



Tuairisc Bliantúil An Rúnaí 2015

Is mór an phribléid dom Thuairisc Bliantúil a chur ós comhair Chomhdháil Comhairle na Mumhan CLG don bhliain 2015. Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil do gach éinne a raibh páirteach le hobair an Chomhairle í rith 2015.

I am pleased to present the Annual Report to Provincial Convention on the activities of the Munster Council during 2015. In this Report on the general activities of the Council I will concentrate on the Council activities during the year in broad terms. I will not go into detail where the aspect of the Council work is covered in detail in Sub-Committee reports relating to Council activities also contained in this Annual Convention booklet.

OVERVIEW 2015

Representatives in National Inter-County Scene:

Overall 2015 will be regarded as a less successful year for the Province on the field of play than either 2014 or 2013.

In Hurling while it was generally a disappointing year for the Province nonetheless there were significant highlights notably the win by Waterford (from Division 1b) of the Allianz National Hurling League and the continued success of the Province at Under 21 level with Limerick claiming the Bord Gais All-Ireland title. While there was no Munster representative on All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final day both Tipperary and Waterford, the two Provincial finalists, performed well on semi-final day. Tipperary also qualified for the Electric Ireland Minor Hurling decider but unfortunately just fell short in the closing stages of the final.

In Football while the Munster Champions, Kerry retained the Electric Ireland Minor All-Ireland Championship and also won the Junior All-Ireland they failed to retain the senior crown won the previous year. The recent significant advances being made by Tipperary at under-age level in football are continuing and were marked this year by appearances in the Under 21 and Minor football Finals and the county was most unlucky to lose the Under 21 Final after a very competitive game against Tyrone.

Representatives in National Inter-Club Scene:

It was a mixed season for the following Provincial Club Representatives in the 2014'15 All-Ireland Club Championships:

<i>Iomáint:</i>	<i><u>Shinsir</u></i> <i>Cill Mocheallóg</i>	<i><u>Idirmheánach</u></i> <i>Ceapeach Chuinn</i>	<i><u>Soisir</u></i> <i>Ma Dheilge</i>
<i>Peil:</i>	<i>Aibhistín De Staic</i>	<i>Ard Fhearta</i>	<i>Brosnach</i>

Kilmallock qualified for the AIB GAA All-Ireland Senior Club Hurling Final but came up against an experienced Ballyhale Shamrocks team who proved much stronger and more clinical on the day. Austin Stacks just fell short of reaching the senior football decider when beaten by Derry Champions, Slaughtneill at the semi-final stage of the AIB GAA All-Ireland Senior Club Football



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Championship. Cappoquin fell at the quarter-final stage in the Intermediate hurling and Modeligo met a similar fate at semi-final stage in the Junior hurling championship.

However two Kerry Clubs, Ardfert and Brosna, brought All-Ireland honours back to the Province when they were crowned Intermediate and Junior Club Football Champions respectively.

It is hoped that the six Clubs representing the Province in the 2015'16 AIB GAA All-Ireland Club Championships who won their respective championships in November/December 2015 have successful campaigns in the All-Ireland championships just commenced. The Munster representatives are: Na Piarasaigh (Senior Hurling), Na Trachtalaí, Cluain Meala (Senior Football), Wolfe Tones Na Sionna (Intermediate Hurling), Naomh Mhuire, Cathair Saidhbhin (intermediate Football), Dun Guairne (Junior Hurling) and An Teampall Nua (Junior Football). With the quality of the representatives there is every reason for optimism.

Internal Provincial Competitions:

The Council organised eight Inter-County Championships in 2015 comprising of the Senior Hurling and Football, Intermediate Hurling, Junior Football, Under 21 Hurling and Football and Minor Hurling and Football. In addition the two subsidiary hurling (Waterford Crystal Cup) and Football (McGrath Cup) were run in January 2015 with Limerick winning the hurling competition and Waterford the football.

The Scoreboard appended later in my report on activities provides full details of all match results for both inter-county and inter-club games played during the season.

Provincial Representation in Education Sector Competitions:

A positive achievement at Post-Primary Schools' level was the retention in the Province for a second successive year of the *Hogan Cup* (Senior Post-Primary All-Ireland Championship) by Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne.

The Brian Lohan managed UL brought the prestigious *Fitzgibbon Cup* to the Province when accounting for fellow Provincial Institution, WIT in a replayed Final. The competition finals were ably hosted in the Province by LIT.

The Billy Morgan managed UCC team was most unlucky not to retain their *Sigerson Cup* title in their own grounds in 2015 when narrowly beaten by DCU.

Provincial Teams - Inter-Provincial Competitions:

The hurling and football teams representing the Province travelled to Galway and Newry respectively on 5th December 2015 to play Leinster in the 2015 Interprovincial semi-finals, with the finals scheduled for the following day. Unfortunately the weather took a hand in matters and neither of the semi-finals could be played. This was particularly disappointing for the players and management teams who had prepared and travelled for the games. On behalf of the Council I wish to record the sincere thanks of the Council to both management teams and to all the players who prepared to represent the Province in 2015. For the record the selected Munster teams were as follows:



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GAA Hurling Interprovincial Championship Semi-Final Panel v Leinster (5-12-2015)

Team: Darren Gleeson (Tiobraid Árann), Cathal Barrett (Tiobraid Árann), David McInerney (An Clár), Noel Connors (Portláirge), Paudie O'Brien (Luimneach), Mark Ellis (Corcaigh), Pádraic Maher (Tiobraid Árann – **Captain**), Shane Golden (An Clár), Conor Ryan (An Clár), Seamus Harnedy (Corcaigh), James Ryan (Luimneach), Patrick Maher (Tiobraid Árann), Cian Lynch (Luimneach), Shane Dowling (Luimneach), Shane O'Donnell (An Clár).

Substitutes: Anthony Nash (Corcaigh), Cian Dillon (An Clár), John Conlon (An Clár), Shane Nolan (Ciarraí), Gavin O'Mahony (Luimneach). Tom Condon (Luimneach), Paul Browne (Luimneach), Paudie O'Sullivan (Corcaigh), John O'Dwyer (Tiobraid Árann) and Kieran Bergin (Tiobraid Árann).

