Chairperson and Secretary Report for 2014

Cuala Juvenile Girls Section

Firstly we would like to welcome you all to the 2014 AGM for the Juvenile Girls Section.

2014 has proved to be an exciting year for both the Club and the Juvenile Girls teams in particular. The Juvenile Girls section continues to grow and we are seeing very good numbers of girls playing at the younger age groups in particular, so the future is very encouraging.

The under 9’s, even though part of the Club Academy, attended all Section Meetings throughout the year and we note too very healthy playing numbers there. It is great to see girls participation in sport growing and all our work helping in this endeavour.

Our various age groups have done very well in the last year and you’ll hear more about that later in the meeting. However it would be remiss of us not to mention some of the highlights from the 2014 season.

- The 1998’s, 1999’s 2000’s and 2001’s in numerous finals and latter stages of competitions
- The 2001 Girls won the Division 1 Football Championship County Final
- 2002’s, 2003’s and 2004’s have competed strongly in their Go Games
- 2004 have transitioned well from the Academy and have a strong group for next year

This year saw the successful implementation of alternate week-ends. This positive move has benefited the under 10s and the under 9’s and in part also helped the under 11’s as a compromise model was implemented for them in 2014. Feedback given from the Section to both County Boards earlier this autumn is to continue to roll this out so that the Under 12’s in 2015 (i.e. the 2003’s) and the younger groups continue to get the benefit of alternate week-ends.

To note that the Section Committee was very active during the last year and met on a monthly basis. This is not to mention the countless other Groups and Committees served and engaged with by people in this room and others in the Section. The work behind the scenes is quite extraordinary so many thanks to all who attended Committees, Coiste meetings, Workshops, County Board Meetings, etc.

Whilst the large numbers of girls playing Camogie and Football is encouraging it also presents a significant challenges to the Section.

- Retention of players at the older age groups in particular
- Maintain strong recruitment numbers of new girls for the Academy
* Improve the appeal of Cuala GAA Club to potential playing members at all ages and not restrict the recruitment drive to the initial Academy entrance year. We note recent successes in new girls joining the under 10’s and 11’s since the end of the summer and the work those Groups have done here

We hope to address these recruitment and retention issues and meet these challenges in 2015.

Thank you to our hard working Juvenile Girls Committee – especially Colm Small, Juvenile Girls Secretary, for his constant support, hard work and reliable commitment to the role; Declan Wylde, Treasurer, for his efficiency and effectiveness; Jo O’Connor, Registrar, for her concise, clear and expert manner in which she carries out her role; May Moore for co-ordinating our Camogie referees; and our Coiste rep, Orla Tallon. Thank you also to Trish Madden and Barbara O’Reilly, our football and Camogie representatives on the County Boards. Thank you also to Pat O’Donoghue and Pat O’Donnell, the shadow football and Camogie representatives in 2014, who will take these roles over from January 2015.

At this point, it is important that we thank the mentors/coaches and administrators who train and manage all the age groups in the Juvenile Girls section (2004-1998 year groups). We often forget that all are volunteers who give of their free time and get no reward for it other than knowing that their players are hugely benefitting in many ways – lifelong friendships formed, team skills, etc.

There are many others on the Juvenile Girls Committee who carry many other roles within Cuala and in the G.A.A. – thank you to all.

Thank you to the Coiste and wider Cuala who have provided invaluable background support and advice throughout the year.

We would like to pay particular thanks and tribute to Barbara O’Reilly, Trish Madden and Siobhan Murphy who have done tremendous work over many years for the Section. We wish them all the best as they move with the 1998’s into the Adult Ladies Section this January. Their wisdom, hard work and humour will be sorely missed.

Finally we would like to also hugely thank Colm Small, Jo O’Connor and Orla Tallon for their invaluable contribution to the Juvenile Girls Committee over the years. They are now stepping down from these roles. We will greatly miss them and hope to fill their vacated roles.

Karen O’Connor (Chairperson) and Colm Small (Secretary)
This year, our last year in the Juvenile Section, the 1998 group played in the Under 16 grade in both camogie and football.

As we move on from the section and into the world of minor and adult games, on behalf of the 1998 mentor group, I would firstly like to pay tribute to the brilliant group of players that we have had the pleasure of working with over the last 8 years. The 98s have been an extremely dedicated and enthusiastic bunch of girls and their commitment to their team, their club and to each other has been exemplary. They now have a strong social bond, which we hope will continue for a lifetime. As camogie players and footballers we are confident that their skills and abilities will be a great addition to the minor and senior ranks, on and off the field of play.

