

# Tolka Park: For Football and Community



**SAVE  
TOLKA  
PARK**

## **WHAT IS THE SAVE TOLKA PARK CAMPAIGN?**

Save Tolka Park is a coalition of local residents, football fans and activists who are concerned at the possibility of another Dublin institution falling into the hands of private developers and being consigned to history. We have carried out initial consultation with local residents' groups, in addition to local football clubs. We plan to proceed with more detailed engagement with these vital stakeholders following the launch of this proposal.

The Save Tolka Park campaign is made up of a broad spectrum of society; artists, sports stars, politicians, journalists, videographers, graphic designers, public servants, photographers, architects, archivists, activists, and historians. This is a community project and it is **based on the principle of public land for public use.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- For almost 100 years, Tolka Park has been a site of great sporting, historic and social importance.
- Dublin City Council (DCC) proposes to demolish Tolka Park and is asking that councillors vote to rezone the land to make it available for sale to private developers.
- The resultant funds are intended to be used for a new-build Dalymount Park, which was not originally planned when the project was first mooted and both stadiums taken into public ownership.
- When first announced in 2016, the plan for a new-build Dalymount Park was costed at €20m for a 10,000-seater stadium. That cost has now risen to €35.6m (which may rise further) with the capacity reduced to 6,000, while also now requiring the sale of Tolka Park. This revised plan demands renewed examination.
- The stadium has served the community in times gone by as a multi-purpose venue for several sports as well as non-sporting entertainment events. Tolka Park should serve the community for many years to come.
- Significant housing development in recent years, along with more currently planned in the surrounding areas, means that the need for retention and improvement of sporting and community facilities has never been greater.
- Tolka Park is situated in an area currently deprived of green/sporting spaces.
- The current plan for one stadium could exclude women's football due to overuse of Dalymount Park and would leave a shortfall in facilities for the wider city.



- The DCC Development Plan 2016-2022 calls for sporting facilities to enhance sustainable city living and the councillors' settled democratic will currently backs the retention of public land for public use.
- This proposal outlines how a refurbished, publicly owned Tolka Park could provide significant community facilities. It is costed at between €10.1m and €13.8m allowing for contingencies, and could be completed on a phased basis.
- This compares favourably with the current estimated cost of €35.6m for a new-build Dalymount Park, with refurbishment of both stadiums delivering a greater community return.
- A refurbished Tolka Park offering multiple community amenities, such as a gym, crèche, café, enterprise centre and public toilets, would offer far greater social benefit and value for money than the current plan, and respect the principle of public land for public use.
- The Save Tolka Park campaign is a coalition of local residents, football fans and activists looking to make this plan a reality and keep public land in public hands.
- We have carried out initial consultation with local residents' groups, in addition to local football clubs. We plan to proceed with more detailed engagement with these vital stakeholders following the launch of this indicative proposal.

## INTRODUCTION

Tolka Park has served as a football venue since the 1920s. Over the years, the stadium has been home to a range of clubs and has hosted many historic events. Tolka Park has been home to Shelbourne F.C. since the club obtained a long-term lease on the stadium in 1989.

Dublin City Council now owns Tolka Park outright. It is currently envisaged that Tolka Park will be disposed of to part fund a new-build Dalymount Park, and Shelbourne F.C. will relocate there as part of a groundshare. **This proposal has been produced to make the case**

**for the retention of Tolka Park as a sports stadium and community facility.**

It sets out how Tolka Park can be refurbished on a cost effective basis to deliver a FAI category 3 stadium (suitable for League of Ireland Premier Division clubs)<sup>1</sup> and a community facility. We aim not to put forward the only solution for Tolka Park, but to facilitate an informed conversation around what may be possible.

## AN ASSET OF GREAT, IRREPLACEABLE VALUE TO OUR CITY

Our city's history has sustained Dubliners' pride in our hometown through the bleakest of times, from the grand Georgian doorways of Mountjoy Square to the granite façades of College Green. Today's Dubliners cherish the rich, layered tapestry of centuries of life here, preserved but still living across our great town. It is the beating heart of who we are. Our history is a common good, it inspires and gives value to what it means to call this great city home. It is one of the great attractions to those who choose to visit us and share in our story. We must treat this precious and finite asset with great care.

As a part of that great history, Dublin is rightly proud of its fine tradition of football, from the glory days of the League of Ireland to the great players such as John Giles, Liam Brady and Robbie Keane, who began their playing days on the city's streets before



gracing some of the world's biggest stages. This heritage must be celebrated and enhanced, it must be the bedrock for the future of the game in this city. A key step towards nourishing this rich culture and heritage is through the preservation and modernisation of the true monuments to the game which still exist, such as Tolka Park.

Tolka Park first hosted football in 1924 and has been at the heart of the game in Dublin ever since. It has been home to some of the capital's most prestigious clubs, from Drumcondra, to Home Farm, to Shelbourne and Shamrock Rovers. It was the Republic of Ireland's first floodlit stadium, and our first all-seater football stadium. Its pitch has been graced by many of the greats of the Irish and world game. It has hosted full men's and women's internationals, as well as many underage international games, great League of Ireland nights, FAI Senior & Junior Cup Finals, and nights of European glory never to be forgotten.

Imbued with a century of rich sporting and social history, Tolka Park is one of the most significant places in the proud Irish football story.

This is not a car park, this is not a derelict factory, this is not an outdated office block, this is not an empty lot worth only the price placed on it at auction. This is a place that is truly important – to football and to the people of this city. Generations of the same families have experienced many memorable nights together in this century old venue, while those sacred traditions continue to be passed down the family tree to this very day.