Hurling Manager: Anthony Daly (An Clár) **Council Liaison Officer:** Nuala Nealon

Selectors: Tommy Dunne (Tiobraid Árann) and John Mullane (Portláirge)

GAA Football Interprovincial Championship Semi-Final Panel v Laignean (5-12-2015)

Team: Brendan Kealy (Ciarraí), James Loughrey (Corcaigh), Aidan O'Mahony (Ciarraí - **Captain**), Fionn Fitzgerald (Ciarraí), Paul Murphy (Ciarraí), Brian O'Driscoll (Corcaigh), Iain Corbett (Luimneach), Gary Brennan (An Clár), Eoin Cadogan (Corcaigh), Kevin O'Driscoll (Corcaigh), Steven O'Brien (Tiobraid Árann), Paul Whyte (Portláirge), Michael Quinlivan (Tiobraid Árann), Seanie Buckley (Luimneach), Jamie Malone (An Clár).

Substitutes: Brian Scanlan (Luimneach), Mark Griffin (Ciarraí), Pa Ranahan (Luimneach), Thomas O'Gorman (Portláirge), Alan Fitzgerald (Ciarraí), Peter Acheson (Tiobraid Árann), Conor Cox (Ciarraí), Gary O'Sullivan (Ciarraí), Daithí Casey (Ciarraí).

Football Manager: Ger O'Sullivan (Corcaigh)

Selectors: Tommy Griffin (Ciarraí) and John Galvin (Luimneach)

Council Liaison Officers: Pat O'Shea and Mary O'Mahoney.

I have stated previously my view that unfortunately the interprovincial competitions have lost their appeal for patrons of our games and this is the situation for some time. I believe that commentators who suggest that the fall off in public interest arises from a lack of adequate marketing of the games or our failure to identify an optimum time slot for the competitions, in a heavily congested fixtures calendar, are mistaken. I believe that the entire games environment has changed radically and that these interprovincial competitions have simply lost their status in this changed environment. There is significantly more activity at both inter-county, club, higher education and post-primary levels in all grades since the interprovincial competitions were a significant part of the Association's games calendar. Foremost amongst the factors which have changed the games environment and consequently the relative status or position of the interprovincial competitions are the revised format of the club and inter-county championships with second chances etc. leading to far more commitments for players and particularly elite inter-county players. The training regimes for club, inter-county and schools' players have also intensified out of measure from the days when the interprovincial competitions had a significant niche in the Association's games calendar. The All-Ireland Club Championships at Intermediate



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and Junior levels in both codes have achieved an importance within the minds on the patrons since their introduction and rightly so.

Change is inevitable in all spheres of activity and the Association is no different. The challenge presented to us is to adapt to this change and to plan accordingly in a mature manner. The Association can no longer credibly search for improvements to how we plan, structure and manage our games programmes (geared towards reducing burnout to elite players and giving a fairer deal to club players in terms of the number of games available and the scheduling of these games programmes) while simultaneously searching for an optimum slot for the interprovincial competitions. The credibility of many excellent reports is compromised, in my view, by a reluctance to acknowledge that accommodating the interprovincial competitions in a seriously congested fixture calendar is virtually impossible without creating adverse impacts elsewhere. Neither is it realistic or credible for the Association to continue to expend significantly on the interprovincial competitions when every single staging of the competitions proves irrefutably that the patrons have no interest and have spoken with their feet. In my view it is impossible to justify such expenditure when many clubs and county committees are struggling to meet the significant financial burdens on them in order to survive and continue. I recognise that savings on these competitions alone will not relieve the burdens on all of these units but I do believe that we should sensibly prioritise the use of all funding at our disposal and use it prudently.

ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

Provincial Bye-Laws:

Item 9 on the Convention agenda schedules the making of Provincial Bye-Laws by Convention. Significant changes were made to the Provincial Bye-Laws at the last Convention. This year some relatively minor amendments, suggested by the Bye-Laws Work-Group of the National Rules Advisory Committee, are presented for the approval of Convention. One of the proposed amendments was received from the Provincial Post-Primary Schools' Council arising from a decision to alter slightly the composition of the Provincial Post-Primary Schools' Council Competitions Control Committee during the year.

Provincial Council:

For the record the Council membership since last Convention on 30th January 2015 was as follows:

Oifigí:

Cathaoirleach:

Leas Cathaoirleach:

Cisteoir:

Oifigeach Caidreamh Poiblí:

Príomh-Oifigeach Feidhmiúcháin/Rúnaí:

Ruibéard an tSeaca

Diarmuid Ó Suilleabháin

Antóin Breathnach

Gearóid Ó Riain

Siomón Ó Maolrunaí (Non-Voting)

Teachtaí ar son Na gCondaethe:

An Clár:

Ciarráí:

Pádraig S Mac Dubháin agus P S Ó Ceallaigh

Cristóir Ó Cillín agus Seosamh Ó Crualaoich



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<u>Corcaigh:</u>	Marc Ó Siocháin agus Diarmuid Mac Gabhann
<u>Luimneach:</u>	Prionnsias Ó Riada agus Liam Ó Loineacháin
<u>Portláirge:</u>	Breandán Ó Toibín agus Seán Ó Laoire
<u>Tiobraid Árann:</u>	Seán Ó Costagáin agus Séamus Ó Muineog

<u>Comhairle Réigiúnach Liathróid Láimhe:</u>	Antóin Ó hAodha (Non-Voting)
<u>Comhairle Ard-Oideachas Na Mumhan:</u>	Seán Ó Corcráin (Non-Voting)
<u>Comhairle Iar-Bhunscoileanna Na Mumhan:</u>	Liam Ó Mathuna (Non-Voting)
<u>Coiste Bhunscoileanna Na Mumhan:</u>	Seosamh Ó Laighin (Non-Voting)

There were **eight new County Representatives on the Council** at the beginning of 2015 so the Council composition underwent significant change this year. An Induction Seminar was held on 7th May 2015 for all Council members.

