

P.R.O. Handbook

A resource for voluntary Public Relations Officers



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógachta



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Réamhrá ón Uachtarán



THE Camogie Association is a community based volunteer led organisation and is very much dependent on the continued commitment of volunteers nationwide. The Public Relations Officer is one of the key administration roles in our Association, a vital role in the promotion of the game of camogie.

The role of the PRO is varied and is a very rewarding role, whether it is at club, county, provincial or national levels.

Following the annual PRO Training Event in 2013, a need was identified for a PRO Handbook, which has been compiled by the National Communications and Marketing Committee.

This handbook will assist existing and new PROs and will provide an extremely useful manual on how to carry out the very important role of the Public Relations Officer of any unit, to the best possible standards, with efficiency and success in the promotion of the game in the media.

The role of the PRO is now more important than ever before, with the number of media outlets available and the instant nature of such forums. The PRO is at the forefront of promoting their unit and is a vital link between media, supporters and sponsors. The demands are many but the rewards are great. The PRO Handbook will assist the volunteer, providing a step by step guide on how to manage the busy role of a PRO. It will provide top tips and hints to follow to assist current and new officers.

I hope that all current PROs, incoming PROs and those with a general interest in the role of Public Relations within the camogie unit, will find the handbook useful and beneficial to their chosen area.

On behalf of the Camogie Association I want to thank you all for the commitment and enthusiasm you bring to the role in the promotion of camogie.

Míle Buíochas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Eibhlín Uí Leathlóbhair'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

EIBHLÍN UÍ LEATHLÓBHAIR

Uachtarán An Cumann Camógaoíghta

Introduction

THE expansion of the variety of media streams and their instant nature has placed greater demands on the PRO at all units of the Association both in terms of the skills required to carry out the role in an effective manner and also the workload placed on individual PROs. For the first time PRO the learning curve can be steep and daunting.

The need for this guide originated from the feedback received following the PRO Workshop 2013 where newly appointed PROs identified that a handbook would assist them in establishing themselves in their new role.

Whilst this handbook is designed to assist the PRO it can equally be of value to all officers of the Association and indeed individual members, as we all have a role to play in terms of promoting the Association.

The format of the handbook allows for additional material to be added to the booklet by the PRO and in time where a new PRO is appointed the booklet can be passed on.

Throughout the handbook reference is made to the club PRO, however this can be read as PRO at any level of the Association – county, province, college.

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of the members of the Communications and Marketing committee in the preparation of this booklet.



Role of the Public Relations Officer

What is Public Relations?

It is the relations fostered by any unit of the Association with the environment surrounding it – the members, the community, the public and the media.

What is the function of the PRO?

Every club of the Association needs publicity – it helps development and attracts new members as well as encouraging and motivating members. The main functions of the PRO are to promote our sport and to communicate our message in a positive and clear manner both internally and externally. Some functions of the PRO can be shared with other committee members or indeed members of a communications sub committee.

What are the requirements for a good PRO?

- Be proactive in promoting all activities of the club
- Good communications skills – report writing, interview techniques, fostering good relationships with the media and use of social media and other means of communications to promote camogie
- Good team member – work with executive, sub committees, players, club members, family of Gaelic games and the general public
- Good IT skills – to effectively use PCs, Laptops and other IT devices (Tablet, iPod) for report writing, accessing the Internet, communicating through email and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)
- Accessible and good organisational skills
- Inclusive and innovative

What tools are required to carry out the role of the PRO?

- Laptop/iPod/Tablet with access to internet/email etc
- A Notebook always at hand to note relevant information
- National Fixtures Book
- Local Fixture List
- Database of contact phone numbers/emails
- Camera or other device to take photographs
- A copy of An Treoraí Oifigiúil and Code of Conduct

What are the key tasks of the PRO?

The work of the PRO can be divided into four key areas:

- Member of the camogie unit team – attending meetings, officer role
- Promotion of camogie in the club's area
- Communications – internal and external
- Administrative

The above are developed in greater detail in the following sections of the handbook.



THE PRO AS A MEMBER OF THE CAMOGIE UNIT TEAM

The PRO is an officer of the club to which they have been elected. As an officer, the PRO, along with the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Registrar, Treasurer, Children's Officer, Development Officer and Delegates to the higher Unit, is automatically a member of the executive of the unit.

