

## **Clontibret O'Neills Secretary's Report 2015**

Presented to AGM 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015

### **A Year of Highs and Lows**

The year gone by will be remembered for many significant achievements by our club and club members both on and off the field, but also for the fact of not reaching the county final for only the third time in the past decade. That in itself is a yardstick of how we measure ourselves and how over the past decade or more we have come to expect only the highest accolades for our efforts. Seven county finals with five wins in ten years is not a bad record, but each year is judged on its own merits and in that respect we can only say with regard to 2015 "could have done better". At this stage of the year we all have to take stock, members, officials and players alike, to agree what we can improve upon before we move on to 2016. Like every other year much good work was done on and off the field and while players and managers are often criticised when things don't go according to plan, i.e. you don't win, (nobody plans to lose!), the effort of the daily and weekly grind is just as great when you lose as when you win. We shouldn't forget that players and team officials put much of the lives on hold to give us something to cheer about and the main thing they ask, and deserve, from their supporters is... support... on both good days and bad.

With or without success at top level the good work of the club goes on. Another band of willing workers is those charged with preparing our teams of the future, with scores children from as young as four coached almost daily at our grounds. Another major initiative this year was the launch of Clontibret Our Future where up to 240 members have committed to a regular financial contribution of €20 per month over the coming years to help fund the development of our new grounds purchased in 2012. The fruits of this are already visible as the earthmoving equipment is currently busy at work levelling the new grounds.

These are exciting times for our club, time to develop new facilities for the next generation, time to develop young players and teams to use these facilities and time to lay plans to win back the Mick Duffy Cup, among others, in 2016.

### **Senior Championship and League**

The defence of our championship title began as we would have wanted it, overcoming a strong Magheraclone challenge at Inniskeen on August 23<sup>rd</sup> with a 2-9 to 0-11 score line. Thereafter we entered a marathon duel with Ballybay which stretched over three matches including extra time and in hindsight probably defined our championship year. The first encounter in Blayney on Sept 5<sup>th</sup> ended 2-9 to 0-15, the replay in Scotstown on Sept 12<sup>th</sup> was a titanic struggle which also ended all square 1-15 to 2-12 while in the second replay in Inniskeen on Sept 19<sup>th</sup> we ground out a result 1-5 to 0-6 to advance to the semi final. Back in Scotstown on Oct 4<sup>th</sup> we got off to a good start against Monaghan Harps with a Conor Boyle goal and despite losing our way for much of the first half went in at the break only two points down. Starting the second half a man down put us on the back foot and despite valiant efforts from a number of players we failed to impose ourselves on the game and Harps were on their way to the final on a 2-12 to 1-10 score line. The team on duty was Conor Fadian, Brian Greenan, Colum Greenan (0-1)(C), Conor Boyle (1-0), Darach Mooney, Dessie Mone, David Savage, Eoin Greenan, Conor Lavelle, Martin Corey, Vincent Corey, Pauric Boyle, Aodh Curran, Ryan McGuigan(0-1), Conor McManus (0-8). Subs used Paul McGuigan, Kieran Greenan, Killian Lavelle, and Stephen Mohan while Rodney Gorman who had figured strongly in all previous championship matches was unavailable for that match.

Our senior league began in Ballybay on March 22<sup>nd</sup> where the locals came out on top, but as the year progressed we moved up the league table to a top four position as the last few rounds approached.

In the end it came down to a visit to Magheraclone following our championship exit where a team weakened by absences due to a wedding put in a spirited performance which wasn't enough to claim the points needed to ensure qualification as Magheraclone passed us out by one point.

Just like other years a lot of effort was put in by a lot of people both on the pitch and off it to ensure success this year, but for whatever reason it just didn't work out. A number of factors probably added to the mix including; the number of games we have to play without our county players; the fact that as soon as the county players are knocked out of the All Ireland series, they must readjust immediately and slot back into their team for the championship; the fact that the championship is run off so quickly at the end of the season and the difficulty of maintaining a winning momentum over consecutive years. The team was managed by Fergal Reel and I thank him and especially his local selectors Brendan Murphy and Damien Moen for their all their hard work with this team and the reserves as well as Colm Gormley and Aiden Woods who performed an important liaison role with the team.

