



# East Belfast GAA

Club Development Plan 2024-2026

# Contents

SECTION 1	<b>Chairperson's Address</b>	Page 3
SECTION 2	<b>History of the Club</b>	Page 4
SECTION 3	<b>Mission, Vision and Values</b>	Page 6
SECTION 4	<b>Club Structure</b>	Page 8
SECTION 5	<b>Finance and Fundraising</b>	Page 12
SECTION 6	<b>Community and Culture</b>	Page 18
SECTION 7	<b>Coaching and Games</b>	Page 22
SECTION 8	<b>Pitches and Facilities</b>	Page 26



# Chairperson's Address

It's hard to think that something that has become such an integral part of the lives of so many people is still in its early days. East Belfast GAA is about to begin our fifth season of competitive play, and it's clear that we are here to stay.

In May 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic, a single tweet was sent. From that tweet, it's amazing that we have been able to create something this incredible together.

It is now my pleasure to introduce the inaugural Three-Year Plan for East Belfast GAA. The club has gone through a stage of unparalleled growth in its four years, and decisions have had to be taken quickly and instinctively. However, now is a time to pause, reflect and plan for our future. We are fielding teams across all four codes, and we have also provided opportunities for over 200 children and young people from across all of East Belfast.

In everything we do, we will recognise that the club has a responsibility to its members and to the East Belfast community to create an open environment where all can feel welcome and to bring alive the rich culture of the area.

I am honoured to be your Chairperson, and I look forward to continuing to work together with you all over the coming years as East Belfast GAA develops. Together with our members. Together with the wider GAA. Together with this great part of the city we call home.

**Kimberly Robertson**  
**Cathaoirleach/Chairperson**  
**East Belfast GAA**



# History of the Club

How do you write a history of a club that has only existed for four years?

It started with a tweet.



The tweet came after a discussion between two good friends during the first COVID lockdown musing over the lack of a GAA club in their part of Belfast city. This area hadn't seen a GAA club in decades, and times were changing. To an observer, East Belfast was not a logical neighbourhood to set up a GAA club but to the surprise of everyone, the club was born.

Of course, every club has their founding story; a group of people, eager to play a sport and have a bit of craic. On Sunday 31st May 2020, a Twitter account was set up, a tweet went out, and within 17 days, East Belfast GAA was a reality, officially recognised by the GAA.

After that tweet, countless emails had been received. Originally the idea was to have just an underage football team, but soon enough, people of all ages were reaching out and getting in contact.

Some had previous playing experience, but many had never played Gaelic games at all.

The first official Interim Club Executive Committee meeting took place on the 5th June 2020. Soon after, regular training sessions were scheduled for all four codes. The club crest and colours were chosen, kit designed and ordered, and the first official matches took place.







The wins were few that season but the craic was ninety. In addition to training and matches, social events and club days cemented our club as family. The club had some engagements, marriages and even a few babies on the way.

With strength and perseverance, and countless hours of dedication from volunteers and players alike, the club has succeeded. The hospitality given to our club from fellow County Down clubs, as well as a few County Antrim clubs, has been unmatched and extremely appreciated. With assistance and encouragement from local politicians, businesses and many others, the club's future is bright.

**We are East Belfast GAA, and we go onwards and upwards**  
**Together, Le Chéile, Thegither.**

## Features of the Crest

### Farset/Feirste typeface

Based on Belfast's historic tiled street signage.

### Red Hand of Ulster, Shamrock & Thistle

Representing the different communities coming together as one club.

### Harland & Wolff Cranes

The iconic cranes from Belfast Docks clearly connect with the local area and cover the east Belfast skyline.



### Shield within Circular frame

A traditional style GAA style is housed within a modern circular frame - symbolising the old meeting the new; which the club represents.

### Sunrise

Symbolises a 'new beginning' "The Sun rises in the East".

### Waves

Represent the region's proud links to the sea (ship-building heritage).

### Club Motto

Main aspect of club is the coming 'together' of people - so this word is shown in three languages; English, Irish and Ulster Scots.

# Mission, Vision & Values

## Mission

- We want to build a community in East Belfast.
- We want to utilise the power of sport to provide opportunities for the different communities to get to know each other.
- We want to create a local hub that promotes togetherness and allows everyone to get the physical and mental health benefits of doing something positive.



