

Submission for Galway CDP 2022 – 2028

KINVARA HOCKEY CLUB

Kinvara Hockey Club is seeking support for sport facilities in our area and in the county that cater for minority sports such as hockey. Such multisport facilities would allow our sport and other minority sports to be played and developed (such as athletics & tennis) as well as having a functional use for the mainstay sports of soccer, GAA & rugby as secondary training facilities. We require sporting facilities to be planned as multisport going forward.

Galway Co. Council needs to review it's existing astro pitch facilities to understand the extent of the community being excluded from using these pitches already in existence. Community based facilities instead need to be planned as multisport. Decisions to redevelop existing community facilities to move away from multisport uses need to be challenged. Regulations around the surface of astro pitches need to be made with an impact study completed. This would ensure that all sports are catered for in future developments not just a select few. Currently in Galway there is only one pitch in the entire county available to hockey players at Dangan. It is already over-utilised and beyond capacity. This needs to change. Hockey in Galway urgently needs a multisport facility to accommodate even its current membership.

Kinvara Hockey club is 40 years in existence in 2020. We are 10 years in existence for juvenile members. Our membership has grown in the past 10 years from less than 30 to over 200 members from the entire South Galway & North Clare regions. We are proud to be one of the few rural hockey clubs in the country. We offer weekly training, recreational & competitive sporting activity to women and young girls in our community – the demographic government strategy has identified as a target to increase participation in sport.

As our club has grown so has our needs. We have recruited a large & growing number of volunteers, many of whom had no previous background in hockey to help meet this need. We have linked with our governing body and utilized the support of Regional Development officers from our governing body. We can be an example to all rural areas of how to successfully grow a minority sport in a rural area and how to increase participation for women & girls – all of which is part of programme for government.

To continue, to go further, to do more, we urgently need facilities in order to meet the growing demands for membership. Since 2018 we have had to restrict membership with waiting lists in all groups at the start of each season because of lack of facilities. We want this to change. We want to continue to grow this sport in our community and to offer hockey training to everyone. We want to open hockey to boys as a sporting choice but we cannot do so within the existing infrastructure in our community. The existing astro pitches in the Kinvara area and surrounding areas (indeed in the entire county) are not multisport and therefore hockey cannot be played on them. In order to play hockey in full, to develop players in full for long term participation in this sport, a pitch with the correct surface is needed.

We strongly feel that Kinvara Hockey club needs access to facilities locally for training – such a facility needs to be multisport. This would open it to other sports in the community also and would not need to exclude any minority or majority sport. We envisage this as ideally being linked with the school system locally to maximise its use and allow for example much needed sports facilities for local schools. Seamount College is at the foundation of our club and hockey is a major feature of its culture & heritage yet they have never hosted a match - instead every match is a bus trip away at a cost to all. We want to change this. Visiting teams bring visiting people and add to the local economy. Hockey being a winter sport allows this to take place in quieter tourism months.

We are asking you to consider the opportunity to improve participation in sport for all of our community by planning and developing a multisport facilities and making this a key initiative in the development plan for 2022-2028. This will be a major achievement in many facets of local government – Social, Community & Cultural Development, Infrastructure & Transport, Rural Place Making & the Countryside, Economic Enterprise Tourism & Retail Development.

With thanks

Fiona Rodgers

Chairperson Kinvara Hockey Club