



Chairman's Report

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of Leinster Branch Badminton. I am very pleased to be here today as this is my first opportunity to speak directly with members of the Council of Leinster at a public Leinster Branch AGM.

We have 2 hours arranged for this meeting and you will have seen the Agenda already, in brief we will run through the Reports to Members, do the election of the incoming Executive, say farewell to our departing Executive and take time to acknowledge extraordinary hard work of some volunteers by conferring lifelong membership on them and then it will be your opportunity to share concerns ask question of the Executive.

This morning I will give an overview of the financial performance in the last financial year. I will hand over to Kevin McGrath who will cover the bulk of the financial details. I will cover the key events of the year including the impact of Covid-19. I will share our vision for Leinster. I will talk about the year ahead and share some initiatives without

Financial performance

I am glad to report that Finances were satisfactory overall for the 12 months to December 2019 . There were adequate funds to make repairs to the roof and tarmac the car park in Whitehall Road. The current year will be very different as Covid -has undermined income at all levels and there are increased costs required to manage Covid-19. It is expected there will be a deficit and it is too early to call what that will be.

Key Events of the Year

Covid-19

The main nonsporting event this year has been Covid-19. It has adversely impacted on everyone and everything to do with Badminton and it seems it will continue to impact us for at least the rest of the calendar year.

Outside of Dublin very little badminton has been played as Clubs and players have to comply with the restrictions from Sports Ireland and Badminton Ireland which impacts on travel and hall availability. Halls which are hired from Schools and community centres are not available this year and there are no alternatives.

In both centres in Dublin, demand is high for courts but running the courts has become expensive due to the high resource and consumable cost required to comply with Covid-19 restrictions. The bars in both locations have been closed since March and as of now there are no plans to re-open.

Staffing

The lock down caused the layoff of our staff for the duration some of whom are not yet back to work. The lock down also meant Leinster could not afford expensive staff who were made redundant.

The Executive are taking all steps to address the impacts on Badminton and to manage the shortfall which is unavoidable. Grants have been applied for and every opportunity is being sought to manage costs and maintain income levels.

Sporting Activities

The Season started on a positive note, with entry numbers up in all events. This trend continued right up to mid-March when Covid-19 caused the cancellation of all events from that date onwards. This was very frustrating and unfortunate for the players as the Season was coming near an end and players missed the thrill of the final events.

A summary of the key events:

Dublin Schools had a very successful year. Their entries were up and had 58 schools taking part. The Dublin finals were held for each age group, teams went through to the Leinsters and emerged successfully to take part in the All Irelands, but these were cancelled.

Dublin & District had an increase in entries – now up to 61 clubs. The League finals were played but the League play offs were cancelled. Some of the Graded events were also cancelled.

The Masters took place last November and events after that were cancelled.

The Youth Activities committee had an excellent start to the year, entry numbers per tournament were up 20% on the previous year. The committee rebranded their tournaments and increased the number of events held which worked very well. The Celtic Challenge u13 took place in Lisburn with Leinster bringing home the cup Unfortunately all other end of season tournaments and trips abroad were cancelled.

The Leinster Branch Coaching committee reported an excellent year, with Leinster coaching taking place for children, beginners and improvers leading to an increase in numbers taking up the game.

130 people attended BWF level0 Coaching throughout Leinster with over 12 people attending a BWF Level 1 course.

The County Affairs Committee reported that the Graded Individuals did take place in December. Preliminary rounds were played in the Inter Counties and the CAC Inter-Count finals were postponed.

The Seniors competed in Milton Keynes in November and January with mixed results, however the final match of the season was cancelled.

The first quarter of the 2020-2021 season is near an end. To-date all scheduled tournaments have been postponed. While both centres are open to players in Dublin, many clubs are reporting their halls are not available and they cannot get alternatives so their season has not yet started and they have no indication when they will get back to play. The safety of our players is our number one priority, but we sympathise with any players who cannot get back to play this season.

We also recall the Olympics did not take place which impacted our players. In fact, the absence of the usual bulk of reports from other Sub committees is a further indication of the reduced activity across the Branch due to Covid-19.

Safety

I would like to make a brief mention of the Leinster Branch activities in relation to safety. Safety of Players, staff and volunteers is a critical priority and we continue to strive for zero issues in relation to Safeguarding, Covid-19 and Health and safety across all players, volunteers and staff of Leinster Branch.

