

Carrigaline Tennis Club – Brief History

In early 1985 a group of people interested in playing tennis came together in Carrigaline with a view to establishing a Tennis Club. At that time there was no history of tennis in the village. The Community School, which had been built a few years previously, had three tennis courts that were not being utilised during the Summer months. The school was quite willing to rent these courts to the Club but only during the holiday period.

Very quickly the popularity of tennis became obvious and large numbers of adults and children joined the club. Competitions were organised and, having affiliated to the Munster Council of the ILTA, teams were entered in inter-club competitions.

It soon became apparent that the school facilities were not adequate for the large numbers interested in the game. During 1986 the possibility of purchasing land, to build new tennis courts which could be used all year round, was investigated. Local landowners, including Cork County Council which had a land bank in the area, were approached with a view to purchase but all were rejected for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was cost. In tandem with this search for land fund raising events continued. Approaches were made and negotiations commenced in 1987 between the local GAA Club and the Tennis Club. Carrigaline GAA Club, some years previously, had built two tennis courts for their members but these had fallen into disrepair.

The Tennis Club proposed leasing the ground adjacent to, and including, the two existing courts. Agreement was reached on the terms of the lease and while legal documents were being drawn up by Solicitors representing both parties, the Tennis Club was drawing up plans for four new tennis courts on the proposed site.

In April 1988 the lease was signed and a contract to build the courts was awarded to John A. Wood Ltd. with work to commence immediately. The cost of these new courts to Carrigaline Tennis Club was £31,000 of which the club had to borrow in the region of £25,000. This was quite a large amount of money for any club to begin its playing life. However, the committee felt confident that the repayments could be met with the debt being paid off quickly. Indeed six members of that committee had such faith in the local community that they were brave enough to act as guarantors for this money.

The project was completed in early June and a 'Portacabin' was purchased for use as a Club House.



With the official opening of the courts on 18th June 1989, membership soared with the temperatures but unlike the weather the membership continued to rise. An extensive programme of coaching was set up with almost everyone taking lessons. Indeed over 100 Junior/Juvenile members took regular coaching each Saturday morning under the watchful eye of an experienced coach, Pat Coleman, and several qualified assistants.

Carrigaline Tennis Club catered for large numbers of people of all ages in a growing community. Family participation was very important as tennis was one of the few sports which all members of the family could play. It is quite common to see parents with their children enjoying themselves on the courts on a summer afternoon instead of going to the beach! It was a marvellous thing to see a sports complex such as Carrigaline GAA Club allowing greater use to be made of its facilities. Many times during the Summer it seemed that half the population of Carrigaline was participating in sport, with hurling and football being played on the field while all four tennis courts were occupied and spectators having a hard time trying to watch all three!

In as far as possible the club tried to involve all club members and as many of the Community at large who were willing to participate in fund raising ventures. Indeed some of the more successful ones had an element of fun and sociability about them which had popular appeal. It was the intention to clear the existing debt within three years and to start on a further programme of expansion.

Already it had become apparent that four courts were not enough to cater for the numbers wishing to play. Lighting for night and, because of the high volume of shift work in operation in the Carrigaline area, early morning playing, was also essential and the Committee had enough foresight to insist that ducting for this was incorporated when the courts were being laid.

The club qualified for its first Summer Cup Final in 1989 but were beaten by Mitchelstown.





The courts were resurfaced in October 1993 with coloured tarmac and the lights were upgraded during Spring 1994, adding lighting to Courts 1 and 2.

The next major facilities development occurred in 1997. The Court surface was upgraded to “Desso” Artificial Grass and the ‘new courts’ were officially opened on 23rd August 1997.

By early 1990, a waiting list for new members existed. Planning permission was obtained to add flood lights to Court 3 and Court 4. The addition of floodlights extended the hours that the courts could be used by club members.

In 1991 a further phase of the development plan was initiated. This phase of development covered the addition of a Practice Court and a new Clubhouse with shower facilities. The Practice Wall and fencing around it was erected and planning permission was obtained for a temporary Clubhouse which was officially opened on 26th April 1992.



Carrigaline won its first Inter-Club in 1997. In the Munster Final Division 5 Ladies Carrigaline beat Kinsale 3-1 in Limerick. The winning team was Mary Craig (captain), Lorraine Matthews, Frankie Bresnan and Pauline Bagnall.



During 2002 the court fencing was replaced with monies the club had raised through fundraising, along with support from the National Lottery and Cork County Council support.

The fifteen year lease from the GAA club was due for renewal in 2003. Protracted negotiations were initiated and in 2006 an extension was granted without a renewal clause. Without a lease, the club had no rights of tenure. This drove the club to explore alternative locations for its club facilities. In November 2008, the club entered into a license agreement with Carrigaline GAA that remained in place until the Tennis Club had built its new facilities on the Ferney Road.

The Tennis Club approached Cork County Council with a view to leasing land and building new facilities. In January 2007, the Council assigned the club a land locked site in Kilnagleary with no direct access to a main road. In 2007, the council estimated the development around the land-locked site would be completed in 2010, but that was before the effects of the Celtic crash were fully known.

Getting access to the land-locked site took a lot of negotiation with Carrigaline GAA and Cork County Council. In June 2011, the Ferney road access to the land locked site was approved in principle with the Council. This development marked a major milestone for the club in terms of developing new facilities on a site that the Council was providing to the Tennis club on a 35 year lease. The new site is 1.76 acres in size. Planning permission was submitted and obtained for five new courts, a clubhouse and parking spaces.

Finally in February 2012, planning permission was approved for the development. The club signed a 35 year lease with the County Council with an option of a further 35 year. The club paid the first installment for lease of the site.

The development consisted of five new courts using 'Tiger Turf' surface finish, high efficiency floodlighting, clubhouse and car-park facilities. Construction started on May 24th 2013.

Club members played their part in putting the finishing touches to the new setup. They rolled up their sleeves and helped out massively with completing the internals of the club-house and the external landscaping.



Finally by October 2013, the new club was almost ready. The opening event at the new setup was the Closed Veterans competition on the weekend of October 19th. The new clubhouse and courts came into full use at 8pm on Friday November 1st. Carrigaline GAA hosted a farewell night in their clubhouse as members vacated the old facilities and moved on to new.



On Sunday 22nd June 2014, Carrigaline Tennis Club's new facilities were officially opened by Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, Simon Coveney TD in the company of President of Tennis Ireland Ann O'Connor, Stephen McCarthy representing Munster Tennis, Councillor John Collins MCC, Father Pat Fogarty and Reverend Elaine Murray.

During the opening ceremony, the Honorary position of Club President was bestowed on Brian Walsh.

As part of the 30th anniversary celebrations a dinner dance was held in Fernhill Golf and Country Club on Saturday June 6th 2015. Members, guests and past members took part in the celebrations to make it a memorable night.



On Sunday 3rd April 2016, a Cherry Blossom Tree was officially planted at the Club by Ron Sisk to mark the 30th Anniversary of Carrigaline Tennis Club. Ron was chosen to do the honours as he was a founding member of Carrigaline Tennis Club and has been a continuous member since 1985.