As an officer, the PRO is required to act within the framework of An Treoraí Oifigiúil and the Code of Practice for all Officers of the Camogie Association. The Code sets out the conduct expected of officers as follows:

Every Officer of the Camogie Association shall:

- Act within the Association's governing document An Treoraí Oifigiúil
- Act within the law
- Act in the best interests of the Association
- Act with integrity and good faith
- Promote a positive image of the Association
- Work respectfully with all
- Perform her/his functions of the office honestly
- Be familiar with An Treoraí Oifigiúil and its associated Codes and ensure that all decisions/actions at Unit level are carried out in accordance with these
- Respect confidentiality
- Declare any private or personal, material or financial interests relating to issues/decisions and cooperate in processes to resolve such conflicts of interest
- Be accountable for their decisions and actions within and in relation to the Camogie Association
- Actively engage in respectful discussion, debate and voting in meetings
- Make decisions objectively and based on merit
- Make collective decisions and accept a majority decision
- Declare gifts or favours which exceed €1,000 per annum from any one individual source.

As an officer of the Association you should familiarise yourself with An Treoraí Oifigiúil and the Code of Conduct

As a member of the executive you should ensure that you can attend meetings of the committee and thereby make PR contributions to the workings of the committee. You should agree with the Chairperson and Secretary what aspects of the meetings can be reported and communicated to the local media and members and when.

COMMUNICATIONS

– INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Communication whilst a key component of the role of the PRO is not the preserve of the PRO. All members of the Association by either their actions or inactions play a role in the communications of the Association and projecting a positive image of the Association.

Internal Communications:

For the PRO to be effective it is essential that there is a good working relationship with fellow executive members, committee members, team management, players and officers of other units. Much of the internal communications will be through the club secretary. The PRO may be required to communicate with parents of underage members, club volunteers and former members.

Communicating with the county, provincial and the Communications & Marketing Director is an important aspect of the club PRO. Among the main tasks are:

- Furnishing team line outs for matches within the timeframe set by the County/Provincial or National PRO
- Making available profiles for the club's senior players
- Communicating any potential adverse issues which need to be handled sensitively
- Notifying results of home matches with scorers and main key aspects of the game

Communicating with club members on a regular basis is an important aspect of the PROs work and this can be achieved by means of regular updates on web and social media, newsletters, texting, emails, local media and newspapers. These means of communication are dealt with in greater detail in later sections of the booklet.

Ensure that team management are aware of the deadlines set for team lineouts for production of match programmes.

External Communications

The PRO is a key person when communicating with the public. It is essential that there is an agreement within the executive of your committee that all official press statements are made through the PRO.

External communications includes supporters, sponsors or potential sponsors and general community served by the club. The main external audience is the media, local newspapers and local radio. Establishing good relationships with editors, sports editors and agreeing deadlines and content is important.

A requirement for communicating through the medium of the Irish language may also arise and to this end if you do not have sufficient proficiency enlist the assistance of a club member who is in a position to communicate and conduct interviews in Irish.

Like internal communications there are various means by which external communications can be delivered by web, social media, newsletters, mail shots, notices in prominent local places e.g. community notice boards, church bulletins etc. Again the use of these means of communication are dealt with in the next section of this booklet.



PROMOTING CAMOGIE AND THE CLUB

The PRO is a key person in promoting the club and camogie. It is therefore important that this is done in a positive manner and that it reflects well on the club thereby encouraging sponsors, volunteers and others to support and become involved in the club. It is not possible for the PRO to be present at all games and activities and to this end the PRO should at the beginning of the season ensure that each team has a contact person for the supply of details to you pertaining to players, results, scorers, etc. Set out for them the format in which you require the information and deadlines.

The means by which the PRO can promote the activities of the club are as follows:

- Weekly columns in the local newspapers
- Regular updates in local radio
- Bulk text messaging
- Email
- Newsletters
- Websites & other Social media

Local Newspapers:

- Make contact with the journalists of your local newspapers and develop a good working relationship
- Discuss with them their requirements – deadlines, format and extent of content, acceptance of photographs, feature articles etc
- Ensure that you adhere to their guidelines and deadlines
- Submit material on a weekly basis even in “off season”
- Include material on all teams not just the senior club team



- Bring a camera to all games and events so that you can supply photographs
- Include material on social and non-playing activities – launches, presentations
- Include results of draws, lotto's etc
- Submit report on AGM giving the list of officers etc
- Ensure you acknowledge sponsors and others who support the club
- Use guest contributors to vary the style of reporting
- Provide feature articles – player profiles, children's corner, skill a week corner, down memory lane column or other such material of interest to the broader audience
- Make sure your material is brief, to the point and accurate, portrays a positive image of the club and Association, is not offensive or likely to cause upset to persons

In Appendix 1 you will find a template for reporting of matches.