- We want to see young kids from all backgrounds all mixing and making friends with each other and growing up playing sport with each other.
- We want to grow the standard of our club on the field. Our dream is to see local kids competing for and winning championships at the highest level of the sport.

## Vision

- Our vision is that everybody has the opportunity to be welcomed to take part in Gaelic games and culture, to participate fully, to grow and develop, and to be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement with our Association.



**Values**





# Club Structure

## Where are we now?

---

East Belfast GAA has grown at a pace not seen too often in the world of GAA. This has been incredibly positive but has also necessitated a rapid and unique construction of club management structures to suit our unique situation. Our growth would not have been achieved without the Club's professional, diverse and dedicated young membership who have been empowered and made productive through 13 different committees containing over 60 committee members. It is their energy that drives the Club forward. Our member-led and bottom-up approach is highlighted by:

1. Our emphasis on letting the subcommittees make decisions themselves.
2. Our emphasis on encouraging player power.
3. Our frequent engagement with members through polls and surveys.
4. Our two-year limit on all Club Executive Committee positions.

## Where do we want to be in 3 years?

---

The aims of the club mapped out in this three-year plan will be impossible to achieve without having good structures in place to grow at the pace at which demand necessitates.

These subcommittees need to be well organised, hardworking, and guided by the needs of club members.

Good communication between all committees is vital. Regular engagement between members, management, coaches, and club volunteers through meetings and other initiatives will remain appreciated and central to the culture of this amateur club and voluntary organisation.



## Headline Points of Action:

---

- Ensure all 13 committees function in an effective and coherent manner.
- Grow the an underage subcommittee and have parents exclusively run the underage section of the Club.
- Continue to support the Coaching and Games Development Committee.
- Continue to support the Pitches and Facilities Committee to locate and develop the facilities needed for our growing club.
- Develop the role of the Cultural Officers.

<b>Care Of: Main Club Committee</b>		
<b>Aims:</b>	<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Finish:</b>
Governance – Regular upskilling of Club Executive Committee members on governance, management, accounting and best practice using GAA and external sources.	Ensure all finish GAA officer training	12/26
	Offer other training to committee members	01/26
	Club Officers to complete GAA Officer Training upon election	01/26
	Ensure regular officer upskilling and training	09/26
Establish a Coaching and Games Development Committee, focusing on the unique needs of our players.	Appoint Coaching & Games Development Officers in each code	01/24
	Appoint a permanent subcommittee	02/24
	Develop coaching structures at every underage group	03/26
Establish an Underage Subcommittee of mostly parents to the Youth Committee.	Elect a permanent underage committee	02/24
	Grow the academy membership to over 400 kids	09/26
Establish a Cultural Subcommittee to help the Cultural Officer promote all the languages and cultures within the club.	Recruit a provisional committee	01/24
	Elect a permanent cultural subcommittee	02/25
	A strong presence at Scór and Irish and Ulster Scots activities	06/25
Maintain a gender balance of over 30% females/males on relevant committees of the EBGAA Club.	Ensure gender balance in Club Executive Committee	12/26
	Ensure that the youth committee also adheres to the quota	12/26
	Try to abide by quota in all sub-committees	12/26
Appreciation for those who go above and beyond for the club whilst maintaining our volunteer status.	Evaluate ways of rewarding those who help us	10/24
	Develop honorary memberships for non-members	11/24
	Appreciation of those assisting the Club Executive Committee	09/26
Enforcement of the Three-Year Plans.	Ensure all committees have contributed to the plan	01/24
	Ensure committees begin implementation of actions	01/24
	Report yearly on the progress of the plan	12/26
Establish a Pitch and Facilities Development Committee. Working with planning consultants, experts, the council and other institutions to construct pitches and facilities.	Locate pitches for use in the short term	12/26
	Work with Council/Civil Service/others for use of EBGAA prioritised rented facilities	12/26
	Work with Planning Consultants and experts to build the Club's own pitches and facilities.	12/26



# Lagan

AVIATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Construction of complex airport projects



30 years experience | 70+ airfield projects

20 different countries

[www.LaganAviation.com](http://www.LaganAviation.com)

