

# Suncroft Gaelic Football Club

## Ladies Football



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### A Brief History Of Ladies Football In The Suncroft Parish

The first Ladies Football Club in Suncroft was established in the early **1970's**. The team was made up of Suncroft ladies along with ladies from neighbouring Nurney. The team was managed by Ollie Brannock (snr) and captained by his wife Rose. The Suncroft Ladies won their first Kildare County Championship title in **1975**.

There was a gap of some twenty-five years before Suncroft fielded another ladies team in **2001**. This team was managed by Ollie Brannock (jnr) and Christy Brennan (jnr). In **2003** they reached their first League final and it was a very close encounter against Prosperous with Suncroft losing by two points on a score line of 2-14 to 2-16.

**2004** was a very successful year for Suncroft Ladies. Overcoming Prosperous in the Championship Final Suncroft was crowned Junior B Championship Winners and also received the prestigious Kildare Ladies Football Club of the Year award. The team also reached the league semi-final.

In **2004** the ladies club decided to set up a minor team under the management of Eamon O'Modhrain and Alan Troy (Originally from Kilcormac in Offaly, one of the first parishes in the country to field a ladies' team in the mid 1960's) with Patrice Behan assisting. In their first year the minor team reached the Championship final and were unlucky to lose to Sarsfields/Athgaravan. The club has continued to enter the minor competition thereafter.

The younger ladies of Suncroft played on the same, mixed, teams with the young gents under the auspices of the GAA up to under twelve level (The official cut off in the GAA for playing mixed teams is under twelve, due to child welfare and protection issues). Following on from the successful establishment of the minor team, in 2007 an increased emphasis was put in by Diane Behan and Eamon O'Modhrain to expand the Suncroft Ladies Club's underage setup to bridge the gap between the GAA's under twelve teams and the ladies' minors. In **2007** the club entered teams for the first time ever in the under thirteen, under fourteen and under fifteen competitions and the under thirteens went on to win the Division 3 League title in their first year.

In **2007** the Senior Ladies overcame neighbours St Laurence's to win the Division 2 League title and for the first time Suncroft Ladies would be playing Division 1 football in 2008.

In **2008** the club entered teams in all ages from under eleven. Suncroft went on to win the under eleven Division 5, under thirteen Division 4, under fourteen Division 3, under fifteen Division 4 leagues and narrowly missing out on the under twelve and under sixteen leagues. The under fourteen team also entered the first Féile for the club in 2008 and made it all the way to the Leinster final before losing out to Kilkenny in the Division 4 final.

In **2010** Diane Behan decided to take a back seat in the football club and departed with one of her more famous statements *"without the underage of the club learning to play and being brought up through the age groups there will be no senior team"*. This proved to be so true as the senior team were struggling to field a team and some of the underage ladies stepped up to play at senior level.

Through commitment of the more mature players and their nurturing of the younger players the senior team went on to win the Junior B Championship and Division 2 league in **2012**. In the same year the under thirteens won the Division 5 League.

In **2013** the under thirteen team won the Division 3 League. In **2014** they under thirteens won the Division 4 League and the minor team won the Division 2B Shield. After the success of 2012 a number of the senior ladies' team moved on and the team was rebuilding and giving older underage players senior experience in 2013 and 2014.

**2015** was a very successful year for the ladies. The under fourteen's winning the Division 3 League and they also won the Kildare Féile B and went on to represent the County in the all-Ireland Féile competition where they

# Suncroft Gaelic Football Club

## Ladies Football



were beaten by New York in the quarter final. The senior ladies team won the Division 4 League and the Junior B Championship.

**2016** was again a very successful year for the ladies with Suncroft fielding competitive teams at all age levels. The senior Ladies won the Division 3 League and the Junior Championship and went on to overcome Westmeath, Kilkenny and Offaly in the Leinster Junior Club Championships before losing out in the Leinster final to the Dublin Champions, St. Maurs (St. Maurs went on to win the All Ireland). The minors won the Division 2 League and the under fourteens reached the Division 4 League final.

2016 was closed out with the fantastic achievement of the club being awarded Kildare LGFA Club of the Year.

**2017.** 2017 proved to be another successful year with The Croft again fielding competitive teams at all age levels again. The Senior ladies stepped up to Intermediate and reached the final of the league and Championship but couldn't get them over the line in their first year at these grades. the Under Sixteens won the Division 3 league.

**2018.** 2017 was a great year for The Croft ladies. The senior ladies under new management of Deirdre Hurley and Kevin Brannock won the Division 2 league and Intermediate Championship. They went on to represent Kildare in the Leinster Club Championship, but St Michaels of Meath got the better of them.

The U16's won the Division 5 league, the U14's won the Division 4 league and the U13's won the D2 league. A super amount of talent coming through and all looking forward to 2019.

