



## Challenges, celebrations, developments and moments of sadness as we reflect on a period of 33 months since last GAA Handball Club AGM

**Chris Curran, Chairman Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club**

First of all it is important to point out just how wonderful it is to see our handball courts back buzzing again, not just our own facilities here in Loughmacrory, but GAA Handball facilities throughout Ireland, and indeed the World.

2021 was meant to be a year when we would have seen a large club contingent of players, in youth and adult grades, travel to courts (mainly to the new centre in Croke Park) throughout Ireland to challenge for World Handball Championship titles. However, just like most things around the world, that was halted due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. It is only in the past two months that we have finally seen a resumption of our sport. In fact the astonishing statistic that 22 months just passed without competitive GAA Handball at any level is a stark one, but in that period we have also managed to have some strong milestones for the club as well as having to deal with some very challenging and sad moments too.

Due to that Covid-19 pandemic, in line with all governance and planning at all levels of GAA Handball Ireland, we thus meet tonight for our Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club AGM for what is the first time in almost three years (33 months to be precise).

Remarkably, as our minds have been very much focussed on the “lack of handball” in more recent times, it does however makes soignificant reading when noting what we have achieved and carried out as a Club since that last AGM. For that reason it is important to highlight some of those moments as we now at last prepare to maintain the excellent buzz of recent weeks into what is at last beginning to look like a more positive and active future.

***Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club AGM 2022***  
***Sunday 27 February 2022, 7pm,***  
***in Loughmacrory Community & Handball Centre***





## 2019: Historic first ever DOUBLE All Ireland Division One Feile na nGael success for Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club - in 40x20 and 60x30

There is no doubt that the highpoint since our last Club AGM was the unprecedented first ever All Ireland 40x20 and 60x30 double in Division One of the Feile na nGael for the club. It was a first and only time that the feat was achieved in the one season, with the two codes of the sport having been separated into different festival weekends by GAA Handball. Again, quite remarkable when thinking that both the 40x20 and 60x30 All Ireland Feile premier cups remain in Loughmacrory still to this day - as the competition has not yet taken place since that last success in the traditional big court in August 2019.

The third ever All Ireland Division One Feile success for the club (previously in 1984 and 2003) was achieved by the 40x20 team in Cork - that team comprising Gary McAleer, Eoin McElholm, Ruairi McCullagh and Dearbhail Fox. Coached by Kenny Curran, the team produced a most dramatic and enthralling triumph against the Cavan team - the astonishing second game comeback to take the prestigious title delivering amazing scenes of celebration. The club then went to Wexford for the 60x30 All Ireland Division One Feile event in August 2019 and the team of Gary McAleer, Eoin McElholm, Ruairi McCullagh, Tomas Duff and Dearbhail Fox completed the historic double. Added into that was the 60x30 Division 1 All Ireland Feile Skills gold medal for Gary McAleer, who personally capped an incredible season by also securing the 40x20 All Ireland Under 14 singles championship title. Part of that build-up included a great social gathering at the new-look Community and Handball Centre for a Coffee morning.