Strategy

Before Covid-19, the Exec took time to review the Vision and Mission of Leinster Badminton. The growth has been such in recent years that we can now say that our vision is 'A future where badminton is a mainstream sport in Leinster'.

Our Mission is to develop, promote, grow & govern badminton in Leinster by sharing knowledge, creating partnerships, building good practice, and coordinating with others

The Strategy

Our strategy to achieve this throughout the entire province will be fivefold:

- We need to cater for social club players, for competitive club players and for high-performance players, for adults & juveniles alike.
- We need to have open communication channels with BI to leverage their development activities in a mutually beneficial way.
- We want to grow the numbers of affiliated adults and juveniles playing across the province.
- We will need to improve our communication channels and the way in which we promote our game.
- We need to ensure that proper Governance is in place for all our activities.

One of the key priorities is to grow the number of players and cater for players at all levels, a key tactics to achieve this is to create a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for all Leinster Players. It has been decided that Baldoyle BC will be the location of the CoE. The project is still at the planning stage and updates will be provided as appropriate. |

[JD1]The Executive Committee

My first year as chairman of the Executive has been nothing short of a baptism of fire and the learning curve has been sharp. Key items which demanded time were Staff Recruitment, Negotiation of a deal re Masts, Discussions relating to Sale of Site which culminated in an SGM in February. Covid-19 has taken up considerable Executive time since March and that includes the re-opening of the two centres in Dublin.

Since last June, there has been 20 Executive meetings, many of them via Zoom. During the year, Aoife Lennon retired early, and Liza O'Rourke was co-opted to the Executive.

Retirements and Resignations

Kevin McGrath-Honorary Treasurer

We would like to acknowledge the retirement of Kevin McGrath who has held the position of Honorary Treasurer for the past 4 years. His contribution has been immense and there is not much that he hasn't been successful in pursuing and achieving for the Branch who owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Aoife Lennon

Aoife was due to leave the Executive at this time, she did so earlier due to her workload at the Mater Hospital. Aoife spent 4 years on the committee and during that time, she contributed significantly to creating the Selection Criteria for Juvenile, Senior and Master Squads. She set up the framework for Child Safeguarding for Leinster Branch and co-managed the Senior tournaments.

Mark Topping

Mark completed four years on the committee. Mark brought great insights to the Executive in relation to Coaching options for Leinster. He challenged the committee's way of thinking and offered alternative solutions to problems raised at the executive meetings.

Roy Cobbe leaves the committee and his knowledge of the operation of the branch together with this business acumen has been of immense help to me and the Executive in the past year.

Although not a member of the Executive, I cannot finish without saying a few words about David Hogan Hogan who is something of a legend in Leinster Badminton and indeed in the Provinces. I would need an hour to talk about the years of hard work he had put in for Leinsters and as a consequence this achievement are endless and thanks to that the Youth Activities are in a robust position and we wish Jean the best as she takes on that role.

Outlook

Turning now to the year ahead, the Executive has a positive view. Demand for the Game continues to grow, we now have over 6000 members. Our teams are competing at the highest levels. While we are positive, we will have to work hard to play safely with Covid-19 and will take nothing for granted. Our focus will be to develop the young players, create opportunities to provide challenges for our seniors and to create the CoE in Baldoyle for players at all levels across Leinster Branch.

Closing

Before I hand over to Kevin, I would like to place on record my thanks to the Executive Committee, all Leinster Branch Volunteers and our staff for their outstanding contribution during the year. Thank you also to our Players who have had many opportunities taken away from them both last season and this season and we ask you to stick with it - it is a temporary blip. I also want to record our thanks to the Umpires and Referees who work at as many events as they possibly can. I also want to thank our Sponsors-Yonex and south Dublin CoCo for their support during the year.

Finally , Leinster have a very solid foundation and we have some of the best people involved in Leinster Badminton .Their efforts will continue to place the Leinster Branch in the best possible position to go forward, grasp opportunities and deal with challenges in the year ahead. The Executive (and I) are determined to ensure Badminton prospers and with their (and your) support, I look forward to the years ahead with confidence.

Stay Well

David Murphy

Chairman

September 2020