



Duagh GAA Pitch Development

In 1968, Father O' Sullivan was negotiating a central school with the Department of Education. Up until then, there were five individual schools in the Duagh side of the parish. The Department stipulated extra playing space was required to cater for the larger

number of children.

Father O' Sullivan invited the GAA to the presbytery and informed them of his plans for a new central school. Present at this meeting were Billy Doran (Chairman), Jimmy Buckley (Secretary), Billy O' Connell and Tony Maher (Treasurers), Mickey Joe Daly and Ger Murphy. He briefed them of the Department's stipulation for extra playing space and that he could buy land at the back of the proposed school from Mrs Murphy (Ma Kate) at a reasonable price for a football pitch and to facilitate the school children. At this time, the GAA in Duagh did not have a playing field, and matches were played in various fields around the parish. The land would be handed over to the GAA to pay for it and to develop it. It would be vested in the County Board and the school children would have access to the field. Also, it was agreed that there

would be a right of way up to the field for the GAA through the yard of the school. However, when the plans for the school were drawn up, the plans of the school built over the road access for the GAA.

Sometime later Deborah Scanlon was approached to sell a piece of her land. She agreed. The purchase of this important right of way was due to the foresight of Jimmy Buckley. The GAA were and are to this day very grateful to Mrs Scanlon. The price of the field and the right of way was £1,200.

The land was of poor quality mainly mud, water and rushes. It required a lot of work. It was made up of four small fields, all with dykes. A group of local men met on a Saturday with spades and shovels to knock the ditches into the dykes. The main dyke going through the middle of the land was filled with stone from the old Lyon's residence across from the Elm bar today. Timmy Collins from Abbeyfeale opened drains with a spade and shovel, and shored them with stones. This cost £500. Patrick Buckley ploughed the field. It was dressed, seeded and stones picked by a group of volunteers. This was over the years 1971-1972. The first game was played in 1972, Duagh versus Finuge.

The field was still of a poor standard so a Sports Field Committee was set up. Chairman - Dan McAuliffe, Vice-chairman – Billy O' Connell, Secretary – Liam Dennehy,

Assistant Secretary – Mickey Joe Daly, Treasurers - Tony Maher and Jimmy Buckley and P.R.O – Eoin Stack. A lot of effort was put in to raise money for the further development of the field. Card games, dances, carnivals, raffles and collections were held over the next ten years.

In 1981, Martin O Keeffe was employed to lower the top of the field by approximately six feet and raised the village end of the field. He dug drains, and a dyke by Mick Stack's boundary was piped. The pipes cost £2,000. Martin filled in the dyke. There were three lorries and a digger drawing topsoil from Tony Maher's quarry. Hire of the lorries and digger cost £2,500. Martin levelled and spread the topsoil over the field. Martin's bill was £11,700. When Martin was finished volunteers ploughed and reseeded the field.

Dressing rooms were built at a cost of £18,000. The field at this time was too narrow for a stand. In 1988, a strip of land was bought from Séano Sheehy for £8,000. In 1989, the stand was bought and erected from Kerry Co-op for £2,200. The concrete and labour was supplied by Derry Carroll at a cost of £5,500. Ger Dillon drew stones up from the river to trunk the stand and developed the strip of ground to create the embankment. He also developed the gravel roadway across the bottom of the field and up to the stand. This cost £9,000. Volunteers then wired in the field.

At this stage the Duagh GAA field was of comparable standard with pitches in Kerry at the time. Thanks is due to all the people who contributed both physically and financially. A special word of thanks is due to the late Fr. O' Sullivan for having the foresight to source a field in such a central location.

The Sports Field Committee had achieved a functioning football field in the heart of Duagh and thus the maintenance and further development of the field was taken over by Duagh Gaa. Since then the GAA has done a lot of work to the field and its facilities. It has succeeded in developing the pitch into one of the best playing surfaces and football amenities in the county.