Local Radio

As with local newspapers, you should arrange to meet with radio sports presenters to make arrangements for the inclusion of club reports in their sports programmes on a regular basis. The provision of material will replicate that provided to the local newspapers but should also allow for interviews. Interviews with players, other club officers should be provided for and arranged through the PRO so that the relevant personnel are briefed on the subjects on which they are to be interviewed. Remember your audience and that of the radio and therefore ensure to include material of interest to all sectors of your club, community and supporters.



Tips on preparing for interviews are included in Appendix 2

Bulk Texting

This is a quick, effective and relatively inexpensive means of getting out short or urgent messages to your members/players. It is particularly useful for communicating the day, venue and time of fixtures.

On-line registration

The on-line registration, which will be rolled out to all units on a phased basis from Spring 2014 onwards, will allow units to communicate via email to unit members (*please note they must be over-18 to receive text/email communications*) and also by SMS by purchasing SMS bundles from the registration service provider.

EMail

Email is another quick and inexpensive means of communicating with members. The club newsletter can be circulated in this manner.

Important Note: Communications with underage members of the club should be done through their parents/guardians only.

Newsletters

Newsletters are an effective means of communicating and publishing events within the club, particularly to those members who would normally access social media. You can create an online newsletter (multiple free packages available on-line) or create a printed version. In the case of the latter, you can make arrangements for delivery to households in your local area or make available in local amenities/services.

Younger members will be happy to facilitate in undertaking this task. Former members might be interested in either contributing to sections of the newsletters or you could persuade them to take on the publication with your assistance!! Don't forget photos – underage players and their parents like to have these as mementos.



Website & Social Media

The website is a good communication tool particularly for those outside your immediate base and for supporters abroad. It is also a tool that potential sponsors use when considering whether they will enter into a sponsorship arrangement with the club. It is important to remember this and to ensure your

website is updated regularly, contains accurate information, is eye catching and has broad appeal.

The use of social media is a very popular and an instantaneous means of communicating with supporters, players, members and the world wide community. Again the need to have this updated is essential. More importantly is the need to ensure that it is administered by an authorised member of the club.

- *It is essential that PROs should familiarise themselves with the Camogie Association's policy document Social Media & Guidelines. This policy requires club PROs to make application to your county secretary to establish an official Camogie Social Media Account. This document is available from the National Office or can be downloaded from the camogie website – <http://www.camogie.ie/social-media-policy-&-guidelines>.*

A set up guide to assist you in best practice when setting up on social media networks is also available on the following link:

<http://www.camogie.ie/social-media-policy-&-guidelines.asp>

Other means of Publicity:

- Posters – particularly useful for upcoming fixtures
- Car stickers
- Community Notice Boards – ensure you seek permission of the relevant group
- Camogie National Website



Presentation

THE PRO has overall responsibility for ensuring that the club is well presented to the general public. Such responsibility includes not only the grounds but the club facilities such as toilets, dressing rooms including one for the match officials, club house and club notice board. This does not mean that the PRO has to carry out this work but rather ensure that such matters are delegated by the executive to appropriate members. For games ensure that the pitch is lined, flags are in position, nets are hanging, the grass is cut and the Tricolour is flying. If a scoreboard is available, it should be in working order and a designated responsible person assigned to manage it.

White coats for umpires should also be in place. Where there is a significant fixture being played on your home grounds the provision of public address should be considered to facilitate announcements.

Players should be properly kitted out in the club colours, i.e. club jersey, skort and socks. Ensure that players are presented well for team photographs and that helmets are removed.

Where members of media are in attendance at a match ensure they are supplied with a match programme. Check with team managers for any changes and advise the media.

See match day check list – Appendix 4

In the case of an event/function ensure that the media are provided with a press release and programme of events. List photographs you require to have taken.

Administrative Role

IN THE era of high usage and dependency on technology there is a tendency to overlook the need to retain material from an historic perspective.

Much of our data is now retained for us on websites and social media outlets. However such assumption can only be on the basis that it has been secured and accessible to others in the future. Ensure that you retain all information contained on social media and websites including photographs.

