

## SOCCER LIMERICK FC NEWS



Field of dreams: An image of what the Markets Field will look like when it's developed into a 8,000-capacity stadium; Below - Limerick FC chairman Pat O'Sullivan gives a presentation at last week's announcement in Thomond Park

# Limerick aim for Markets Field return next season

Colm Kinsella

AMBITIOUS plans to develop an 8,100 capacity all-seater stadium at the Market's Field in the coming seasons have been unveiled by Limerick FC Club Chairman Pat O'Sullivan.

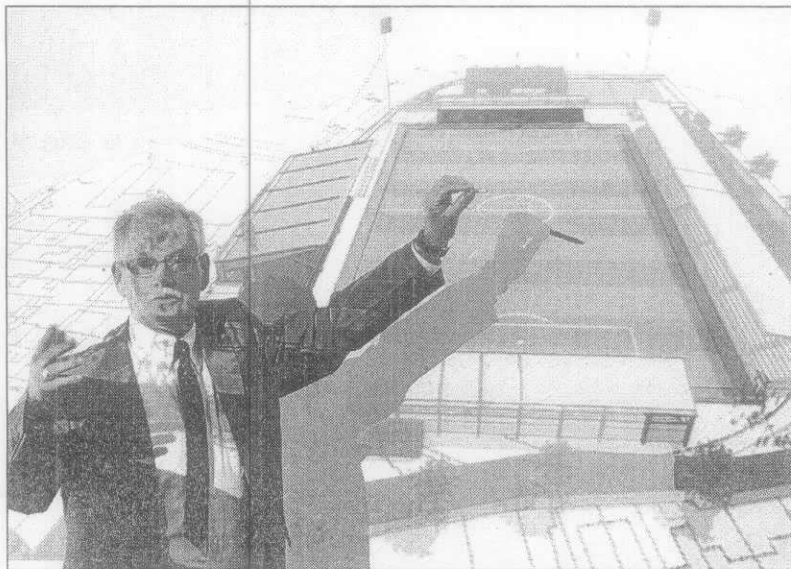
The exciting plans for the new facility, which will play host to Limerick FC's home games as well as having the potential to stage other sports, were revealed as part of a presentation given by Pat O'Sullivan, on the future direction of the football club.

The presentation also included an overview of the club's Underage Player Development and Community Programmes, as well as details of the ongoing Third Level Talented Footballer Scheme.

The Limerick FC Chairman O'Sullivan said the Airtricity League First Division club had been anxious to secure the Markets Field as a home for senior soccer in Limerick. This aim had been achieved due to the kind support of JP and Noreen McManus and the LEDP.

Pat O'Sullivan explained that between now and the start of the 2012 season, the club planned to install a new floodlit playing surface at the Markets Field, as well as renovating the existing stand on the site which previously staged greyhound racing.

Limerick FC also envisage installing dressing rooms under the stand,



upgrading the existing bar, opening a new club shop, new club Offices and a club Museum before the start of the domestic senior soccer season in March of next year.

As well as the construction of a new roof on the existing stand at the Markets Field, sufficient seating will also be provided in the stand to bring the facility in line with the requirements for a Premier Division Airtricity League club.

Over the coming seasons, plans are in place which would see ground capacity at the Markets Field

eventually increased to 8,100. A stand on the existing 'popular' side of the sporting venue is set to cater for some 2,500 spectators.

Two stands will also be developed behind either goal. The design of the existing stand will remain the same as at present so as to maintain a link with the past.

The dressing rooms at the re-developed Markets Field will be located under the current stand once it has been re-developed. These dressing rooms will be completely separate to any dressing rooms used

by other sports which may be played at the venue.

The dressing rooms under the main stand will be for the use of Limerick FC and their opponents on match days exclusively.

The Limerick FC club offices, which will be situated behind the North Stand, will be the first stage of development and they will be established in the coming weeks. The office building will be close to two six-a-side astro turf pitches; which in turn will generate income for the club.

At his presentation Pat O'Sullivan stressed that the facility will be a municipal stadium. The businessman was anxious to stress that the venue would be very much part of the local community.

The stadium would be clearly visible from the surrounding neighbourhood. Landscaping work would ensure that the facility would blend it well with the local environment.

Contact has already been made with the GAA with a view to the possibility of schools fixtures and small-sided games being played there. Gaelic Games have been played at the Market's Field in the past.

There is also the possibility that Rugby League Ireland may establish a base at the Limerick venue. The new-look venue also has the potential to host concerts on a smaller scale to those which have been staged at Thomond Park in recent years.

## Limerick unveil new signings

Stephen Kinsella

LIMERICK FC unveiled their new marquee signings in Thomond Park to a warm reception last Thursday.

Manager Pat Scully was beaming as his new signings Joe Gamble and Denis Behan sat beside him. Both players were released from English league one side Hartlepool at the end of May and have been in search of a new club ever since.

The Super Blues hierarchy offered lucrative deals to beat off the competition of many Premier League sides and Scully is confident that these two signings can help push the club on to new heights.

"These new signings will really help influence the whole team on and off the pitch. We have got great experience in these two lads. We want to get promoted and it was obvious we needed a few extra players. I think that the business you do in the window, could be the decisive factor whether you go up or not, so we had to act fast and we are delighted to have the two lads here," said Scully.

Scully dismissed any notions that there may be any unrest in the camp following these signings.

"We have a great spirit and honesty at the club. You have to remember where these lads are coming from, they are coming back from England. I think it is unprofessional to talk about their deals, that is between the players and the club. These are two big signings for us, no one will dispute that."

Behan has signed a one and a half year deal, while Gamble has put pen to paper on a two and a half year deal.

Behan especially was delighted saying he had always wanted at some stage join his "hometown club". Behan is originally from Abbeyfeale and said he was delighted to be back home again and excited by the prospect of regular football.

"It is like being a little kid at training again last night, I was delighted just to be back out there again. It is a great move for me and my family are absolutely delighted," said Behan.

Denis Behan, 27, is a former Ireland U-21 International and signs from Hartlepool United, having previously played for Cork City.

Gamble, 29, also joins from Hartlepool United - he was capped twice at senior level by the Republic of Ireland in 2007.

Limerick FC also announced that young players, Tinotenda Nzvaura (Pike Rovers), Stephen Walsh (Corbally United) and Andrew Cowpar (Regional United) join the Club for the remainder of the 2011 season.