Tolka Park is irreplaceable. Our historic sites are a finite resource. Once Tolka Park is gone, there the story ends. Neither it, nor the deep social and personal histories that live there today, can be resurrected. Today, we can touch our history, we can feel it and breathe it in when we watch or play at Tolka Park. We are now faced with a choice: erase that story or use it as the foundation for a bright future.

We must not repeat the mistakes of the past which saw great historic sites, the fabric of the city's story, discarded in the name of short-term gains for the few. Today, Tolka Park is at the forefront of that battle.



*It would be very sad if Tolka wasn't used as a football amenity. Kids could play there, schoolboy football, junior football...it definitely is a landmark of what we could call the 'rare auld times' for me. **I have very, very beautiful and fond memories of seeing amazing things there.** The first floodlight match in Ireland was played there in 1953, I think. St Mirren came over from Scotland and it was like being on another planet to see floodlight football.*

**Eamon Dunphy, October 2016, RTÉ<sup>2</sup>**



# The Case for the Retention of Tolka Park

The case for the retention of Tolka Park revolves around the following three principles:

1. Public land for public use
2. Sustainable development of communities
3. Sporting and community potential

## 1. PUBLIC LAND FOR PUBLIC USE

Ireland is in the midst of a severe housing crisis, therefore it is not unexpected that there will be pressure for all publicly owned land to be considered for housing development. However, it is a tenet of good planning and the development of sustainable neighbourhoods that any housing strategy should include a mixture of supporting facilities and amenities. This is acknowledged and reflected in the Dublin City Council Development Plan 2016-2022. **Additionally, local sports facilities have the potential to deliver significant social good<sup>3</sup>, offering health and wellbeing benefits to the wider community.**

The Dublin Agreement 2019-2024 between the ruling council coalition of Social Democrats, Greens, Labour and Fianna Fáil is clear about the sale of public land:

*“We will reject any selling off of publicly owned land to private developers within the city boundaries in the absence of a*

*clear evidence-based justification that the monetary benefit to the Council far outweighs the long term social and economic benefit foregone in terms of the necessary development of housing and other public uses.”<sup>4</sup>*

In January 2020, DCC Chief Executive Owen Keegan presented a proposal to councillors to sell off various parcels of land to private developers to raise money for capital projects in the city. Included in this was his intention to sell Tolka Park, subject to a positive rezoning and disposal vote by councillors, to fund €15m towards the cost of the proposed Dalymount Park project. **The councillors unanimously rejected his proposal as they had previously agreed that they would only approve the sale of the city’s ‘crown jewels’ for social housing development.**

The Chief Executive was directed to return with a case-by-case justification for the sale of each site, including Tolka Park. Since then, councillors have blocked the sale of a site on the Oscar Traynor Road to private developers. This creates the obvious question of what happens to Tolka Park, a question Owen Keegan acknowledged would present councillors with a decision.

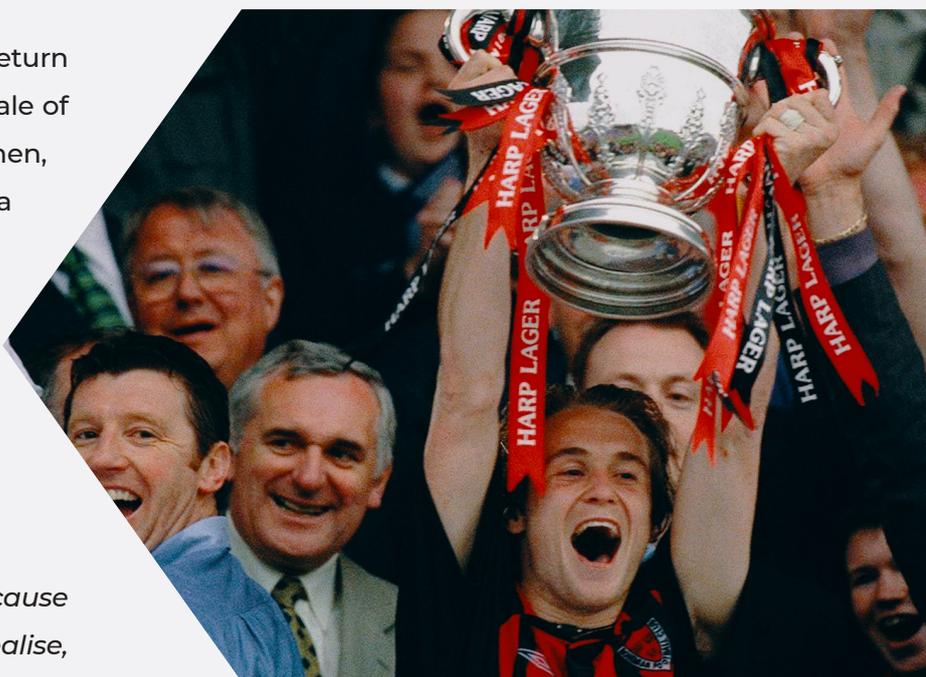
*“It’s gonna be a huge challenge because we’ll have to sell off Tolka Park and realise, you know, sell that say for private development. That may be unpalatable to our members (councillors).”<sup>5</sup>*

**The sale of Tolka Park would be a giveaway and must be opposed by councillors in line with the principles they have set down themselves.**

## 2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES

In recent years, there has been a significant amount of housing development in the area immediately surrounding Tolka Park.<sup>6,7,8</sup> In addition, there are potentially very significant housing developments planned on privately owned lands close to Tolka Park, in the coming years.<sup>9</sup> It is necessary, therefore, to ensure suitable amenities remain available to the community. **The retention and refurbishment of Tolka Park would help deliver a sustainable neighbourhood in line with good planning.**

Many of the green spaces around Tolka Park have already been built on, including housing



on St. Joseph’s Primary School for Children with Visual Impairment, housing on Rosmini lands, a new school in All Hallows College grounds, and also housing on the site of the Hampton Carmelite Convent where further housing and a nursing home is planned.

