

A MESSAGE FOR GAA CLUB MEMBERS

A chairde,

We are living in the most extraordinary times.

The Coronavirus pandemic has changed almost everything about our world and has impacted upon so much of what we thought was normal about our lives.

Like all sport, Gaelic Games have gone into hibernation.

But it is a source of enormous pride to us that what has not disappeared or become dormant has been the spirit and the passion for community that is the lifeforce of the GAA in every corner of this island.

Clubs big and small and across towns and rural parishes are doing what the GAA has been proud to do for 136 years – and that's be a light and a standard for the people who they represent.

We have always said that the GAA ultimately, is all about People – People working together for a goal.

We have a common goal now like never before.

Our goal is to help the island of Ireland push back against the spread of this virus and give the people of Ireland the best chance possible of limiting its impact and being able to hopefully, some day in the not too distant future, come out the other side.

This community spirit is also prominent among our hundreds of GAA clubs overseas who are such a vital support network for our Diaspora.

To the people posting skills drills for stuck at home players, keep up the good work.

To all of those who have been able to offer help to the vulnerable in their communities, we extend our sincerest míle buíochas and urge you to stay safe while doing so and follow all the advice and guidelines from the health and statutory authorities.

From the outset of this crisis the GAA has been working closely with the HSE and we have made all of their guidelines available to all of our clubs.

Their request for our support has deepened in recent times.

The large car parking facilities at Croke Park have been made available for staff working in nearby hospitals.

We have made part of Croke Park available as a drive through test centre for people with symptoms of Covid-19. Cars arrive by prior appointment and drive into the Cusack Stand tunnel where they are tested by doctors in their cars and they then drive away out the other side.

It is all conducted under full medical supervision.

It is an opportunity for GAA HQ to play its part and mirror what is being done by so many of our members elsewhere.

Similar testing facilities are now in operation at several other GAA county and club venues around the country - all of them playing an important role.

Sport is not a priority at a time of a national emergency.

But when the time comes again for the boots to be laced, hurleys to be gripped, nets to be hung and the pitches to be marked and when the time comes for men and women, and boys and girls to run out into the air and play the games they love, sport will be more important than ever before. We are planning for that day – whenever that day may be.

In the meantime, we can help make that day come quicker if we do what we are being asked to do by the people who know what they are talking about.

Stop, look and listen to all of the advice that is there on how we beat this common foe.

Washing our hands, personal distancing and if needs be self-isolation are the weapons that we have.

Keep safe, keep thinking of others, keep fit and healthy in body and mind.

As that great son of Derry, Seamus Heaney wrote:

***“So hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that further shore
Is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles
And cures and healing wells.”***

Ar son Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, go raibh maith agaibh



Seán Ó hÓráin
Uachtarán



Tomás Ó Riain
Ard-Stiúrthóir