### **Reserves**

The reserve team started the league with a good win over Scotstown on March 15<sup>th</sup> and remained in contention for league honours until defeated in the last league game in Latton on July 17<sup>th</sup> by three points. The O'Duffy Cup campaign was short lived as we faced Monaghan harps in the preliminary round and lost out 1-6 to 0-11.

### **Minors**

Our minor squad competed in Division One where the competition was strong and on completion of the first round we moved to the shield division. Convincing victories here against Scotstown and Harps brought us to a final clash with the Harps, where victory was the reward for this promising group of players under the guidance of Pdraig McGuigan, Des Brennan and Brian McSkane. Team captain Gerry Gorman was presented with the newly commissioned McCartan Cup. The successful minor squad was Christopher McDermott, Gerry Gorman, Cormac Boyle, Senan McCague, Dean Brennan, Michael savage, Dean McDonnell, Francis Hughes, Darragh Hughes, Dylan Connolly, Conor Doyle, Ross Lowey, Jack Gormley, Francis McNally, Dean McGuigan, Tiernan McQuaid, Conor Moen, Darren Mohan, Jamie McMahan, Cian Coyle, Pater Fitzpatrick, Cian Brennan, Aaron McGuigan, Darragh Todd, Daniel McDonnell

### **Underage**

Under the direction of Youth Officer, John Paul Mone, our underage structures continue, with the development of teams at all age levels from Under 6 to Under 16. The priority here is development and improvement to bring on as many young players as possible so that they too can wear the senior jersey with distinction in the not too distant future. JP has a more detailed Youth Report which is presented as an addendum.

### **County Players and Awards**

Our players continue to backbone the senior county team and we are immensely proud of their contribution to the successes of recent years. None more so than this year when on July 19<sup>th</sup> in Clones a Clontibret man lifted the Anglo Celt Cup as captain for the first time ever as well as claiming the Man of the Match award. The outstanding contribution of Conor, Vinnie and Dessie to Monaghan's run in both league and championship was recognised when all three were honoured with Irish News Ulster All Star awards at year end with Conor also named as the Player of the Year at both the Irish News All Star Awards and the Ulster GAA Writers Awards. Conor Boyle is also steadily making a starting place on the team his own and would surely have done so this year but for a mid season injury. At Under 21 level, we were represented by Darren McDonnell, Conor Lavelle and Brian Greenan, while at county minor level Francis Hughes was selected. At Under 16 level we had

two representatives on the successful Buncrana Cup team in Jack Gormley and Conor Doyle, which, incidentally, was coached by our own Marty Corey

Further honour came to our club in November when Conor McManus was awarded with his second All Star and both Conor and Dessie were selected on the Ireland squad to face the might of Australia at Croke Park on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Hurling, Camogie and Ladies Football**

Hurling at adult level in the club is struggling to keep its momentum and while much good work is going on at underage only one underage team was affiliated this year. The camogie girls came up against a reenergised Blayney outfit this year and lost the final battles. The girls of O'Neill Shamrocks meanwhile carried the flag for the ladies winning their second ever county junior championship and were unlucky not to add an Ulster title, losing narrowly to the Derry champions. The demands of so many teams across all codes reinforce the need for additional playing and training facilities which will hopefully come on stream in the not too distant future in McCully's field.

### **Social Events**

The highlight of the social year was of course was February 21<sup>st</sup> in The Hillgrove as we celebrated the successes of 2014, chief of which was winning back the senior championship, with The Mick Duffy Cup holding pride of place on a very crowded podium. Guests included the successful senior and reserve panels with their managers, Dom Corrigan, Olly Fay, Brendan Murphy and Mickey Hughes as well as Chairman of Coiste Chontae Mhuineachain CLG, Padraig Sherry, who addressed the large gathering.