Across the river from Tolka Park, planning permission has just been granted to build 1,650 apartment/housing units in the grounds of Clonliffe College. A large plot of land between the Ierne Social & Sports Club, Stella Maris F.C. and St Vincent's Hospital is also zoned for housing.

**Large scale development with little social return is depriving the area of badly needed amenities,** and has the potential to increase congestion and pollution in what is a significant choke point for traffic in the city. Providing housing is incredibly important, but there is no guarantee any development based on Tolka Park would meet the needs of those currently on the housing list, or in need of affordable housing more generally. For instance, the deal DCC struck with respect to the development of O'Devaney Gardens has seen the share of social housing decrease over time.<sup>10</sup> **A private, high rise, high density development may be favoured by any developer looking to maximise their return and be of**



**limited public benefit.** To guard against this, we feel **keeping the land in public hands** is the safest option.

DCC has formed a City Recovery Task Force “to shape a physical, economic, social and cultural recovery strategy for the city post Covid-19”.<sup>11</sup> DCC has embraced the need to better appreciate our outdoor spaces, a vision that has been warmly welcomed by the people of the city.<sup>12</sup> **A refurbished Tolka Park would give the area huge social return through community facilities such as a gym, crèche, café, enterprise centre, public toilets etc., and potential access to the River Tolka through a public access route.** We feel this fits in perfectly with DCC's planned post-Covid-19 recovery strategy, and funding should be made available accordingly.

### **3. SPORTING AND COMMUNITY POTENTIAL**

Tolka Park is currently zoned Z9: Amenity/Open Space Lands/Green Network, which aims to preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks. Within this definition, the Dublin City Council Development Plan 2016-2022 states that:

*“The continuation of sports clubs and facilities to enhance sustainable city living is recognised. In highly exceptional circumstances, in order to serve the long-term retention and consolidation of the sporting facility in a locality and to secure the primary sporting land use on the site, some limited once off development is open to consideration. Specifically, residential development shall not be permitted on public or privately owned open space unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.”<sup>13</sup>*

The north inner city is the country's most densely populated area and yet remains crit-

ically underserved with green spaces and sporting facilities.<sup>14</sup> A publicly owned facility providing high-quality playing and community facilities could offer major benefits to the large, local population through youth services, local clubs, schools, integration of new communities, and generally by providing a higher quality of city living.

The beauty of football at a senior level in Ireland, in both the League of Ireland (LOI) and Women's National League (WNL), is how close it is to grassroots football. **A single mega-stadium on the Dalymount Park site, championed by a previous FAI regime under John Delaney's leadership, may not be in keeping with what many match-going fans want from the game in Ireland.** Delaney's advocacy for a single 10,000-seater stadium also came with the promise of significant Euro 2020 money, which has not materialised.<sup>15</sup> Two stadiums that offer fans a more intimate and passionate stadium experience would be more in line with what fans of the game in Ireland look for.

However, this proposal argues strongly that these **stadiums should no longer be limited to their current use as the homes of League of Ireland clubs.** These facilities belong to

the people of this city and should be treated as such. Although the stadiums are close together, they both serve a broader hinterland that is home to hundreds of thousands of people, and Tolka Park is adjacent to some of the most impoverished areas in the city. The sale of Tolka Park would represent a transfer of social and financial capital from the north east inner city to Phibsborough, **when both areas should be given investment to retain and improve their facilities.**

The current plans for a new-build Dalymount Park may limit the potential for equal access for the men's and women's first teams of Shelbourne F.C. and Bohemian F.C. **This may lead to the women's senior sides of both clubs being forced to play home games at sub-standard venues, dealing a major blow to both clubs' ambitions and the wider game in Dublin and Ireland.** To attain equality for all, and continue to build on the rapidly improving success of the women's game in Ireland, there is a need for a solution which provides first class facilities for men's and women's senior teams. **A hybrid playing surface in Tolka Park would also easily accommodate two senior teams and local clubs in need of playing space.**



***We have to value amenity land more** and I get a sense in Dublin that hasn't happened historically.*

**An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, 4 May 2021, Off The Ball<sup>16</sup>**



When stepping out onto Tolka Park donning the famous red we are Shels, no longer Shelbourne's WNL. **We are one with the men's side and finally feel somewhat on par with them. If we lose Tolka Park it will be a huge step back in the women's game.**

**Pearl Slattery, Shelbourne WNL Captain and Republic of Ireland Women's U17 Coach**

# CURRENT STATE OF TOLKA PARK

## Main Stand

Capacity of ~1,500. Both entrance points to the ground are contained at either end of the stand. Contains two bars, one office and capacity for members of the media. Was rewired and had fire alarm upgraded recently. Structurally sound but roof requires replacement.



Bar 1



Bar 2

## Ballybough End

Has been out of use for over a decade. Likely structurally unsound. At this end of the ground there is also a derelict house which housed changing rooms and offices many decades ago, which has recently been tidied up by DCC and Shelbourne F.C.



