



Club Manual

Role of the Public Relations Officer (PRO)

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GAA



Role of an Oifigeach Caidrimh Phoiblí – Public Relations Officer

Communications is one of the most important activities in the Association. The success of all units depends to some degree on the national and local image of the Association. Everyone in the GAA who has a role in their Club, no matter how small, has a part to play in effective communication. There is always a need for a proper flow of information in the Club so that everyone understands how the Club operates.

The main function of the Club PRO is to communicate with the general public on behalf of the Club, presenting a positive image of the Club and Cumann Lúthchleas Gael in the local community and beyond. Therefore, the PRO holds one of the most important officer positions in the Club.

Remember:

- 1: Public Relations is the practice of managing the flow of information between the Club and the public.**
- 2: No longer is it good enough for a Club to do good work: people must be told about it!**
- 3: The biggest mistake that a PRO can make is to assume that people know!**

“Public Relations is the practice of managing the flow of information between the Club and the public”

Role of an Oifigeach Caidreamh Poiblí - Public Relations Officer (PRO) continued

Main Duties:

The main duties of the PRO are summarized as follows:

- **Work as part of a team along with the other Club Officers, team mentors and the various sub committees in the Club**
- **Promote the Club to the local community and beyond using all available methods of communication**
- **Provide team lists, match results and all relevant information to the County PRO on time**
- **Keep records for historical purposes**
- **Make sure the Club is well presented**

The main duties are now discussed in greater detail.

1: Working as part of a team

Effective communication in a Club requires a 'team effort'. Every officer and member has some part to play in communicating, but the PRO is the key person when it comes to communicating to the general public.

A PRO can only do his/her job as required if there is a good relationship with all other Club officers, team mentors etc. and if they provide information when required.

Communication in the Club operates at two levels:

- 1. Internal communication**
- 2. External communication**

Internal - Involves Communicating with:

- Club Officers
- Executive Committee and Sub-Committee members
- Players
- Mentors
- Parents
- Active members (volunteers)

Internal communication is the job of all officers, particularly the Club Secretary

External - Involves Communicating with:

- Supporters
- The community in general
- Parents
- Sponsors
- Media

External communication is mainly the job of the Club PRO.

2: Promoting the Club

As outlined, the PRO plays a major role in promoting the Club to the local community and projecting a positive image of the Club. This is a key role, because encouraging new volunteers, successful fundraising etc., depends on the Club having a good image in the locality. It is important to note that a Club does not have to be winning championships every year to be seen as an 'active' Club. There are many examples of positive stories in the Club including:

- Anniversary of past glories
- Fundraising success
- Club social nights
- Pitch and clubhouse development
- Juvenile blitzes in the Club
- County player visiting the Club
- Club player making a county panel

Methods of Communication:

Local Newspapers

Submitting notes to the local newspaper is one of the most effective ways of ensuring that the Club's story is told to the members and to the community in general. Most local newspapers accept notes from clubs free of charge and all clubs should make sure to avail of this service.

There are a number of points to remember when writing the newspaper report:

- 1: Arrange with the editors of the local newspapers to have a weekly GAA column published.
- 2: Use the report to create a positive image of the Club.
Remember: A Club does not have to be winning championships to be seen as 'positive, progressive, alive and active'! Let readers see that the Club is a place full of social and sporting activity. Do not just concentrate on the big championship games but report on all games in the Club, including challenge games and blitzes. Show

how much enjoyment and activity that juvenile players are getting in the Club.

- 3: Include all clubs activities in the article e.g. social activities, fundraising etc. If a Club runs a 'lotto' fundraiser, give updates on the jackpot and when there is a winner include a photo of the person receiving their cheque.
- 4: Make sure that the each section of the article is brief and to the point.
- 5: A PRO should not use the column to vent his anger or frustration with any aspect of Club activity and should not report in a manner that is likely to upset or embarrass anyone in the Club. The purpose of the article is to portray a positive image of the Club.
- 6: Submit photographs of a quality suitable for the printing purposes and submit the article on time!

Remember: Bring a camera to all games!

When writing a match report, include the following points:

- Team and substitutions
- Final score/half time score
- Goals, top scorer, exceptional displays
- Main action points
- Scores and scorers
- Consequence of result

Note: When writing juvenile match reports, remember to praise the entire team and subs!

Bulk Text Message

This form of communication has a number of advantages for clubs. SMS messaging is a quick method of communication information, particularly short and urgent messages. It is a relatively inexpensive method of communicating versus using phone-calls, and almost everyone has a mobile phone.

The online GAA registration system provides a text message management system for clubs that is quick, cheap and easy to use

Note: When communicating with juvenile members, clubs

should send messages to parents’/guardians’ mobiles only.

Club Newsletter

The Club newsletter is a very effective way of communicating with the members and informing them of progress in the Club’s development. It is preferable to issue a newsletter 3-4 times a year and a two page document can be very effective. The news items should be concise and should cover all of the clubs activities.

Email and Website

Using email is also a quick and inexpensive way of communicating with the clubs members. It is ideal for forwarding bulky communication e.g. the Club news-letter and can save considerable expense. The new GAA email solution is a great Club communication tool.

A website is an ideal way to communicate information to Club members and in particular, those living outside the locality. A well presented and informative website will give a very good impression of the Club and therefore must be kept up to date. A Club should include photographs of past and present teams as well as a history of the Club and details of its current structures and facilities. The website must be updated

regularly with reports on games, results etc. in order to be regularly viewed by members. An out of date website does not present a good image of the Club.

Local Radio

Arrange to have Club events included in sports programmes on a regular basis e.g.

- Notice of fixtures and match results.
- Notice of other activities and reports and interviews on them.

Other types of Publicity

- Display GAA posters and leaflets in Schools, Community Halls etc.
- Display GAA car-stickers
- Circulate GAA literature to Schools
- Have forthcoming Club events announced at matches, church services etc.



3: Working with the County PRO

The Club PRO must make sure that all Club game results and any other required information is provided to the County PRO on time. It places a huge burden of work on the county PRO if he/she must contact clubs individually for their results. All counties now operate a text message system through the 'GAA Fixtures and Results System' for results and this is a quick and efficient way of managing this. Team lists for match programmes should also be submitted on time. A good relationship with the county PRO is essential.

“A good relationship with the county PRO is essential.”

4: Keeping records

“Retain press cuttings, published articles and photographs on file as the history of the Club will be compiled from these.”

The PRO plays an important role in keeping records in the Club. Retain press cuttings, published articles and photographs on file as the history of the Club will be compiled from them. This is invaluable information for the Club. Photo's, past and present, should always be displayed on the Club notice board. This gives people a great sense of belonging and of being part of a great GAA community.



5: Club Presentation

The PRO is responsible for ensuring that the Club is well presented to the general public. It is important for the clubs image that the Club grounds are tidy and clean and the toilet facilities are presentable. It goes without saying that a PRO cannot be expected to physically do all the work associated with keeping the premises clean and tidy. However, he/she should ensure that the work is being carried out.

For games ensure that the pitch is lined, flags are in position, nets are hanging, the grass is cut and the Tri-colour is flying. If a scoreboard is available, it should be in working order. Players' should be properly kitted out in the Club colours i.e. jersey, standard colour shorts and standard colour socks. It does not portray a good image if players turn up in different colour shorts and socks.

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