The six constituent Counties in the Province are required to submit to the Council a list of all the affiliated Clubs before March 1st each year. A significant reappraisal of the actual number of Clubs throughout the Association was conducted on behalf of Central Council during 2014 which led to a reduction in overall Unit numbers. The following reflects the Clubs in each County as per the affiliations submitted in 2015:

<i>Contae:</i>	<i>gCumainn:</i>
An Clár	57
Ciarraí	73
Corcaigh	260
Luimneach	65
Portláirge	50
Tiobraid Árann	72
Total:	577

The Council met on five occasions since the last Convention on 30th January 2015. Significant decisions taken by Council during the past year include:

- Council Meeting Schedules for 2015'16
- Membership changes to Council Sub-Committees
- Approval of a Council Budget for 2014'15 on the recommendation of the Management & Finance Committee
- Approval of the Development Grants Scheme for 2015 recommended by the Planning & Development Committee
- Receiving reports from the County Representatives on the status of the Club Championships in their respective counties
- Approving recommendations from the Council Planning & Physical Development Sub-Committee for Physical Development Grants for Units within the Province funded by Central and Provincial Council



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- Receiving Progress Reports from the Chairpersons of the various Council Sub-Committees
- Approval of an application from Coiste Contae Chiarraí for permission to re-grade more than one Club to Intermediate and junior status arising from a reformat of the County Senior Football Championship
- Adoption of a formal “Home & Away” venues Policy for Provincial Competitions
- Appointment of management personnel for the Interprovincial teams
- The submission of a motion to Annual Congress 2016 seeking a Rule change to remove the absolute prohibition on Provinces commencing Minor Championships before stipulated times in April each year
- The making/alteration of Competition Regulations for all Provincial Inter-County and Inter-Club Competitions (sixteen competitions in total). This included making alterations to the Minor Hurling Championship Competition Regulation and to the McGrath Cup Senior Football League and Senior Hurling League Competitions Regulations
- Recommendation to the Central Competitions Control Committee that an application from Corcaigh to play a “second best” team in the Provincial/All-Ireland Intermediate Hurling Championship for developmental purposes be recommended for approval to Ard Chomhairle

The decision to alter the Competition Regulations for the two Subsidiary Competitions was taken following a meeting between the Provincial Competitions Control Committee and the senior County Committee officers and their senior county management teams in the six counties. The outcome of this consultation was to revert to a County only competition and to structure the competitions on the basis of the number of counties entering generally leading to a round robin format. It was agreed to review the outcome of the changes to determine if the status of the competitions improve.

I wish to pay tribute to a number of members of the outgoing Council who will not be returning after Annual Convention either because their maximum five-year term is ending with the life of this Council or to move on to other things within their County Committee. These include: Pádraig S Mac Dubháin (An Clar), Antóin Ó hAodha, Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe Na Mumhan, Seán Ó Corcráin, Comhairle Ard-Oideachas Na Mumhan. I would also pay tribute to the outgoing Uachtarán Oinigh, Teidí Ó Suilleabháin (Ciarraí) whose maximum three-year year term also ends at this Convention.

Work of Council Sub-Committees:

Some of the work of the Council is referred to sub-committees in accordance with Rule and Provincial Bye-Laws. In all the Provincial Council has ten statutory Sub-Committees prescribed in Rule. A number of these sub-committees have Work-Groups dedicated to specific aspects of the committee brief. Consequently when reporting on the activities of the Council it is necessary to state that the work of the Council is assisted by an extensive sub-committee structure. The various sub-committees operate on the basis of specific Terms of Reference approved by the Council, with Committee members serving three-year terms coinciding with the tenure of the



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Provincial Chairperson. The Council received Progress Reports from the Chairpersons of each Committee throughout the year as frequently as deemed necessary by the Council. The reports from the various sub-committees and work-groups are included later in this booklet and form part of the report on Council activities for 2015.

Management & Finance Committee:

The management of the affairs within the Provincial Jurisdiction is the responsibility of the **Management Committee** between Provincial Council meetings. The **Finance Committee** is responsible for all Financial Matters referred to it by the Provincial Council. The Munster Council operate a combined **Management & Finance Committee** and this was the case in 2015.

The following is the common membership of the Management & Finance Committee:

Cathaoirleach: Roibeard an tSeaca **Rúnaí:** Ciarán Ó Lidí (Bhainisteoir Oibríochtaí/Leas POF/Rúnaí).

Oifigí Foirne: Diarmuid Ó Suilleabháin (Leas Cathaoirleach), Antóin Breathnach (Cisteoir), Gearóid Ó Riain (Oifigeach Caidreamh Poiblí) agus Siomón Ó Maolrunaí (Príomh-Oifigeach Feidhmiúcháin/Rúnaí).

During the year since Convention the joint Management & Finance Committee met on 10 occasions as business required.

The key business of the Management & Finance Committee during the year included:

- Dealing with routine matters arising for decision between Council meetings
- Monitoring the Council's Finances on an on-going basis, with particular reference to income and expenditure arising from competitions organised by the Council
- Processing and approving applications and detailed proposals on behalf of County Committees for specific funding under the Budgetary Framework for the ten-year period 2015-2024. Significant engagement with specific proposals submitted by three Counties took place during 2015.
- Recommendations on the appointment on a permanent basis of a Provincial Communications Officer incorporating the role of the former Social Media Co-Ordinator
- Recommending a Council Budget for 2015 to the Council for approval
- Dealing with applications for financial assistance to Council
- Dealing with applications for Borrowing Approvals, meeting applicant Units and making recommendations to the National Finance & Management Committee on behalf of the Council as appropriate. This forms a significant and growing element of the Committees work.
- Dealing with applications from Units within the Province for permission to purchase/lease/dispose of real property, meeting applicant Unit representatives and making recommendations to the National Finance & Management Committee on behalf of Council as appropriate
- Selection of recipients for the Annual Awards 2015



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Club Fixtures Monitoring Committee:

The statutory *Sub-Committee to Monitor County Fixtures Programmes* again operated in 2015 as required by rule. The Club Fixtures Plans from the six Counties were analysed early in 2015 and some engagement took place with County Committee officers on aspects of the plans. All Counties had full representation in all Provincial Club Championships in 2015 and there was little adjustment required to the scheduled dates fixed in December 2014 in order to achieve this positive situation. In one case the Portlárge Representative had only twenty-four hours between the County Final and fielding in the provincial senior club football championship quarter-final, despite the latter game being put back one week by Provincial CCC. This is an unsatisfactory situation for the Club players involved. It has to be acknowledged however that particular factors within the county fixture programme and indeed in the welcome extended involvement in inter-county senior hurling competition contributed to this unsatisfactory situation. It is hoped that with continued dedication to fixture planning and scheduling and the introduction of adequate Competition Regulations for club championships that these instances will be progressively eliminated.