View from Ballybough End



## Drumcondra End

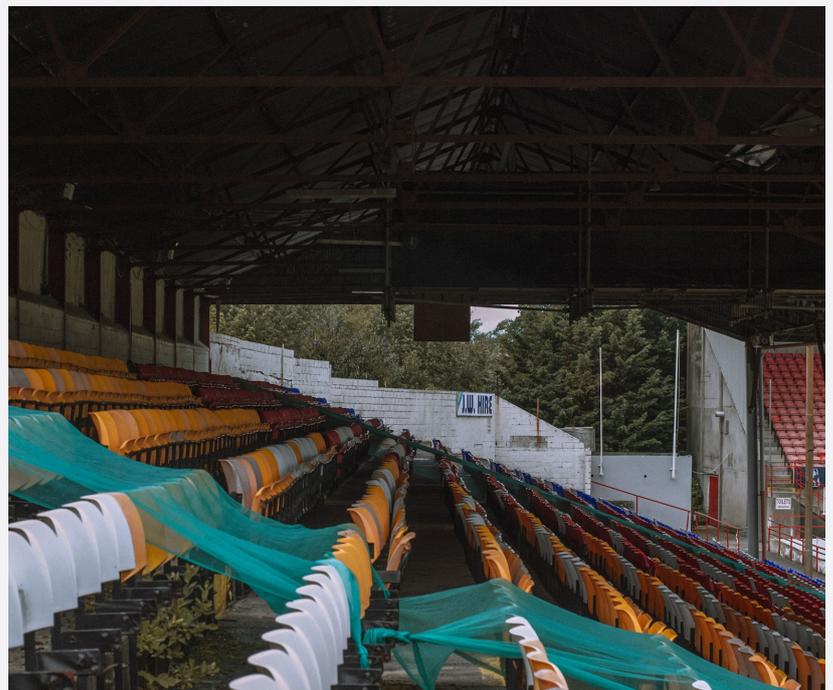
Capacity of 862. Supporters have been unable to use the stand since 2019. Contains dressing rooms, referees room, manager's office, kit room, gym, players' entrance to the pitch and more. Roof contains major structural flaws.



View from Drumcondra End looking towards Ballybough End

## Riverside Stand

Operating with a reduced capacity of 3,200. Primarily reserved for visiting supporters. Stand contains TV gantry which had its supporting structures replaced in 2020. Structurally sound but requires a full conditions survey.



## I PROPOSAL

Here we present a vision for a refurbished, 6,640-seater Tolka Park that is both a high quality, UEFA category 3 stadium with a hybrid playing surface, and a modern community facility with a range of amenities to serve the broader community. The proposal was drafted by numerous experts including senior architects and estimators, from publicly available information and professional quotes at current market rates. It is intended to give an indicative costing and layout to any refurbishment, and provide a starting point for conversation and consultation with all the relevant stakeholders including football clubs, local residents and DCC. Crucially the profile of the site dedicated towards spectators will decrease from its current status, with both ends of the stadium being refurbished to incorporate public amenities.

### A Modern Stadium

The new Tolka Park would be a modern 6,640-seater category 3 stadium, to rival any currently in the League of Ireland. In contrast to the current situation, where the stadium operates solely as a League of Ireland venue, it could be opened up to use by amateur and underage teams in various sports from the surrounding area.

### A Community Hub

The new Tolka Park could offer a gym, crèche, café, enterprise centre and public toilets for the wider community, as well as providing meeting spaces that could be available to local groups of all kinds for meetings, functions etc. There would also be scope to explore the provision of bicycle parking and food stalls for use by the wider community. A refurbishment along these lines would

provide a unique facility, delivering the most inclusive, accessible and community focused stadium in the country.

There are several different options that could be explored for the retention and refurbishment of Tolka Park. What is presented here is a single, high-level proposal, supported by outline costings, to give an indication of the potential for the site. It is envisaged that this proposal would be carried out in three distinct phases allowing for the stadium to continue in use during the refurbishment.

- **Phase 1** would see the refurbishment of the Main and Riverside Stands.
- **Phase 2** would see the demolition of the Ballybough End Stand and Drumcondra End Stand, and the construction of a new community facility at the Drumcondra End.
- **Phase 3** would see the construction of a new stand with supporting facilities at the Ballybough End and the installation of a hybrid pitch. The works at both the Drumcondra and Ballybough Ends would aim to improve overall accessibility at the stadium.

**Adopting an approach of retention and refurbishment of stands, rather than a complete new-build, can keep costs relatively low whilst delivering a high community return. Extending the useful life of the existing stands will also aid sustainability. We have outlined indicative costs for each phase, but high-level costings can be found in Appendix A and a more detailed planning rationale in Appendix B.**

# Phase 1

€1.325M

- Reroofing of the Main Stand and Riverside Stand
- Reseating of the Main Stand and Riverside Stand
- General repair and refurbishment work to the Main Stand and Riverside Stands including

the refitting of internal facilities in the Main Stand and improving access for those with disabilities in both stands



## Phase 2

€5.425M

- Demolition of the Ballybough and Drumcondra End Stands
- Installation of temporary changing facilities etc. at the Ballybough End
- Construction of a three storey, 1880m<sup>2</sup> building in place of the existing Drumcondra End Stand to house:
  1. Football and club facilities which could include dressing rooms, offices, club shop, storage etc. (450m<sup>2</sup>)
  2. Community facilities such as a gym, crèche, café, enterprise centre, public toilets etc. (1080m<sup>2</sup>)
  3. Additional changing facilities to support use of a hybrid pitch by the community (350m<sup>2</sup>)



# Phase 3

## €2.432M

- Installation of a hybrid pitch
- Construction of a new stand at the Ballybough End with a capacity of 840, supported with:
  1. Catering facilities
  2. Toilet facilities
  3. A separate and segregated access route for away supports to access the Riverside Stand
  4. In conjunction with the above, the development of an access route across the River Tolka



