

# The Future of our Clubs and Counties:

## The Impact of Demographics

Peter Horgan



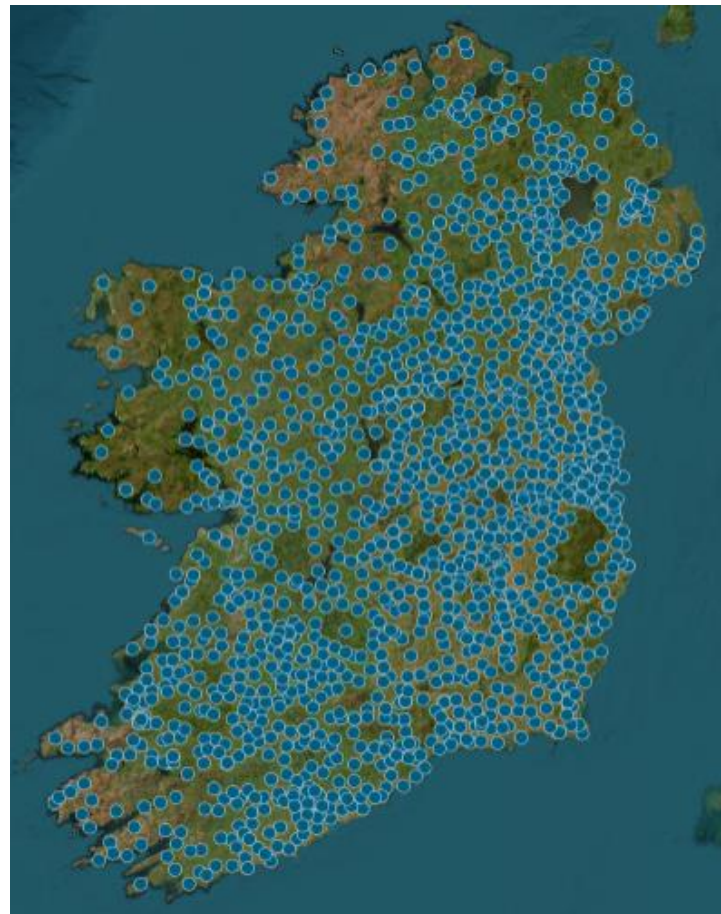
GAELIC GAMES  
**COACH  
PATHWAY**

**GAA**  
WHERE WE ALL BELONG

**LGFA**  
PEIL na mBAN

**THE GAMOGIE ASSOCIATION**  
An Cumann Camógachta

# From there...to here...



# Agenda

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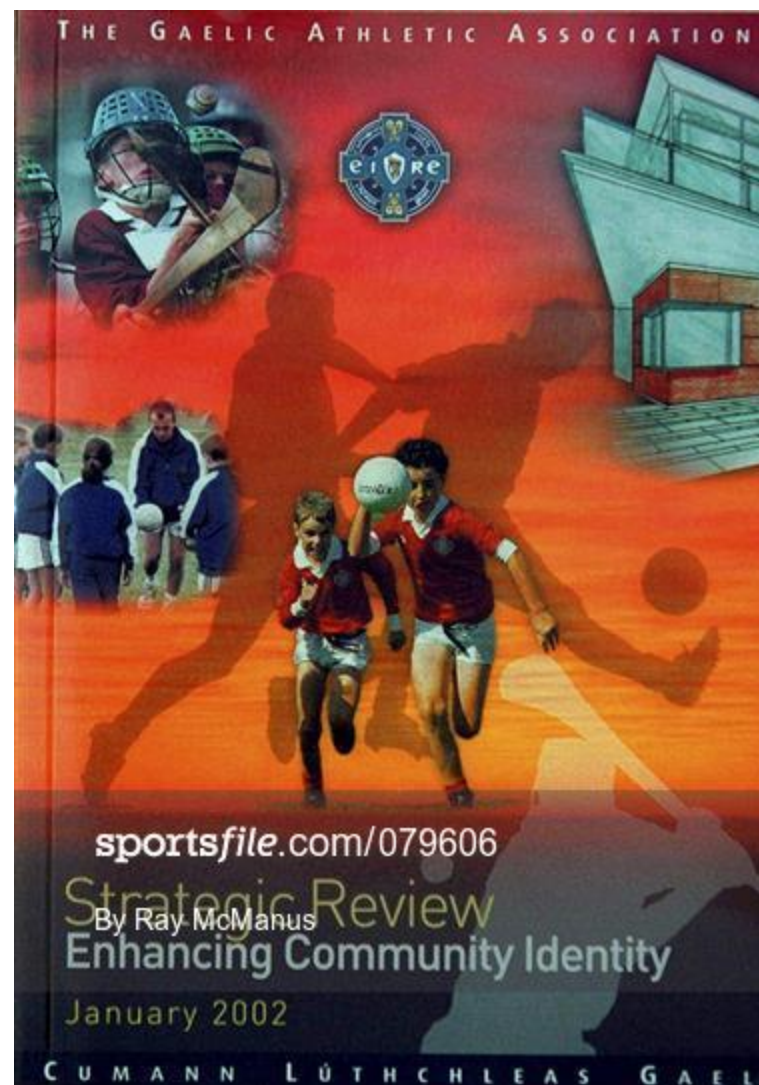
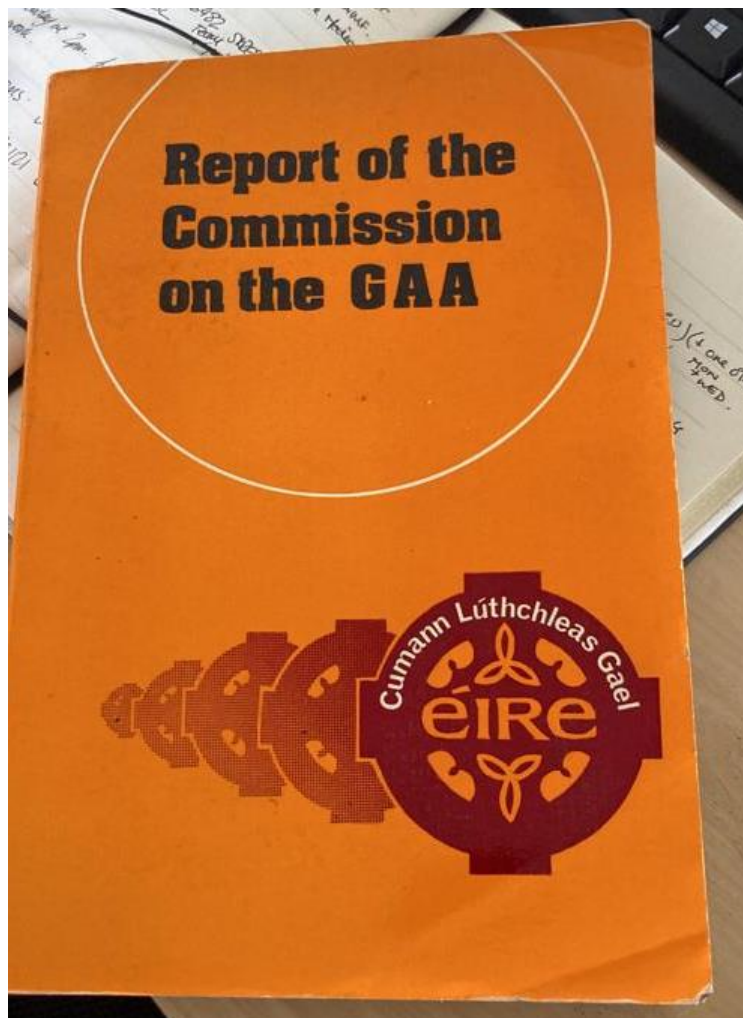
1. Demographics in Ireland
2. What issues have been identified?
3. We need your help!

# In summary

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- The GAA is concerned with all the people of Ireland, urban and rural. The problem is that **the Association is weakest where the population is increasing; it is strongest where the population is declining.** That problem has always been there but the extent of the adverse trends in recent years has now brought a full realisation of its seriousness for the Association
- The greatest implications and challenges for the GAA of the future are to be found in **growing cities, larger settlements** across the country, **satellite towns** serving major cities and the increasing number of towns with populations of more than 5,000 people. The net result is that the **effects of urbanisation are being felt across the entire country**, including by village and rural clubs.