This sub-committee is comprised of: Roibeard an tSeaca (Cathaoirleach), Siomón Ó Maolrunaí (Príomh-Oifigeach Feidhmiúcháin/Rúnaí), Marc Ó Siocháin (Corcaigh) and the two Provincial Fixtures Planners, Liam Ó Conchúir agus Ciarán Ó Lidí. It is hoped to build on the experiences gained in 2014 and 2015 in the coming year.

Competitions Control Committee:

Two of the Council sub-committees, the **Provincial Competitions Control Committee (CCC)** and the **Provincial Hearings Committee**, operate on the basis of prescribed roles and procedures in General Rule and Provincial Bye-Law.

The *Competitions Control Committee* is composed of the Council officers and Representatives from each county and deals with the arrangements for all provincial fixtures (within the terms of Competition Regulations made by the Full Council) and Objections lodged during the year. The membership during 2015 was as follows:

Cathaoirleach: Roibeard an tSeaca **Rúnaí:** Siomón Ó Maolrunaí

Baill den Choiste:

Oifigí den Chomhairle: Diarmuid Ó Suilleabháin (Leas Cathaoirleach), Antóin Breathnach (Cisteoir), Gearóid Ó Riain (Oifigeach Caidreamh Poiblí).

Baill den Chomhairle ar son Na gCondaeth: Pádraig S Mac Dubháin (An Clár), Cristóir Ó Cillín (Ciarraí), Marc Ó Siocháin (Corcaigh), Prionnsias Ó Riada (Luimneach), Breandán Ó Toibín (Portlárge) agus Seán Ó Costagáin (Tiobraid Árann).

Provincial Referees' Administrator: Liam de Baróid.

All referee appointments within the jurisdiction of Comhairle Na Mumhan CLG are delegated under Provincial Bye-Law to a *Referee Appointment Workgroup* comprised of the Council officers and the Provincial Referee Administrator.



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The Competitions Control Committee met on six occasions during 2015 and thanks to the committee all competitions were completed within the calendar year.

The following Table gives an analysis of the games and disciplinary activity dealt with by the committee in minor and adult competitions during the year:

<i>Inter-County Competitions:</i>	<i>Games Fixed:</i>	<i>Games Played:</i>	<i>Including Replays:</i>	<i>Disciplinary Cases:</i>	<i>Hearings:</i>
Senior Hurling Championship	4	4		CCCC	CHC
Senior Football Championship	6	6	1	CCCC	CHC
Intermediate Hurling Championship	4	4			
Junior Football Championship	5	5		1	
Under 21 Hurling Championship	4	4		2	
Under 21 Football Championship	5	5		6	
Minor Hurling Championship	6	6			
Minor Football Championship	8	8		2	
Waterford Crystal Cup	10	10			
McGrath Cup	9	9		3	
<i>Totals:</i>	61	61	1	14	0
<i>Inter-Club Competitions:</i>	<i>Games Fixed:</i>	<i>Games Played:</i>	<i>Replays:</i>	<i>Disciplinary Cases:</i>	<i>Hearings:</i>
Club Senior Hurling	4	4		3	1
Club Senior Football	5	5		3	
Club Intermediate Hurling	5	5		2	
Club Intermediate Football	5	5		5	
Club Junior Hurling	5	5		2	
Club Junior Football	5	5		2	
<i>Totals:</i>	29	29		17	1
<i>Total Inter-County & Inter-Club:</i>	90	90	1	31	1

The committee also proposed penalties in a **further six cases** during the year arising from: an inter-county U15 hurling challenge game (2 cases), the Under 16 Inter-Divisional Hurling competition organised and managed by the Coaching & Games Development Committee (1 case) and an approved inter-club minor hurling challenge game (3 cases).

No **Objections** required processing by the committee during the year.

As referred to above a comprehensive record of all the provincial playing activities entitled **SCOREBOARD 2015** is appended to this report containing the results of all Council fixtures played throughout the province in 2015.



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The draws for the **Provincial Senior Championships** are made each year in conjunction with the draws for the other provincial senior championships. The 2016 draws were made on 15th October 2015. The draws for the two senior championships determine the pairings for the provincial intermediate hurling and junior football championships. Following the draws the Provincial Competition Control Committee determined the venues and the fixture schedule for 2016.

The Provincial Competitions Control Committee subsequently conducted the draws for the remaining 2016 inter-county championships (Under 21 and Minor), the subsidiary competitions (McGrath Cup – Munster Senior Football League and Munster Senior Hurling League) and for the senior, intermediate and junior club championships in both codes. The **schedule of all inter-county and inter-club games in 2016** as approved by the Provincial Competitions Control Committee is published later in this report.

A meeting between the Chairpersons and Secretaries of all Competitions Control Committees in the Province and the Chairperson and Secretary of the Central Competitions Control Committee took place on 19th March 2015 in “Áras Mumhan”. The exchange centred on the **Calendar Year Proposal** and the ongoing Fixture Planning Pilots.

The **Report of the Central Council Work Group Calendar Year Proposal** was aimed at scheduling all club and inter-county fixtures within the one calendar year. I believe that most units and members agree that this is a desirable policy objective but as always within the Association the devil is in the detail or on how the objective is implemented. The report made eight specific suggestions with supporting reasoning.

I would agree with all suggestions made in the report and particularly the proposal that the London (Senior Club Football) and British (Intermediate & Junior) Champions be accommodated within the Provincial Club structure.

There is however one proposal I could not support based on my own experience in the fixtures area. I believe that the **Provincial Club Championship Draws** should be made much earlier than late August, as proposed by the Work Group. At present these Draws are made in December of the previous year and this is essential, in my view, in order to give adequate time to counties to plan, manage and conclude their club championships in time to meet specific target dates. Neither do I agree that the Draws should be structured in such a way as to **systematically** give counties still involved in the All-Ireland semi-finals and finals byes to the later stages of the Provincial club championships. This approach, in my view, compromises the integrity of the Draws and also dilutes the Association’s stated commitment to proper fixture planning.

I have a concern that the calendar year proposal, though necessary and welcome, will struggle on implementation if the Association does not simultaneously introduce in Rule a structured framework which prescribes the structure the broad parameters governing Club Championships in all counties. The timely completion of county club championships is certainly hampered by inter-county activity. We must also recognise however that timely completion is delayed by the varying timeframes for the completion of internal county club championships. The latter factor is influenced primarily by the internal county championship structure including: the number of



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clubs participating, the number of chances permitted to participant clubs and the efficiency and range of divisional feeder competitions. At present there is a wide variety of county championship models in place throughout the Association. While variety and local input is positive the consequence is inevitably that county club championships require very different timeframes to complete. In my opinion if the county championships feeding in to the provincial championships are not synchronised or broadly uniform then planning is compromised and progress is only achieved at the pace set by the slowest participant.