Presentations were made to the successful managers; retiring officers Fergal Mone and Colm Gormley as well as to long serving grounds man Robert Kidney. Also recognised were players of the year at various levels including Young Player; Conor Lavelle, Reserve Player; Pauric Boyle and Senior Player; Colum Greenan. The camogie club also made presentations to their championship winning team and award winners.

Highlight of the evening was the contribution of Guest Speaker, 1993 All Ireland winner, Tony Scullion from Derry, who gave a heart-warming address aimed directly at the players as he challenged them to build on their past success and move on to greater things. Tony then presented the Reserve League medals to the players while Padraig Sherry presented the senior championship medals. Formal proceedings came to a close with a special presentation by Club Secretary Frank McManus to Colm Gormley with a photomontage to represent the achievements of the club in the senior championship during his thirteen-year Chairmanship. The celebrations continued into the night to music provided by Brendan McCourt and band

The clubhouse continues to provide a valuable social outlet and focal point for members with many enjoyable gatherings, both planned and impromptu during the year. I acknowledge the efforts of all who work towards making the Clubhouse a pleasant and relaxing environment and remind members that it is a facility there for all, to be used as much as possible. Thanks to Kevin Winters, bar staff, including volunteers who help when needed, those who provide refreshments during championship matches, as well as those who look after cleaning and maintenance

### **Clontibret Our Future**

The announcement earlier in the year that a new sports capital programme would become available prompted thoughts of developing the grounds adjacent to our main pitch purchased three years ago. In order for such an application to be successful matching club funds would be needed and so was launched after much planning and deliberation the Clontibret Our Future fund This involves asking members and friends of the club to commit to a contribution of €20 per month (€240 per year) over the coming years to help complete the development. The initiative was driven largely by Club chairman, Aidan Deighan and a willing band of promoters who took on the unenviable task of contacting prospective contributors. To date almost 240 members have signed up creating a

potential fund of over €50,000 which together with the €55,000 granted through the Sports Capital Fund will allow Phase One of the development (stripping and levelling the site) to be completed, hopefully by year end. When that is completed we will then seek funding for Phase Two which will involve restoring the surface, drainage and the laying of an all weather pitch with associated facilities. We will of course be depending on the generosity of Clontibret Our Future contributors to continue into the coming years to bring the project to completion.

### **Development**

While the most notable aspect of development began on October 30<sup>th</sup> when the machines moved in to strip and level the new pitch, the more mundane aspects of development continued throughout the year. Maintenance and management of both pitches and buildings continues year round with significant improvements carried out to ladies toilets and referees room.

O'Neill Park continued this year as the premier location for championship matches within the county and we hosted ten different championship days, six double headers and four single matches I wish to acknowledge the work of all who facilitate this, including our field staff and voluntary stewards whose work on match day in organising patrons and their parking is the principal reason for the popularity of our grounds. Workers at the grounds from both CES and Tus schemes this year included Pete Moen, Tom Mohan and Ciaran McMahan. Pete Moen has now been replaced by Chris Reidy, while Mick Hamill also made a vital contribution during a stand-in spell with us over the summer.

### **And finally**

I thank all those who continue work away quietly in the background to ensure the smooth running of the club at different levels; in the clubrooms, at the grounds, washing jerseys, catering, acting as linesmen, umpires and scorekeepers, selling programmes and other necessary jobs that are often unseen but have to be done. Running a club that covers all codes, with multiple teams and hundreds of players and members, can be a complex and demanding operation, with demands and responses changing daily and sometimes more often. I thank all members of the executive committee, collectively, who contributed to that, including Chairman Aidan Deighan who began his tenure in January and Caroline McQuaid who looked after the treasury this year. Special thanks also to our many sponsors who provide much needed funding, especially main sponsor Woods Fuels. At this time of year when the club takes stock it is important that club officers also review their contribution and as club secretary since 1996 it is time that I so do. Having carefully considered the position, I will, if required, serve one more year, but it is time for a new generation to take over the administration of this great club and perhaps a new secretary could be groomed in during the coming year.

