



BUILDING PROJECT APPEAL

Information about a New Building Project for Athlone Boxing Club and an Appeal for Financial Support

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an update on the club's plans to establish a new purpose-built training headquarters adjacent to the Athlone Regional Sports Centre at Lissywollen, and to request financial assistance from supporters for this essential initiative. As a voluntary, not-for-profit, community-based resource, the provision of this new facility will rely on financial contributions from many sources, including State bodies and business organisations, as well as income generated from organised events. Contributions from charitable groups and individuals shall also be gratefully received. Special thanks at this stage is due to Westmeath County Council for providing the land, approving the planning application, and granting a 20-year lease on the site. A special acknowledgement is also due to Westmeath County Councillors Aengus O'Rourke and John Dolan whose support for this initiative is greatly appreciated, as are the many written and verbal endorsements already received by the club. This newsletter includes a message from Minister for State, Kevin 'Boxer' Moran, who refers to his commitment to help in the provision of a building which will serve on a cross-community basis. It is hoped that our newsletter, by providing an update on the club and an explanation as to why the new building is so necessary, will enable Athlone Boxing Club to continue to live up to its motto 'Inspiration and Development for Young Athletes' well into the years ahead.



Members of Athlone Boxing Club pictured with plans of the proposed new facility.

ATHLONE BOXING CLUB

The Athlone Boxing Club, affiliated to the Irish Athletic Boxing Association (IABA), was established in 2007 as a not-for-profit voluntary organisation to provide young people with opportunities to train for the sport of boxing and to enhance their confidence, self-esteem, team-working, discipline, and friendships. Over the years, the club has attracted an increasing number of members from diverse backgrounds in Athlone and the wider region. The focus of all activity is to enhance the personal development of participants. This is achieved by emphasising self-respect and respect for others, nurturing boxing talent, improving physical fitness, and preparing members to progress in life as a result of the training and education provided.

An average of 100 members attend every week in two groupings – junior boxing ranging from 6 to 11 years, and senior classes for those aged 12 years and upwards. The sessions are held in the basement of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Athlone town centre. The facility is appreciated, but it presents many challenges in terms of size and limited amenities.

Inspiration and Development for Young Athletes

Mission Statement

The aim of Athlone Boxing Club is primarily to promote and encourage the sporting and personal development of each participating young member, with particular emphasis on physical and mental fitness, enhancing self-respect and self-esteem, and the promotion of discipline in both a sporting and wider context. The development of boxing skills, in line with each person's ability and potential, is the channel through which the goals are achieved.

Core Values

All activities associated with the club are based on principles of transparency, honesty, integrity, and inclusiveness. Those involved in delivering a range of services are expected to demonstrate

- Concern for each individual member
- Concern for the group
- Impartiality
- Approachability
- Loyalty
- Best example

Some Competitive Achievements

Athlone Boxing Club, since its foundation, has won 50 Leinster titles, 25 All-Ireland titles and numerous European medals. Success has also been achieved in national and international Box Cups and other major tournaments.



Uses of New Building

It is expected that the facility will also be used for complementary community-based activities, for example :

- Fitness training and social events for adults
- Senior citizens' meetings and active pastimes
- Project and fitness-based exercises for members of sports clubs
- Student participation in programmes and competitions
- Hosting boxing tournaments with a regional/national dimension.

This wider proposed use will also help to generate revenue to cover the running costs on an ongoing basis. All entering the premises will do so at their own risk, and the club will not be responsible for loss or damage to such persons or their property. The club is committed to the highest level Health and Safety standards.

Funding

Due to the fact that only minimal funding has been received to date from national sporting bodies, the raising of capital to establish the new premises will depend on the goodwill and generosity of all funding providers and potential sources. It is hoped that those who are aware of the essential services which the club offers will respond generously in recognition of the important role which sport plays in children's physical and mental well-being. The benefits run deeper, particularly for current and future members of Athlone Boxing Club. There are so many positive effects which sport conveys on our members' lives, from developing social skills and teamwork to leadership training and the promotion of discipline. Real-life lessons can be learned through participation in sport – in this club's case it's through boxing.