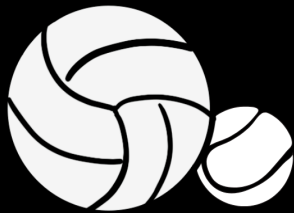






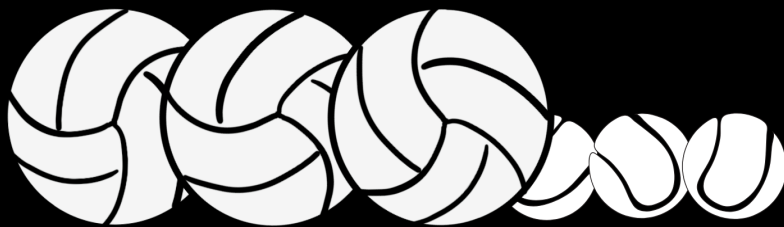
# COULD YOU BE A MATCH BALL SPONSOR?

[tinyurl.com/BallSponsorEBGAA](https://tinyurl.com/BallSponsorEBGAA)



**1 Match Ball**

**£50**



**3 Match Balls**

**£130**

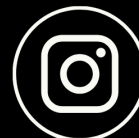
## LET'S WORK #TOGETHER

Open to businesses and individuals/families

**Reach**

**19,000+**

**We have thousands  
of followers across:**



# Finance and Fundraising

## Where are we now?

---

The Club's Finance Committee was put in place after the AGM with nominees from each code that have joined the elected Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. It has, at times, had difficulties with ensuring adequate resources due to the time taken for involvement. It would benefit from a wide range of professional skills including qualified financial professionals. The Club Executive Committee currently provide oversight on the Club's finances and support to the Executive Committee.



## Where do we want to be in 3 years?

---

The Finance Committee will grow to provide oversight and support to a wide range of stakeholders within the club including fundraising, grant applications, society events and best practice governance of all the financial aspects of the Club, by using the skills and expertise within the Club from its wide base of members.

## Headline Points of Action:

---

- Develop policies and procedures to align with Club Maith accreditation.
- Develop and launch the charitable/ philanthropic arm for club (Friends of East Belfast GAA).
- Develop comprehensive financial plan for next three years.
- Enhance grant and funding structures to ensure the Club maximises funding opportunities available.
- Provide financial and governance support across all fundraising activities.

<b>Care Of: Main Club Committee</b>		
<b>Aims:</b>	<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Finish:</b>
Appoint a new Finance Committee to oversee the financial aspects for the club and provide support for other functions.	Identify the individual members of the Finance Committee from individual codes and grow from the existing structure.	01/24
	Ensure clear terms of reference for the Finance Committee.	02/24
	Put in place recurrent agendas and a meeting structure going forward.	05/24
The club budget should be introduced on an annual basis, and report to the Club Committee at each meeting about the performance of the Club's finances in line with that budget.	Liaise with each code to assess current stocks of equipment and assess need for additional/replacement equipment for the forthcoming year.	03/26
	Ensure adequate facilities are accounted for over the course of the season with management teams of each code.	12/26
Draft, review and approve a full set of updated financial management policies and procedures to ensure that there are adequate controls within the club that will be aligned to Club Maith Gold Standards.	Complete a list of all policies and procedures that will need to be reviewed and updated.	05/24
	Draft all updated policies for approval, in line with best practice from Ulster GAA and GAA.	08/24
	Put all updated policies in operational effect and ensure that there are controls in place to ensure they are being adhered to.	09/24
To create a Fundraising sub-committee to ensure there is a strategy in place for fundraising to help maximise the Club's brand and potential.	Develop the current fundraising team into a functioning committee that will be representative of all codes and will support the agreed fundraising strategy.	03/24
	Create a calendar of events for the forthcoming year that will set a blueprint for planning and executing effective fundraising.	03/24
	Ensure all members are aware of the process of introducing fundraising ideas that maximises the Club's potential.	05/24
Friends of East Belfast GAA – to introduce a charitable vehicle to enable the Club to maximise its revenues and draw support from members on an ongoing basis.	To establish the Club as a Community Amateur Sports Club with HMRC.	06/24
	To seek advice from legal and taxation specialists on the legal structure of such a scheme and how such a scheme would benefit the club.	08/24
	Explore and research best practice for how this scheme would be best managed in collecting such funds.	10/24
	Launch "Friends of East Belfast"	03/25