During the year our playing numbers reduced slightly – from 16 to 15 in camogie and from 20 to 17 in football although with a new joiner we hope that is 18 very soon. Going into Feile year nearly 3 years ago we had 18 camogie players and 22 footballers so we would like to think that is a very reasonable retention rate during a notoriously challenging time for player retention in female sport. Just as importantly, our remaining players are all generally very committed to training and games - so we are hopeful that Cuala will remain part of their lives through the Leaving Cert cycle and beyond. We encourage the players to continue to balance their sports and study lives and we have also actively encouraged them to get involved in refereeing and coaching younger teams. 11 of our players, alongside a group of the 1998 boys, recently completed the Foundation Level coaching course and are now being deployed across the Academy and younger JG section teams. The same groups of lads and girls have also engaged on the new club Gaisce award initiative which we hope will be a great success.

On the field of play the 98s competed at Division 1 level in both camogie and football, again a great reflection on the girls abilities – only one other club (Ballyboden) competed at this level in both codes. In football we finished 5th of 8 teams in the regular league and won all of the games in the Bottom 4 competition. In championship we drew one game and lost two, one by just a point, and thereby missed out on an A championship semi-final. We qualified for a Shield Final where Clontarf adjusted better to the windy conditions to win.

In camogie we finished 7th of 10 teams – competing very well with the teams near us on the table, but finding the top teams still just that bit too strong. In the championship, we drew a tough group and lost our 3 games, but then produced the performance of the year to beat Good Counsel away in the Shield Semi-final. Despite a great effort, in the wind again, against Ballinteer in the Shield Final we came out on the wrong side of a low scoring encounter.

So, whilst there was no silverware it was another great year with the girls showing themselves to be right up there at the top level in both codes. With 14 dual players we do find it difficult to compete with some of the top teams in each division, many of whom are predominantly single code. Also, many clubs merge their under 15 and 16 panels to produce very strong U16A squads.

Other points of note:

- Due to tight numbers, especially in camogie, we were again very dependent on the 1999 group for support throughout the year. Thanks to the 99 girls who showed great commitment and
support and fit in very well socially too!. Thanks also to Maria O Sullivan, Orla Tallon, Derek Dunne and Cecil Beggins for their ongoing support for our group and their co-operation with players playing up. We really do appreciate this positive attitude and we know all of the girls will ultimately benefit from this involvement.

- Inter County: Two of our footballers, Hannah O Dea and Billie Kate Huggard, represented the club on the Dublin Under 16 football squad and played a major part in every game on that squad’s path through Leinster and ultimately to the All Ireland final. Whilst losing out narrowly to Cork in the final, the girls did themselves and their team and club proud. Four of our camogie players represented the two Dublin camogie squads in Leinster and All Ireland action this year – Clodagh Sheehan, Sinead Murphy, Hannah O Dea and Blaithin Lane. This was one of the larger club representations and the girls skills and abilities were right up there. We look forward to seeing some of our group on the new “Wall of Honour” for All Ireland winners in years to come!

- Adult and Minor : our group was very well represented in minor and adult camogie and football games, especially on the Adult Camogie team in the summer cup and Championship/Shield competitions. Also our footballers played for the minors regularly and over the summer months on the two adult football teams also. We thank all of the mentors for giving the girls these opportunities especially Fintan Quill, Richard Byrne, Linda Farren, John McKeown, Leanne Doyle and Ann Marie Kennedy.

- We also thank Karen, Colm, Declan, Jo and the JG section for their support. Also to our county board reps and all who help with the smooth running of the JG section

- Thanks to Ken Fitz for his support on coaching and especially to Willie Braine as he departs to pastures new – Willie was a great support to our group and he will be fondly remembered by the 98s not least due to his efforts with the summer and easter camps from which the 98 girls got so much over the years

As we move on up from the JG section, our players will be playing minor football and adult camogie as their primary teams next year. As they spread their wings, it will be very important that as a club we look after their needs – ensuring players are not over used nor, even more importantly, lost to the club by not being given the right support and game time. We plan to work with the minor and adult management to ensure a process and lines of communication are in place to manage these risks.

As we move on up from the JG section we remember of course that it was Fintan Quill who started out the 1998 group as part of his “mixed age group” in the Academy – it is very appropriate that Fintan will be back involved with the group as part of the adult camogie management in 2015!

The Juvenile Girls section has been great for the 1998 group and we would like to think that the players and management of the 98, 97 and 96 groups will now form the advance guard of the torrent of juvenile girls that will be flooding through to the adult section. We wish the JG section well for 2015 and beyond and we look forward to seeing and hearing of lots more success on and off the pitch for the section.
Cuala 1999 Girls Annual Report 2014
2014 Tuairisc Grúpa 1999 Cailíní

The majority of this panel of girls have been together since their Cuala Academy days and it has been a great pleasure to watch them grow and develop as players and young adults in 2014. The panel now consists of just 19 girls, five of whom do not play camogie.

