mara (Shane Smyth) all of whom stepped up to the mark superbly when required. Thanks also to

commentators and co-commentators on the streams and the club representatives who enhanced our coverage with half-time and post-match interviews. All club championship draws, including those for Rounds 3 and 4 of the new format championship league, were also streamed – on Donegal’s Facebook page - and hosted (and largely organised) by Damien O’Dónaill of RnG.

Publications

CLG Dhún na nGall published a hard copy Leabhrán Eolais for the first time in three years in 2022. Regrettably, plans to do a Donegal Annual 2022 were shelved – mea maxima culpa as work pressures proved too much for me to put together the annual, one of the reasons I felt obliged to stand down from the PRO role. Doing a 2022 annual would have facilitated an update of the club pages on the www.donegalgaa.ie some of which are quite dated. The new site has been designed to allow Club PROs to edit some of the content, if they have official PRO @gaa.ie address. Similarly, the Coaching Office, Children’s Officer and Cultúr agus Teanga Officer are also to edit content on their pages (Coaching page below). Microsoft Teams workshops with Spence Digital for the PROs and for the officers in 2022 was planned for 2022 and will be scheduled in 2023 by the incoming PRO.

With fewer streamed games there were less digital match programmes and more hard-copy programmes this year. Thank you to the club secretaries and PROs for their help, particular for County Final programmes were considerable input was required. Thanks too to the journalists who provided me with match previews and other articles and particularly to Geraldine Diver - but also Evan Logan, Thomas Gallagher, Declan Kerr and Peter Campbell - for providing many of the images. County officials Pat Walsh (referees administrator), Catriona Sweeney (Irish Cultural Officer) and Fergus McGee were also invaluable. Finally, thanks to Gemma and Sammy in Impacto Print.

Miscellaneous

Working as a Team

Working as part of a team is integral to the work of a PRO. The help of the County Board and the timely co-operation of the clubs is essential across a range of PRO functions. Our flagship County Football team attracts the lion’s share of media and public attention. Co-operation of the squad and management is integral to the success of CLG Dhún na nGall’s communications with the public. Declan Bonner was exceptionally easy to deal with. He was always available for pre-match press events, post-match interviews, launches, fundraisers etc. Similarly, squad members have followed suit and my sincere thanks for their availability, affability and comfortable efficiency each dealt with the media and the general public. Thanks too to the hurling fraternity, particularly Frankie Doherty, Mickey McCann, Marty McGrath and Manus O’Donnell for their co-operation preparing for hurling match days and putting together match programmes. Finally, Gary Duffy and Luke Barrett were always helpful in relation to the County u20 and minor teams. Comhghairdeas to Mickey and Luke on their re-appointment and ádh mór to our new bainisteoiri Paddy and Leo.

As already noted, the work of club PROs and Secretaries and their inter-action with me is vital to ensuring the Donegal PRO brief is fulfilled. The @gaa.ie based communications system is a massive help in making communicative teamwork more efficient. All secretaries use their @gaa.ie addresses but a significant number of club PROs do not use this address. This makes electronic communication more difficult and it also means they cannot access the information folders on One Drive. I urge all PROs, already in situ not using this system or appointed for 2023, to please sign on for next year.

Teamwork on matchdays is vitally important. Considerable thanks to ground staff/stewards at grounds throughout the county, particularly where we streamed games and sought accommodation for the press. Working closely with the scrupulously efficient Fergus McGee on match days to communicate with fans was always seamless.

There were just two meetings of the PR and Marketing Committee this year, both virtual. The Donegal GAA Academy and Donegal Coaching have their own social media accounts which frees up the PRO. The CCC had a plethora of meetings and the PRO worked closely with this Committee to organise the All-County League and Championship structure. This year also seen the successful re-introduction of League finals. Particular thanks to David McLoone (chair), Ed Byrne (secretary for most of 2021) and Frankie Doherty for all the heavy-lifting that helped make my job in relation to fixtures and results a lot smoother.



Sponsors

Sponsors are increasingly important in providing the funding for the activities of CLG Dhun na nGall. The logos of key Senior team sponsors – circet, Abbey Hotel, McGinley Motors, O’Neill’s Sport and Leisure, Evolve Menswear, YesChef Catering, Affidea, Pod-Trak, ATU and Global Hydrate are all on the landing page of Donegal GAA with links through to their websites. A new and upgraded Memorandum of Understanding was signed with ATU that, inter alia, maintains the University’s access to the Donegal GAA Centre and our development squads more access to ATU’s expertise and facilities. A new jersey was introduced in January 2022 with sponsor’s Global Hydrate and POD-TRAK having their logo’s on the sleeve and all 40 clubs listed on the upper part of the jersey

Competition sponsors – Michael Murphy Sports and Leisure, Brian McCormick Sports, Marley Travel, YesChef

Catering and McGlynn’s Restaurant – all came back on board for 2022 and a new sponsor – The Grand Canal Hotel in Dublin - was added for the Hurling leagues and championships. Each are mentioned as often as possible whenever the relevant competitions are discussed. In particular, special graphics were designed in-house to assist with promotion. Considerable thanks to Aidan Spence for his help in designing not just graphics for promoting our sponsors-competitions but also for other events and promotions.

Thanks once again to everyone who has helped me over the course of the year and apologies if I have left anyone out – the omission was not intentional. Go raibh mile maith agaibh,

Sean MacCondubh, OCP
John McEniff, PRO



Division 1 2022 Champions



Division 2 Champions - Downings



Division 3 Champions 2022 - Burt



Division 4 League Champions 2022 - Naomh Conaill