**2019.** In 2019 the senior lady's team had stepped up to Senior and league Division 1 and performed well in both competitions, only missed out on semi-final places by score difference. The minor ladies won the Division 3 Championship and the U13's and 14's were playing great football in the high divisions. A lot of talent and good numbers coming through.

**2020** was severely disrupted by the Covid Pandemic and on top of that Kildare LGFA introduced some additional covid restrictions that basically meant that small clubs like Suncroft couldn't field competitive teams at a lot of age levels.

**2021** was similarly disrupted by the Covid Pandemic and again Kildare LGFA kept their rules in place and seriously curtailed Suncroft's ability to field teams and compete. Despite this the U14 ladies did manage to win the Division 4 league.

There has been a few stumbles and setbacks along the way but with the perseverance, commitment and efforts of the committee, team managers, coaches, mentor's helpers, and players over the years Ladies football in Suncroft has gone from strength to strength.

Facilities are always a challenge and the dressing rooms in the community centre, which opened in 2015, were a great step forward. In 2019 a new sand-based training area with floodlights opened for use and the main pitch was drained and sanded. The new training area pitch upgrade will benefit all going forward. In 2020 railing were erected around the main pitch and two new, and robust, dugouts were installed. 2021 saw Suncroft purchase a large new grass mower which will help keep the pitches in good condition for the players.

With growing numbers of lady players (over 120 in 2021) the focus needs to continue to be on the development of the facilities to ensure the youth of our parish and its surrounds have the facilities that they need and deserve to remain engaged with sport and physical activity.

# Suncroft Gaelic Football Club

## Ladies Football



### County

Suncroft gents have a long history of developing footballers of county standard and Suncroft Ladies started out on this road Elain Dillon and in 2008 when the club was represented on the County under fourteen team by Ellen Dowling and Rebecca McGuirk. Since 2008, as the football developed, Suncroft has been represented on County teams by players at all levels.

The following Suncroft players have played with county teams and the number is growing:

Elain Dillon, Paula Browne, Chloe Foy, Ellen Dowling, Rebecca McGuirk, Trina Duggan, Niamh Bolger, Amy Dunne, Becky Coogan, Aine Conway, Muirne Fagan, Orla Fennelly, Amy Reid, Rebecca Johnson, Nichole Dooley, Carla Ennis, Aislinn Dooley, Eve Kehoe, Megan Troy, Collette Keon, Ciara Fennelly, Mary Enright, Taylor Hughes, Orla McDonald, Grace Farrell, Laura Prendergast, Miya O'Byrne, Ruth Dillon.

### Honours

#### Club

Intermediate Championship:	2018.
Junior Championship:	2016.
Junior B Championship:	2015, 2012.
Senior League:	2018 Division 2, 2016 Division 3, 2015 Division 4, 2012 Division 2.
Minor League:	2019 Division 3, 2016 Division 2, 2014 Division 2B Shield.
Under Sixteen League:	2018 Division 5, 2017 Division 3.
Under Fifteen League:	2008 Division 4.
Under Fourteen League:	2021 Division 4, 2018 Division 4, 2015 Division 3, 2008 Division 3.
Under Fourteen Féile:	2015 Féile B County and reached all-Ireland quarter final (lost to New York). 2008 Division 4 County and reached Leinster final (Lost to Kilkenny).
Under Thirteen League:	2018 Division 2, 2014 Division 4, 2013 Division 3, 2012 Division 5, 2008 Division 4, 2007 Division 3.
Under Eleven:	2008 Division 5.
Kildare LGFA Club of the Year:	2016, 2004 Division 2.

#### County

Intermediate:	2016 Ellen Dowling, Trina Duggan. Leinster and All Ireland Championships. 2015 Ellen Dowling, Trina Duggan, Rebecca McGuirk. Leinster and All Ireland Championship finalists.
Junior	2004 Elaine Dillon. Leinster and All Ireland Championship.

# Suncroft Gaelic Football Club

## Ladies Football

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- Minor: 2018 Eve Kehoe, Aislinn Dooley, Megan Troy, Carla Ennis. Leinster B Champions and All Ireland B Championship.  
2016 Nichole Dooley. Leinster B Championship finalist.  
2014 Ellen Dowling. Captain.  
2013 Trina Duggan. Captain. Leinster Championship finalists.  
2012 Trina Duggan. Leinster B Championship.
- Under Sixteen: 2017 Aislinn Dooley, Eve Kehoe Leinster B Championship and All Ireland finalists.  
2015 Carla Ennis, Nichole Dooley. Leinster B Championship and, All Ireland semi-final.  
2011 Trina Duggan Rebecca McGuirk, Ellen Dowling, Aine Conway. Leinster and, All Ireland B Championship Shield.
- Under Fourteen: 2021 Ruth Dillon. Leinster Championship A.  
2015 Aislinn Dooley, Eve Kehoe. Leinster Championship A Shield. All Ireland Division 2 Blitz.  
2014 Eve Kehoe, Aislinn Dooley. Leinster Blitz.