The 2014 season has been one of mixed fortunes. The team finished runners up in our football league and won the camogie league but were beaten in the Championship final. However, the girls are enjoying themselves and have grown and matured as a team this year.

Football
The girls played in Division 2 of the DLFA league and finished in runner up position. This is a great achievement given that they only moved up to this division at the start of the season. The team reached the semi-finals of the championship and were beaten by the eventual winners. At present there are 19 girls on the football panel. We would like to congratulate Eimear Loughlin who played on the Dublin u14 team winning a Leinster Championship medal.

Camogie
Having won the division 3 league in 2013 it was our intention to move to division 2 for 2014. However, a number of players chose to concentrate on football and we realised in January that we would be playing with a very small panel of only 14. A request was made to the Co Board to allow us to again play division 3 which is only 13 a side thus ensuring that we could keep the girls playing. The team won the league this year and were beaten in the Championship final. This is a very tight panel of players and it is always necessary to have each and every one of them turn out and to their credit they have seldom let each other down. We are very grateful to the 2000 age group who have willingly supplied us with substitutions on more than one occasion.

Coaching/Training
The girls continue to train twice a week with one camogie and one football session. The football sessions are led by Derek Dunne and camogie by Cecil Beggins. Many thanks to Paul Scully and Aiden Quinn for their help with coaching in football and camogie respectively.

Acknowledgements
Our thanks to all the girls; for their commitment and for the many hours of frustration and fun they have given us.

Many thanks to all the parents who have been just as committed and who are always available to support and help the team. A special word of thanks to Marie O'Donnell who has cared for our team kit throughout the year and to Celestine Byrne who is our principal first aider.

Thank you also to Coiste Cuala and the members of the Cuala Juvenile Girls committee who have provided invaluable background support and advice.

As we look to the coming year we hope to have a football team entered in division 1 of the league and to play division 2 camogie. We are, nonetheless, very cognisant of the fact that this is Junior Cert year for most of the girls and that many may make choices in respect of which code they chose to play. We are presently undertaking a survey of parents in order to ascertain the level of commitment.
and the number of players available for the 2015 season. Future planning will be determined once the outcome of this survey is known.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

Derek, Cecil, Orla Maria and Celestine.

2014 Tuairisc Grúpa 2000 Cailíní

The ’00 Girls will look back on their Feile Year with great satisfaction, having learned to develop as individuals and as a team, to commit wholeheartedly and accept the fortunes of sport. The support of parents as coaches, mentors, umpires, kit-washers, fundraisers, reporters, photographers but foremost as committed fans contributed significantly to the extra effort that this year requires. The support proffered by the wider Cuala community throughout the year is fully appreciated.

Prior to Christmas and anticipation of the year ahead a team building away trip was organised to Wexford. Almost the full squad was available to attend, the girls had a great time together forging bonds that stood to them on and off the pitch. Challenge matches were arranged for the next day in both codes; suffice to report that the team building activities were prioritised over the playing performance.

Competitive action in Camogie commenced on February 22nd with a league match away to Naomh Brid. Newly promoted to Division 2 there was some apprehension that we might be outclassed. Winning by a point in the last minute of the game proved that we were not to be discounted in a performance that was symbolic of the determination that we embraced for the season ahead. Going into our Feile weekend we had three wins from three and were ready for the challenge.

Our Camogie Feile was played on April 26th on possibly the wettest day that the 00 girls had ever encountered. Having lost our first game, drew the second and won the third a play-off was required for a semi-final place which was duly achieved. Sadly we were unable to outdo Raheny the eventual winners but a brave performance with everything given by the full squad allowed the girls to be proud but disappointed.

Our league action continued into the summer and concluded in early autumn in the unusual position of having a three way tie on points for the top three positions. The resulting play-off saw us finish a point down by the final whistle to our nemesis, Raheny, leaving us in third position in Division 2.

Our championship run unfortunately resulted in two defeats leaving us to contest a Shield final. Notwithstanding our fierce determination to complete the season with some silverware, Raheny again got the better of us but only just.

