



Objective of this document:

At Straffan GAA we strive to offer the best and safest facilities to all the members and guests. The intention of this policy document and is to outline the clubs' guidelines for facilities management including pitches, facility lighting and bookings. With an expanding membership and number of teams, we have developed our facilities in the club and added new playing areas with lighting provisions. All members from Straffan GAA, Straffard GAA and Straffan Camogie who manage or mentor teams should be familiar with this document, as should any other members who are involved in facilitating requests for access from teams outside of the club.

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1. Facilities Booking Policy

Aims of the facilities booking policy

To help the volunteers who are involved with teams and facilities bookings. Due to the continued high demand for pitch space and training facilities for clubs associated with Straffan GAA there is a need to have in place policies to help decision making for facility bookings. Furthermore, outside of all-weather facilities, consideration must be given to conditions which might impact on player safety or damage to the facilities, such as grass pitches, parking on grassed areas and safe management of traffic when significant numbers of people might be arriving at the facilities. Any agreements for usage times etc. should be adhered to and as advertised by Straffan GAA club committee.



Policy and criteria to determine who may book the facilities (Pitch, Astro, Skills area, Gym):

- Appointed team coaches/managers who are members of Straffan GAA club, Camogie club, LGFA club.
- For team amalgamations which include teams associated with Straffan:
 - There should be at least one lead coach/manager involved from the Straffan club.
 - Where multiple Straffan players are involved, an application made to booking facilitator as to why no charges are applicable, otherwise outside clubs to be charged for use of the facilities at an agreed hourly rate. Note: All St Edwards and Straffard teams are not charged.
 - There should be fair usage spread of facilities between amalgamated clubs to ensure pitch demands are uniformly spread across such clubs. Otherwise charges should be applied to outside clubs who wish to avail of Straffan's facilities on a continuous basis. (Common sense to prevail in this case and where other clubs are already facilitating Straffan players/coaches at their facilities for other age groups and swops have been agreed etc.)
 - Clubs or coaches representing county teams may apply to booking co-ordinator through a Straffan team manager/coach, who will apply the agreed criteria. NOTE: Unfortunately, due to the ever-increasing demand on booking slots, priority must be given to our own club teams.
 - The person making representation on behalf of a county team should take ownership for organising any requirements of that team including opening pitch/Clubhouse, lights on/off, safe parking, locking up the facility.
 - Teams other than club teams, such as county teams or other sports should be charged pre-agreed / Standard charges as bench marked against other organisations. E.g. Portions of Astro pitch have standard charges per hour, Full Astro has charge per hour and grass pitch has a charge per hour. Gym and Skills area might also be considered, in the interest of funding our grounds committee and the ongoing maintenance costs associated with each facility.
- Any team requiring artificial lighting will also have this included in the per hour charge.
- Any team using the lighting, to be charged additional fees for having lights ON beyond the booked time interval e.g., per hour, or on a per 15-minute basis and pro-rata to the hourly charge.
- Pitch goal guards are in place to protect pitch goals on the main grass pitches and should be returned in place post and training or match bookings.

Skills Wall Booking Policy

The skills walls should be booked via the online system at **www.straffangaa.com**

- This facility can only be booked by Club Members.
- Any bookings by non-club members will first need to be approved by the pitch booking coordinator or Club Chairman.
- Individual bookings can only be completed in blocks of a maximum 1.5 hrs to ensure other club members can also gain access to the facility on a fair basis.

2. Policy / criteria to determine when grass pitch is playable or unplayable.



Following wet or continuous rain conditions the grass pitch may be unsafe, it may be water-logged, or it may be deemed inappropriate or damaging to the pitch to have people out on the surface.

Following excessive dry weather, the pitch surface may become damaged or barren of grass cover. It may be deemed inappropriate to use such areas of the pitch. E.g. Dugouts or Goal areas may become excessively damaged, and it may be necessary to cordon off (e.g. use goal guards) and deem such areas as un-usable for training purposes etc. For games this criterion may be lifted or reviewed in the interest of preventing cancellation of home fixtured games etc. (Common sense to prevail)

Pitch Inspection criteria:

An appointed representative, from one or each of the clubs, Straffan GAA, Straffan Camogie, LGFA to be appointed for the purpose of carrying out pitch inspections following adverse conditions. A WhatsApp group to be set up where any one or all the group may agree to meet and carry out an inspection of the pitch in order to approve or dis-approve before a group go onto the pitch. In the interest of fairness, the inspectors will apply a set of criteria answering the questions are listed in **Appendix 1** of this policy. If required, final decision will rest with club chairperson.

