

Crosshaven Rugby – a different year

Crosshaven Rugby AGM 2021

Chairman's Report

Stephen Lawlor

2020/2021 – A Rugby Club without Rugby

Crosshaven Rugby has triumphed over many challenges in its forty-nine years but no one could have imagined that we would be prevented from being able to engage in the sport that is our very reason for being - that we would not be able to play rugby. But so it was and as ever we looked not at what could not be done but what was possible. Whereas we could not enjoy our minis, juveniles and J1s competing on the field we could and did use the time to ensure that when we do get back to business, our facilities will support our ambitions.

Finances

When the club was faced with a prolonged time without our primary sources of income, we called on our trustworthy and massively loyal membership and once again they responded with incredible generosity. Although the prospect of no rugby was very unwelcome, the one bright side was that we would have the opportunity to address the drainage on our two pitches. Last year we initiated a GoFundMe project to raise money with which we could leverage government grants to undertake the drainage project.

Thanks to the generosity of the members and the efforts of Mick Smith, we were able to submit a well-funded application for a Government Sports Capital grant. The grants have not yet been awarded but if, as we hope, we are successful we are ready to move quickly on the drainage project.

We also benefited from an IRFU grant for which less than half of the clubs in Ireland were in a position to apply. Thanks to our treasurer, Paul Cogan, for ensuring that our accounts were in good order and for working through the arduous process to provide the detailed financial information required.

Our thanks to our sponsors, Paul O'Brien of The Lodge, Phil Neville, Dave Guilfoyle and Mick Smith for their continued support and also to the many members who, despite circumstances, continue to pay their membership dues which allow us to pay those charges associated with running a club that never go away.

Projects

The transformation of our gym in a few short weeks has been amazing. It has been on our to-do list probably too long, but it is now a testament to what can be done with a little determination and the astute use of a little capital. Led once again by Mick Smith on the funding side and Mick Goode on the execution, the project has delivered a vastly improved gym. This €23,000 investment has been made possible by members’ contributions and the Cork County Council Community Fund Scheme. We would like to thank councillors Audrey Buckley and Seamus McGrath for their support for our application.

Most of our teams are now back enjoying training and as society normalises and as soon as is permissible, we will reengage in our normal activities. Merle O’Connell has kindly volunteered to run the summer camp again this year and that will take place on July 26th to 28th. We will pursue the possibility of running the golf classic and hopefully the J1s will be able to revive the tag tournament.

We are also working towards launching a fund-raiser called “Split the Bucket” to raise money on a sustainable basis to help bridge the gap between recurring expenses and income. Our thanks to Darren O’Keeffe, Dean Crowley and Jason Brady for spearheading this initiative.

Our fiftieth anniversary is coming up next year and although a full season away it is important that work starts now to ensure that we honour those who founded the club and our progress over the last fifty years. Our sincere thanks to Liz Deane who has volunteered to coordinate activities during

the anniversary. Any and all suggestions are welcome and can be sent to Liz or anyone of the committee members.

Rugby

Hopefully, before too long, we will see a return to full contact rugby. I am delighted to welcome our new J1 coach, Stephen Knoop, and wish him and our J1s the very best for the coming season. And thanks to Mick Good for taking to the role of Director of Rugby with his characteristic vim, vigour and energy. This has been a challenging season in many ways and Mick has been a rock of good sense in the choppy waters.

This year also marks the tenth anniversary of what is the greatest achievement of the club to date, the winning of the All-Ireland Junior Cup in 2010/11. It is extremely disappointing that we have not been able to celebrate in customary style, but I know that this club will not be found wanting when circumstances allow us to honour this achievement and those who made it possible.

I would like to thank our Juvenile Coordinator Donal O’Boyle for his work throughout this most unusual of seasons. Donal took on the role on a strict one-year term, and we reluctantly accept his decision to step down after fulfilling that agreement. During the season, Finn O’Boyle as well as coaching the U16s has been proactive in reaching out to the secondary school in Crosshaven where we hope to revive rugby for the benefit of the school and the club.

Caroline Ainscough has completed her fifth and possibly most challenging season as Minis’ Coordinator. Caroline put a huge amount of work in to ensuring that the club was following all government and IRFU guidelines so that the younger underage teams could train as often as possible and in safety. My thanks to Caroline for all her work through the years and I am delighted that she is willing to continue to give of her time to the Crosshaven Rugby minis.

Committee

This is my last year serving as chairman of Crosshaven Club. It has been a fascinating five years. I am equally amazed by the variety of the challenges that face a rugby club and the incredible ability of club to overcome each and every one of them. Although financing a voluntary organisation and building infrastructure to support that organisation is never easy, the club has grown from strength to strength over the years. The engine behind that growth has been a dynamic, hard-working committee focussed purely on making the club a better place to play rugby. It has been an honour and my pleasure to serve as chairman to this wonderful group of committed people and I look forward to continuing to serve the club in whatever role I can.

I would especially like to thank my fellow officers, President Dave, Secretary Mia and Treasurer Paul for their unwavering support during my tenure as chairman.

Change is good, it brings new ideas and perspectives to bear on the running of the club. This committee is not a closed society and there are no barriers to entry. I am living proof of that. I have never played rugby for any club never mind this one. I have no deep roots in the community as many do and from which the club gains so much. My only qualification for the position of chairman of Crosshaven Rugby is having filled a bottle of water for U10s twelve years ago. There are many out there with more to offer and the committee will welcome them with open arms.

As my last act in the position of chairman for this illustrious club, I am very happy to award this year's Club-person of the year award to ...