In addition I believe that where there are too many clubs permitted into county senior club championships then the intermediate, and in turn, the junior club championships are diminished. Where the county feeder system to provincial club championships is not uniform this also compromises the integrity of the provincial competitions.

Broad uniformity in the county championship models employed in all counties should be introduced and this, I believe, would greatly benefit both fixture planning and the integrity of the senior, intermediate and junior club championships. My view is that Rule should prescribe a range of the maximum/minimum numbers of clubs which can be permitted into senior and intermediate county club championships in each county based on the number of clubs participating in each code in that county. Accompanied by definite targets for the optimum number of games each club player should be provided through county club leagues and championships this can systematically improve the provision for club players across the Association.

Such a change can only be implemented incrementally. I believe if put in place such a uniform club championship model will address some of the current challenges faced by the Association including the desire to move to a Calendar Year model. The uniform model represents a more complete response to the challenges we are seeking to address.

Provincial Hearings Committee:

The *Provincial Hearings Committee* is comprised of members of the Council and others qualified personnel and deals with all Hearings arising from Provincial Competitions and Appeals lodged against decisions of County Committees in Munster. Members of the Provincial Management and Competitions Control Committee may not serve on the Provincial Hearings Committee.

The Report on the activities of the Provincial Hearings Committee is included later in this booklet. I wish to acknowledge the hard work of the Committee, and particularly the hard working Chairperson, Donncha Mac Thomáis, and Secretary, Liam Ó Conchúir. The Council is extremely fortunate to have committee officers of such integrity and experience available and committed to the work of the Council.

In addition to the ten/eleven “statutory” sub-committees required under Rule the Provincial Council has five Workgroups to work in areas which the Council and its Sub-Committees see as requiring a dedicated Workgroup comprised of personnel with particular expertise in the particular area. These additional five Workgroups are:



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(Planning & Physical Development Committee)

Club & County Support Workgroup

Club & County Grounds Health & Safety Workgroup

(Coaching & Games Development Committee)

Urban Development Workgroup

Football Development Workgroup

Hurling Development Workgroup

All sub-committees are manned by a group of dedicated voluntary people who work tirelessly on behalf of the Council. I wish to acknowledge the immense efforts and personal sacrifice, in terms of time and energy, made by these people on the Councils work. In particular I wish to thank the officers of these sub-committees on whom a greater burden of responsibility falls. I recognise fully that without these unpaid volunteers the work of the Council would seriously suffer. **Reports on the membership and work of each general sub-committee and workgroup are included later in the booklet** and give a sense of the range of work being carried out on the Councils behalf by the many personnel involved. Go raibh mile maith agaibh arís.

GAMES 2016

This was a successful year for the Council in terms of games activity. This is the core work and key focus of the Council. The details are recorded earlier in this report in the section dealing with the work of the Provincial Competitions Control Committee.

I wish to thank all involved for this: the Competition Control Committee, the hard working and efficient Referees' Administration Sub-Committee, individual Referees, Linesmen, Sideline Officials, Umpires and Referee Advisors; and all ground staff at large and small venues throughout the province. I wish to thank the six County Treasurers and the many Stile persons for all the help and assistance provided to the Council Treasurer, the Council Operations Manager, Kieran Leddy, and the Councils Events Manager, John Brennan, in relation to Council fixtures throughout the year.

I wish to record my thanks to the *Match Monitor, Kieran McGann*, who diplomatically but firmly supervises the implementation of the Association Organisation and Presentation Regulations for all the Council senior games during the year.

This year, in line with a Central Council policy, the *Respect Handshake* was conducted prior to the senior and minor finals. I wish to thank *Ger Hickey* for very effectively managing the Respect Handshakes before the five finals in 2015.

I do not propose to go into any detail about the individual competitions and the individual winners and losers as everyone is well acquainted with this material already. However I do wish to record the congratulations of the Council to the winners of all sixteen provincial competitions and particularly to the winners of the fourteen Munster Championships as follows:



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Inter-County Championships:

GRADE:

Senior
Intermediate/ (Junior)
Under 21
Minor

IOMÁINT:

Tiobraid Árann
Corcaigh
Luimneach
Tiobraid Árann

PEIL:

Ciarraí (*after Replay*)
(Ciarraí)
Tiobraid Árann
Ciarraí

Inter-County Subsidiary Competitions:

COMPETITION:

Waterford Crystal (McGrath)
Cups

IOMÁINT:

Luimneach

PEIL:

(Portláirge)

Inter-Club Championships:

GRADE:

Senior

IOMÁINT:

Na Piarasaigh (Luimneach)

PEIL:

Na Trachtalaí, Cluain Meala
(Tiobraid Árann)

Intermediate

Wolfe Tones Na Sionna
(An Clár)

Naomh Mhuire, Cathair Saidhbhin
(Ciarraí)

Junior

Dun Guairne (Corcaigh)

An Teampall Nua (Ciarraí)

SCHOOLS

A key element of the strength of the national games over the years is the work carried out by many Teachers in our primary, post-primary and third level schools in promoting the skills of the games with our youth. On behalf of the Council I wish to acknowledge the ongoing contribution to our games by the teaching profession. The Council seeks to make this task easier in the schools and directly contributed **€333,055** as follows to the schools bodies in 2015:

	Annual Grants	Staff Costs Subvention	Development Grants	Bursaries (Primary Game)	Totals
Third Level	€25,000	€112,000		€43,125	€180,125
Post Primary	€27,000	€29,600			€56,600
Primary	€38,359		€31,895	€26,076	€96,330
Totals	€90,359	€141,600	€31,895	€69,201	€333,055

In addition to this the Council via the Coaching & Games Development Sub-Committee organises an annual **Primary School Teachers Course** in Mary Immaculate College during the Summer months each year.



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FINANCIAL REPORTS

I will not dwell too long on the financial aspects of the Council activities during 2015 as this is dealt with comprehensively by the Council's Operations Manager and Deputy CEO, Kieran Leddy. Kieran, who is the Council's Financial Controller, has a detailed report on the Council finances later in the booklet. In addition the Financial Reports for the Year Ended 31st October 2015 audited by BDO are included in the booklet.