# Finance and Fundraising

Care Of:		Main Club Committee	
Aims:	Actions:	Finish:	
Review the sponsorship within the Club and create a group that will endeavour to maximise revenue for the Club.	Review all current sponsors and liaise with them to ensure that relationships grow and remain strong.	12/26	
	Identify short term gaps in sponsorship and take steps to introduce new sponsors to the club.	02/24	
	On the Club website, ensure all sponsors receive adequate attention and that all needs are met for current social media representations.	12/26	
	Identify key sponsors with a view to signing new sponsorship deals.	12/26	
To create a three year financial strategy that will incorporate the mission and values of East Belfast GAA.	Assess the priorities of the Club over the next 3 years based on operational activities, introduction of youth, and the agreed position of facility management.	06/24	
	Draft year plans that will show opportunities and risks to the Club financially, as well as tying in key income streams.	07/24	
	Agree this strategy document with the Executive Committee and then provide a road map to completion.	09/24	
Create a long term financial plan for Club's facilities and pitches	Identify individuals who will work with the Committee to identify potential sites that could be used by the club.	01/24	
	Produce a paper that will look at all aspects of the financing of facilities and provide to the Club Committee to assess.	03/24	
	Review potential sources of income that could be used to pay for new pitches and facilities.	12/24	
To create a grants subcommittee that will be responsible for applying for, reporting on, and submitting feedback on all grants that will be of benefit of the Club.	Identify 2 people from each code and appoint them to the grants sub-committee.	06/24	
	Create a working document for all members to review and update on current and future applications.	09/24	
	Provide training for all members of the grants team to identify and capitalise on potential revenue streams.	02/25	













# Community and Culture



## Where are we now?

As a newly formed Club in the midst of a global pandemic, social gatherings and anything outside of a playing focus has been limited. The development of this strategic plan has allowed us to hear from the new members of the Club and ascertain their vision for their Club. It is obvious that there is a strong willingness to be a force for good in the community and many members have already started putting forward ideas. There is an unknown potential in both the community and culture and this will be an exciting 3 years discovering exactly who we are.

## Where do we want to be in 3 years?

A key part of the East Belfast community. We want to raise awareness of Irish and Ulster Scots language and culture.

A Club culture of openness and respect for all the people of East Belfast.

To provide opportunities for engagement outside of sport in many of the other cultural and social activities that will enrich the Club.

To have an engaging and up to date website to allow internal and external engagement with the Club.

## Headline Points of Action:

- Appoint an Ulster Scots champion to promote cultural growth and engage with external organisations.
- As a Club, be aware of the cultural significance of the GAA in East Belfast by learning the history and embracing the culture of the area.
- Create an annual event around the establishment of the club and develop this into a fun event, open to all and a key fixture in the East Belfast events calendar.







Care Of:		Main Club Committee	
Aims:	Actions:	Finish:	
Grow the responsibilities of the cultural subcommittee.	Begin participation in the Scór competitions	06/26	
	Appointment of an Ulster Scots champion	01/26	
Creation of an annual cultural event around the club anniversary.	Appointment of an anniversary steering group	03/24	
	Monitor and capture the engagement from the East Belfast community each year	12/26	
	Plan and create an activity for our 4 year anniversary	06/24	
	Plan and create an activity for our 5 year anniversary	06/25	
Engagement with the East Belfast community.	Plan and create an activity for our 6 year anniversary	06/26	
Engagement with the East Belfast community.	Participate in two East Belfast community events per year	10/26	
Management of club website.	Monitoring of content and usability	12/26	
Have a culture of care for player welfare and promotion of good health.	Welfare team to produce a detailed plan of how to promote welfare	06/24	
	Monitor and review this every 6 months to incorporate evolution of Club	10/26	
Promotion of the Irish Language.	Begin playing Irish speaking friendly matches	06/24	
	Participation in Irish language competitions in Scór	01/24	
	Free language classes for all parents of underage players	01/24	
	Increase the number participating in the Club's free classes	12/26	
Awareness of the history of area and local cultures for all members.	Completion of the various local tours	10/24	
	Development of a Club Tour specifically to achieve the outcomes of this action.	06/26	

# Members' Voice



**10%** of our playing members are in committees while **15%** are in subcommittees.

**74%** would be interested in volunteering work organised through the club.



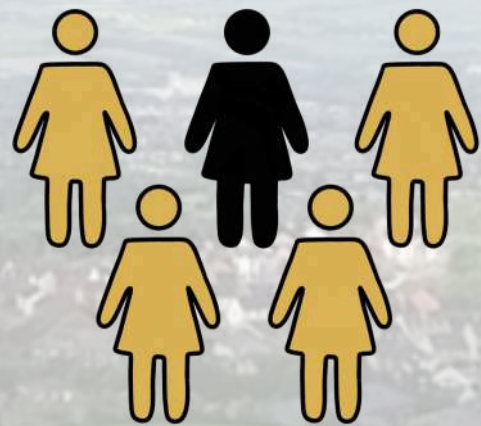
Almost **3/4** would participate in an online club lotto if monies raised went to the club.





