



Health is at the heart
of every club



APRIL 2026



AGHADERG GAC & BALLYVARLEY HC HEALTHY CLUB NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE
AGHADERG GAC & BALLYVARLEY HC HEALTHY CLUB
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER!

OUR CLUB FIRST BECAME INVOLVED WITH THE GAA HEALTHY CLUB
PROJECT IN 2019 AS A PREREQUISITE OF OUR CLUB MAITH
ACCREDITATION. WE APPLIED AND WERE SUCCESSFULLY ACCEPTED
ONTO PHASE 4 OF THE PROJECT.

WE SUCCESSFULLY DELIVERED AND REPORTED ON MANY HEALTHY CLUB
INITIATIVES AND WERE AWARDED HEALTHY CLUB STATUS IN 2021
ALONG WITH A GRANT FOR 1,000 EUROS TO SPEND ON HEALTH AND
WELLBEING ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CLUB.

SINCE THEN WE HAVE ACHIEVED FOUNDATION STATUS, ACCEPTING THE
AWARD AT AN EVENT IN GARVAGHY CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE LAST YEAR.



AT THE END OF 2025 BERNICE REA WAS APPOINTED AS OUR NEW
HEALTHY CLUB OFFICER AND ALONG WITH HER HEALTHY CLUB PROJECT
TEAM – DEIRDRE MCGRATH, HELEN MORGAN, ANNE MCGRATH, ANNE
AND ANDREW HAGGART AND CLAIRE MORGAN – HAS ALREADY BEGUN
PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INITIATIVES IN OUR CLUB.

AS WE CONTINUE ON OUR HEALTHY CLUB JOURNEY WE WANT TO KNOW
WHAT **YOU** FEEL WE SHOULD BE PRIORITISING.



**PLEASE TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO
COMPLETE OUR VERY SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE AT
THE FOLLOWING LINK. THANK YOU!**

**[FORMS.OFFICE.COM](https://forms.office.com) (HEALTHY CLUB
COMMUNITY MAPPING SURVEY)**

STEPPING OUT IN STYLE FOR 2026



We were delighted to take part in
Ireland Lights Up, meeting every
Wednesday night at the Boulevard
and walking up to 3 miles. We
braved atrocious weather
conditions to still get our STEPS in!!



We hope to host another walking
group later in the year so watch
this space!

BÍGÍ LINN – JOIN US!





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Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge

Our club joined the GAA Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge – to walk more than 4,000km (2,485 miles, approximately the distance around Ireland’s coastline) in 5 weeks to be entered into a draw to win 2,500 Euro for our club.

75 OF US ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE AND WE SMASHED IT!

WE WALKED MORE THAN 11,780 KM (7,320 MILES) BETWEEN 7TH JANUARY AND 11TH FEBRUARY FINISHING IN 55TH PLACE OUT OF 308 PARTICIPATING ULSTER CLUBS!

Ruairí Donnelly, Brenda McShane & Pauline O’Malley finished with the Top Three mileage counts in our club!

Why not join up next January 2027 when the Challenge goes live again and make those steps count for your club!!

Could you take on the Top Three?

Check out our Healthy Club Facebook for more info;

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18ZVx4dbvA/?>

Healthy Club supports the GAA Healthy Eating Guidelines summarized in this handy infographic;

HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

Our club aims to create a supportive environment in which it promotes healthy eating for all its members and the wider community, to make the Association a healthier place for everyone to enjoy. The club is committed in supporting a whole organisational approach to embed and implement the following healthy eating guidelines.

HEALTHY EATING TIPS

- VEGETABLES, SALAD & FRUIT**: MORE IS BETTER, INCLUDE UP TO 7 SERVINGS OF FRUIT, VEGETABLES OR SALAD EVERY DAY. INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BASE MOST OF THE MEALS THEY EAT AROUND THIS FOOD GROUP.
- WHOLEGRAINS**: CHOOSE WHOLEGRAIN CEREALS, BREADS, PASTA, POTATOES & RICE FOR ADDED FIBRE & SLOW RELEASE ENERGY. THE NUMBER OF SERVINGS DEPENDS ON AGE, ACTIVITY LEVELS AND ENERGY NEEDS.
- MILK, CHEESE & YOGHURT**: REDUCED FAT OR LOW FAT MILK CHEESE & YOGHURT OPTIONS HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF CALCIUM AND OTHER NUTRIENTS WITH FEWER CALORIES.
- MEAT, FISH, EGGS & ALTERNATIVES**: TRY TO EAT FISH TWICE A WEEK, OILY FISH IS BEST. CHOOSE LEAN CUTS OF MEAT AND CUT ANY VISIBLE FAT & SKIN OFF MEAT & POULTRY. PLANT BASED SOURCES OF PROTEIN SUCH AS BEANS PEAS AND LENTILS ARE LOW FAT, HIGH FIBRE ALTERNATIVES TO MEAT.
- FATS & OILS**: ALL TYPES OF FATS, OILS AND SPREADS ARE HIGH IN CALORIES. USE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE AND CHOOSE LOW FAT OR LIGHT SPREADS AND BUTTERS WHERE POSSIBLE.
- HIGH FAT, SUGAR & SALT**: FOODS THAT ARE HIGH IN CALORIES, SALT, SUGAR & FATS SHOULD ONLY BE CONSUMED OCCASIONALLY - NOT DAILY.