The Council, thanks mainly to the gate receipt revenue from the Senior Football Championship replay, had a successful year financially. The benefit of this financial strength as always is shared with the Club and County Units in the Province by way of significant disbursements streamed via the various grants schemes, details of which are contained in the financial statements for the accounting period. During the year the Council commenced the implementation of the ten-year Budgetary Framework 2015-2024 approved by Council in January 2015. The implementation by the Management & Finance Committee involved distribution of the dedicated budgets to five counties and involved Assistance to Capital Projects expenditures, Debt Redemptions and employment of the Collateral Cash-Flow Mechanism. Greater detail is provided later in this booklet and in the Financial Statements.

ANNUAL AWARDS 2015

The Munster Council Annual GAA Awards Night has become a well-established and important function in the social calendar each year. The presentation function was held in the "Dromoland Castle Hotel" in Newmarket-on-Fergus on Saturday, 12th December 2015 and it was an extremely enjoyable night. The deserving recipients of the various awards in 2015 are as follows:

Player of the Year Awards:

Senior Hurling:	John O Dwyer (Tiobraid Árann)
Senior Football:	David Moran (Ciarraí)
Handball:	Dominick Lynch (Ciarraí)
Camogie:	Cáit Devane (Tiobraid Árann)
Ladies Gaelic Football:	Bernie Breen (Ciarraí)
Intermediate Hurling:	Diarmuid Byrnes (Luimneach)
Junior Football:	Conor Cox (Ciarraí)
Under 21 Hurling:	Cian Lynch (Luimneach)
Under 21 Football:	Steven O'Brien (Tiobraid Árann)
Minor Hurling:	Lyndon Fairbrother (Tiobraid Árann)
Minor Football:	Mark O'Connor (Ciarraí)

Distinguished Service Awards:

Manager of the Year:	John Kiely (Luimneach)
Club of the Year:	Clonmel Commercials CLG (Tiobraid Árann)
Hall of Fame (Hurling):	Ger Loughnane (An Clár)
Hall of Fame (Football):	Ray Cummins (Corcaigh)



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Refereeing:	Michael Wadding (Portláirge)
Service in Education:	Jimmy Browne (LIT & An Clár)
Media Award:	Paul Collins (Tiobraid Árann)
Special Merit Award:	Michael Ryan (Portláirge)

REFEREES:

The Council also honoured the Referees who officiated at the Council championship finals in 2015 at the Annual Awards function. This is small recognition for the training which these Referees undertake throughout the year in order to be right for the many games they officiate at during the season. I wish to pay tribute to all the Referees in the province for the essential job they carry out week in week out for the Association. The Referees are honoured in this way as representatives of all Referees. The 2015 recipients were:

Inter-County Competitions 2015:

Séamus Ó hEoghain (<i>Loch Gorman</i>)	Iomáint Shinsir
Pádraig Ó hAodha (<i>Ard Mhaca</i>)	Peil Shinsir
Muiris Ó Duígin (<i>Laoise</i>)	Peil Shinsir - Ath Imirt
Damian Mac An tSionnaigh (<i>An Clár</i>)	Iomáint Idirmheánach
Alan Ó Ciosáin (<i>Portláirge</i>)	Peil Soisir
Fearghal Ó hOrgáin (<i>Tiobraid Árann</i>)	Iomáint Fé 21
Sean Seoighe (<i>Ciarraí</i>)	Peil Fé 21
Seosamh Ó Lorcáin (<i>Corcaigh</i>)	Iomáint Na Mionúir
Caoimhín Ó Murchú (<i>Corcaigh</i>)	Peil Na Mionúir
Seán Ó Riain (<i>Tiobraid Árann</i>)	Corn Waterford Crystal
Séamus Ó Maolmhichíl (<i>Ciarraí</i>)	Corn Mhic Craith

Club Championships 2015:

Diarmuid Ó Ciarbháin (<i>Corcaigh</i>)	Iomáint Shinsir Na gClub
Ruairí Ó hÍcí (<i>An Clár</i>)	Peil Shinsir Na gClub
Seán Ó Murchú (<i>Luimneach</i>)	Iomáint Idirmheánach Na gClub
Seán Ó Lonargáin (<i>Tiobraid Árann</i>)	Peil Idirmheánach Na gClub
Ruairí Mac Cana (<i>An Clár</i>)	Iomáint Soisir Na gClub
Séamus Mac Fheorais (<i>Corcaigh</i>)	Peil Soisir Na gClub

I also wish to reiterate my recognition of the **Provincial Referees' Administration Committee** who worked extremely hard throughout 2015 and performed most efficiently. I wish to pay particular thanks to Kevin Walsh (Chairperson) and Willie Barrett (Provincial Referees' Administrator) for their excellent work and commitment throughout the past year. The Council is extremely fortunate to have officers of this calibre managing the refereeing affairs in the province. Willie's work on behalf of the Association at County, provincial and national level was recognised earlier in 2015 with his appointment as Chairperson of the Central Referees' Appointments Committee for a three-year term.



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Finally, on behalf of the Council, I wish to acknowledge the sad and all too early passing of one of the Provincial inter-county referees, Paul Foley, during the year. Paul officiated at three Council games during the year before his untimely death. The sincere condolences of the Council are again conveyed to his family. Ar dheis De go raibh a nAnam.

CURRENT & ONGOING CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSOCIATION:

There are a number of challenges facing the Association at present and these challenges have been addressed and debated over the past number of years.

Discussion Paper on Player Overtraining and Burnout, and the GAA Fixtures Calendar

The recently published *Discussion Paper on Player Overtraining and Burnout, and the GAA Fixtures Calendar* considers recommendations contained in many previous reports. It distils into eleven key and specific recommendations the main thrust of the debate, analysis and reporting on these and related matters to date. The Uachtarán, Ard Stiurthóir and Rúnaí of the Central Competitions Control Committee engaged with the Provincial Officers and the County Committee Chairpersons and Secretaries in the Province on the key proposals in this report at a meeting on 24th November 2015 in “Áras Mumhan”. It was a very worthwhile and informative engagement.

I have addressed the Calendar Year proposal earlier in my report and will not deal with this particular challenge again.

