



INTERIM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021-2022

I was asked to take over the role of Interim Chairman of the Branch after Derek Stewart stepped aside as Chairman earlier in the year. Derek had set out a formidable range of tasks and challenges for the Executive at the beginning of the year and it is my hope that we can complete many of these tasks in the course of the coming twelve months. I would like to thank Derek for all his work on the Executive Committee and I know that he will continue to assist Leinster Badminton in the future.

Finally, after 18 months of very little or no Badminton due to Covid restrictions, we returned to full play towards the end of 2021. It was a challenge for the clubs and the sport generally to get back to some form of normality. Many of our normal calendar events took place since re-opening and I would like to thank and congratulate all those who helped to make those events take place.

Not all of the clubs, particularly outside Dublin were able to get back fully up and running but we hope that they will be able to get back to full capacity for the coming season. Approximately 89% of the Leinster Clubs in 2019 have returned now with 71% of players re-affiliated. We hope to see these figures improve in the 2022/23 season.

It has been a long journey since February 2020 to get our Leinster Representative teams back to competition. We are extremely fortunate that the province has been very well represented by our various representative teams this year.

Unfortunately, our Senior team was unable to stay in the Premiership of the Inter County Championships but will be playing in Division 1 next season.

Our juveniles continue to go from strength to strength, and under the management of the Youth Activities Committee, the U13, U15 and U17 Leinster Teams recently won Gold in the Interpro competitions. The Committee also held an U16 Leinster Invitational Tournament with two Leinster teams and teams from Alpha and Munster. Many thanks to Jean Kelly and her team for continuing to bring on the Leinster juvenile squads and teams.

Our U18 Leinster team had a phenomenal showing at the English U18 Intercounties Tournament to bring home Bronze. This is the best result a Leinster team has achieved at this competition since 1994, when Leinster won Gold. The future for Leinster Badminton looks good.

Our Senior and Masters teams were not to be left in the shade. The Grade A team and the 40+ Masters team also won Gold in the Interpro competition. The 50+ team brought home silver. Thanks goes to the selectors, team managers and players for representing our province so well.

Much thanks go to the various sub-committees including YACs, DDLC, SWLBL DSC and CAC who have all returned to action over the course of the last six months. The amount of time and effort needed to bring back tournaments, leagues, schools' competitions and intercounty competitions cannot be overstated. Leinster Badminton is extremely privileged to have such dedicated volunteers on these sub-committees.

During lockdown we were able to have a major overhaul of the Electrical Installation undertaken in the Baldoyle Centre and received funding from Sport Ireland via our COVID Grant to do so. This has resolved a long-term concern at the centre
Following from that we undertook the replacement and upgrade of the lighting installation in both the Baldoyle and Terenure centres. This has made a huge improvement to the facilities and had brought the lighting levels up to international standards increasing the light levels from 100 Lux to 500 Lux. I think this has been one of the most significant improvements at the centres since either came into being. I appreciate that some individuals and clubs were discommoded by the lighting works, I would like to thank them for their patience and understanding in getting these works completed. I would also like to thank the Sports Capital Grant Programme for their significant support for this project.

Additional improvement works have been done in both centres, including replacing 50% of the mats in both Baldoyle and Terenure Badminton Centres. Furthermore, new security systems have been installed in both centres.

The Executive has commenced a review of the Branch Rules and it is hoped to bring a proposal for Rule Changes to a Special General meeting later this year.

David Murphy in his Chairman's report last year referenced that the Executive was working on a Major Strategic Plan for the Branch. Work on this is ongoing and it is hoped to have this completed and presented during the coming year.

My thanks to our trustees for all their support during the year. There is a vacancy amongst the trustees and it is hoped that this position will be filled shortly.

Our thanks to Badminton Ireland for all their assistance during the year particularly with their guidance on coping with the restrictions during the various lockdowns.

I would particularly like to thank all the members of the Executive Committee for all of their hard work during the past year. It was a challenging year, particularly trying to get the sport back up and running after the Lockdowns. Our president Catherine Smyth will be stepping down as president at the end of the summer and on behalf of the Executive committee I would like to say a special thank you to Catherine for all the work she has done for the Branch over the years.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to our professional staff who support us and ensure that the work of the Branch and the volunteers is supported in the best possible way.

A lot of un-named people do untold work for Badminton all over Leinster. I would like to recognise them and thank them for their commitment and support for Badminton and hope they will continue to help our sport.

Finally, it has been an objective of this Executive Committee to find ways to expand the sport at grass roots level and there has been some success in this regard. I hope that along with everything else that the Branch undertakes, we can develop this work in the coming season.

Yours in Sport

John Taylor
Interim Chairman

19 April 2022