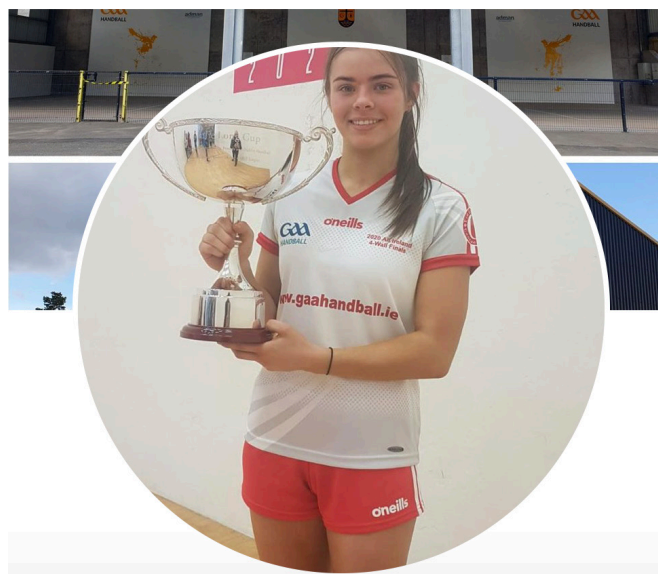


The other big stand-out success on the handball court in that interim period was actually finally achieved in December 2021, but was in fact from the 2020 GAA Handball 40x20 Championships. Mairead Fox saw her March 2020 All Ireland Minor Singles 40x20 Championship final put on hold due to Covid-19 but did finally get the chance to complete her own piece of history 21 months later. Mairead's brilliant All Ireland Minor championship triumph over Kilkenny's Noelle Dowling saw her complete her clean sweep of titles at every grade and mark her down as a major contender for the biggest honours of all in the years ahead. Indeed, as we meet for this AGM, Mairead is in the process of playing in the USA in the Inter-varsity Championships and, having come through a field of 51 players, now meets Roscommon's Fiona Tully in that International Ladies Open final.

MAIREAD FOX - GAA Handball All Ireland Minor Singles 40x20 Champion 🏆🏆🏆

A fantastic performance from our young club star Mairead Fox has seen her join a very elite group of players in securing a clean sweep of All Ireland GAA Handball Championship titles at Under 14, Under 16 and now Minor level

A tough week in which Mairead sustained an ankle injury which looked set to rule her out of her All Ireland final challenge but terrific resilience has seen her dig deep and step up... [See more](#)



## Another hugely successful Lough Wallball Showdown Tournament

We also have to go back to 2019 to review the well established and highly ranked Lough Wallball Showdown tournament. There were again record numbers of players from all over Ireland and internationally attending the Showdown Tournament, that having been the sixth successive event in the series. Of course Covid lockdown and rules prevented us from continuing that sequence but hopefully we will be back to enjoy the One Wall Handball Arena in Loughmacrory buzzing and beating with the sound of handballs in the summer of 2022.



**Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club AGM 2022  
REVIEW - 2019, 2020, 2021**





There have been a long list of successes again by club players over the past 33 months and some of those have been highlighted with all featured prominently and proudly on the club's Social Media Pages. We can enjoy some of the pictures showcasing those on the following pages too and will be referred to in our secretary's report but it would be remiss not to mention a few other key moments in the club's history over the past couple of years.

### **Additional £20,000 development brings Loughmacrory 40x20 to top ranked status**

Firstly, while the whole of the GAA Handball fraternity in Ireland could only look on with no action or competitions of any kind due to Covid-19, our Club went about the task of securing grants for our 40x20 court. We thank Shane McCullagh for his work in securing the grant from the Community Fund and ESB and in managing the works to the 40x20 court and to our many members who volunteered their time in completing the works. As can be seen from the images this involved an absolute overhaul of the entire 40x20 court which has brought our court back to almost brand new status and in the top ranking courts now in the country. It also follows on the back of the significant works on the Community Centre as a whole which seen a £300,000 development and included a fantastic new back wall and viewing area in our traditional 60x30 court. It should be noted we did not need to fund-raise for any of those.

### **Envious facilities**

Our 60x30 court remains the only big alley in the North of Ireland and has since hosted All Ireland semi finals and finals. While it is hoped to do further work in the inside of the court itself in the coming years, it very much puts Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club in the top few clubs in Ireland for impressive facilities in all codes. With a now brand new 40x20 court, an excellent refurbished 60x30 court and a brilliant full outdoor One Wall Handball Arena with 3 full-sized courts, there are very few clubs anywhere in the country who could match that in terms of facilities. That is a major achievement and is there due to the dedication and commitment of a vibrant community of handballing people over many decades.

These facilities and those surrounding them in conjunction with the many brilliant community groups here, have been highlighted now 100s of times by everyone who comes into Loughmacrory - from any part of Ireland or the world. From the now 1000s of players and guests who have attended our Showdown Tournaments, championships, etc... at our 3 excellent facilities, it has been constant compliments and praise for the development work, off court achievements, facilities to encompass all codes of the sport and receiving international recognition for them. Every member, official and person who has been involved in the past 60 odd years can always take significant pride in that. Of course there will always be thoughts and focus for the future in terms of developing as a group and we look forward to how we can do that in the next stages of the club's history.







