



Michael Davitt GAC, Swatragh

Newsletter

November, 2020

Welcome to the new Michael Davitt GAC Newsletter!

We want to keep everyone in our community up to date with the current on-goings at the Michael Davitt GAC club and grounds. We are one community, one club, this is your club.

Brief History

Michael Davitt GAC Club was formed in 1946 by John McCormack, Patsy Collins, Jim McMullan, John Eddie Friel and James McGurk. This coincided with the centenary year of Michael Davitt, who had given Irish Land League speeches in Swatragh in the late 1800s. Adopting the green and white hoop jersey design in 1949, the original club colours were red and white.

Since the beginning, the club has strived to keep improving the facilities and grounds. Here is what we have achieved over the years...

The ground on which the current club house and pitch are situated was purchased in 1971. By 1977 the pitch and pavilion were completed, providing Swatragh with their own grounds for the first time.

1973 saw the formation of our camogie club and in 1984 the second pitch was opened, allowing more space for our growing number of teams to train and play.

By 1988 the main hall was completed; it was built by the labour and finances from the community and has been enjoyed by thousands of visitors over the years and used for a range of events including Scor, youth clubs, bingo, plays and Mass during the renovations of the chapel.

In the early 2000s, additional ground was purchased so we could extend the lower pitch. At this time, flood lighting was also installed.

Between 2014 and 2015, the ball wall was completed to help with training, and the drive and carpark areas were tarred.

Current Works

During 2018 a discussion commenced within the club regarding improving and upgrading the main pitch. The pitch had reached a point where unfortunately it was unavailable during wet weather. It also required reseeding and other works carried out. With 21 teams needing training opportunities, this was putting additional pressure on an already busy lower pitch.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 season has been greatly restricted, but also giving us a unique opportunity to address the problems with the main pitch early in the season. The decision was taken that this was the (least disruptive) opportunity to carry out the major works the pitch required.

When the decision was reached to move forward with the refurbishment and upgrade of the main pitch, we also decided that this was the ideal time to widen the pitch. By doing this now, we are removing the possibility of future disruption that further extension works might cause.

Compared to county grounds, our main pitch is narrower than most, and the decision was taken to widen the playing surface to make it comparable to others, thus giving our players the best opportunity to prepare for championships.





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As this work was going to be carried out, we felt it was the perfect opportunity to future-proof the pitch by adding a new drainage system and ducting for lights, PA etc. We have also added new street lighting to facilitate walkers and other groups using the grounds.

Future Plans

We have now formed a development committee to help organise and look after the future development of the club. Our plans include the development of the following facilities:

- Gymnasium
- Changing rooms
- Pedestrian safety management

Before the Covid-19 lockdown, most if not all members of the wider community had some contact with Michael Davitt GAC. Each night of the week saw different activities and events taking place.

- Over 20 teams playing football, hurling and camogie
- Irish dancing
- Gym
- Kids dance clubs
- Walking
- Drama club
- Bowls
- Catering for parties/fundraising/funerals
- Bar
- Bingo

The club is a massive asset to our community, an asset of which we should be rightly proud.

Conclusion

All work carried out over the years has depended heavily on the foresight of people who have gone before us and crucially, the generosity from our community both in physical and financial terms.

There are many people who have given generously over the years, some of these people have gone to their eternal rest but have left a legacy which still exists in our club today. With your assistance now, this will continue for years to come.

The works being carried out are expensive and we will apply for all grants available to us. But we cannot rely on this however. We are hoping that our community will step up and offer us your support. We need the community to rally behind us and help us with the fundraising efforts.

If we can get enough families and individuals to give a little, together it will add up to a lot and we will all be able to secure and make the future success of the Michael Davitt GAC club a reality.

With this in mind, you will find enclosed a letter outlining options of how you can support *your* club. We would also ask and encourage anyone who would like to offer help and advise us on raising funds, or who can help with other areas of the club, to please get in touch with us.

We are doing everything we can to guarantee the success of the club for future generations, but *we need your help* to make this happen.

Thank you



Groundworks September, 2020