# INTERNAL VIEW OF THE NEW DRUMCONDRA END

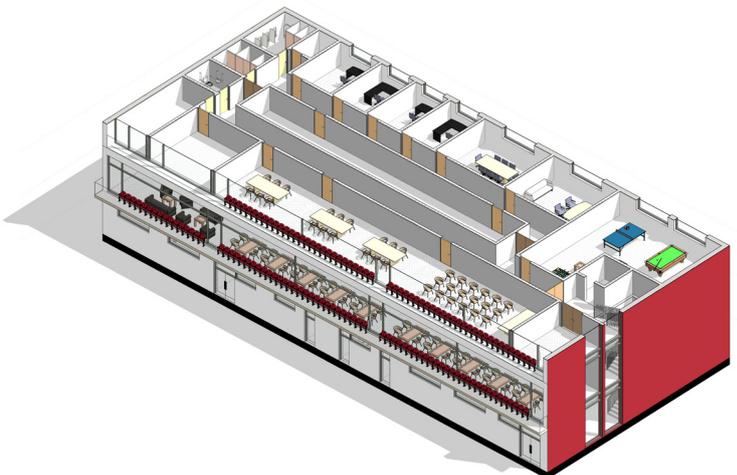
Ground Floor Plan — 1:100



First Floor Plan — 1:100



Second Floor Plan — 1:100





Outline costings for this proposal are set out in Appendix A. The cost outlined could be reduced if the facilities to be provided under the proposed stand at the Ballybough End were limited or excluded. The costings provided for that stand are based on the proposed new North Stand at Tallaght Stadium (extrapolated from the cost plan), which includes significant additional facilities, as well as other publicly available information. The proposed access road behind the Ballybough End Stand would have the added benefit of providing much needed infrastructure for greater connectivity between communities and a platform for enhanced cycling access within the local area. Likewise, the refit of the facilities under the existing Main Stand are at the high end of what would be expected. It should be noted that the existing roofing on the Main and Riverside Stands has lasted decades and reroofing of these structures would mean they could endure for many decades to come. Allowance has been made for general repairs during each phase of the proposed works, these are presently estimated allowances and are subject to a full conditions survey being completed.

When drafting this proposal, the authors also considered possible flood defence costs. However, given that significant upgrade works were carried out with regard to flood defence

in recent years<sup>17</sup>, further costs in relation to this were not deemed necessary to factor in at this point. The possible need to upgrade floodlights was also contemplated, however, as we understand that floodlight maintenance work has taken place in recent years, we are not aware of further substantive work being required currently. Therefore, no related costs have been estimated until any stadium survey is carried out which may identify any issues unknown to us at this point. While the costings are based on currently available information, it is acknowledged that further construction-related inflation may increase costs. However, any increase would similarly apply to the proposed redevelopment of Dalymount Park and other building projects, and are difficult to predict and estimate. A full conditions survey would do much to confirm what the exact scope of the required work is, and should proceed in the event DCC policy is to retain and refurbish the stadium.

## I FUNDING

The current plans for a new-build Dalymount Park are seeing costs escalate whilst requiring the sale of Tolka Park. The project was first estimated to cost €20m, for a 10,000-seater category 4 stadium.<sup>18</sup> This has been reduced to a 6,000-seater category 3 stadium, while the most recently, publicised, estimated cost has risen to €35.6m<sup>19</sup>, of which €15m is earmarked as coming from the sale of Tolka Park, €15m from the Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund, and the rest from development levies. This cost is likely to rise further due to inflation within the construction industry due to

Covid-19 global stimulus plans and the finalisation of any new-build design. **We feel an approach of refurbishment of both stadiums, rather than a new-build on one site, would give a higher financial, social and sporting return, while providing better value for money for the taxpayer.**

Sports capital grants over a number of years could be utilised, along with grants from the Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund, as



well as funding from DCC under its new post-Covid-19 recovery strategy. Development levies from the intensive developments close to the stadium should be reinvested in the refurbishment of Tolka Park, and developers should not be permitted to keep building for profit over existing public facilities without providing any means to retain quality of life for residents. Additionally, co-op based fan investment, funding and donations from the Irish Immigrant

Investor Programme, as utilised by Meath GAA<sup>20</sup>, and other sources of funding could be explored.

**Community benefit is the overall aim of the project, and we believe a social return would be the result of appropriate investment. Certain aspects of the community facilities such as a gym, crèche, café, enterprise centre and space for food stalls could also generate ongoing revenue as well as create additional**

**jobs, which would provide a return on the investment of public funds.** At the same time, an advanced hybrid facility such as this would allow for income potentials which can offset any financial investment made, through the current anchor tenant Shelbourne F.C. and provide affordable rents to a number of local clubs.



**1**

Reroofed and reseated  
Main Stand

**3**

Three storey building in place of the  
existing Drumcondra End Stand

**2**

Construction of a new stand at the  
Ballybough End which incorporates a  
new access road across the River Tolka

**4**

Reroofed and reseated  
Riverside Stand

## I CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates the potential for the retention of Tolka Park as a community facility in Drumcondra. The proposal would provide a 6,640-seater FAI category 3 stadium (suitable for League of Ireland Premier Division clubs)<sup>1</sup> at a minimum, with at least 1400m<sup>2</sup> in community facilities in addition to a hybrid pitch. The proposal also provides for a potential river crossing at the Ballybough End as envisaged in the 2007 Richmond Road Area Plan.<sup>21</sup> This would potentially allow for access to the Clonliffe College development and enable a public corridor, including walkway, on the banks of the River Tolka. This would provide a superb amenity for local residents, and also retain green space.

By refurbishing the existing stadium facilities at Tolka Park, and extending the useful life of two stands, financial savings and environmental efficiencies can be achieved compared to a more costly demolition and a complete new-build at the Dalymount Park site. Whilst details of such a similar refurbishment for Dalymount Park are beyond the scope of our

proposal, we feel a similar approach at the two sites would also provide better value for taxpayers' money and use of finite public funds, whilst retaining both stadiums in public ownership.

The proposed new stand at the Ballybough End would enhance accessibility at the stadium and with the provision of additional community facilities, the proposal outlined here has the potential to deliver significant social good to the local area contributing to a sustainable neighbourhood.

