

## A HARD YEAR FOR STRATFORD GRANGECON GAA

2013 was another very busy year for the Stratford Grangecon GAA Club, both on and off the playing field with Junior and Senior teams in all competitions; the juvenile membership grew at all ages and participated in all games throughout 2013, with our Under 12's team claiming silverware and our U16s still in the Shield at time of writing. The club also was busy with events, courses and fundraising.

### Lotto:

The weekly lotto continues to be our main source of funding which involves a wide range and number of very committed and hard working people – promoters, sellers, treasurer teams and buyers and the generosity of so many from within both villages and beyond. We had two winners during the year. In April Aileen Phelan - Aileen and her family, Philip, Ruairi and Roisin were presented with the cheque of €13,250, the following week and in September, Seamus Norman won the jackpot of €12,500. We would like to wish both winners well for the future and encourage everyone to support us in 2014.





**GAA Events:**

We hosted our first Cul camp, it was a massive success, with over 50 children taking part during the course of the week, learning new skills and enjoying themselves. For a club of Stratford-Grangecon size, the camp would not have been so successful without the help of Billy, Jim and Michael for supporting Paul and his team of coaches. Both children and parents were delighted and the week was finished off with finger food and ice-cream. We look forward to hosting another Cul camp next year.







### **Junior and Senior teams:**

The Juniors at the start of year, were under management of Pat Cronin and took part in West Winter Junior League, the team struggled for numbers, but gave a good honest performances, only narrowly losing matches. For the Junior C, Frank O'Neill and Declan Hanly were the new management team and had some success in bringing younger faces back to the team, although results did not go our way, the outlook for junior football is good for 2014. We would like to thank Pat Cronin, Frank O'Neill and Declan Hanly for giving their time for this season.

The Seniors, under the management team of Mick Hyland and selectors Pat Cronin, Jimmy Barrett, Alfie Hanbidge and Hugh O'Keefe, were elected in April to manage the team. From the outset, the loss of key players due to injury and retirement had an effect on the team's performance in the league campaign, the panel had to rely on junior players to step up to the level required and all players who put the jersey on, did their utmost to avoid relegation, however the team was relegated without a win in the league. The Wicklow championship did not fair much better, as we were knocked out of Coogan Steel Tinahely/Rathdrum Senior Football Championship in August, and beaten in the Keating cup later that month. The team had one final chance to save the club's senior status with a relegation battle against Arklow/Gerldines, but despite a

valiant display the team lost and will be playing intermediate football in 2014. Although it has been a tough season, the club appreciates the time and effort given by everyone who gave their time for the team.

Our juveniles, who are the future of our Club, are an inspiration to us all - they enjoy their football so much – they have fun, make friends, and gain confidence – surely the aim of any GAA Club. We held a very successful Club day on which saw the juveniles and senior players come together for fun and games. Food was provided for all concerned and we finished off the day with tea and home baking.

### **Juvenile teams**

Our well attended Academy under the watchful eye of Evelyn Ryan, Paddy McKitterick, Freda Moore and Pam Nicholson provides the opportunity for children to meet and have fun while getting exercise, developing co-ordination, team work skills and making friends.

The U10s and U8s traveled far and wide in the county to participate in blitzes under the stewardship of Jim Barrett, Jimmy Fluskey, Richie Curran and Michael Carmody, Ed Lawrence. The club hosted 2 very successful blitzes throughout the year and had great success in the county U-Can skills at this age group, the Club welcomed lots of new faces, which bode well for the future of the Club.

The U12s played some super football throughout the summer, gave great commitment and really gelled as teams under the mentors of Jim Bollard, Michael Carroll and Dave Breslin, with the highlight winning the championship, were they defeated Kilmacanogue with great team display. The club would like to thank the mentors for their hard work and efforts over the season.





The U14s joined Michael Dwyer's, due to smaller numbers and our mentor Philip Phelan was part of a successful year who won the division B league title. The team also had success in the championship, reaching u14 A championship semi final only to narrowly lose to Tinahely in the on a score line 1-7 V 0-12. Many thanks to Nigel Gavin, Angela, and Breda for their dedication and support through out the season.



There was individual player success also, Connor with Michael Dwyer's under 14 hurling team in the in the county and Limerick Feile Congratulations to Ross Cogan, Sean O'Neill, Conor Hanly.