Based on the answers to the questions in **Appendix 1**, the inspectors may deem the pitch playable or unplayable.

- 1) Where the facility has been inspected and deemed unplayable by the inspection team; **notification should be sent to the booking co-ordinator by a representative of the inspection team and where appropriate, notification sent to other relevant personnel who may be awaiting update on availability of a facility. For games an inspection to be carried out at least 4 hours before game time. If decision is “pitch unfit to play” then Club Secretary to be immediately informed so other team and County Board Notified.**
- 2) Where the pitch has been inspected and deemed playable by inspectors; notification should be sent to the booking co-ordinator and where appropriate, notification sent to other relevant personnel who may be awaiting update on availability of a facility. **As per normal GAA protocol, the final decision for any game or training event to proceed will rest with a game referee.**

3. Straffan GAA Grounds Pitch Lights Policy

Aims of the facilities Pitch Lighting Policy

Straffan GAA club has recently been designated a ‘Green Club’ (as part of the Green Clubs Programme). With this move to a more sustainable club, energy efficiency is a key priority. Reducing our energy use is something that needs to be addressed by all members of the multiple sporting clubs using the GAA grounds. Currently, the greatest use of energy are the floodlights for the Astro, grass pitches and Skills Wall. It was therefore agreed that a policy for the management of all pitch lights be drawn up.



Pitch Lights Policy

Straffan GAA, LGFA and Camogie clubs have agreed the following policy for the use of the pitch lights for all pitches including Astro, grass pitches and Skills Wall.

Floodlights for all pitches should only be used when natural light is insufficient for training or match playing. They should not be turned on during full daylight hours when natural light can be used. Where a group is only using part of a pitch e.g. a section of the astro-pitch, then lights should only be turned on for that section. The astro light buttons are clearly marked up for Road-side and Main Pitch to allow only 50% of the lighting to be enabled if required.

All floodlights should be switched on and off via the designated apps only. Access to the manual switch will only be available to specific keyholders and should only be used if the apps are offline/there is a Wi-Fi issue.

Those with access to the app should be contacted when a group needs the floodlights turned on. **At least 2 mentors/coaches from each of the 3 clubs have access to the app and can be contacted via their individual mentors/coaches' group.** A list of those with access to the app is available below - known as **Pitch Lights App Keyholders**. This group also the manual keyholders and have access to keys via the back-up Lockbox inside the main astro.



Straffan GAA Floodlight Keyholders

Keyholders WhatsApp for App (Group 1)		
Rep 1	Rep 2	Club/Function
Charlie Keegan	Brian Maguire	Lighting Facilities
Orla Golden	Francis Farrell	Strafford
Catherine Cook	Declan Keville	Camogie
Terry Shanley	Ciaran Reilly	Underage Boys
Tony Clarke	John Neenan	Adult Men's

- 1) 10 users have been provided with access to the new Apps for switching lights on/off across the facility
- 2) Each playing group currently has an existing WhatsApp group for all mentors
- 3) Each mentors WhatsApp group will have 2 keyholders to switch lights on/off via club Apps for Astro, Skills Wall and grass pitches
- 4) Back-up keys for lights is in lockbox inside main astro as an option if Wi-Fi fails

Figure 1: Pitch Lighting App Keyholder (PLAK) List

Where lights are found on, either during daylight hours, or when activities have finished for the evening, then the group using the pitches at that time will be held responsible for the lights being left on and may have sanctions placed against them for future use of the grounds.

Anomalies should continue to be reported into the WhatsApp group as is currently happening, as there may be requirement for specific issues for both technical and behavioural to be addressed from time to time. Lighting Facilities Reps will take overall responsibility as they are best positioned to review events and to carry out follow investigations.