Of the ten other key proposals I would agree with all of them with two exceptions:

I believe that the ***Under 21 Football Championship*** should be retained as it is not causing any difficulties at present in terms of fixtures, primarily because it is played earlier in the year. I think that this Championship provides a necessary step for promising young elite inter-county players to transition from minor to senior inter-county participation. I think that bringing order to the proliferation of Tournaments, particularly in Under 21 Football, played in January/February each year is the way to proceed at this grade. These tournaments are staged at a time when the Provincial Subsidiary Competitions and the Higher Education Competitions are in full swing and immediately prior to the commencement of the National Leagues i.e. when Under 21 football players are busiest.

I do not agree that ***mandatory extra time*** should be played in all drawn games. I would exclude Provincial quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals from this proposal. I say this because of the promotional and financial importance of high profile replays which arise at these stages of the Provincial Championships. We should not underestimate the promotional value of high profile replays in the Provincial Championships, whether it is Kerry v Cork in the Munster Football Final replay in 2015 or Waterford v Cork in the 2014 Munster Hurling quarter-final. The internal county championship fixtures programmes should be robust enough to withstand the disruption to club championship plans arising from occasional replays. Such replays are not so frequent as to impede necessary progress in streamlining inter-county and county club championship



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programmes. It should also be remembered that the unbudgeted revenue from such high profile replays contribute very significantly to the capacity of the Provincial Council to redistribute a bigger pot of resources to constituent counties and clubs. While money is not the key focus of our activities equally it is necessary to ensure that we can deliver adequate coaching and games development funding, necessary supports to GAA activity in the educational sector, and financial assistance to infrastructural developments at club and county level. For this reason I believe that this specific proposal should be modified.

I have some minor reservations on other aspects of the proposals. I do not believe that the Intermediate Hurling and Junior Football Championships are creating any difficulties in terms of either fixture scheduling or overtraining/burnout. In this Province these two competitions provide useful curtain raiser games to our senior championship games up to and including semi-final stage. Nonetheless, if their abolition is seen as part of an integrated package of proposals aimed at streamlining the fixtures calendar I would accept such a development. In any event there is no doubt but that a critical review of these two championships is long overdue, particularly in light of the number of participants who have been approved “second best” status. Should Congress decides to retain both Championships then this review should introduce some binding criteria which will govern which counties can apply for and be approved a “second-best” team derogation. Central to this set of criteria should be the number of clubs participating in county championships in applicant counties.

I also have some reservations at the possible loss of promotional opportunity for our games which may arise from playing the two All-Ireland finals two weeks earlier as proposed. However if this is a price we must pay in order to make progress in the areas addressed in the proposals I believe we should do so.

Central Council Review of Senior Football Championship

During the year Ard Chomhairle debated requests for the review of the structure of the senior football championship with the express intention of improving the lot of the less successful counties arising from their participation in and relationship with this competition. Eighteen proposals for change emerged during the process. At the time in time when my report was written Ard Comhairle was on the eve of determining whether or not to put a motion to Congress on this matter. By the time you read these comments it will be known if Ard Chomhairle will do so and probably the nature of any such motion to be considered by Congress 2016. Nonetheless, although events will surpass my comments, I believe it is necessary to record my own views on this important debate:

Consideration of the structure of the senior football championship independently of the Association’s overall competitions and fixtures framework is inadequate. While such isolated consideration may produce a range of solutions to one Association challenge it will be from a narrow perspective and this in turn may impact on our efforts to overcome other Association challenges. Some of the proposals which emerged took no account whatsoever of the reality that this is a two-code Association with many dual players at club level. This is a particular reality in this Province.



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I believe that the primary route towards improving the standard in the weaker football counties should be via targeted Games Development initiatives within the Clubs and Schools in these counties. The Football Championship is not an ideal mechanism for improving standards.

The only meaningful way of working towards the goal of improving the lot of the weaker counties in the narrow context of the senior Football Championship is by minimising the number of mismatches occurring between counties of unequal standard. The only logical way of achieving this is by ensuring, as far as possible, championship games are between counties of similar standard.

The best method of seeding or identification of similar standard/peer counties is undoubtedly the national football league where promotion and relegation, universally accepted, automatically and continuously seeds counties into their appropriate division or standard.

The Provincial Championships, because of the inherent imbalance in terms of uneven distribution of counties between the Provinces and the equally uneven distribution of strong and weaker counties between the four Provinces, make these competitions unsuitable as a seeding mechanism.

Nonetheless the Provincial Championships, and the consensus is clearly to retain them, have an extremely strong tradition and appeal and can continue to provide an opportunity for all counties to play in the Tier 1 All-Ireland Championship irrespective of whether or not a Tier 2 is introduced.

In my view the best way to assist the weaker counties is by streaming counties into Tier 1 (Sam Maguire) and Tier 2 Championships once individual counties exit their respective Provincial Championship. This streaming would be based on league standings. This will be unpopular with some of the weaker counties and I would have serious concerns at the inevitable scheduling issues which would arise. However the key test should be if such a model improves on the current Qualifier system or not. A tiered system exists in the Hurling Championship based on relative standards broadly in line with league standings.

The introduction of "round-robin" elements into the Provincial or indeed the All-Ireland Championships, as suggested in some proposals, would inevitably exacerbate fixture scheduling problems for Provinces. This would certainly be the case in terms of running Hurling and Football Championships simultaneously. It would also impact the scheduling of County Club Championships in dual counties. More Inter-County Championship games means less space for Club Championships.

There is no structure for the senior football championship which will suit all participants as viewed from their individual perspectives informed from their individual levels of competitiveness at any point in time. Unless a tiered senior football championship, similar to the tiered hurling championships, is introduced, and this model has been strenuously resisted in the past, then there will continue to be mismatches in the senior football championship.



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Unless counties are prepared to look at the introduction of tiered similar standard groupings into the Football Championship on the basis of the evidence provided on the field then I am firmly of the view that we should leave well enough alone and retain the existing Football Championship structure. If we are undecided, uncertain and divided about the best way to proceed to a better system we should stay where we are.

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

Staffing At Council HQ:

At the outset I wish to state that I am looking forward to serving the Council as CEO/Rúnaí for a further year i.e. until Convention in January 2017.