## Remembering those who paved the way and have gone before us...

The past three year period has also been very difficult both personally and as a club and community as we have lost some very significant figures in our club. On a personal note, my father **John Curran** was the driving influence for all our family to become involved in the sport of handball and he has unequivocally made an indelible mark of GAA Handball here in Loughmacrory and indeed much further afield. Part of the founding committee, a long-standing club chairman, one of the first coaches to deliver and drive juvenile handball here in the county, achieving a first ever All Ireland Juvenile championship success - for club, Tyrone and also Ulster, with his son Ciaran, he passed away after illness in August 2021. As a family we miss him and I am sure it will be the same as a community.

His brother **Peter Curran**, another founding member of the club and a visionary in our community whose drive and commitment played such an incredible part in how all the groups in our community have come forward. Peter was also the founding member of both the Youth Club and the Community and Development Association. As an official and a coach in handball he too is greatly missed, having passed away less than twelve months before his brother John in 2020.

Another Loughmacrory Clubman who made his own piece of history when becoming the first ever Tyrone Handballer to win an All Ireland Championship title was **Mickey Conway**. Again it is sad to think that we also said goodbye to Mickey, a highly regarded and successful handballer in the 1970s, who passed away in 2020.

## Night of Celebration...

Indeed, just how quickly things can move on, is highlighted by the fact that all three men were honoured at what was to be the last occasion we were able to come together as a club in our community. Over 100 people enjoyed a fantastic night of celebration on 31 January 2020 as we celebrated 60 years of the official club committee

**Loughmacrory GAA Handball** is in Loughmacrory.  
August 31, 2021 · 🌐

Loughmacrory handball club lost another legendary figure at the weekend with the sad passing of John Curran.

The club is indebted to John for many reasons and his contribution to the sport, not just in [Lough Macrory](#) is immeasurable.

He was a member of the first official Loughmacrory handball committee in 1969 and over the next three decades he served as club, [Tyrone GAA Handball](#) and [Ulster GAA Handball](#) chairman, as well as becoming a member of [GAA Handball](#) central council i... See more



October 30, 2020 · 🌐

**Peter Curran RIP** 🙏🙏🙏

Many great Handball and Community people have said 'goodbye' to us all in recent times and today we have said goodbye to one of our most amazing 😞

Peter Curran was a founding member of Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club and a pillar of Community, who gave immeasurable hours of selfless voluntary help and always did so with an air of compassion, thoughtfulness and in the most humble way.

A ... See more







and 150 years of GAA Handball in the community. That was planned to be the start of an exciting year of activities, events and of course handball at all levels but we all now know only too well what was to follow.

We lost some great people since and we may have been starved of the sound of the handballs cracking against the wall for a substantial period of time but now we can be thankful and now enjoy the present and indeed the future. It has been exhilarating again to see the large numbers of young people finding a love for handball on our courts and the many parents who have now taken to enjoying what the sport has to offer too.

We have an excellent committee, we have some very exciting youth coming through again and this is highlighted by the recent and ongoing county and Ulster championships. We have some new faces now coaching too and that is very positive and heart-warming to see and with all the elements now becoming aligned again, it is again a time to get excited about the future of GAA Handball in our Community.



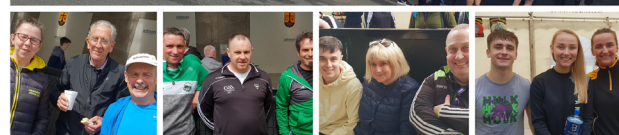
There is so much else we can reflect on in recent times and in the pages ahead there is a flavour of that with a snapshot of images to highlight them.

It has reached that time when I will be stepping down myself as Chairman of Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club. The honour of being allowed to serve your club and community is a distinguished one but new faces and the energy they bring to the table is what is currently exciting. Having joined the Club Committee in 1987 (scary to say 35 years ago) I may be stepping down from a key role in the club but of course will always be part of this club and look forward to helping out in any way going forward.