The 00’s started the Division 4 Football league inauspiciously with a heavy defeat to N. Mearnog on the first Sunday in March but with each week they built on their performance and started to gather points. Focussing on Feile we entered into that weekend in mid-April with some real belief. Our
confidence had some validity as we finished on the Saturday with a place in the final. The next day we played great football against the strong favourites N. Mearnog to be defeated by a score that was the final act of the game. Reporting on that encounter even at this remove re-opens the pain of such a narrow defeat. Unlike the mentors, the girls got over their disappointment and marched on to the runners-up spot in Division 4, with a tally of 6 wins, a draw and 3 defeats.

Our determination to yield success from the championship was underscored by fantastic attendance and effort by the full squad on the training pitch. Unfortunately our results did not match our ambition with the team missing out on a place to contest the Championship final by another one of those last minute scores. From one perspective, we fell short by the narrowest of margins on a number of occasions, from another it has been our best football season ever. The latter measure is based on the range of players who have transformed their skill level and confidence and is the more accurate assessment of this year.

In late August and in advance of the Championship competitions a trip was organised to play Dungarvan in both Camogie and Football. We were warmly welcomed and played two great games against strong teams and drew both. On our return journey we visited an adventure centre in Kilkenny which was great craic and finished our day with a picnic in the evening sunshine before heading home.

The ‘00s squad comprises 22 players, 21 of whom play football and 17 camogie players including one who plays on the U14 Dublin Camogie team. We hope to retain our numbers and fulfil our ambition to play in U15 competitions in the year ahead.

In conclusion the girls can look back on the 2014 season with great pride on their progression as a team. This development has been achieved by the dedication of mentors and coaches. We are indebted to Fintan Quill and Paul Doyle for football and Dermot Malone and JP Byrne for camogie coaching. Carmel Buckley earns special mention for being omnipresent at training and matches. Our fundraising committee spearheaded by Joanne Wylde and supported by all the parents included a clothes recycling collection and a bag pack in Dunnes Stores and has been very effective in keeping us financially robust. Special gratitude is expressed to Neil and Sarah Rafferty for their generous sponsorship of our Feile gear. Throughout the year Magnus O’Driscoll has consistently assisted us in fielding full Camogie teams and we appreciate the support of the 01 group for this collaboration.

The 00 Girls are fortunate to have a positive and committed group of parents who support the team wholeheartedly whatever the request. This makes all our involvement with Cuala a pleasure and we thank them for this support and trust it will flourish further in the coming year.

Jim O’Toole
The 2001 girls fielded two teams in the Football League and two teams in the Football Championship. Two teams were fielded in the Camogie league and one in the Camogie Championship.

The A football team played in Division 1 of the League and Division 1 of the Championship/Cup. There were six teams playing in Division 1 of the League and eight in the Cup out of a total of 54 teams in the age group. The 2001s won the Division 1 Cup accounting for all the major teams St Sylvesters, Lucan, Na Fianna, Kilmacud and Ballyboden along the way. It was an excellent achievement. There are a number of matches left in the Football league and the 2001s are in a battle for second place, first place now being out of reach. The B football team played in Division 5 of the League and Cup and are currently in third place in the League and lost in the Cup semi-final.

The 2001 A Camogie team played in Division 1 of the Camogie League and in the A Championship. There were seven teams playing in Division 1 of the League and six in the A Championship out of a total of 34 teams in the age group. The 2001s finished fourth in Division 1 of the League. The team played well in the main in the Championship but didn’t make the Championship semi-finals and the lost the Division 1 shield final. The B Camogie team played in Division 4 of the League.

Attendance: The 2001s train on Mondays and Thursdays. Attendance at training is very good.

Parental help: We have a good level of parental help with training sessions and matches. We are very grateful for this help. Particular thanks on this to Brian Mullally, Michael O’Sullivan, Maurice Basquille, Rob Hartnett, Joe Byrne, Eileen Healy, Mary Ann O’Carroll, Collette O’Shea, Fionnuala O’Kelly, Fiona Ross and Mary Sheridan.

Fundraising: Thanks to Jessica Lewis who manages the fundraising for the 2001s and has run a number of fundraisers throughout the year including two bag packs and a recycling fundraiser which have raised significant funds for our age group.

Thanks to the club Coiste for the huge amount of work they do. Thanks to Ken Fitzgerald, Willie Braine and Damien Byrne for running the Easter and Summer camps. A fair amount of the 2001s attended and the girls enjoyed and benefited a lot from the camps.
The 2002 girls had a good year this year. Numbers are only down marginally by one to 29, with all the girls playing both codes. The girls are developing very well in both football and camogie skills, related development and teamwork. Team spirit is strong and became very evident towards the second half of the season as the games become even more competitive as we move out of Go Games in the near future.

This year we fielded one Camogie and one Football team in the Under 12 Go Games. We also subbed up a number of players on a weekly basis for the 2001’s football and camogie matches, working very closely with the 2001’s in both codes throughout the season.