MEAL PLANNING ADVICE

- EXAMINE FOOD LABELS TO CHECK FOR SALT, SUGAR AND FAT CONTENT
- INCLUDE A VARIETY OF FOODS EVERYDAY
- START EACH DAY WITH A HEALTHY BREAKFAST
- HAVE SOME HEALTHY SNACKS ON HAND THROUGHOUT THE DAY
- BATCH COOKING HELPS YOU TO BE ORGANISED & SAVES TIME
- AVOID ADDING SALT TO FOOD

OUR CLUB DOES NOT RECOMMEND

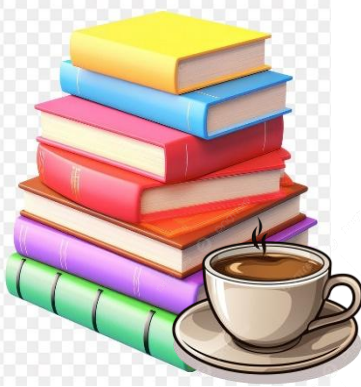
- THE USE OF SPORTS SUPPLEMENTS AND NUTRITIONAL PRODUCTS (PROTEIN & CARBOHYDRATE POWDERS/ MEAL REPLACEMENTS) CLAIMING TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE FOR JUVENILE PLAYERS
- BRINGING FIZZY DRINKS, SUGARY DRINKS, CRISPS, CHOCOLATE ETC. TO TRAINING OR GAMES
- THE USE OF SPORTS DRINKS, BARS AND GELS
- ACCEPTING SPONSORSHIP FROM UNSUITABLE FOOD SUPPLIERS WHO HOLD OPPOSING VIEWS

OUR CLUB IS COMMITTED TO FOLLOWING THIS HEALTHY EATING GUIDE BUT WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DIETS OF MEMBERS

Check out page 4 of this newsletter for information on the healthy & nutritious GAA Recipes for Success initiative!

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BOOK CLUB CORNER



Healthy Club have launched a small pilot **BOOK CLUB**. We held our first meeting earlier this month and we plan to meet regularly once monthly for a relaxed and informal chat about our Book of the Month - with some lighthearted fun thrown in too!



We'll pass on any great reads (or those books we wished we'd left on the shelf!) here in this newsletter.

If our pilot is successful, we plan to open up **BOOK CLUB** to other avid readers in our club and community!

BÍGÍ LINN – JOIN US!



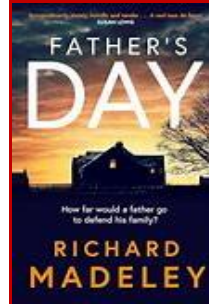
Did you know that you can join **libraries ni** for free and gain access to thousands of not just traditional books but eBooks/Audiobooks/eNewspapers/eMagazines? Check out the following link;



[Become a Libraries NI Member now for free](#)

Our April Book of the Month was;

“Father’s Day” by Richard Madeley



How far would a father go to defend his family?

We gave it 3.5 stars.



Genre: Revenge Thriller; Our opinion-thought provoking, relevant to today’s social media vulnerabilities facing our young people, a sensitive, disturbing subject. We would explore other books from this author.

May Book of the Month;

“The Great Alone” by Kristin Hannah.



A gripping novel of family dynamics, heartbreak and hope which tugs at the heartstrings set against the beauty of the Alaskan wilderness...

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GAA Recipes for Success is a Nutritional Toolkit to Support Healthy Living and Optimise Sports Performance.



We all want to maximise our health and our performance but with so many mixed messages out there about what we should eat and drink it's hard to know what's best. The GAA's Recipes for Success booklet is filled with tasty, healthy, performance enhancing recipes that are easy to make and aims to support GAA players and members in making the right choices.

Cooking for yourself is something you can only truly learn by doing. That's why the unique partnership behind Recipes for Success facilitates bringing teams together to enhance not only their nutritional knowledge but also their practical cookery skills, one of the most important life-skills any player can develop.

This unique collaboration is about bringing together expertise, including leading sports performance nutritionist Dr. Críonna Tobin, and an array of sectors to respond to an identified need in GAA clubs for both educational and practical programmes supporting healthy eating for sport.