Records which are not web based need to be recorded and maintained. Press cuttings, published articles, books, magazines and photographs should be retained by the PRO and made available to the club when required. Such material can also be displayed on club notice boards and/or club rooms thereby creating interest in the events of the club both past and present and on or off the field of play. Records of this nature are also useful in supporting applications for funding where possible sponsors or state funders require to see tangible evidence of their financial support.

Match programmes should be furnished to the Communications & Marketing Director for retention in the Camogie National Archives. Where the club publish books a copy of same is required to be furnished to the National Library and Trinity College Library.

Summary

- Retain newspaper and other hardcopy material
- Post material on your club notice board on a regular and eye catching manner
- Retain a library of photographs including up to date photos of your senior players
- Save data on websites and other social media
- Furnish copy of match programmes to the National Office
- Establish databases of contacts
- Establish databases of mobile phone numbers of club members for internal communications
- Where the club publish a book furnish a copy to both the National and Trinity Libraries

Closing comment

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!
4. You are not alone – advice is close at hand via your own club officers, county board officer and the national Communications & Marketing sub-committee and the Camogie Association Communications Director. Also, it is advisable to take the opportunity to attend PRO workshops and other information sharing events
5. It is a most rewarding job as you see the results of your work



APPENDIX 1

Match Report

THE following is a sample match report for a club game. In the case of an underage match where possible give recognition to all of the players. Ensure that you submit the report via email by the deadline required by local media. Where a match programme is available send a copy of same with the report and any photographs from the game.

Headline

Fixture:	<i>Dublin Senior League</i>	Round 3
Teams:		St John's v St Ann's
Venue:		St. John's GAA Grounds
Date:		Sunday, 12th January

The Play: This 3rd round fixture was played in ideal conditions with both teams on level points going into the game. Playing with the wind St John's were first to register a score from the full forward player Mary Jones. They added three further points before St. Ann's raised a white flag. A goal from St. Ann's county player Mary Bloggs levelled the sides just before the half time whistle.

Scores in the second half were difficult to secure with both sets of defenders playing superbly and in particular St Ann's goalkeeper, Jane Bloggs who brought off some fine saves. Points from two successive frees gave St. Ann's the lead going in to the final minutes of the game but to the delight of the home supporters St. John's rallied and finished with two fine points from the stick of Joan Smyth, leaving the game all square when the referee Jane Daly blew the final whistle.

Team manager Ann Daly was pleased with the performance of the team and in particular the minor players many of whom were playing their first senior game for the club.

Teams:

Scorers:

Referee:

Next up: This result leaves St. John's as joint leaders of the group with their final group game fixed for Sunday next away to Clan na Gaels at 2pm. A draw will suffice to qualify for the knock out stages of the competition.

Team photo and match programme attached.

Contact: Ann Smyth, Club PRO – annsmyth@camogie.ie
Mobile 084-1111222



APPENDIX 2

Preparing for Interviews

- * Make contact with the interviewer in advance. Agree format, time, content and length of interview
- * Prepare notes. Where the content is controversial agree content with fellow executive members
- * Stick to the agreed interview content and ensure your key message is conveyed
- * Don't use jargon or acronyms, e.g Rule Book not Treoraí Oifigiúil
- * Turn off mobile phone if interview is taking place in studio or is being recorded
- * Use landline where possible
- * Be positive
- * Remain calm and relaxed
- * Thank presenter/interviewer



Match Reporting

- * Prepare notes
- * Give fixture detail – teams, venue, grade, competition
- * Scorers
- * Half-time score
- * Full-time score
- * Turning point of game
- * Key aspects of the game – injuries, substitutions, free taking etc
- * Next up



APPENDIX 3

Press Release

Sample Press Release

(Date) 11.06.2013

(Heading) 24 Counties across five grades to compete in the Liberty Insurance Camogie Championship 2013

(Sub-Heading) Wexford Bid for Four-In-A-Row

(Who, what, when, where, why, how in first paragraph)

Twenty four counties across five grades will commence this year's Liberty Insurance Camogie Championship later this month. The Liberty Insurance Camogie Championship, which includes Senior, Intermediate, Premier Junior, Junior A and Junior B, was launched at Croke Park this afternoon by President of the Camogie Association Aileen Lawlor and CEO of Liberty Insurance Pat O'Brien.

(Main body of release)

Liberty Insurance recently announced its sponsorship of the GAA Hurling and Camogie All-Ireland Senior Championships for the next five years.