Overall the girls played very well. We were in the stronger One Team League in Camogie and placed mid-table in a division of seven teams.

In Football the win ratio was about two thirds with the girls finishing the season very strongly with five straight wins.

The 2002 girls train on Mondays, Wednesday and Saturdays. Attendance at training is good. Attendance at matches has also been good.

A very big thank you to both Niamh O’Connor and Colm Small who have worked tirelessly for the group for the past six years. Their level of work and commitment has been fantastic and appreciated by all of the parents and players in the 2002s. They both stepped down from the Group lead roles in September 2014 due to work pressures and other commitments but will still assist in the background. A group of parents has now split the roles previously filled by Niamh and Colm into administration, and mentoring/coaching. With Weekly emails, Juvenile Girls Committee & player registration being looked after by Margaret Cremins, Camogie fixtures & admin and finance by Deborah Byrne and Jenny Kirkwood looking after football fixtures and admin. On the coaching side Colm O’Donnell, Sheila Kerrigan and help from Michael Fenlon are now looking after the Camogie. The Football coaching is: Garrett Scollard, Dave Bourke, Mike Beary and Philip Shaffrey.

Thanks go too to the wider group of parents. With a group of 29 we are very dependent on parent support and help with training, games and logistics/fundraising. This help is given in spades.

Two meetings of the parents in the Group were held during 2014. These meetings are important and attendance very good with 22 people at the September meeting.

A key final message is that the players are continuing to enjoy their sport, make friendships and develop and make massive strides – we have numerous examples of players who continue to make considerable progress. We hope to continue this trend through 2015.

Thanks finally to the Juvenile Girls Officers and Committee for their ongoing support.
2014 Tuairisc Grúpa 2003 Cailíní

The 2003 girls had a good season with a big improvement in their skills. We have 7 new players since last year, 2 girls did not return after the summer break. We now have a total of 36 girls. We have 2 girls who play football only and one girl who plays only Camogie the rest play both codes. This year we play football one week, Camogie the next and every third weekend we played both. In football, we entered 2 teams in a go games group. We had mixed results throughout the season.

In Camogie, we played 2 teams in a graded league with red and blue teams - the strongest girls played on the Red team. Despite having reservations about streaming the girls, it worked out really well with both teams really benefiting from the division. Our red team ended in the bottom third of the league whereas our blue team ended mid way in the league table.

We get good turnout in training with a minimum of 20 - 24 girls at each session.

We continue with the same group of mentors - Fionan Breathnach, Derek Murnaghan, Colm Begley, Gary Morrissey, Margaret Kelly and Cristin Reddin has joined us to help coach camogie.

2014 Tuairisc Grúpa 2004 Cailíní

The past year has been a successful year for the 2004 cailíní. D’éirigh go geal leo i mbliana. We have 42 girls registered, with most actively involved. We had five new girls register in recent weeks many of whom were responding to our “bring a friend” September initiative. We train twice weekly, Mondays at Loreto Dalkey and Wednesdays in the Cuala Hall, with Go Games on Saturdays. We typically have numbers in the mid 20s for training sessions and the high twenties for Go Games.

Team spirit across the group is very strong and the girls have bonded well and mix well between their schools. One of our core objectives is to facilitate the social activities of the group, as we recognise that this aspect has become more important to the girls as they grow older. Our hope is to put a big effort into maintaining our numbers such that we have enough girls for two playing panels in later years at juvenile level.

We’ve had several skills nights run by Ken Fitzgerald, many thanks to Ken, which are very useful in helping us to progress the childrens’ skills and improve our skills as mentors. We have three coaches who took part in the Award 1 coaching course with Ken / Willie last winter and a number of others who have completed the Foundation level coaching course. We generally have good coaching support from the parents.
We entered 3 teams in the camogie and football Go Games this year which the girls really enjoyed. We were generally very competitive, winning or drawing most games and with the larger and single code clubs providing the toughest opposition.

We held a sponsored walk in June in Glendalough, raising €650 for the group. Our Céili Halloween fundraiser, held for the second year in October 2014, raised €520 after costs.

Ba mhaith linn ár mbuíochas a ghabháil le gach duine a thug tacaíocht duinn i mbliana, go háirithe na tuismitheoirí. Tá moladh tuillte ag na cailíní chomh maith, as an obair a chuir siad go léir isteach i mbliana agus an muid dul chun cinn atá déanta acu ó thaobh na scileanna de.

Thanks must go to all the parents who help out, with parental involvement very high.

Seán Ó Dochraigh & Colmán Ó Drisceoil.