

**PLEASE TAKE TIME TO READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION  
THAT WILL BRING A POSITIVE CHANGE TO OUR LOCAL  
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT**



**Dear resident,**

You may be aware that, subject to planning permission and approval, Michael Davitt GAC is about to embark upon an ambitious Project to regenerate the old gravel pitch at Corpus Christi College and the adjoining, disused land near to St. Paul's Primary school. It is anticipated that any development will be completed by 2015.

The proposed plans set out a modern, state-of-the-art sports and leisure facility including;

- a full-sized grass, GAA pitch (with floodlighting, ball stops and fencing)
- changing rooms and
- 3G multiuse games area

In addition, the plans include the development of a community play park, nature/woodland walkway and associated car parking. This in itself will bring huge benefit to the health and wellbeing of local residents, in an area lacking such essential and fundamental amenities.

This Project will transform what has been nothing but wasteland for far too long into a vibrant sports facility and community environment which can be enjoyed by everyone.

In order to realise this tremendous development, Davitts need the co-operation of the local community, where many of our players, members and their families live.

The Project requires huge financial investment and whilst Michael Davitt GAC will be making a significant contribution to the proposed development, Davitts will also be pursuing various funding streams, including Sports bodies, Belfast City Council and Government departments.

Your support and backing will be invaluable as Michael Davitt GAC develop applications to each of these organisations.

### **Who are Michael Davitt GAC?**

The club, established in 1912, has been an ever-present part of the Beechmount, Springfield and Lower Falls community for just over 100 years. It is a close knit, friendly, caring and family orientated club, promoting and playing football, hurling and handball from the age of 6 years through to adult level.

Davitts have a thriving youth policy and in partnership with several of the local primary schools, provide qualified coaches to teach GAA skills to a huge number of children. The club has enjoyed many successes during the years at all age groups, particularly at juvenile level and the most recent achievement was winning the County Antrim Junior Football Championship just last month.

The club has been searching for a recognised 'home' playing facility for over thirty years. During this time, they have been based temporarily at various Council locations, such as Twinbrook, Boucher Road and more recently, Falls Park. However, they have never been able to obtain a facility in the local area to promote and play our national Gaelic games.

This Project now gives Davitts a positive opportunity to change and transform the local area and build a state of the art facility that will be there for present and future generation of our communities.

### **What will the Development Provide?**

The proposed sports and community facility will improve the quality of the local environment through alleviation of current social problems and an end to unauthorised dumping.

The new facilities can be utilised by all of the local residents and community, including;

- Beechmount Residents Association
- Corpus Christi College
- St Paul's Nursery Unit
- St Mary's University College
- St. Clare's Primary School
- St. Joseph's Primary School
- Nature/Wildlife Groups
- Blackie Community Group
- St Paul's Primary School
- Gaelscoil na Bhfal
- St. Peter's Primary School
- Gaelscoil na Lonnain
- Mica Drive Day Centre

The proposed development will utilise best practice and sustainability principles, for example thermal efficiency, high efficiency lighting, utilisation of 'waste heat'.

It will provide welcome construction work in the short term, generating additional revenue for local businesses and some full/part time employment in the longer term.

The club has worked tirelessly with local community figures and church leaders, who fully support and have endorsed this fantastic vision for the area.

Parish priest, Father Tony Devlin;

*'The 'local parishes' look forward to this great adventure of multi-sports field, 3G pitch and recreational areas being provided at the Corpus Christi pitches site and extending into the DSD lands. We could not praise highly enough the development proposal and the great positive effect it will have for all the people of our parishes.'*

*'We wish God's blessing on this venture and congratulate Davitts GAC for their untiring leadership in this process. - díá na lámha ar an bhíotáille eachtrúil.'*

Sinn Fein councillors Jim McVeigh and Ciaran Beattie;

*'The vision and ambition that Michael Davitt GAC have for this site is really exciting. We have been working very hard with the club and school to make this vision a reality. Belfast City Council have already committed £150k to the Project, but this is only a small part of the funding required, there's more work to be done.'*

*'Davitts, the pupils of Corpus Christi school and the wider Falls community deserve top class sports facilities. We're delighted that Michael Davitt GAC are about to make this fantastic facility a reality.'*

SDLP councillor Colin Keenan;

*'This project is a huge win not just for Davitts, but for all the people of the surrounding area and beyond. It has spent many years in development and now it's finally happening.'*

*'Once built, this facility will stand as testament to the ambition and hope that the people of West Belfast have for the future and those responsible for delivering it deserve our sincere gratitude and thanks.'*

For your information, an illustration of the proposed development has been included on the next page

## Where are we now with the Project?

Following months of discussion, negotiations are at an advanced stage with St. MacNissi's Educational Trust on behalf of the Down and Connor Diocese to sign a long term lease agreement.

The club is in the process of purchasing an adjoining plot of land to the proposed site, from the Department for Social Development, which is essential to the completion of the proposed Project

A planning permission application has been submitted.

The Club is very hopeful that all of these important elements of the Plan can be agreed and finalised in the very near future.

## How can you find out more or have your say?

Davitts will be holding an 'open night' in their clubrooms early in the new year, where you will be welcome to come along, look at the plans in more detail and raise any questions or concerns you may have about the proposed development.

Details will be advertised in the local press closer to the event.

