

SUMMER *people*

..... Lanesboro/Ballyleague

St Faithleachs are flying!

€1.6m project set for official opening in 2011

St Faithleachs GAA club was formed in late 1962 and has been an integral part of the community of the Ballyleague general area for most of the past 50 years. In 1981 the club started playing at its pitch in Ballyleague and that venue served the club well for many years.

However there were a few problems. The pitch was very wet and prone to flooding during the winter months and there was also the problem with the high voltage ESB cables that crossed the field.

The club decided to seek to develop facilities elsewhere and in 2003 they purchased 23 acres of land close to the River Shannon and then set about the huge task of developing those lands.

The first task that faced the officers of the club was that of levelling and draining the land, which was a huge undertaking. It is estimated that between draining the land and fencing the pitches alone the club spent about €265,000. Club officials say that there is a drain every metre on the pitch. The job was undertaken slowly and meticulously and the results are there for all to see. The club also constructed a clubhouse which has become a focal point for the community. It is used by many local groups for various functions, etc. and there is a modern bar and meeting facilities there for the members and the local people to enjoy.

The club have two full-size playing fields which are the same dimensions as Croke Park and they have a third pitch which is only 20 metres short of the standard length. The latter facility is used for underage matches and training.

The club have embarked on the final part of the development, the construction and development of state-of-the-art



Pictured at St. Faithleach's GAA Club on Tuesday evening last were Frank Curley, St. Faithleach's GAA Club Chairman, Michael Cleary, Padraig Murray, Gerry Donlon and Henry Kenny. Pic: Andrew Fox.

dressing rooms, which are almost completed and it is hoped that the whole facility will be ready for a major official opening in 2011.

Club officials estimate that when it's completed approximately €1.6 million will have been spent on the 23-acre site, making it one of the best club grounds in the county. The support of the local community for the project has been huge and the many fund-raising events that the club have hosted have been very well supported.

St Faithleach's cater for up-

wards of 350 playing members from U-8's to senior level – male and female – and a special effort had been put in by the club in recent years in the area of underage coaching.

St Faithleach's have been in existence for almost 50 years and the magnificent new facilities have ensured that the club's future is well and truly secure for the next 50 years at least! It's a great example of a voluntary community organisation in full flow and evidence too of the power of the GAA club in the local community.



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MONDAY – FRIDAY, 9.30 am - 6.30 pm;
SATURDAY 10 am - 6 pm



St. Faithleach's GAA Club is always a hub of activity. Pic: Andrew Fox.

Tribute to Earley from St. Faithleach's stalwart

Michael Kelly of St. Faithleach's GAA Club in Ballyleague this week paid tribute to the late Dermot Earley, saying that he always had time to shake his hand and always had a smile on his face.

"He was one of the best of all time, in every way. Everywhere he went he always had a

smile on his face. Every time when you talked to him, he had time to talk to you. He shook hands with me in 2006 outside the dressing room in Ennis. I send my sympathy to his wife and family from a Roscommon supporter and a St. Faithleach's supporter. He will be sadly missed. May he rest in peace."