# In summary



# What have we done?

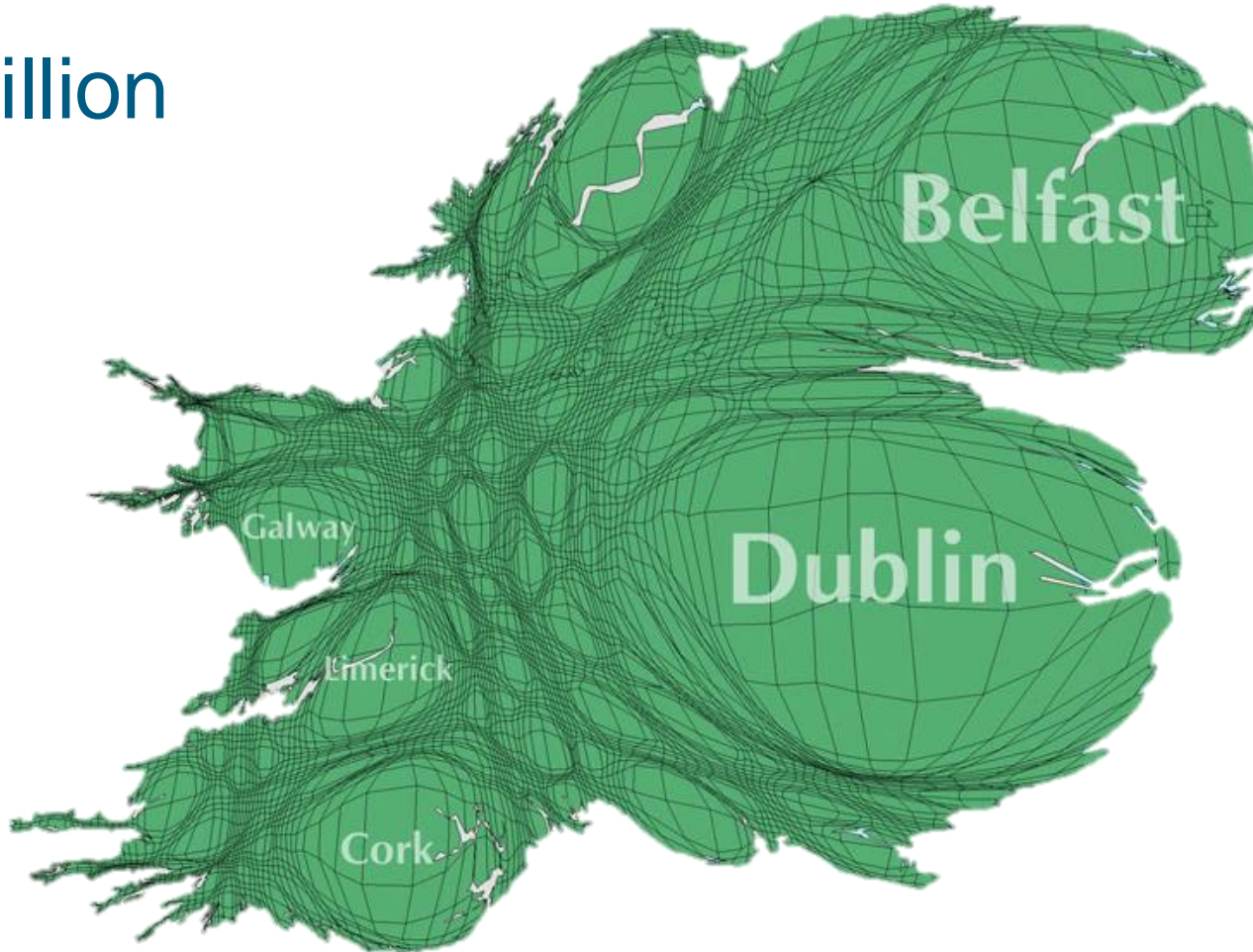
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- Analysis of data
  - Census Data: North 2021 (NISRA) and South 2022 (CSO)
  - Depts of Health and Education
  - GAA Membership data: Foireann
- Engagement with State Agencies
  - Central Statistics Office (CSO)
  - Sport Ireland
  - Dept of Education
  - Teagasc
  - Tailte Eireann (formerly OSI)
- Engagement with Academics/ Researchers
  - Dept of Economics, UCC
- Engagement with Associations/ Committees
  - LGFA and Camogie Associations
  - Games Development Committee
  - Planning and Training Committee
  - Central Fixtures Analysts
- Engagement with Provinces, Counties, and Clubs
  - County Demographics Officers (24)
  - County Committees and Clubs (15)
- Engagement with Previous Reports
  - Report of the Urban/Rural Committee

