



GPA Annual Report 2024

CO-CHAIRS' ADDRESS



We are proud to present the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) Annual Report for 2024, our first as Co-Chairs of the National Executive Committee (NEC). It reflects the work carried out on behalf of and for you the GPA members under the association's four key pillars of Representation, Development, Welfare and Equality. It shows the enormous range of supports that are available to inter-county players and we would encourage all members to review the information and identify where your association may be able to help you. It also shows what can be achieved when players have their collective voice heard. As THE central figures involved in Gaelic games, it is vital that you continue to do so.

We would like to pay tribute to our predecessors in the roles of Co-Chairs. Maria Kinsella and Matt O'Hanlon guided the GPA through a time of momentous change and a time of great difficulty. They were at the forefront of steering our association towards the motion at GAA Congress which paved the way for the three National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to enter discussions on full integration. That is a topic to which we will return.

They also had a huge role to play as we emerged

from the global pandemic. They were calm hands at the wheel and stepped up to the mark when tough decisions had to be made. In unprecedented circumstances, their professional skills and expertise were invaluable. We know that we can call on them when we need advice and guidance and on behalf of all players offer them our heartfelt thanks.

A restructuring of our NEC executive officers saw Mayo legend Cora Staunton elected as our association's first Vice-President. It is a privilege to work beside her on behalf of players and also alongside our President Donal Óg Cusack whose experience offers the GPA an irreplaceable resource. The guidance and advice of our Board of Directors, led by Professor Brian MacCraith, is also something for which we are extremely grateful.

The GPA could not support players 24/7/365 without our dedicated staff. They are always available to players and do so much work that will never make any headlines. That includes dealing with players in serious mental health crises, helping former players who have suffered debilitating injuries because of their inter-county involvement, supporting players who are changing careers and offering scholarship opportunities

to student athletes. They do not seek our thanks but nonetheless it should be offered at every opportunity. To our CEO Tom Parsons and the rest of the team, we offer gratitude and respect for what you do to allow us to be at our best on and off the pitch. You do truly see us as people first, not players and certainly not commodities as some within GAA administration do.

Tom will take you through the operational highlights for 2024, but we would like to give our thoughts on the integration process. The GPA kick-started the integration process and have at all times stood ready to support the NGBs on their journey. However, like many within the Gaelic family, we are mostly in the dark as to how the process is progressing.

Updates are irregular and lack any real detail. Following the latest update pre-GAA Congress, we sought a meeting with the Integration Committee who had said one of their focusses would be consultation. Our request was turned down as we were told it would be “inappropriate” to meet at this time. It is unfortunate and puzzling that an issue that will impact all within the Gaelic family is being kept concealed to such a degree.

It has led to lots of speculation, much of it negative, about whether integration is achievable. Let us be clear, the GPA will not stand for a position where integration is not delivered. It is non-negotiable. It is what the Gaelic family wants. If there are obstacles, we should all be made aware of them because we would all like to help overcome them. We all have an opportunity to make a fundamental change that will have a transformational impact on Gaelic games for generations to come. We will not allow that opportunity to be wasted.

As a final word, we want to return to addressing you, the members, directly. You are the GPA. The NEC, the Board, our CEO, and our staff serve you. So, make your voices heard, engage with us and hold us to account. We are here to work for you and according to your direction. Contact us through your squad representative or get in touch directly. No matter how big or small you feel your issue, concern or suggestion is, you will find willing ears. We are here for you in life and in sport.



Aisling Maher
GPA NEC Co-Chair



Niall Morgan
GPA NEC Co-Chair