**76%** of members indicated that the Club's 'inclusive and multicultural ethos' was an important reason why they joined the Club.

**4 out of 5** women are interested in having a 'mothers and others' team.



**43%** would be interested in joining an East Belfast GAA Supporters Club.



# Coaches and Games

## Where are we now?

---

We have 11 adult teams across the 4 main GAA codes, all teams have a designated manager/coach and we have appointed a Children's Officer and a Coaching and Games Development Officer at the AGM. Both have been working on coach recruitment, compliance and education; along with School Liaison Officers, who have approached local schools to develop our GAA coaching structures.

## Where do we want to be in 3 years?

---

The main aim is to provide robust structures that will deliver a player centred coaching approach to all playing members. We want to give non-players an opportunity to remain engaged in the Club and attract potential members to a vibrant club that delivers for everyone in the community.

On the pitch, we would like to have teams in all 4 main codes at adult and all youth age groups - up to U14 level - plus social teams in all 4 main codes, along with rounders, and coaching for GAA 4 All members.

## Headline Points of Action:

---

- We will have a strong focus on bringing Gaelic Games to the children of East Belfast.
- Provide social games to make sure that all players get as many opportunities to play as possible.
- Whilst beginning with a focus on the youngest age groups, we will grow our older underage teams as quickly as possible.
- We will create opportunities for all to play and participate at any level; be they over 35s, newbies, disabled, or whatever, everyone will get their chance and everyone will get to play.





<b>Care Of: Underage Committee</b>		
<b>Aims:</b>	<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Finish:</b>
Establish underage teams in all codes and all age groups.	Offer coaching up to U9.5 (Nursery-P5)	05/24
	U11.5 Teams (P6-P7) Establish an U11.5 team which in the 2nd year will progress into Down Leagues	03/26
	U14 Teams	03/26
Appointment of Youth Coaching Teams (Head Coach and assistants) for all age groups.	Head Coach in place at each age group (Nursery, U8 – U14)	03/25
	Sufficient Assistant Coach ratio (number of coaches is reflective of the number of players)	03/24
	Coaching teams established for U11.5 and U14 teams	03/26
Work with local schools to grow access to Gaelic Games in the area.	Feeder school tournament—East Belfast GAA to organise School Competitions at both Primary & Secondary	09/24
	Provide help to schools who do not have a GAA tradition and wish to and help them enter in school competitions for Gaelic Games	09/26
	Work with Down GAA & Gaelfast to get GPOs to go into schools in the East Belfast area	09/26
Establish links with other underage Clubs.	Build relationships with other Clubs and take part in at least one underage tournament.	06/24
	Build relationships with other Clubs and take part in underage tournaments, friendlies and weekends.	12/24
	Build relationships with other Clubs by hosting our own underage tournaments, friendlies and weekends.	06/25



# Coaches and Games

Care Of:		Team Committees
Aims:	Actions:	Finish:
Social Teams (Ensuring as many games as possible for all Club members of all levels of skill)	Establish a Mothers & Others team for Ladies football & Camogie members	01/24
	Establish playing opportunities for Dads and Lads teams at Hurling and Mens football	01/24
	Establish cross code games with shinty, hockey and soccer	01/25
Caring for and growing each code	Each Team Committee established and maintaining the everyday running of each code	05/24
	Ensure that members have access to as many trainings and matches as possible throughout the year.	01/24
	Aim to grow the numbers of members and standard of coaching and management each year	05/26