On the general staffing matter the Council appointed Ed Donnelly as the ***Communications Officer*** earlier this year. In addition to managing the Council website, social media platforms, Council publications and Events and IT infrastructure Ed also manages the in-house production of the Council match programmes as part of his duties.

This, in my view, broadly completes the building of an adequate staff structure for the Council in order to efficiently discharge its current responsibilities on an on-going basis.

However there is a work area which I have identified as requiring an additional dedicated staff resource, either on an ongoing part-time or on a full time fixed period basis. It is the function around the control and ownership of the Association property portfolio at provincial, county and club levels. At present there is a good written governance structure on the ownership and control of Association property in the Official Guide and in the Club Constitution with provision for a new GAA Corporate Trustee property holding model. There is however a need for an audit of how well the practice on the ground matches the requirements in Rule/Constitution. A dedicated staff resource, either at national or provincial level, to carry out this audit, Club by Club, and then, based on the results of the audit, to progressively work towards, in consultation with the Clubs and County Development officers, implementing the requirements in rule in each unit. It is an area where progress can best be made in collaboration between the Clubs, Counties and Provinces with a guiding national direction. This is a general area that already takes up considerable staff time but it is generally led by requirements arising when Units are undertaking borrowings or purchasing/disposing of real property. A good template has been developed nationally and is in Rule but implementation is generally ad hoc at Provincial, County and Club level. I hope to develop a broad policy or strategy during the coming year as to how this Council can commence systematically dealing with this challenge.



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The Council currently employs eight full-time staff as follows:

Council HQ – Castletroy:

CEO/Rúnaí:	Simon Moroney
Operations Manager/Deputy CEO/Leas Rúnaí:	Kieran Leddy
Post-Primary Schools' Officer/Events Manager:	John Brennan
Communications Officer:	Ed Donnelly
Administrator (Fixtures/Disciplinary/Finance):	Nuala Nealon
Administrator (Tickets/Meetings/Finance):	Mary O'Mahoney

Fitzgerald Stadium, Killarney:

Games Manager: Pat O'Shea

Carriganore, Waterford:

Games Manager: Joe Carton

I want to publicly record my thanks to all Council staff for their hard work, dedication and commitment throughout 2015.

HQ Premises:

The Council entered a Lease agreement in November 2014 with Limerick County Committee under which the Council has let a portion of the new HQ to Limerick County Committee. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement and is working very well to date. In addition the Council has Licenses with the Munster Camogie Council and the Munster Ladies Gaelic Football Association for the portions of the premises occupied by both bodies. In January 2016 the Council has licensed the remaining underutilised section of the premises to a private sector company.

Sympathy

As with every year the Association in Munster has lost many of its members over the past twelve months in the six Munster counties. I will not recall individually all of those we have sadly lost in 2015 in case I would omit someone and cause offence. However I will mention a former Council Officer, the late Dan Hoare, who passed away from us during the year. Dan gave great service to the Council during his term as Treasurer. On behalf of the Council I wish to convey the sympathy and condolences to all the bereaved relatives and friends of those who passed on during 2015. Go dtuga Dia suaimhneas sioraí da n-anamnacha go léir.

BUÍOCHAS

This Annual Convention will witness a changing of the guard insofar as the outgoing Chairperson, Roibeard An tSeaca completes his three-year term in office and he will be replaced by current Vice-Chairperson, Diarmuid Ó Suilleabháin. An election will see a new Vice-Chairperson elected and perhaps a new Council PRO. Indeed the only certainty is that the Council will again be well served in 2016 by current Treasurer, Antóin Breathnach.

I wish to acknowledge the hard work by Roibeard An tSeaca on behalf of the Council throughout his three-year term, and indeed his contribution as Leas-Cathaoirleach for the three previous years. Roibeard has travelled throughout the Province in discharging his representational role on



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behalf of the Council. He has not spared time or energy in discharging the many and onerous obligations attached to the post in during his time as Cathaoirleach.

I also want to acknowledge the work of Diarmuid Ó Suilleabháin as Leas-Cathaoirleach during the past three years. This is a busy role, particularly arising from the duties as the Cathaoirleach of the Coaching & Games Development Committee, and is excellent preparation for the role as Cathaoirleach. I know that Diarmuid will serve the Council well in the coming years as Cathaoirleach and I wish him well in his new position.

In concluding my report I wish to thank the following:

- My fellow Officers on the Council Management & Finance Committees.
- The members of the Council and the members of all the Council sub-committees for the assistance and co-operation which I received from them throughout 2015.
- To the County Officers in the six County Boards in Munster and particularly the County Secretaries and Treasurers with whom I have most contact and dealings in the course of our work.
- To the officers and members of the schools bodies for the ongoing work they do in support of our games in the various levels of schools.
- To the Referees, Linesmen, Sideline officials, Match Monitor, Respect Handshake Supervisor, Umpires and Advisors for the manner in which they officiated at our games in 2015.
- To the several Stiles persons, Stewards, Grounds men, catering personnel who have helped me during the year in ensuring that access to our games, at whatever level, is safe and efficient. Also to the Event Controllers in the major venues and to the Gardaí, Health Board personnel, and many others who make our games safe for patrons.
- To all the Players at every grade who provided the central product of the Association in Munster in 2015 as in every other year. The popularity of the games for the patrons attending the games and for those watching or listening to media coverage is testament to the level of excellence you have achieved in your chosen sport.
- To the media personnel, national and local, for the excellent coverage which our games receive at every level throughout the year. A particular word of thanks to RTE, SKY and TG4 for the TV fees received during 2015 and to all TV personnel with whom I have had contact in relation to the televising of our games.
- To the Sponsors who provide generous sponsorship to the Council and some of its sub-committees including:
 - Shannon Airport
 - M. Donnelly
 - Etihad Airways
 - Centra
 - Liberty Insurance
 - Eir
 - AIB
 - SuperValu



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- Bord Gais Energy
- EirGrid
- Electric Ireland
- To the Uachtarán, Ard Stiurthóir and all the staff in Páirc an Chrócaigh for the co-operation and assistance received during 2015
- Finally I want to acknowledge the contribution made to the work of the Council by all of my colleagues on the staff of Comhairle Na Mumhan: Kieran, John, Ed, Nuala, Mary, Joe and Pat.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Mise le meas,

Siomón Ó Maolrunaí,
Rúnaí/Príomh-Oifigeach Feidhmiúcháin,
Comhairle Na Mumhan CLG.
15th January 2016