Regardless, we feel keeping the site in public hands will allow for a democratic control over the public land of Tolka Park, and do not feel that should be given away. **We believe public land is for public use, and we would urge you to contact your local representatives to let them know you want them to vote for the retention of Tolka Park, and that both stadiums can and should be retained. You can visit our website at [www.savetolkapark.com](http://www.savetolkapark.com) to view a suggested template and list of contact details for your local representatives.**



*Volunteering at Tolka Park has become a big part of my life. **The sense of community and camaraderie, the friendships built up there are very important to me.** Tolka Park needs to be kept in public hands so that more people can benefit from this wonderful amenity.*

**Aoife Gorby, Shelbourne supporter and volunteer**

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### PHASE 1

| Item                                     | No./Area                        | Rate                 | Total             | Note  |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Reroofing Main Stand                     | 2080m <sup>2</sup>              | €180/m <sup>2</sup>  | €374,400          | Quantity Surveyor estimated rate                      |
| Reroofing Riverside Stand                | 1166m <sup>2</sup>              | €180/m <sup>2</sup>  | €209,880          | Quantity Surveyor estimated rate                      |
| Reseating Main Stand and Riverside Stand | 5,800 Seats                     | N/A                  | €153,498          | Supplier estimate, supply plus labour                 |
| General Repairs Riverside Stand          | N/A                             | N/A                  | €100,000          | Estimated allowance                                   |
| General Repairs Main Stand               | N/A                             | N/A                  | €100,000          | Estimated allowance                                   |
| Internal Refit Main Stand                | 200m <sup>2</sup> <sup>22</sup> | €1200/m <sup>2</sup> | €240,000          | Linesight Construction Cost Report 2021 <sup>23</sup> |
| Professional Fees                        | N/A                             | 12.5%                | €147,222          |   |
|  |                                 |                      | <b>€1,325,000</b> | <b>Phase 1 Total (Excl. VAT)</b>                      |

#### PHASE 2

| Item  | No./Area                         | Rate                 | Total             | Note  |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Demolition of Ballybough and Drumcondra End Stands                | N/A                              | N/A                  | €110,000          | Quantity Surveyor estimate                            |
| Temporary Changing Facilities Ballybough End (with hard standing) | N/A                              | N/A                  | €150,000          | Estimated allowance                                   |
| Construction of Three Storey Community Facility Drumcondra End    | 1880m <sup>2</sup> <sup>24</sup> | €2400/m <sup>2</sup> | €4,512,000        | Linesight Construction Cost Report 2021 <sup>23</sup> |
| Site Development Works  | N/A                              | N/A                  | €50,000           | Estimate subject to survey                            |
| Professional Fees   | N/A                              | 12.5%                | €602,750          |   |
|   |                                  |                      | <b>€5,424,750</b> | <b>Phase 2 Total (Excl. VAT)</b>                      |

### PHASE 3

| Item   | No./Area                | Rate        | Total              | Note   |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--|
| Installation of hybrid pitch                   | N/A                     | N/A         | €500,000           | Supplier estimate, supply plus labour                                  |
| Construction of a new stand at Ballybough End  | 840 seats <sup>25</sup> | €1,800/seat | €1,512,000         | Extrapolated from publicly available information <sup>26, 27, 28</sup> |
| Additional supporting facilities <sup>29</sup> | N/A                     | N/A         | €100,000           | Estimated Allowance  |
| Site Development Works                         | N/A                     | N/A         | €50,000            | Estimate subject to survey   |
| Professional Fees                              | N/A                     | 12.5%       | €270,250           |  |
|  |                         |             | <b>€2,432,250</b>  | <b>Phase 3 Total (Excl. VAT)</b>                                       |
|  |                         |             | <b>€10,100,200</b> | <b>Total Excl. VAT +10% contingency</b>                                |
|  |                         |             | <b>€11,936,600</b> | <b>Total Excl. VAT +30% contingency</b>                                |
|  |                         |             | <b>€13,773,000</b> | <b>Total Excl. VAT +50% contingency</b>                                |



## Appendix B

With a new Dublin City Development Plan being drafted, covering the years 2022-2028, there are a number of relevant goals the plan is looking to achieve, both for the city as a whole and for the area around Tolka Park. We feel an approach of retaining Tolka Park, whilst implementing the changes to the Ballybough End outlined in this proposal, meets a number of the most important of these objectives.

Most notably, the Chief Executive's report "Review of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 and Preparation of a New City Development Plan 2022-2028 (as amended)", published on April 19th 2021, contains the following under the heading "Parks":

*"The need for more parks and green spaces across the City is detailed in many submissions and also that existing parks, green spaces and open spaces should be protected and enhanced."*<sup>30</sup>

This applies to Tolka being kept in public hands and its enhancement as a community facility, as do the comments on page 24:

*"A large number of submissions called for the Council to build social, affordable and cost rental housing on public land and opposed the transfer of public land to developers."*

Under the heading "Sports Grounds, Pitches and All-Weather Facilities", the report also stated:

*"It is noted in many submissions that existing playing pitches and sporting facilities should be protected and also that existing*

*pitches should be made multifunctional so that a range of clubs and sporting activities can benefit from the facilities throughout the day/week. It is highlighted by many that there should be more recognition of the important role sports clubs play within their communities and the need to have these facilities located within or close to residential areas."*

Moreover, a further report by the Chief Executive on submissions to the plan had more specific comments about the site.<sup>31</sup> The Chief Executive, responding to a motion by Cllr. Patricia Roe, agreed that the provision of a cycle and pedestrian bridge across the river should be incorporated into the plan. Cllr. Declan Meenagh also made a submission which called for the expansion of the Tolka greenway, and access to the river through the aforementioned aspects of the plan could enable this.