Care Of: Coaching and Games Development Committee		
Aims:	Actions:	Finish:
Establish a 'GAA for All' team	Have an introductory day for wheelchair hurling/football and GAA for people with intellectual disabilities	01/25
	Begin weekly coaching 'for All' - children/adults	05/24
	Begin an 'East Belfast GAA for All' team	01/24
Sport Uniting Communities	Explore if this Ulster GAA/Ulster Rugby and IFA Initiative can be facilitated by the club	05/25
Database of Coaches in the club/ Tracking of coach education	To ensure we have a clear record of all available coaches and their qualifications at all times	01/26
	Organise courses. Set up a shared document where coaches can update their own CPD	05/24
Links with local universities	Players invited to train with East Belfast seniors instead of travelling 2 hours home if they want	10/24

# Pitches and Facilities



## Belfast City Council & Lisburn and Castlereagh Facilities

---

Until last year, there were no council GAA pitches located in East Belfast. We have been working closely with Belfast City Council to ensure that there are adequate facilities for Gaelic Games in East Belfast. A portion of Henry Jones Playing Fields has been re-allocated as a GAA pitch after a clear proof of need threshold was surpassed a few years ago. East Belfast GAA has trained at Henry Jones continuously since our inception and we can now have games there. We'll continue to work with local councils on identifying more sites for GAA pitches in our East Belfast area to cope with our growing numbers.

## Stormont Estate Facilities

---

The Club is encouraged by the announcement that a full size Gaelic pitch is planned for the re-development of the Stormont Estate sports facilities. With the addition of rugby and soccer pitches, changing facilities and function rooms, East Belfast GAA will be able to hire these available spaces for training, matches and events.

## Newforge Facilities

---

The Club has used Newforge for training over the past couple of years. Currently, Newforge is under development to provide extended and enhanced facilities for sport, including for Gaelic Games. Newforge is a secure, safe location and the Club plans to continue with our use of these facilities.



## Our Own Facilities

We're actively identifying available space to develop our own facilities. We need a minimum of 15 acres and we're open to another sport coming on board in a joint venture for this facility.

## East Belfast GAA Pitch Committee

The Pitch Committee is responsible for the pitch hire for all matches and training sessions, both youth and adult. The Committee is made up of at least one representative from each team, competitive and non-competitive. The Committee meets once a month, with daily/weekly communication for pitch allocation. It is the responsibility of the Pitch Committee to liaise with both Council and private hire facilities to ensure that all teams have a location to train. It is the aim of the Pitch committee that every code/team is able to train on a proper Gaelic pitch with both nets and posts once a week.

As the Club works towards the acquisition of its own facilities, the Pitch Committee will adapt to the needs of the Club. This could include, but is not limited to: groundskeeping, maintenance and pitch scheduling.

Care Of:		Team Committees
Aims:	Actions:	Finish:
Secure pitches for trainings and matches.	Rental from councils: Henry Jones, Cherryvale, Hydebank, Woodlands, etc.	Continuous
	Rental from private sporting institutions: CIYMS, Harlequins, Newforge, QUB, OLSPK	Continuous
Building our own pitches, clubhouse and facilities.	Work with the Councils to develop more GAA pitches	2024-2026
	Reach out to local landowners who are willing to sell/ lease us a minimum of 15 acres to develop our own facilities	2024-2026



# SPECIAL THANKS TO



CALDWELL SOLICITORS

BELFAST | DUBLIN

  
**MCL**  
mclfire.com



**Lagan**

AVIATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



# ALL OF OUR SPONSORS

thegether saam  
起 ensemble  
gyda n gilydd  
ด้วยกัน juntos  
razem le chéile

# سويا

kopá insieme  
കൂടെ kartu  
magkasama  
緒 together  
apapo paanom

Designed by our East Belfast GAA community.  
Funded by our supporters and Sport NI's  
'Project Reboot'.





# DOWN GAA CLUBS DRAW

2024

TICKET  
£120

ANNUAL PRIZE POT £110,000

## MONTHLY PRIZES

East Belfast GAA Club and Down GAA are on the up, but we need support to continue the good work we are doing every day.

For every ticket sold, the Club receives £96.00 (after the initial 24 ticket sales).

[tinyurl.com/DownDrawEBGAA24](https://tinyurl.com/DownDrawEBGAA24)





# BE A PART OF OUR STORY

**FOLLOW US**

**@eastbelfastgaa**



**JOIN US**

**Visit our website or  
send us a DM**

**#Together #LeChéile #Thegither**





By our East Belfast GAA community for the East Belfast community