For over 100 years, GAA Handball in Loughmacrory has thrived and flourished and in recent decades has marked itself at the top end of the table in terms of distinction at provincial, national and International level. That ranking in the top echelons has come about by many people coming together selflessly for the club, community and our youth and that same spirit of "TEAM" in what is actually an individual sport is what will sustain us again long after Covid.







## Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club AGM 2022 REVIEW - 2019, 2020, 2021





**Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club AGM 2022  
REVIEW - 2019, 2020, 2021**





## Handball Update

### High hopes for another big year ahead

**Tyrone competed strongly across all the handball codes again in 2019 with Conor McElduff's 2019 Ulster 40x30 Senior singles championship title being the adult highlight.**

That aside, Sean Kerr reached the Irish Wallball Nationals Men's Open final, losing to Galway's Martin Mulvey, before winning the Lough Wallball shoudoun and All-Ireland Under 21 doubles 60x30 title with Turlough Clarke. Michaela McCarrian, Eilise McCrory, Clodagh Munroe, Clodha McNamee, Dervla Farley, Bronagh McKilliams, Jonathan Owens, Jack Darcy, Conor Fox, Claran McHally, Brian McKear, Bronagh Farley and Caoilan McCartan all celebrated an historic first ever double All-Ireland success in Felle Division 1 Handball in the same year.

Loughmacrory's Felle team comprised players who excelled in handball and football throughout 2019. Eoin McElholm and Ruairi McLaughlin won 3 All-Ireland gold medals, Thomas Duff won two national gold medals

and were key players as Loughmacrory under 14 footballers claimed a historic Tyrone GI football league title in 2019, captained by Eoin McElholm. With Dearbhail Fox, this group delivered an outstanding Felle double success.

Ryan Mullan, Finbar Fullen, Chris Curran, Conal Curran, Niall Kerr, Conor Kerr and Kenny Curran all made their mark on the national stage in 2019 with Turlough Clarke.

Loughmacrory will celebrate 60 Years since the first official committee. 50 years since the Club Centre was built and launch 150 years of GAA Handball and Counting, when they host a night of celebration for all past and present members on Friday 21st February 2020.

An exciting year in 2019 and with the World Championships coming back to Ireland in 2021, for the first time since the unprecedented record-breaking World's in Ireland in 2012, there will be high hopes in the Red Hand ranks for a big year again this season.

The historic GAA Handball All-Ireland Felle na Gaed 1 double by Loughmacrory was the unequivocal highlight on

### Teamtalkmag Tyrone

December 5, 2021 - 3

**Mairéad Fox Makes GAA Handball History**

Mairéad Fox became the first Tyrone ladies handballer to win the GAA Handball

The Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club were honoured by Fermanagh and Omagh Council for their historic All-Ireland Division 1 Felle na Gaed double in 2019.

### Loughmacrory GAA Handball is in Loughmacrory.

June 3, 2021 - 3

Delighted to host **Ulster GAA Wheelchair Hurling** sessions at our outdoor One Wall Arena over the past few Saturdays. 🍀🍀🍀

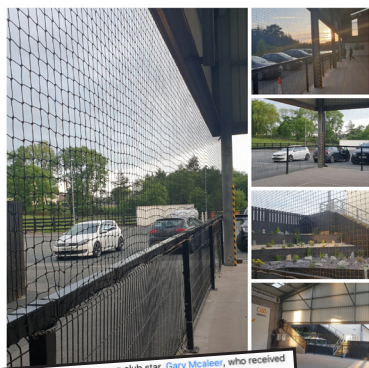
Boost this post to get more reach for Loughmacrory GAA Handball. **Boost post**

94 6 Comments 7 Shares









# Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club AGM 2022 REVIEW - 2019, 2020, 2021





### GAA Handball: Lough Showdown provides feast of quality action

Full Results of Finals on the link below.  
"Overall this was another fantastic weekend of GAA Handball action with the host club maintaining a very strong development programme both on and off the court. The next big celebration in that planning will see the launch of a new book "150 Years of GAA Handball and Counting" at a Gala Event in the GAA Club on Friday 22nd November 2019."



