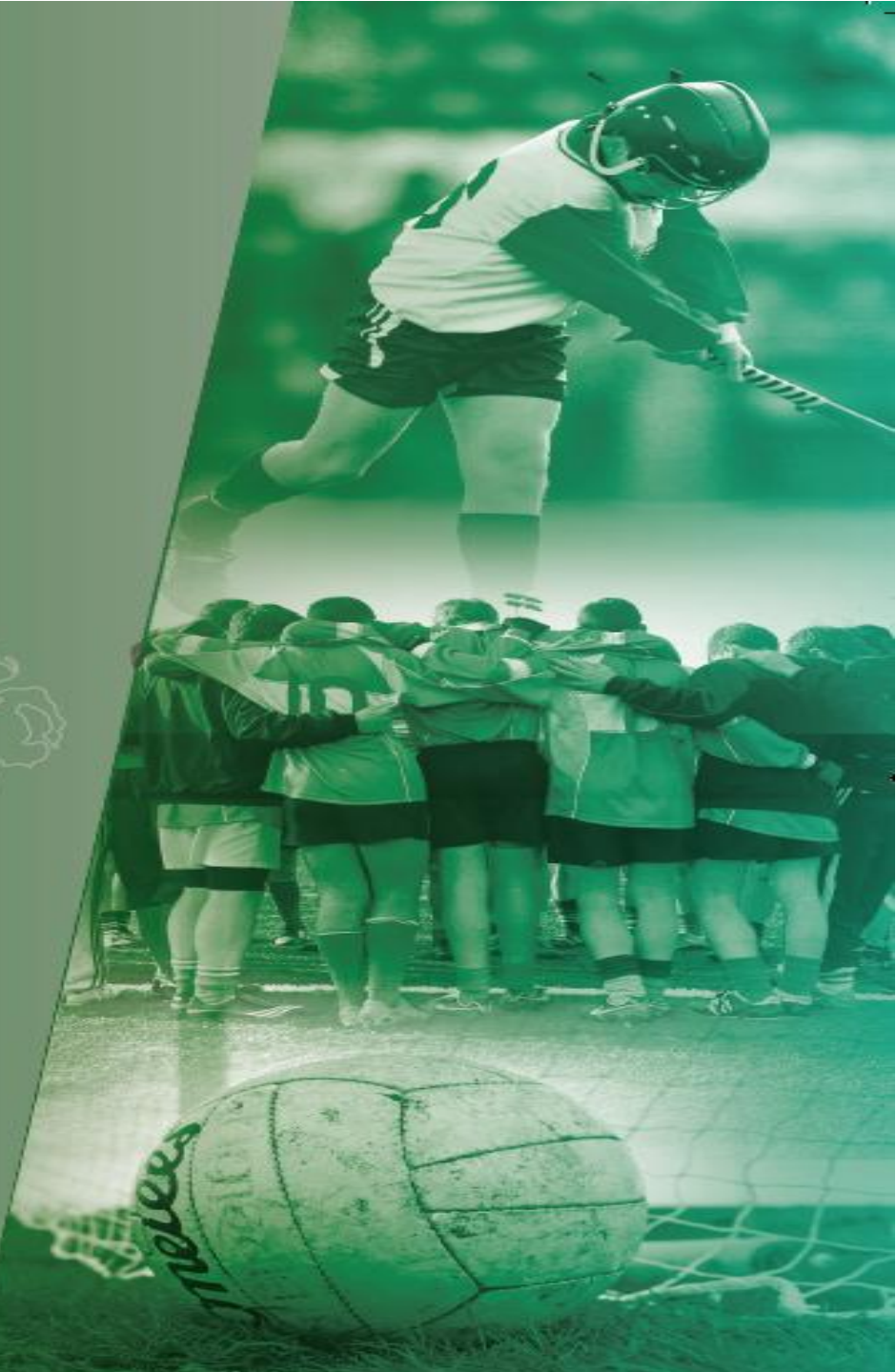


No One Shouted Stop - Until Now

The GAA's Response to
Ireland's Demographic
Shift



WHERE WE
ALL BELONG



Key Message

- The GAA's ability to **serve** its communities depends on how effectively we **adapt to changing** population patterns.
- Changes in population distribution, age profile, and composition are creating a **growing mismatch** between **community needs** and the **location, capacity** and **structure of Gaelic games provision**.