In ladies football Casey O'Brien made the U-14 Wicklow girls squad. Also Katie Ann O'Neill Casey Barrett and Katie Bollard made county level. Well done to all girls who play with our teams do on the county development squads and on ladies football teams. We encourage more to get involved and build for the future.

U16 team this year, the club welcomed the U16 players from Michael Dwyer's, the collective team is now known as Stratford Grangecon Gaels. The team took part in the U-16 B league and championship. Under the mentorship of Pat Burke, Paddy Byrne and Maurice Mangan, the players played some great football and their skill level improved significantly, which has resulted in the team reaching the final of the B Shield.

Hurling was a major development in 2013 in the Club under the determined Michael Carmody ably and willingly aided by James Barrett, Jimmy Fluskey, Richie Curran, Philip Phelan, John Channing, Ken Flood Conor Water and Malachy Sheridan where at times there were up to 40 children in the field on a Friday evening at training. We attended and held a number of very successful hurling blitzes. The club catered for Academy hurlers under the guidance of Denise Ryan and Michelle Carmody. A number of children up to U10 from local football clubs are coming along on

permission forms to play with our own members and under our mentors to gain valuable hurling skills.

Again 2013 saw our Club being represented at County level in a number of development squads, our u-7's- u'12's took part in the Wicklow Football/Hurling U-can skills .We had great success in the U Can Football Skills with Conor O'Neill taking first place in the U10's and Peter Fluskey taking third place in the U11's . Well done to our young hurlers Jessica Fluskey, Connor Carmody, Ross Sheridan, and Shay Barrett, Brian Keogh and Michael Byrne and the footballers Jess Fluskey, Connor Carmody, Jenny McDonagh, and Cormac Burke for doing so well and representing our club. We would also like to thank the mentors who put in the time to train these young stars of the future.

**Guests who attended the club:**

George O' Connor accompanied by Colm Bolger (Wexford GDA) visited the club in April and started off a coaching initiative. George and Colm worked with the various age groups and talked to some some parents afterwards.

A successful coaching workshop was held in the club in May presented by Mickey Ned O' Sullivan, Kerry Minor manager. Mickey Ned gave a presentation on various aspects of coaching and team management. He then worked our U12 and U16 teams. The day concluded with lunch at 3pm. Mickey Ned complimented the club on the standard, morale and enthusiasm of the coaches and the high standard of our facilities.







### **School Link Programme:**

Our school link programme was very successful, with both Michael Carroll and Michael Carmody visiting schools on a weekly basis for both football and hurling respectively. There was great work done in both Stratford and Grangecon schools in both football and hurling since last September. A very successful blitz held in May finished off the school link programme for 2012/2013 season. Thanks to both principals and Paul Garrigan for supporting Stratford Grangecon GAA School Link programme.

### **Fundraising:**

Stratford Grangecon GAA Juvenile Draw took place Easter Saturday at our Easter Party, there was a great response to the draw and prizes were warmly greeted. Cash for Clothes continued during the year, thanks to all who contributed and volunteered in sorting and collections.

A Darts night was held in the Stratford arms in October, the event was very successful, with members and locals turning out to support and taking part.

### **5 Year Development Plan:**

There was no further development on the structure or grounds of club, but we would like to thank Jim Bollard and Billy Moore for their due diligence in maintaining and upkeep of the playing pitches and clubhouse.

The Club however did develop other GAA policies and welcomed Evelyn Ryan, as the Club's Children's Officer and Paddy McKitterick as the Alcohol, Substance, Abuse Officer.

There were Code of Ethics and First aid courses also held during the year, there was a good response and high attendance for both.

### **Summary:**

The backbone of the Stratford Grangecon Club has always been the willingness of past and present members and community to help and support the Club in every way. While the Club recognizes that there are many challenges coming our way, we believe we are in a very good position to meet these challenges. As we head for 2014, the Club has a sense of purpose, belief and excitement in our 5 Year Development Plan and the expertise and resourcefulness within our Club and communities to keep the Club moving in the right direction. The club is especially excited and enthused at the development of a Coaching Plan for 2014.

Sympathy is extended to all in our community who have suffered bereavement during 2013. Sincere thanks to all for their support throughout the year and the Club wishes everyone good health and good wishes for 2014.