



Dear Zenab,

My name is Tadhg Lee and I am Secretary of St Clarets Gaelic Football Club. On behalf of the club can I thank you for your assistance with our application in recent days and for liaising with our Vice Chairperson, Paddy Donaghy, up to this point in time.

I write to you to provide some clarification on the points you raised prior to bringing our case before the Planning Committee on 5th August.

Since the late 1980s our club has used Grosvenor Playing Fields as our training base and home pitch. Therefore, I want to make very clear that our use of the pitch is existing and historical and that this is not a proposed use, we have been using the playing fields for over three decades.

As per your map, we play exactly where it states 'LOCATION PLAN SCALE 1:1250' on the land that side of the stream. Each year we liaise with and pay the council through 'Fusion' to mark out the pitch for us and to ensure the grass is cut regularly throughout the summer so that we can train and play matches there.

We are a Gaelic Football club that is affiliated to the London County Board branch of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). Our club was founded in 1975 to enable London born players of Irish heritage within the locality the opportunity to play Ireland's national game competitively. At that point in time, Hayes had a significantly large Irish population. Since then, the game has grown hugely in London acquiring an international appeal, as has our club, and we are open to players of all ancestries and backgrounds and have strong links built up with primary and secondary schools within the Borough. There are over 30 affiliated GAA clubs in London of which we are the only one based in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

We cater for all age groups from young children right through to adult level. At underage, we have under 6, under 8, under 10, under 11, under 13, under 15 and under 17 teams. And as well as our men's senior team, we also have a ladies under 18 team.

Gaelic football is traditionally a summer sport with the season running from March through to the end of October with the majority of games concentrated between April and September. We only play during daylight hours which means that we cannot train at Grosvenor Playing Fields until early April each year. Prior to this, we pay for training at floodlit facilities for all of our teams at venues that include Brunel University, Hillingdon Sports Centre and The Douay Martyrs Catholic Secondary School.

Our men's senior team train on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and our underage teams training is split across Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. In addition to these training dates, the London County Board make home fixtures for our teams which usually take place on Saturdays and Sundays. However, games can also be scheduled for weeknights during summer months. To be crystal clear,

between April and September, it is feasible that we could require use of our pitch on any given day of the week.

Permission for a storage container on the existing hardstanding adjacent to the field is essential for us as our club membership continues to grow. Presently, our underage and senior coaches are having to ferry equipment from their own homes to and from the field each time we have training and matches. Club members also take it in turns to bring home the nets for the goalposts as well as flags that we use to mark out the perimeter of the field for games. In addition to standard equipment such as footballs, cones, poles, bibs, etc, members also have to bring step ladders and duct tape with them to hang up the nets and all of this make things extremely cumbersome. If we had the storage unit, it would significantly reduce the amount of time taken to set up before, and take down after sessions. We fear that we will struggle to attract new volunteers and club members in the future as they will be deterred with the labour and extra time involved to run teams. It is vital that we can simply store all our equipment onsite, without having to bring to and from the playing fields each time.

I sincerely hope that you will consider favourably our application which we feel we have been very patient with. Just to highlight our commitment to the common good and how seriously we take our responsibilities to the local community, I draw your attention to an article (on the next page) published in the Irish World newspaper on 3rd May 2020 (a London based newspaper for the Irish community throughout Britain) detailing our recent Covid-19 fundraiser, the proceeds of which were donated to the Hillingdon Hospital Staff Welfare Appeal. I also include the web link below immediately below.

<https://www.theirishworld.com/hayes-gaa-club-st-clarets-answers-hillingdon-hospital-staff-welfare-appeal/>

Yours faithfully,

Tadhg Lee
Secretary
St Clarets Gaelic Football Club

SPORT

GAA

Hayes GAA club answers appeal to help Hillingdon Hospital staff



St Clarets are raising money for staff at Hillingdon Hospital

By Damian Dolan

West London GAA club St Clarets is challenging its members, and all Gaelic football lovers, to put their GAA skills to the test - and raise funds for NHS staff at Hillingdon Hospital at the same time.

The Hayes club has launched the 'Gaelic In Your Garden - 500 Solo Challenge' to raise money in aid of staff welfare at the West London hospital, as they lead the fight against Covid-19.

To take part, first complete 500 solos (four steps between each solo) in your garden, either individually or as a family, and then donate £5 to Justgiving page set up by the club. Finally, post a video of yourself completing the challenge.

The fundraising idea is the brainchild of the club's PRO, physiotherapy student, Ciara Hession.

All proceeds will go to the 'Hillingdon Hospital Staff Welfare Appeal' - set up to

provide "essential basic supplies" for NHS staff at the hospital, who are working long hours and are unable to get the shops.

So far, the appeal has raised more than £13,000, and St Clarets are keen to do their bit.

For St Clarets, the only GAA club in the Borough of Hillingdon, it's a cause close to the heart of many of its members.

"We have so many female members of our club, mums, wives and partners of past and present players, who are working on the front line at Hillingdon Hospital," said club secretary Tadgh Lee.

"They are doing outstanding work in such difficult times, particularly as we all know that North West London is a hot spot for the virus.

"On top of this though, our club, based in Hayes, serves the entire borough of Hillingdon, and it's the hospital that our members use routinely in good times and bad.

"So it is really important to us that we show solidarity with

the hospital and its staff at this unprecedented time of crisis."

The club are calling on all their members and friends, young and old, past and present, to roll in behind the club for this fantastic venture.

Ciara is steeped in the green and white hoops of the Clarets. Her late grandfather, Denis McCarthy, founded the club back in 1973, and her grandmother Rose McCarthy is the club's honorary Life President.

Her father Martin is one of the club's all-time greats on the field and coaches underage boys and girls teams, ably assisted by his wife, club treasurer and stalwart, Marie.

Tadgh added: "We are very proud and grateful to Ciara for coming up with such a novel fundraising idea and it really highlights the importance of young blood with fresh ideas in GAA administration."

• To donate go to [Justgiving.com](https://www.justgiving.com) and search for 'St Clarets GFC - We're raising £1,000 to Hillingdon Hospital - Staff Welfare Appeal'