Cllr. Darragh Moriarty also emphasised "integrated design for housing/regeneration projects which does not see community infrastructure held to ransom by forcing Elected Members to dispose of land" with the aim of supporting "the development of public land for public use". This was something the Chief Executive agreed with, citing page 95 of his own earlier report.

Overall, there is a clear rationale for the retention of Tolka Park. The politics, economics and planning priorities of the city and the councillors have moved on from where they were, with an emphasis on the retention of public land for public use. Keeping the stadium in public hands fits perfectly with the current objectives of the council and there is no rational reason to hold elected members to ransom for its sale.



*I was given permission to stay on in Dublin and to train in Tolka Park on my own. **Tolka had so many memories for me**, from the days when we'd all come home from Ormond Square to see Drums playing, to when my father became manager and started to bring me into the world of football men. Not to mention the wall that he had built around the pitch. **Tolka was a spiritual home for me, and I savoured those days before the big match.***

**John Giles, John Giles: A Football Man - My Autobiography**



*Tolka exists far beyond its role as a place to kick ball. It lives in people's hearts. It's a ground that connects families through generations and brings people together to form undying bonds. **For me and mine, Tolka is a place for us to connect with the memory of our best friend whom we lost a few years back, and I know it serves that same role for so many more. Tolka is more than a ground, it's a home.***

**David Balfe, For Those I Love**



***Tolka is so significant historically and culturally, and no storyteller could ever do justice to the extraordinary tales it has witnessed on so many occasions.** The FAI must not allow this treasure to disappear. **Every Irish player has a Tolka tale** and Jonathan Hill (FAI CEO) must be educated on its history.*

**Pat Dolan, writing for the Irish Daily Star, 5 June 2021**



*Spent my youth following Drums, **it's vital for sport in Dublin that Tolka stays.***

**Jim Fitzpatrick, Artist**



# Drumcondra AFC

**One Club – One Community**

27 May 2021

**RE: Save Tolka Park Proposal - Letter of support**

*To whom it may concern:*

Drumcondra A.F.C. wishes to offer its wholehearted support for the Save Tolka Park campaign.

Both Drums and Tolka Park were established nearly a century ago and are Dublin institutions of rich footballing heritage and tradition. Our original home was Tolka Park, while our current home of Clonturk Park is literally a few feet away. The local area is becoming bereft of green space, while our club continues to grow and is lacking adequate football facilities for our kids.

This ambitious yet realistic proposal for a re-imagined Tolka Park sets out the exciting opportunity that exists for our community to avail of this invaluable and historic piece of public land. Drums would love the chance to return to our roots and for the stadium to fulfil its vast potential and become a community hub in a bright new future for Drumcondra and Dublin.

We are grateful to the Save Tolka Park campaign for recognising our strong connection with the stadium and local area, and for constructively engaging with our club prior to the launch of their plan.

Drumcondra A.F.C. lends its strong support to this proposal and the overall aims of the Save Tolka Park campaign and would encourage other stakeholders including local elected representatives, residents and football clubs, as well as the FAI, to do likewise.

We wish the campaign every success and would like to continue to be involved along the way.

Yours in sport,

*Frank Connolly*

**Frank Connolly**  
**Chairman**  
**On behalf of Drumcondra A.F.C**

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9th June 2021

Re: Save Tolka Park Campaign  
Letter of Support

Home Farm Football Club have been active in the Drumcondra area since 1928. The Club originated from street leagues organised in the area. One of the streets intrinsically involved in the founding of Home Farm was Richmond Road, the location of Tolka Park. Home Farm have had a close connection with Tolka Park as owners of the stadium from 1972 to 1989 during the initial years of the Club's membership of the League of Ireland.

The Drumcondra area suffers from a lack of recreational space particularly for football. Finding sufficient grounds to cater for our more than 30 football teams is a perennial problem. A second significant issue for the area is the lack of community facilities.

The proposal to refurbish Tolka Park addresses both issues in an imaginative and cost-effective way. If developed as proposed by the Save Tolka Park Campaign, the stadium would become a focal point for sporting and community activities in Drumcondra, thus, providing major social benefits to the area.

When Home Farm vacated Tolka Park in 1989, it was our clear understanding that the venue would be preserved for football.

Home Farm Football Club support the proposal to save Tolka Park and to redevelop it as a football and community facility. The focus of Home Farm over its ninety-three-year existence has been to foster the development of young people through sport. Keeping Tolka Park as a recreational facility in our local area is very much in keeping with our Club objectives.

Home Farm Football Club wish the Save Tolka Park Campaign success in its endeavours.

Eamonn Mahon  
Chairman

Chairman: Eamonn Mahon Vice Chairman Colin Duff  
Hon Secretary: Brendan Menton Hon. Treasurer: Richard Addison

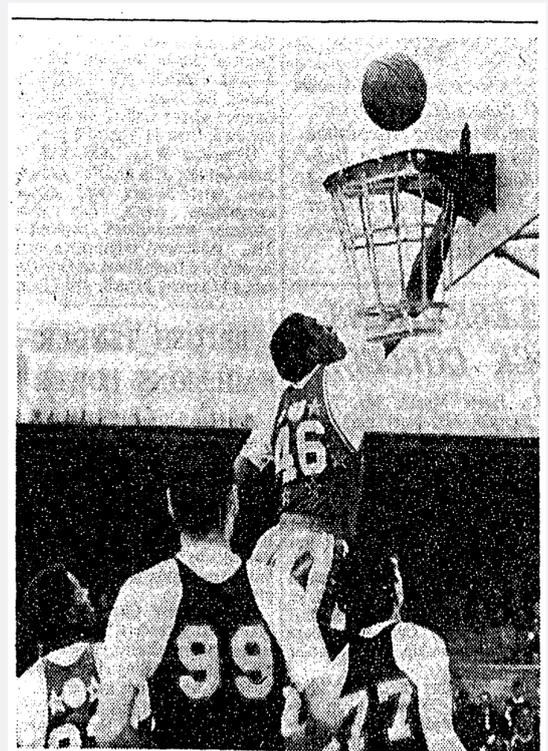
## Arkle taken out of 'Whitbread'