# Population Imbalance

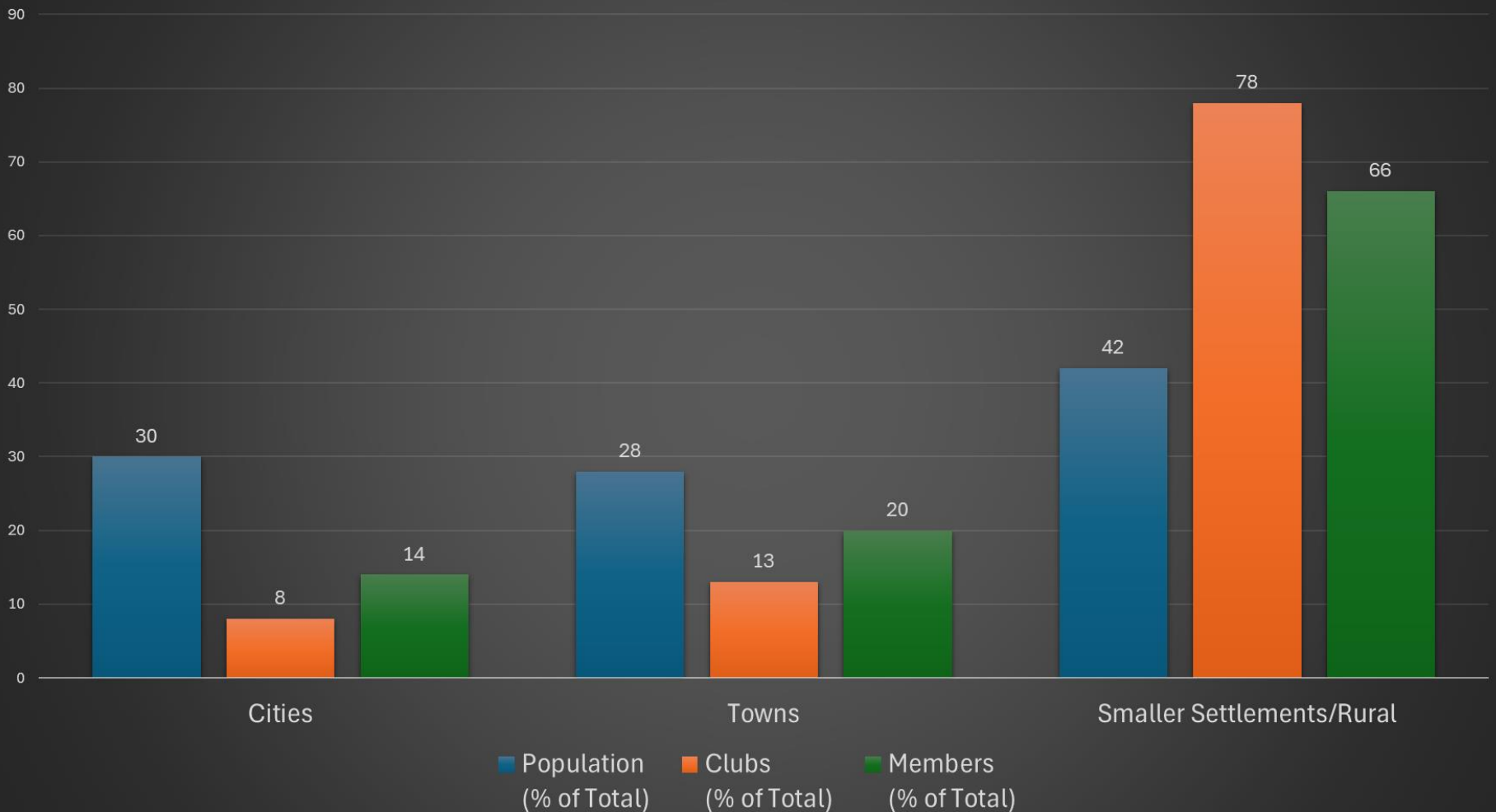
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7 Million