I offer deepest sympathy to all families who were bereaved, during the year, and advise that Mass will be offered for deceased members and friends of the club on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church. We remember especially, at this time, the late Pat Brennan former player, team mentor, club officer, including Club President and willing supporter both vocally and financially, over many years, who passed away in January. I wish all who are unwell, a speedy return to good health, with best wishes to all, for Christmas and 2016.

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16 Samhain 2015

## CLONTIBRET JUVENILES 2015

Clontibret are no different from a lot of other clubs in Monaghan.... A small rural settlement with houses scattered along the landscape and the football club very much the beating heart of that community. Like a lot of other clubs this means that we tend to be limited in the numbers that we have but we always strive to use whatever resources we have to produce the footballers that wear the Clontibret jersey with pride. 2015 was no different from any other year. It's always nice to have trophies at the end of the year but sometimes it's not always about getting that trophy, it's about how you have improved as an individual first and how you have improved as a team from the start of the year to the finish of the year

Our U16s are very much an example of this, very limited in numbers but competed extremely well in Division 3 were they played in a 11 a side competition all the time on a full size pitch. Although suiting teams with greater depth to their squad our boys held their own throughout the year with Trojan work. As a result we finished second in the league falling short to a Castleblayney team with numbers on their side while also losing out to the same opposition in the championship. Never short of hard work, perspiration or style, are these boys now ready to start stepping up to the next level? All this was done under the expert guidance of manager Shane McMahon, who was ably helped by Stephen McGuigan, Thomas Greenan, and Declan Moen

Our U14s are again another example of how through hard work and dedication results can be achieved. Again limited in numbers and playing in a competitive division we managed to finish in second place overall at the end of the year getting better and better all the time. On a June evening we went down by the narrowest of margins in the championship semi final to a very strong Tyholland side who on to win the out competition. Again the seed has been sown for leaders to emerge from this particular bunch of players who always fought to the end and never gave up, a pattern which no doubt will continue into next year.

This never-say-die spirit and style of play was brought out in the lads by a young dynamic management team of Pauric Boyle and Eoin McGuigan who have great management futures ahead of them. This dedication and heart was exemplified by none more so than our U12 team this year. The spring leagues may not have gone the way we wanted it results wise, but a lot was learned and improvements made for the league campaign. As a result we made our way to the semi-final stage which we won to set up a final date against a physically stronger Inniskeen side. Despite conceding strength and height in vital sectors our boys put in a fantastic performance in a game that could have been won. This will only further enhance their game in the knowledge that they can compete with the best and learn for the future. This is a vital aspect of our coaching regime and under the expert management of Seamus Duffy and Rodney Gorman these boys will certainly learn. A special word of thanks to Seamus Carey, Paddy Keenan and Kevin Dunlop for all the help and support that they provided to the management team throughout the year

One area where we seem to be very lucky with numbers is our U10s and U8s. These boys are coming along very nicely and have even competed in their own right with a selection of our U10s winning the shield at the Truagh Under 10 tournament. This augers well for the future and they will continue to be encouraged along. A big thank you to our coaches in this grade, Niall Brennan, Kieran Greenan, and Fintan Brennan. Special mention also to our mentors at Under 8, Trevor Boylan, Jimmy Sullivan, Charlie Byrne, Colm Gormley, Sean Michael McSkeane, Mac McElroy and JP Mone.

Finally a big thank you to all the parents who without your support throughout the year we would be unable to run as smoothly and easy as we do and we hope and look forward to providing another year of fun and enjoyment and learning for our kids and hope that we can all enjoy it together as we watch our children develop further

John P Mone Youth Officer