By Michael Byrne

OWING to the ground being so soft at Sandown Park, yesterday's fixture there had to be called off and Arkle will not attempt to win the Whitbread Gold Cup Handicap Steeplechase for the second year in succession. Arkle was poised to fly out from Dublin Airport on Thursday morning, but in view of the reported adverse weather conditions from the English track, it was decided to postpone his trip for at least 24 hours.

When the news came through that Friday's fixture was "off" the Arkle connections sent the champion back to his Kilsallagher stables, abandoning the expedition altogether.

Arkle is now to be retired from competitive racing for the remainder of the N.H. season, but his admirers can see him parading of all places on a football ground, Tolka Park, and again at the Spring Show at Ballsbridge.



J. Buckhalter, of the Harlem Globetrotters, attempts a spectacular save against the San Francisco Chinese basketball team, at Tolka Park, yesterday.

### ■ Saturday, 23 April 1966

One of Ireland's greatest racehorses meets one of Ireland's greatest football grounds. Tolka Park was used to some out of the ordinary appearances over the years and none more so than in April 1966 when the famous racehorse Arkle was paraded on the pitch at Tolka shortly after winning a third consecutive Cheltenham Gold Cup. Just one of the many greats to grace the Tolka Park pitch over 97 years of history.

### ■ Sunday, 31 May 1959

On a summer evening in 1959 large crowds at Tolka Park were treated to an exhibition from the fabled Harlem Globetrotters. On a specially sprung court imported from Australia, the Globetrotters beat the Basketeers during a day of mixed entertainment at the Dublin ground which included acrobats, unicyclists and even exhibition table tennis matches between former world champions Richard Bergman and Norikazu 'Canonball' Fujii.

## Floodlit soccer match a success

DRUMCONDRA ..... 2    ST. MIRREN ..... 0

**D**UBLIN'S first floodlit soccer match, played at Tolka Park last night, provided spectators with grand entertainment, Drumcondra and St. Mirren, the Scottish League club, playing some splendid football as Drumcondra gained a surprising, but deserved, victory by two goals to nothing.

Thee crowd was disappointing, a cold evening probably keeping many at home, but I am sure that the undoubted success of this game will ensure a much bigger attendance for Drumcondra's next floodlit attraction against Glenavon, the Irish League side, on Thursday week—and I can assure intending patrons that they will get value for their money.

Last night, the teams took some time to settle down, but they found their feet gradually, and fine visibility was provided by banks of lights set on pylons at each corner

By

**Frank Johnstone**

of the ground. The white ball, changed a number of times during the course of the game, helped, too, as did the all-white strip worn by Drumcondra and the red jerseys and white shorts of St. Mirren.

The novelty of the event possibly tends to make one exaggerate somewhat on the potentialities of soccer by floodlight, but it was certainly good football to watch and the game appeared very fast from start to finish, with Drumcondra finishing their best display of the season in honour of the occasion.

With the wind behind them in the second half, St. Mirren attacked consistently in an effort to wipe out Drumcondra's half-time lead of one goal, but the Scottish, who are fourth in their league table and were without only one of their regular team, finished very badly, and Henderson sealed the issue for Drumcondra with a great goal 16 minutes from the end.

It was a night out for Henderson, who has not been having a very successful time of late. Drumcondra's outsideleft has a penchant for producing his best form in these

■ **Tuesday, 31 March 1953**

There are few more beautiful sights than Tolka Park under the lights. In 1953, the Richmond Road ground ushered in a bright new dawn for Irish football when Drumcondra took on St Mirren in Dublin's first ever floodlit match.

## BOXING THREE TITLE BOUTS AT TOLKA PARK

### AN ATTRACTIVE BILL FOR TO-NIGHT

Three championships of Eire, a bout between Mulcahy, the Irish middle-weight, and Peter Crown, of West Africa, and a heavy-weight novice competition, make up an extremely attractive bill for to-night at Tolka Park under the promotion of Mr. Billy Wilson.

The championship contests are:—Light-weight, Eddie Martin v. Daly (Manchester); fly-weight, Reilly v. Mick Dunne; bantam-weight, M. Golding v. Phelan.

Eight entries have been received for the novices' competition, and they will be matched to-day by the Eire Boxing Board of Control after the weigh-in at Messrs. Elvery's at 2 o'clock.

This is the first occasion on which three championships of Eire have figured in the one bill. As a professional, Martin has not been defeated in Eire. Reilly, who boxed under the name of Cahill when an amateur here, has won a number of contests in England, and Golding and Phelan, likewise, have had plenty of experience in the ring. Mulcahy was undefeated on his American tour, and he has beaten the present Northern area champion, Charley Parker. Crown, a coloured boy, had the decision over George James, the Welsh light-weight, and is one of the few men who have stopped Mulcahy in four rounds at Newbury.

The contests start at 8 o'clock, and, should the weather be inclement, there is ample covered stand accommodation in the park for spectators.

■ **Friday, 1 September 1939**

On the day World War II began in Europe, big crowds flocked to Drumcondra to see three Irish championships contested on the same bill for the first time. Undefeated Irishman Eddie Martin beat Manchester's Johnny Daly in their light-weight title fight.

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**SAVE  
TOLKA  
PARK**