

Mull Car Club - Dunoon Presents Argyll Rally 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

It is natural to feel that the rally threatens various aspects of rural life, and we hope that this document brings across our sense of responsibility to the local area.

Of course, we want to provide an exciting event for participants and onlookers, but not at the expense of safety nor good relations with the community. The Mull Car Club and partners have held the Mull Rally on a “Closed Public Road” basis safely and successfully since 1990, and that has brought enormous benefits to the Island, socially and economically.

In addition, the organising team members for the 2021 Argyll Rally have many decades of experience in organising rallies, including closed-road rallies, in Scotland, England and the Isle of Man. Safeguarding participants and onlookers and ensuring a welcome for subsequent years are top priorities for us.

How is a rally organised?

Organising a car rally is a substantial undertaking for the core team of 9 volunteers, who work year-round to deliver the weekend’s event. The overall responsible party in the Mull Car Club Ltd, who act as promoters (take financial risk), event organisers (secure required permits) and control the technical aspects. Typical activities include:

- Design route & general planning
- Community, Council & Police consultation
- Motorsport UK permit
- Council Motor Race Order application
- Direct meetings with roadside properties
- Detailed planning and documentation
- Invitation of entries
- Final Safety Planning with Emergency Services

In the lead up to Rally Week the extended organising team of 30 volunteers undertakes the following:

- Detailed documentation
- Finalise Insurance
- Recruitment of Marshals
- Planning & commitment to suppliers / venues
- Mobilise equipment

Then during the rally week, the event delivery team of 100+ volunteers make the event happen on the ground:

- Final Briefing Meetings
- Stage & Safety Equipment Set Up
- Radio Communications Set Up
- Marshalling – running the rally
- Publish Results

After the rally, the post-event activities include:

- Collection of equipment
- Tidy up litter etc
- Survey route for property damage
- Seek feedback from competitors and community
- Pay the bills

What are the relevant management documents?

- Supplementary Regulations
- Operation Manual
- Safety Plan
- Incident Management Procedure
- Stage Safety Manual
- Stage Set Up Instructions
- Marshal Instructions
- Competitor Final Instructions
- Competitor Road Book
- Communications Manual
- Results Procedure
- Entry List
- Spectator Guide

What is the governing legal structure?

Enabling Legislation:

- The Motor Sport on Public Roads (Scotland) Regulations 2019 - Allows various parts of the Road Traffic Act to be suspended

Sporting Regulations

- The General Regulations of Motorsport UK (incorporating the provisions of the International Sporting Code of the FIA) – technical and organisational aspects.
- Event-specific Supplementary Regulations

Permissions

- Permit issued by Motorsport UK (includes £100m liability insurance)
- Motor Race Order issued by Argyll & Bute Council
- Police Authorisation Letter
- Route Liaison Officer Authorisation Letter
- Supplemental details – e.g. Parade Licence, spectator area etc

Why Closed Road Rallying?

Closed Public Road rallies are popular in many areas of the UK: in Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man for many years, the Isle of Mull and Berwickshire since the 1990s and more recently on the wider mainland.

Leveraging this popularity into providing local economic benefits was recognised by the central and devolved governments and legislation was introduced to make such rallies easier to organise.

Since the passing of new legislation in 2017, new events have become established in Essex, Herefordshire, Ceredigion, Lancashire, Hertfordshire, Coventry, Cornwall and Dumfries & Galloway and more are in the pipeline. In each case, good communications between the organisers and the community has helped each party understand the other's viewpoint and reach agreements. Without exception, the post-event feedback has been positive, and the events have developed in subsequent years.

How does the community benefit?

The primary benefit to the local area is the increase of visitor footfall and direct spend in the hospitality sector. Initially this affects the week leading up to the rally and the rally weekend. As the event becomes more established over time, there is a strong potential for visitors to return to Cowal outside the rally week, as a result of initially attending the rally.

On Mull, we have determined that the annual economic benefit is around £1.7million. There are other indirect benefits, such as business and personal relationship building between the community and the rally visitors.

Will the drivers practice?

No, but the crews are permitted to undertake low-speed reconnaissance in the period leading up to the rally. The crews need to register, so they can be identified, and the organisers perform spot checks to ensure compliance. Any crews transgressing the rules will be excluded. Our experience is that crews will visit the local cafes and restaurants during the recce period which enhances the local benefit.

What does "Closing the Road" mean?

"Closed Public Roads" in the motor sport context is quite detailed, so here is a more comprehensive explanation.

During the road closure period, the road and the verges are legally closed and any person who is present on the road or permits the presence of a vehicle, animal or obstruction on the road or verge is committing an offence.

Practically, the combined team of Police Scotland, Argyll & Bute Council and the Rally organisers implement a series of measures to ensure that the closure is widely known by residents and road users in good time, enacted within the correct timeframe, and enforced. We will undertake consultation with each service provider and business using the route – e.g. home carers, transport providers, haulage firms, tour firms, accommodation, eateries etc. This will ensure that their duties can be carried out, and the schedules potentially adjusted to suit.

In addition, a comprehensive assessment of safety for competitors, residents and onlookers is undertaken, yard-by-yard, for all the competitive sections. This would involve direct discussions with each roadside property covering safe viewing points, exclusion areas, physical barriers, emergency service provisions, livestock fencing, shepherding etc. The safety plans are rigorously checked by the governing body (Motorsport UK), the Police, other Emergency Services and A&B Council via the Safety Advisory Group.

