

Press Pass Gazette

Is John Horan Destroying the Sport

April 2019

Ellie Raftery

Mount Sackville Secondary School

Gaelic and hurling fans were in shock earlier this year when John Horan, president of the GAA announced an increase in ticket prices for the championship to be held later this year. This was an unexpected decision that may hold a future negative impact on the attendance at national championships.

Horan explained that this decision came about 'to increase club revenue grants from 2m to 4m over a 4 year period'. 'We had the national club forum and we increased it by half a million this year and half a million next year, and so on. So it's four half-millions over a period of four years. That revenue had to be found. We're very tight on our administration costs, and our other grant structures here.'

Horan also went on to say that grants to clubs will increase employment in local areas because it will go into infrastructure projects in the areas and spoke of the importance of GAA to our diaspora stating that €200,000 of the increased revenue is going to international GAA clubs.

Horan said that this increase in revenue could fund the construction of new stands at county grounds in Navan, Newbridge and Waterford. Unexpectedly, Horan pointed out that the GAA sold over 3000 more season tickets than they had the year previous even in the height of the criticism about this hike in ticket prices.

Horan has acknowledged there's an element of risk with the decision to increase ticket prices for Allianz League and Championship games as it could cause a decline in attendance but is defending his decision to 'do more for the clubs' nevertheless.

'The GAA press releases announcing the increases read 'this represents the first major review of the championship ticket prices since 2011'.

'But a lot of members and supporters felt this was misleading. This of course does not mean that the ticket prices have not increased since 2011, tickets are now 30% more expensive than they were at the height of the Celtic Tiger.'

Tickets for this year's All-Ireland football and hurling finals will increase to €90 for stand tickets, a €10 increase from the year before and tickets for hill 16 will increase to €45, a €5 increase on last year's €40 ticket prices. There will be a €5 increase for tickets to the semifinals, at €50 for stand tickets and €35 for terrace tickets. Admission to the All-Ireland football qualifiers will increase from €15 to €20 for Rounds 1,2 and 3 and will increase from €20 to €25 for Round 4. There will also be an increase in Allianz League games.

'When you're running games and you've people coming through stiles you can't be working out change of €2 and €1. Fives and tens and 20s is a reasonable way to run it,' Horan added when elaborating on how the new figures were decided upon.

The only question now is what will this increase in ticket prices mean for future GAA and Hurling championship games and National League games. Will attendance drop or will the love for the sport continue to thrive as it has been for centuries. Only time will tell.