GAAHANDBALL.IE  
Lough Showdown provides feast of quality action | GAA Handball

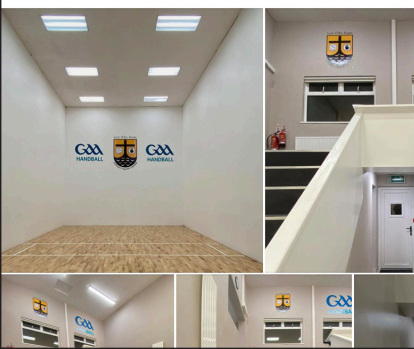
**Loughmacrory GAA Handball**  
December 17, 2020

Work has now been completed on our redevelopment 40x20 GAA Handball Court.

It is very exciting to see the fantastic new-look 40x20 court fully cleaned and finished after a couple of months of work.

We are extremely fortunate to have had clubman **Shane Mc Cullagh** completely co-ordinate voluntarily all the work and planning from start to finish and it has all turned out top class. 🙌🙌🙌

B... See more



### SPORT

#### GAA HANDBALL FEATURE

## McAleer has plenty of targets in sight once action resumes



All this time ago last year, there was no sign of the return of GAA Handball. The sport was in a state of limbo, with no clear path forward. However, the GAA Handball Club has been working hard to get the sport back on its feet. McAleer, a key player, has been training hard and is looking forward to getting back on the court. The club has also been working on its development programme, which includes coaching and refereeing courses. McAleer has plenty of targets in sight once action resumes, and he is determined to achieve them. The club is also looking forward to the launch of the new book "150 Years of GAA Handball and Counting" at a Gala Event in the GAA Club on Friday 22nd November 2019.



Loughmacrory GAA Handball Club 150th Anniversary

### SPORT

#### GAA HANDBALL FEATURE

## Paul clocks up the mileage and the wins



Paul has been a key player for the GAA Handball Club for many years. He has clocked up a lot of mileage and has won many trophies. Paul is a very hard worker and is always looking to improve himself. He has been a great role model for the younger players and has helped them to develop their skills. Paul is also a very good leader and has helped the team to win many games. He is a true professional and is always ready to give his best. Paul is a very important player for the GAA Handball Club and he will continue to be for many years to come.

### SPORT

#### GAA HANDBALL FEATURE

## Fantastic Miss Fox focused on further glory on court



Miss Fox has been a key player for the GAA Handball Club for many years. She has been focused on further glory on the court and has won many trophies. Miss Fox is a very hard worker and is always looking to improve herself. She has been a great role model for the younger players and has helped them to develop their skills. Miss Fox is also a very good leader and has helped the team to win many games. She is a true professional and is always ready to give her best. Miss Fox is a very important player for the GAA Handball Club and she will continue to be for many years to come.