Wexford are the current All Ireland Senior champions securing their third title in a row against Cork last September. Derry were promoted to the senior grade after winning the Intermediate title in 2012 while Meath secured the Premier Junior crown.

Players from each grade of this year's camogie championship, including Wexford joined invited guests for this afternoon's launch. The first round of the Liberty Insurance Camogie championship will commence on June 22nd with last year's All Ireland finalists Cork facing old rivals Tipperary in one of the weekend's key games.

(Insert quote from relevant parties)

Speaking at today's championship launch President of the Camogie Association Aileen Lawlor said:

“We are delighted to join with Liberty Insurance to officially launch the 2013 Camogie Championship. The joint partnership with the GAA All Ireland Hurling Championship is an exciting new departure for the Camogie Association and a fantastic opportunity for camogie. It symbolises the strength of both Camogie and the GAA working together and the natural synergy between both games.

We are particularly pleased that Liberty Insurance, an international company and a leader in its field, has chosen to come on board and partner with our organisation over the next five years. We are excited about the possibilities that this presents and the opportunities to bring camogie to an even greater audience with the strong support of Liberty Insurance.”

Speaking at today’s launch Pat O’Brien, CEO of Liberty Insurance said:

“It was very important for us that this partnership took in the full GAA family of both hurling and camogie. Indeed it is a family where brothers, sisters, cousins and club mates are all united by their shared love of our oldest games. We look forward to working together with the Camogie Association in helping to enhance and promote this unique sport.”

ENDS

(Put in contact details of parties to contact)

For further information:

Contact: Claire Egan, Communications & Marketing Director, The Camogie Association, 01 865 8618, 087 9030 755, Email: claire@camogie.ie

(Additional notes to the editor regarding fixture, points of interest etc)

Notes to the Editor:

- Photographs from the Liberty Insurance Camogie Championship launch are available from Sportsfile on www.sportsfile.com.
- The Camogie Association has over 100,000 members and 560 camogie clubs nationwide
- A full list of championship fixtures is available on www.camogie.ie
- To follow all the Liberty Insurance Camogie Championship follow camogie on www.facebook.com/officialcamogieassociation and on twitter at twitter.com/officialcamogie and see www.camogie.ie for more information.

APPENDIX 4

Check List for Match Day

- * Dressings rooms for each team and match officials cleaned and supplied with toiletries
- * Name of teams on dressing room doors
- * White coats for umpires
- * Pitch lined out, flags and nets in place
- * Tricolour and team flags in place where possible – this essential for inter-county games
- * Scoreboard in place with responsible person to operate it
- * Gate manned
- * Match programmes available at gate or in case of inter-county fixtures sellers in place
- * Supply match programme to teams, officials and media
- * Check with team managers for any changes to match programme lines outs and advise media of any changes
- * In the case of inter-county games – announcer in place for public announcements, team changes etc
- * Updates – twitter, facebook, local radio



Remember not all of the above are the responsibility of the PRO but rather a check list of what is required at match day venues. The club executive should ensure there is adequate personnel in place to carry out the above.

APPENDIX 5

Match Programme

- ✦ A template for match programmes can be downloaded from www.camogie.ie under the Administration Section
- ✦ Ensure that all logos for the Association and sponsors are included correctly. If in doubt check with the office of the Communications & Marketing Director.
- ✦ Give details of future fixtures.
- ✦ Add some interesting feature/material.
- ✦ Check for accuracy before printing.
- ✦ For county finals – additional material such as path to finals, previous winners, previous meetings of the teams, player and match officials profiles. Guest contributors add interest to a programme.



APPENDIX 6

Contacts

PROs

Club/County	Name	Email	Mobile Phone No.

Local Media

	Name	Email	Mobile Phone No.

Club Executive

Position	Name	Email	Mobile Phone No.

Camogie Office Contacts

Position	Name	Email	Mobile No.	Office No.
Ard Stiúrthóir/ CEO	Joan O'Flynn	joanoflynn@camogie.ie	087-6405446	01-8658656
Fixtures Administrator	Liz McGuinness	fixtures@camogie.ie	087-9982092	01-8658653
Communications & Marketing Director	Claire Egan	claire@camogie.ie	087-9030755	01-8658618
Finance Director	Paula Bruen	paula@camogie.ie		01-8658652
Administrator	Caroline Fitzsimons	info@camogie.ie		01-8658651

Other Contacts

	Name	Email	Mobile Phone No.

See www.camogie.ie for full list of Camogie Association staff