GAELIC GAMES IN NUMBERS (ALL CODES)

Census 2021/2022

Total Population
7,052,602

Total Clubs
2,371

Total Members
760,183



DUBLIN COMMUTER BELT

Total Population
2,304,899

% Total Population
32.7%

% Total Clubs
18%

% Total Members
25.7%





EASTERN SEABOARD

Total Population
3,071,222

% Total Population
43.5%

% Total Clubs
18.6%

% Total Members
25.4%



EASTERN SEABOARD MAJOR CITIES & MAJOR TOWNS (>10K)

Total Population:

4,420,760

% of Total Population

62.7%

% Total Clubs

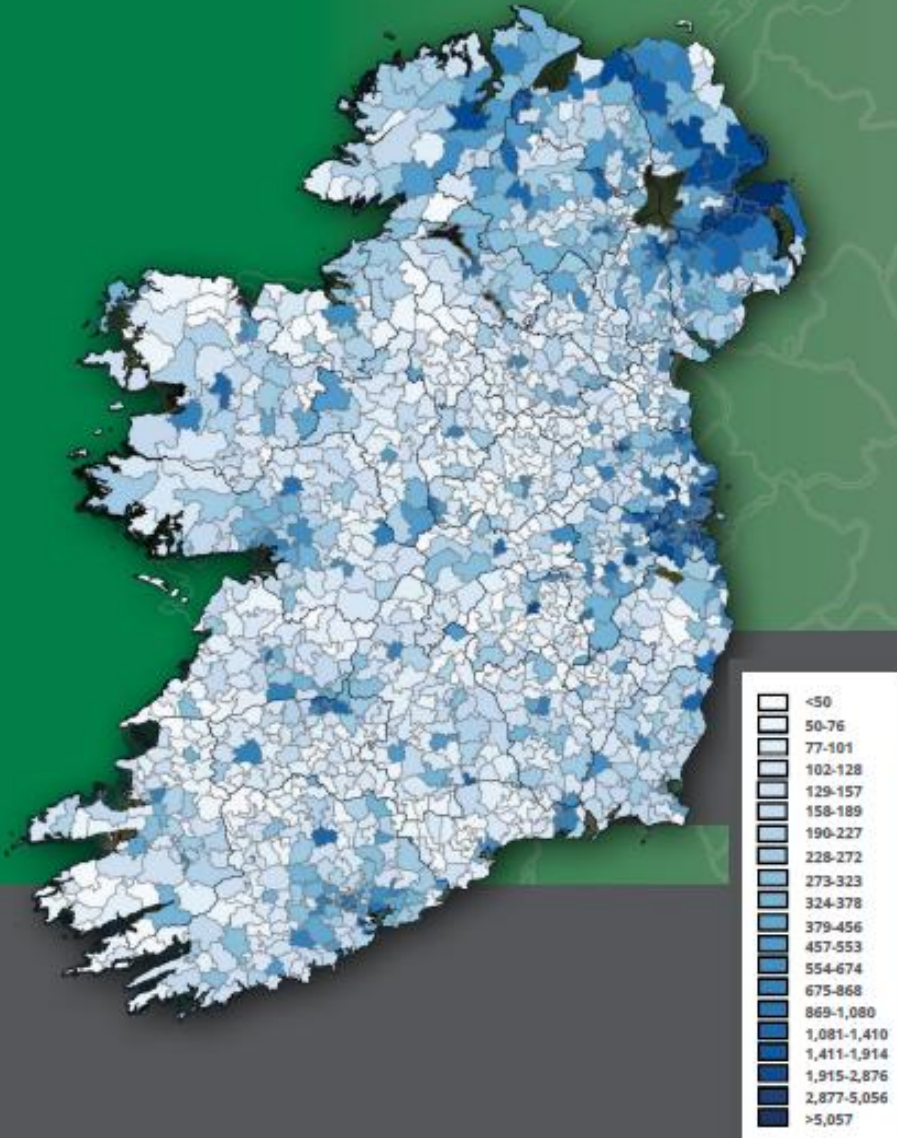
26.3%

% Total Members

36.6%

POPULATION OF 0-5-YEAR-OLDS

Population of 0 – 5 Year
Olds according to Club
catchment areas:



Top 50 Clubs:
25% of all 0 – 5-year-olds

Lowest 1,000 Clubs:
22% of all 0 – 5-year-olds

The strategic mismatch

Risk context	Exposure	Potential consequences	Control direction
Growth locations	Population growth outpaces club and facility capacity.	Waiting lists Pitch congestion Volunteer overload Lost participation	Facilities planning New / expanded clubs Catchment review Targeted Games Development
Demographically challenged locations	The population base needed to sustain traditional club structures weakens.	Fewer age-grade teams Independent teams Longer travel Reduced player choice	Flexible competition Eligibility supports Club support Shared facilities

The risk is not demographic change itself — it is failing to adapt the sporting facility footprint to demographic change.