The implementation of the safety measures is checked first-hand (and adjusted if necessary) by the Police, the organiser's Marshals, Stage Commander and Safety Officer and the governing body's Safety Delegate immediately prior to the competition starting. This is achieved by a convoy of course cars, each with a defined duty. At least one of those course cars is a Police vehicle. The course cars are in

communication with Rally Control HQ. At Rally Control HQ are the Clerk of the Course, the Motorsport UK Steward, the Police Commanding Officer, a representative from the council and a Chief Medical Officer, who is in contact with the local Hospital and Emergency Services. All of these parties need to be satisfied that the Special Stage is ready to start from a safety perspective, before the go-ahead is given.

The rally provides an ambulance and doctor at the start each stage, who are primarily there to react quickly to rally incidents, but can be deployed to assist non-rally related incidents on the route, for example if a resident fell ill.

What about the roads? The roads are mainly single track and on some of your proposed routes the roads are in very poor condition with pot holes, loose gravel and very poor lines of sight.

Perhaps surprisingly, narrow and bumpy roads are more suitable for rallying than smooth fast roads. The challenging nature brings the speed down, which helps with safety. Smooth fast roads, such as A-roads, lead to potentially high-consequence accidents.

In addition, the road use and closure is undertaken in full collaboration with the roads authority, who may decide that remediation works are required before or after the event. The roads authority is responsible for undertaking that works, which may be beneficial to the residents long term.

What about livestock? The route goes through and past several farms and at that time of year there are a lot of young farm animals, many of which wander onto the roads.

As mentioned above, the organisers work in collaboration with roadside properties, including farms, prior to the event. This includes such details as ensuring fencing and gates are suitable to prevent stray livestock on the road. Where necessary, a specific shepherd is employed to ensure hill sheep do not pose a hazard. This method has been successfully employed on the Mull Rally for many years.

What about wildlife? There are a lot of wildlife, especially deer, which wander across the roads. This is no longer confined to the winter months or dawn and dusk.

Our experience with the Mull Rally, which takes place during deer rutting season, is that the passage of the course car convoy alerts the animals to the road being busier than normal and they head higher into the hills. There are approx. 6000 deer on Mull. The Argyll Rally is proposed to take place entirely in daylight, we've never had a deer issue on Mull in daylight. Very occasionally we see a deer in the night-time sections, but we don't plan any night-time sections on the Argyll Rally.

Noise and proximity to houses - at many points the route passes close to people's properties and the noise levels and inherent dangers from fast moving vehicles passing these properties gives cause for concern. There are several young children who could potentially put themselves at risk.

Regarding the dangers of fast-moving vehicles, the safety provisions described above are fundamentally implemented to mitigate this risk. There's no getting away from the fact that the competing cars are noisier than normal road cars. Some folk will find this part of the attraction and some will find this annoying. The cars are regulated to 100db noise level. While the noise

level can be irritating and inconvenient, we have never seen any permanent hearing damage to onlookers nor property damage from noise.

What about access for and to residents? E.G. Home Care Visits, Hospital appointments, Service Buses etc.

As mentioned above, we work in collaboration with the essential services to ensure their duties can be carried out, sometimes with adjustments by both parties. The rally timetable of Friday evening and Saturday daytime should minimise the likelihood of issues. Where the rally visits a road twice, there should be a planned period of ½ hour for residents' access/egress, between each run. Saying that, every resident on route and the essential services will have contact details of the Rally Control HQ and can request access at short notice for emergencies. This will be enacted in full collaboration with the police and the rally management team. For those without phones, there will be marshals positioned along the route who are in radio contact with HQ, via the stage commander.

What about cyclists? The routes are very popular with cyclists who may be in danger.

As mentioned above, the road will be legally closed and that closure also includes cyclists. The closure will be publicised in advance, to minimise the number of cyclists arriving uninformed of the closure.

What about The Cowal Way? This covers a significant part of the route.

As mentioned above, the road will be legally closed and that closure also includes walkers. The closure will be publicised in advance, to minimise the number of walkers arriving uninformed of the closure. The intention would be to re-direct The Cowal Way temporarily along an alternative, safe route, in collaboration with the Police, Council and C&GDT.

What about Business Interruption?

Regarding business interruption - we have not reached the point where we planned to engage each of them directly, our feeling is that it is manageable. We will of course approach each one soon. Considering the timings (Friday evening and Saturday daytime) we think we are principally concerned with hospitality businesses. We've addressed some below. We have found on Mull that we can work with farms, fish farms, haulage, forestry, sewage works etc to arrange our joint schedules to suit.

- Glendaurel Caravan Park - access from the A886 is not impinged, it is indeed a good potential spectator point where they could gain business from catering.
- Oystercatcher Inn, Otter Ferry - the route proposals will cut off the Inn for short periods, our intention would be to set up a safe spectator area there and assist them with advertising the hours of operation and spectator access times. Our experience on other events is that pubs and restaurants welcome the additional business provided by the rally spectators.
- Largiemore Holiday Estate and other self-catering, and indeed residents - the route proposals will cut off the property for short periods, we will assist each in setting up safe viewing points and spectator access times. Our experience on other events is that self-catering establishments welcome the additional business provided by the rally competitors and spectators.
- Inver Restaurant and Castle Lachlan - the current route proposals will cut both off for short periods. We will of course discuss directly with each, but it could be that we alter the Loch Fyne stage by bringing the finish line further south.