### SPORT

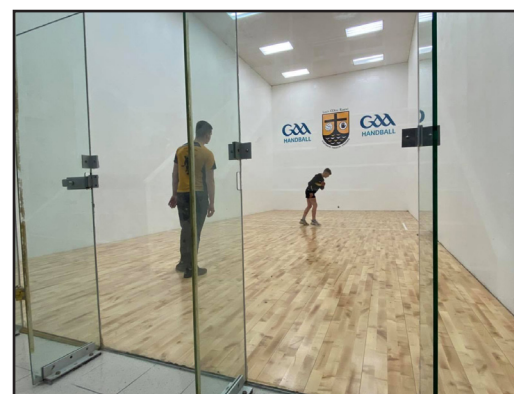
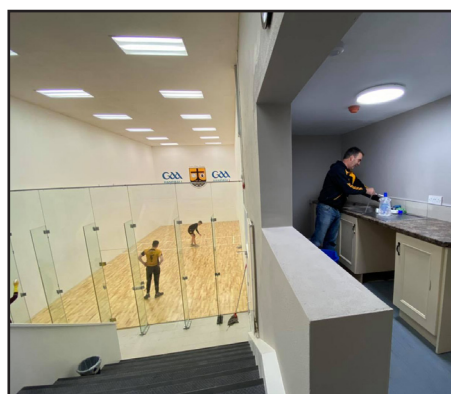
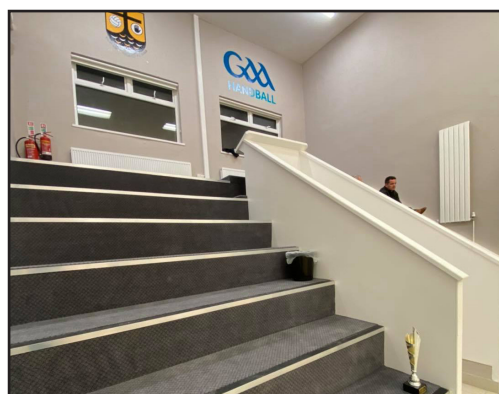
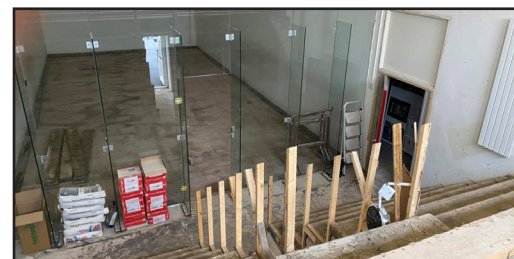
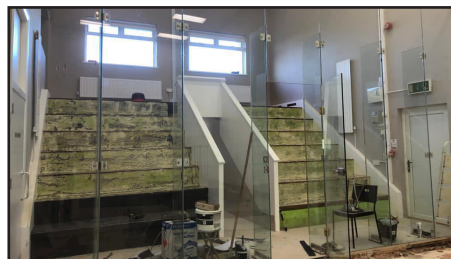
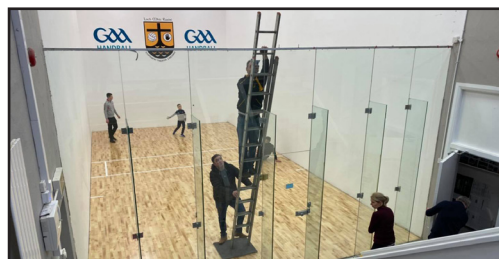
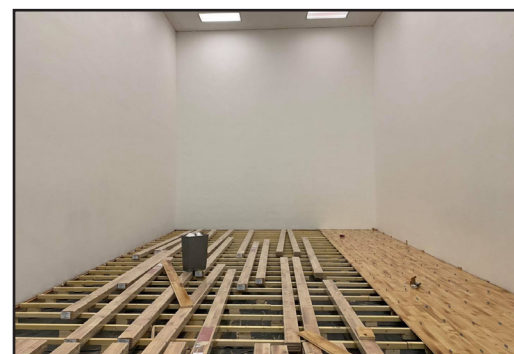
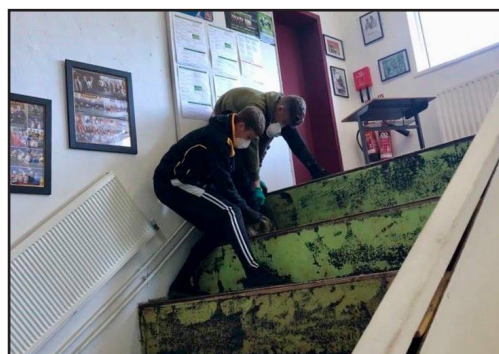
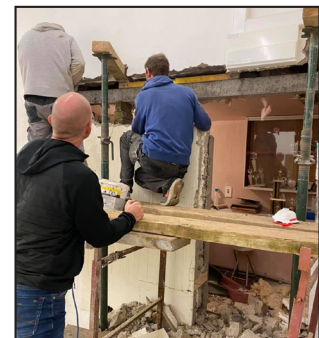
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The present.... and the future looks bright...