The Recipes for Success toolkit is filled with tasty, healthy, performance enhancing recipes that are easy to make

You can check out this tasty and nutritious toolkit at the GAA Recipes for Success link here;

[d2uyp6y6g4nibzu4kxmm.pdf](https://www.gaa.ie/d2uyp6y6g4nibzu4kxmm.pdf) (GAA Recipes for Success)

Our Healthy Club Project Team were delighted to sample some recipes from the GAA Recipes for Success Toolkit at their last meeting. Here, they are enjoying Porridge Bread and Easy Oatmeal Biscuits;



You can find the simple, easy to follow recipes on the following pages of the GAA Recipes for Success toolkit:-

Porridge Bread; Recipe on Page 67.

We used chia seeds instead of flax or linseed and this was a tasty, moist bread.

Easy Oatmeal Biscuits; Recipe on Page 69.

We prepared cinnamon and raisin biscuits along with blueberry and orange and they were both delicious!



YUM!





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Cardiac Risk Management:

The GAA advocates for a holistic and proactive approach to cardiac health for all its members, grounded in risk reduction, education, and emergency preparedness. To this end, the following is recommended for members;

1. Lifestyle and Long-Term Cardiac Wellbeing;

The GAA's Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee recommends a continued emphasis on good nutrition choices, appropriate physical training, stress management, and other positive lifestyle behaviours in the context of maintaining positive cardiac health. The GAA has produced, and continues to update, educational resources and support programmes which help to promote everyday heart health. Examples of these can be found below, and it is recommended that all members familiarise themselves with these –

- [Fuel your Game - Healthy Eating for Sport | Tobar](#)

- [Healthy Eating in the GAA](#)
- [Smoke-Free GAA Clubs](#)
- [Training and Lifestyle | Tobar](#)
- [OneDrive](#) (GAA Substance Use Policy)
- [GAA Mental Health Charter](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Samaritans Ireland](#)
- [Mental Fitness](#)
- [Irish Life GAA Healthy Club Programme | Tobar](#)
- [Critical Incident Response Plan](#)

2. Emergency Readiness;

Recognising that cardiac incidents can still occur despite best preventative measures, the GAA places equal priority on rapid response capability to include the ready availability of personnel trained in CPR and a functioning Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Healthy Club are planning to update First Aid, CPR and defibrillator training for our coaches.

3. Cardiac Screening;

As an additional method to identify potential risk, the GAA, through its Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee, recommends that the most effective way to identify potential risk for players over the age of 14 is to undergo cardiac screening on one occasion. It is also advised that this process be repeated before the age of 25. This process involves

- the completion of the GAA cardiac health questionnaire - available here; [\(Microsoft Word - Cumann L\372thchleas Gael cardiac screening protocol.doc\)](#)
- an ECG (electrocardiogram),
- and a physical examination conducted by a suitably qualified medical professional.

Players should contact their GP if experiencing any of the symptoms listed in the questionnaire, now or if they present in the future.

Further information can be found at the Cardiac Health Information Hub -

<https://learning.gaa.ie/cardiachealth>

Healthy Club is exploring the feasibility of organising self-funded Cardiac screening at the club later in the year. We will provide an update on the outcome.



CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) offers free screening for young people over the age of 14 years. Further information on screening can be found here;

[Q&A's about screening – Testmyheart](#)

You can register your interest for the next CRY Cardiac screening session in Northern Ireland here;

[Cardiac Screening Interest](#)



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FEBRUARY WALKING CHALLENGE FOR MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Aghaderg GAC & Ballyvarley HC

Walk 50-100 miles in February Challenge



Supporting

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT



We raised £640 for Macmillan cancer support surpassing our £500 target!

35 of us signed up to walk 50-100 miles in February support of this very worthy charity.



Healthy Club Officer Bernice Rea and Healthy Club Project Team member Claire Morgan were delighted to present MacMillan Fundraising Manager, Aaron Nugent, with the proceeds of our February Walking Challenge!



Healthy Club is very aware of the selfless dedication and commitment of all our coaches, giving freely of their time to enrich the lives of our young people.

The GAA has partnered with many experts across multiple agencies to support them in this role and at Healthy Club we aim to signpost to this support.

The JIGSAW ONE GOOD COACH online workshop is aimed at One Good Adults who coach or train young people within the Gaelic Games. The workshop takes approximately 40 minutes to complete.

As a result of this workshop, participants will:

- Have a greater understanding of mental health
- Have a greater understanding of their role as One Good Adult
- Have a greater awareness of how to promote and support young people's mental health in their role as coach.

The link to this course is below;

[One Good Coach - Gaelic Games and Jigsaw - Overview](#)