Procedure for using the lights:

1. Mentor/coach assesses the natural light in relation to the ability to train/play matches and ensure safety of those using the grounds at the time
2. Mentor/coach liaises with other groups using the same pitch so that only 1 person contacts the Pitch Lights App Keyholders (PLAK).
3. PLAK is contacted to turn a specific set of floodlights on via the app (if a person is unavailable then contact the next person on the list). If one of the Keyholders is on the grounds and turns the app on, then they should let the PLAK WhatsApp group know.
4. The PLAK turns on lights remotely via the app and confirms with mentor/coach that the lights are on.
5. **PLAK puts message on the *PLAK WhatsApp group* to let group know that lights have been turned on and for what group.**
6. Mentor/coach contacts PLAK when finished session in order get lights turned off (or to let them know that a new group is now using the pitch).
7. Mentor/coach last to leave grounds at night contacts PLAK to get all lights turned off (if on), ensuring everyone has left the grounds safely first. If the last person to leave has access to the app then they should turn off all floodlights and let the WhatsApp group know.

If the app is offline or there is a Wi-Fi issue, PLAK will contact one of the manual keyholders (if not already on the grounds) and they will turn on/off the lights via the relevant manual switches. A set of back-ups keys are placed in a lockbox at a secure location inside the main Astro.

4. Locking up Checklist.

The person responsible for booking facilities that are to be used by the **last group** for any given day / period is responsible for ensuring the below checks have been carried out and ticked on the checklist before leaving the grounds. If 'NO' is the answer to any question below, then a reason / comment must be sent to your representative on the Pitch Lights App Keyholders (PLAK) group. In this way, any issues may be followed up and assigned to relevant owner for follow up. See Appendix 2 for the checklist.

5. Non-club members access to Straffan GAA facilities

Where external clubs are requesting regular access to Straffan GAA facilities such as weekly training slots, there are agreed rates in place for both pitch and lighting (if required). These rates are available on request from the chairman for one-hour block bookings. Note priority will where possible be given to club teams from the Straffan GAA, Straffard GAA and Straffan Camogie.

Facilities Management and Booking Policy



For groups not belonging to any of the 3 clubs, there is a dedicated WhatsApp group they can join to request lights to be switched on and off. Contact the Straffan GAA Chairman or booking coordinator get added to this group. Outside groups must have an agreed club contact who is an approved user of facilities and has agreed to take responsibility for organising external group requirements.

Facility	Cost Per Hour
Skills Wall	Contact club chairman
Main Astro 1/3	Contact club chairman
Main Astro Full Pitch	Contact club chairman



Appendix 1: Inspection checklist for pitches:

Ref	Pitch Inspection Checklist			Notes if applicable
		Yes	No	
1	Is the pitch surface damaged in any specific area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2	<p>If yes, identify the location where the pitch has been damaged and comment on the type of damaged.</p> <p>The inspectors may decide to mark the areas where they find damage such as grass under water. The intent is to determine if this area should be deemed hazardous / unplayable. (NOTE: Any area with grass submerged in water should be deemed unplayable and drawn to the attention of match referee and team managers/coaches.)</p> <p>1) The grass is submerged in water at nominated locations and unsuitable for players to travel safely, or without further damaging the surface.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	2) Grass has been damaged and holes/hollows are present which might deem the surface unsafe or likely to become further damaged to the detriment of the area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	3) Goal areas are waterlogged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	4) Goal areas are damaged with no grass surface remaining.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	5) Dugout areas are damaged with muck / water present and becoming a slip hazard or likely to become further damaged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

Based on the answers to the above questions, the inspectors may deem the pitch playable or unplayable.

- 1) **Where the facility has been inspected and deemed unplayable by the inspection team; notification should be sent to the booking co-ordinator by a representative of the inspection team** and where appropriate, notification sent to other relevant personnel who may be awaiting update on availability of a facility.
- 2) **Where the pitch has been inspected and deemed playable by inspectors; notification should be sent to the booking co-ordinator** and where appropriate, notification sent to other relevant personnel who may be awaiting update on availability of a facility. The final decision for any game or training event to proceed will rest with a game referee or with any manager/coach who oversees a game / training session on that surface.



Appendix 2: Facility Locking up Checklist.

Ref	Pitch Inspection Checklist			Notes if applicable
		Yes	No	
1	Is the area you were using secured and tidied up?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2	Are all lights at facility switched OFF?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3	Are pitch goal guards in place to protect pitch goals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4	Are storage areas locked?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4	Are the temporary goals placed back at dugout side of grass pitch?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5	Is the clubhouse locked?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6	Is the outside toilet locked?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
7	Did you close the main gate on leaving?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8	Did you send a WhatsApp to the PLAK group or your nominated representative, confirming checklist completed and commenting on any issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	