



## **First major rally event of 2024!**

The 2024 Corrib Oil Galway International Rally takes place over the bank holiday weekend, 3rd and 4th February next, and it is eagerly awaited by motorsport enthusiasts. A capacity entry is anticipated for the first major rally of the year and the event is the opening round of the 2024 Samdec Irish Tarmac Rally Championship and the second round of the Sherwood Engines Irish Historic Rally Championship. The Galway International Rally has retained its full weekend format and is expected to generate over 2,500 bed nights for the city and county which is estimated to generate more than €3m of revenue for the local economy.

Clerk of the Course, Gary Leonard, said "Event planning is at an advanced stage. In a change from previous years, there will be eight closed road stages on day one, with a further six stages on day two, giving the maximum permitted 240 kilometers of competition to competitors." In a new initiative for 2024, Galway Motor Club will highlight the increased involvement of Women in Motorsport, both as competitors and organisers. Galway rally driver, Aoife Raftery has had great success competing in Ireland, UK and Europe, as part of the Motorsport Ireland Academy, and she will be the rally's Women in Motorsport Ambassador for 2024."

The rally will get under way with scrutineering of cars at Galway Airport from 1.00pm on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, followed by a Ceremonial Start in Eyre Square later that day at 8.00pm. Both will be ideal opportunities to see the rally cars and drivers prior to the start of the competition. The headquarters for the event is the Connacht Hotel, Dublin Road, Galway. The rally Service Park will be at Galway Airport on both days of the event. Admission to all events will be free over the weekend. Official Rally Programmes will be available in the week before the event.

Merion Evans from Wales won the 2023 Corrib Oil Galway International Rally, co-driven by Jonathan Jackson, driving a Volkswagen Polo GTI R5. The 2023 event was also the first counting round of the 2023 tarmac championship to provide a dedicated refuel zone and controlled fuel for championship competitors. This was recognized by Motorsport Ireland who awarded the "Presidents Award for Sustainability and Innovation" to the championship organisers at a ceremony in Dublin recently.

For 2024 Galway Motor Club have partnered with Rallying for Down Syndrome Awareness. David Mannion of R4DS said "Rallying for Down Syndrome are delighted to be associated with Galway Motor Club for the Corrib Oil Galway International Rally 2024. As a competitor and a member of Galway Motor Club for many years it is fantastic to get the support from the Clerk of the Course Gary Leonard and his team to raise awareness for Down Syndrome, as a dad to Ruby who has DS it is more special. It is a unique opportunity to use motorsport to show support, to send a positive message and try to change the old-fashioned stigma around Down Syndrome."

During the Galway International Rally, R4DS will be fundraising for the new centre for Down Syndrome Ireland based in Swinford, which will be ran by DS Mayo. It is a house donated to Down Syndrome Ireland which will become a centre of excellence which DSI hope to open to people and families with Down Syndrome. All money raised will go towards providing services at the centre as well as completing the works.

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