The strategic mismatch

The existing sport facility network largely reflects historic settlement patterns.

Future population and housing growth is increasingly concentrated in urban areas, large towns and commuter settlements.

The implication is not that rural clubs matter less — but that the Association must plan for two realities at the same time.

The geography of future participation demand is changing faster than the geography of the facility network.

A Shared Agenda for Strong Communities

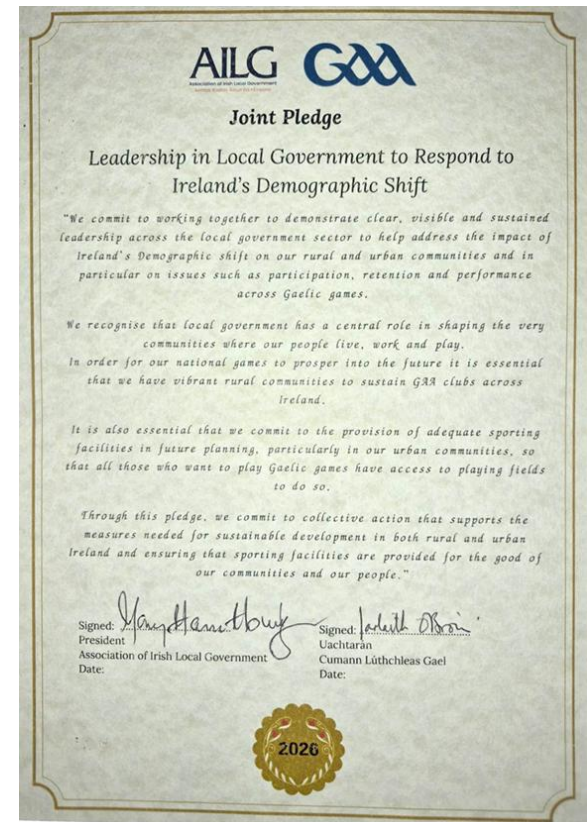
- **Sports & Community Infrastructure in New Housing Developments**
 - Require **mandatory provision of zoned and serviced land for sport and recreation** in all County Development Plans.
 - **Protect sports zoning** from being re-designated under development pressure.
 - **Concurrent** rather than retroactive development of community sports facilities in high-growth areas.
- **Capital Funding for Facilities**
 - Create a **Community Sports Grant demographic-pressure funding stream** for high-growth areas.
 - Provide **multi-annual certainty** for large projects in commuter counties.
- **School–Club Dual-Use Facilities**
 - National policy framework enabling **automatic dual-use** of new school sports facilities.
 - **Joint capital funding** from Sport & Education.

A Shared Agenda for Strong Communities

- **Local Authority Planning & OPR Oversight**
 - Develop **national level community sport facility policy**, which would then be subject to OPR oversight
 - Standardise **minimum** sport and recreation **benchmarks** nationally.
 - Formalise **engagement** between councils and sporting bodies.
- **Zoning and Protection of Land for Sport**
 - **Protect existing** sports lands in planning law.
 - **Reserve land** for future sporting use in growth areas.
- **Municipal and Shared Sporting Facilities**
 - Provide **municipal playing facilities** which can cater for Gaelic games

AILG – GAA Joint Pledge

- A commitment to **balanced regional development**, stronger **collaboration**, facilities **aligned with population growth** and an all-island sporting facilities framework.



AILG – GAA Joint Pledge



'Is Féidir Linn le Chéile' — the action framework

Standardised planning engagement template

County Boards and clubs make consistent, evidence-based submissions to the plan making process

Planning guidelines & consultation

Embed sporting infrastructure and structured GAA input in plan-making.

10-year plans & Year 5 review

Ensure emerging facility gaps can be identified and addressed.

Align policy and funding

Join housing, regeneration, sport and community investment around place.

Shared / municipal facilities

Move toward multi-use models in growth areas and dual-use models in rural areas.

Demographic Change and Local Government: Implications for Communities and Infrastructure

- Population Change Is **Reshaping** Our Counties — Faster Than Our Plans
- **Growth is concentrated** in cities, commuter belts, and satellite towns
- **Decline is deepening** in smaller towns, villages and rural hinterlands
- Community **infrastructure** (sport, schools, amenities) is not keeping pace
- Clubs in urban Ireland cannot provide **adequate game time** for the number of players who want to play our games

Go raibh míle maith agaibh