To achieve the stated target of 150 members by 2027/2028 and provide an appropriate infrastructure the club, in 2023, approached local County Councillors for assistance towards securing a location in Athlone for a new boxing premises. Westmeath County Council backed this vision for the future, and offered a site upon which to build. The location is the campus of the Regional Sports Complex on the outskirts of Athlone town. Full planning permission for this building was granted by Westmeath County Council in June 2025 and the lease was signed in October 2025. It is now essential to procure the funds required to establish this new centre of excellence which will allow the club to continue its progress and achieve even greater success in the future.

~ Messages of Support for the New Building ~

Barry McGuigan: "Amateur boxing clubs help so many young people in society, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Involvement in a club teaches discipline, self-respect and respect for others. Investment in the sport and getting the rewards teaches participants about hard work and how to appreciate the trainers and coaches who so willingly give of their time on a voluntary basis. Amateur boxing is arguably the best sport in the world for transforming those who participate and helping them to understand the important things in life. I understand that Athlone Boxing Club is doing such great work with an amazing number of young people. Hopefully, the authorities and those who control the budgets publicly and privately will fully support the club's great initiative. Joe Ward is an amazing example of what amateur boxing can achieve in terms of sporting success and character development."



Kellie Harrington: "Boxing clubs in my opinion are an integral part of each community. Those involved are unpaid social workers. They help to keep children and anyone who comes through the doors focused by teaching discipline, resilience and respect. I strongly endorse Athlone Boxing Club which helps to build character and in doing so can find that some people are born to become champions. You couldn't find a better role model for young people to look up to than Joe Ward."



Jon Mackey, High Performance Director, Irish Athletic Boxing Association: "Athlone BC's doors are open to children of every background and ethnicity, reflecting boxing's long standing role as a social leveller across Irish working-class communities. Few role models illustrate these possibilities better than Joe Ward – three-time European champion, triple world medallist and 2016 Olympian - who now coaches in the club. Ward's journey from Athlone to the world podium shows every youngster that international success is genuinely within reach and that the next Irish Olympian could just as easily emerge again from Athlone BC."

In summary, for nearly two decades, Athlone Boxing Club has delivered first-class coaching, positive mentorship and a proven diversion from anti-social pathways. With planning permission now secured for a purpose-built facility, it stands ready to serve even more young people – but only if it receives the support it deserves."

Minister Kevin 'Boxer' Moran: "I believe the location for the new building is ideal. Athlone Boxing Club has a huge interest in young people, sometimes young people who need a bit of help and support to give them a sporting outlet. I have seen the layout of the proposed facility, and we will put the call out for corporate sponsorship for the club. We will all work together on this – there is no political point scoring here. This is about the young people of Athlone going forward. It is something I want to be a part of due to the benefits which club members gain as a result of participation in the sport of amateur boxing."

Pat Campbell, Chairman Athlone Community Development Association: "Without question the provision of a new boxing training facility is one of the most worthwhile sporting projects planned for Athlone. The Athlone Community Development Association is fully supportive of the project. The prospects of this new facility producing local sporting heroes and encouraging young people to participate in a well-managed and disciplined sport will have social benefits beyond our imagination."



Joe Ward – three-time European champion, triple world medallist and 2016 Olympian with fellow coach Rory Parkes.

Joe Ward: "In my own experience it's great to see young boxers come from all walks of life. They come into their local boxing club for both short-term skill improvements and long-term aspirations. The support of a boxing gym community can change young people's lives and give them great opportunities to achieve their goals."

Rory Parkes: "I'm nearly 20 years involved with the club and, for me, there is no greater accolade for any coach than when a young person comes through the door with no boxing experience and, after lots of hard work, determination and training, becomes a champion. My motivation to produce champions and always set higher standards has never dwindled after all these years."

Conclusion

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information about the current state of Athlone Boxing Club, its plans for the future, and the determination to achieve our goals. Contributions towards meeting the financial costs shall be gratefully acknowledged. For more information please contact:

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