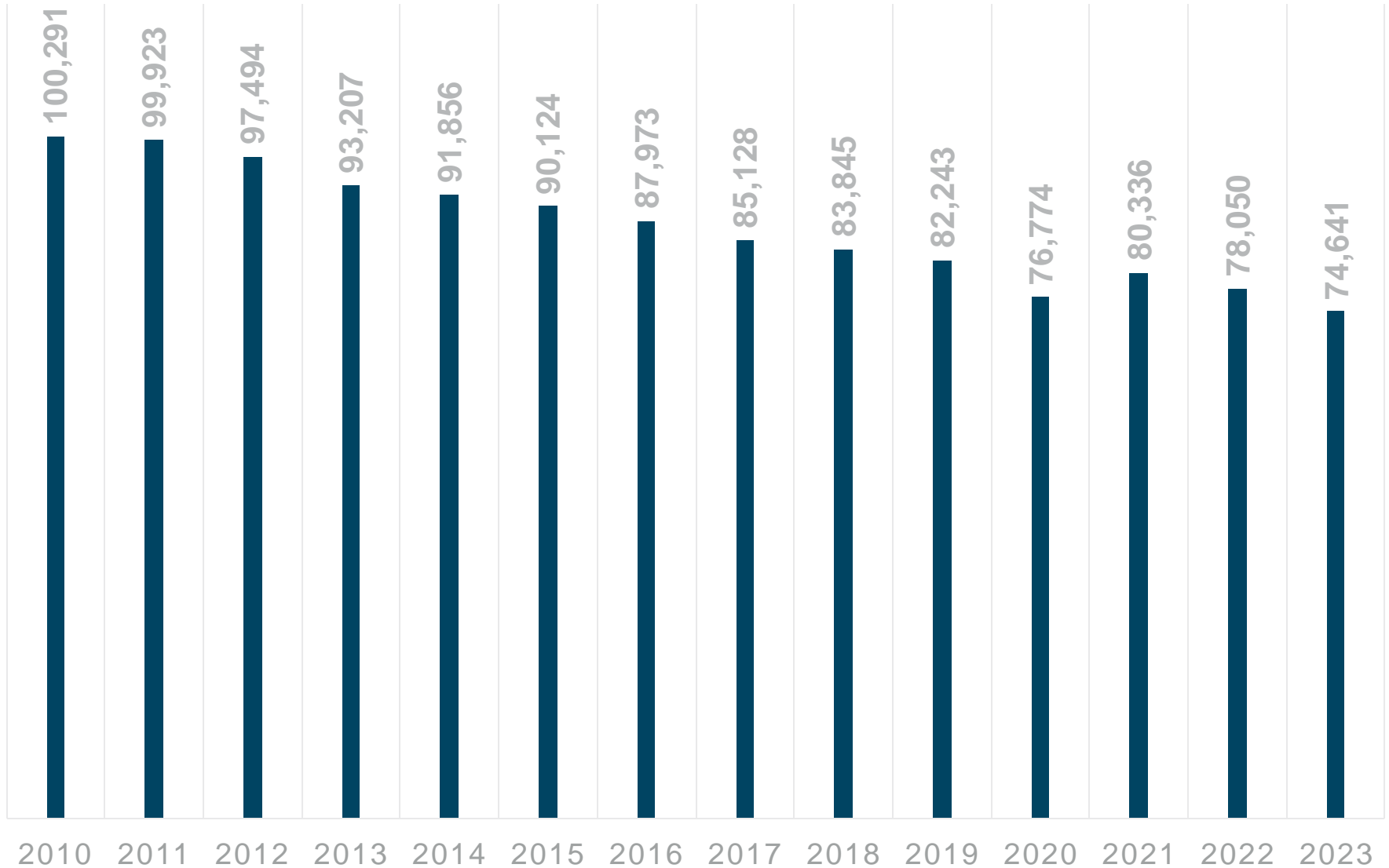
# What does the information tell us?

Population of Ireland, % of GAA Clubs, and % GAA Members According to Settlement Size





# NUMBER OF BIRTHS 2010 - 2023



# What are the issues?

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- A shift eastwards nationally, and a shift from Rural to Urban across all Counties
  - Rural depopulation making amenities unviable – shops, pubs, post office, banks etc
  - Smaller numbers of young children enrolling in Primary Schools – reduced teacher numbers/closure of small schools
  - Little/No rural housing development – reducing the regeneration of the local population, forcing young people to move to planned urbanised areas
  - Previously separate clubs forming Independent Teams or amalgamating to enter competitions – loss of community identity
  - Possibility that facilities built up might not have sufficient use

# What are the issues?

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- Growing Urbanisation

- Increasing memberships of urban clubs, resulting in significant requirements for coaches/club volunteers
- Lack of facilities to cater for all participants
- Significant costs towards providing facilities
- Children not getting sufficient game time leading to drop off
- Clubs becoming too large for their County structures – can clubs grow to an infinite size / number of members?

- Conversely:

- Many clubs in urban areas are struggling to recruit from within their communities
- Participation numbers might be high but overall penetration is low

# Proposed Actions

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- Menu from which counties can select according to their needs:
  - Player Eligibility
    - Transfers / parish rule/ Sanctions/Parent rule
    - Permissions to play from urban to rural
  - Games Programmes:
    - Cross county / provincial games based on the Táin Óg principles
    - Smaller sided games
- County and Club Support Unit
  - Creating a structure designed to provide guidance, resources, and assistance to clubs. The goal is to ensure the sustainable growth and efficient management of clubs

# Proposed Actions

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- GAA counties and clubs find it difficult to engage with councils, agencies, governments, and government departments
  - We need enablers.
- External Government / Local Authority Engagement
  - Rural and urban planning
  - Development of Social Enterprises
  - Development of Urban Facilities
  - Access to funding
  - Job creation
  - Partnerships

# We need your help?

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How have demographic issues impacted your club?

What initiatives have you undertaken locally?

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Go raibh míle maith agat