



Massive traffic management plan in place for Ballyfinnane Festival of Speed

This weekend Kerry Motor Club and Ballyfinnane Community Hall Association will celebrate the 120th anniversary of the Ballyfinnane Hillclimb.

On July 15, 1903, the first-ever closed-road motorsport event in Kerry was won by Charles Rolls who later founded the Rolls Royce Motor Car Company. The joint organisers have put together a motoring and motorsport festival with the mid-Kerry village set to be the hive of activity for two days.

The action starts on Saturday when the Kingdom Veteran, Vintage and Classic Car Club and the Irish Veteran Club host a road run of the period (1900 to 1920s) and modern classics from Castlemaine village to their monument at the top of the original 1903 climb.

This event, while separate from the main action on Sunday, will pass through Ballyfinnane on Saturday morning from approximately 9 am to 2 pm.

The Kerry Motor Club event kicks off at 4 pm on Saturday with the safety inspections of the 50 or so racing and rally cars participating in the speed trial getting underway at Kerry Agricultural Services in the heart of the village. Drivers and officials sign on will also start at the same time in the Ballyfinnane Community Hall – volunteers from the association will be selling soft drinks and snacks at the hall throughout the weekend.

Later that evening a parade of competing cars, led by a lone piper and under Garda escort, will leave the community hall and proceed to a ceremonial start at the Shanty Bar.

This event, organised by locals, will get underway around 9 pm ahead of an evening of entertainment at the Shanty.

Some of the fastest cars ever seen in Kerry, including a Formula 3 racing car, several single-seater racing cars and a host of rally cars have signed up for the event. “The support of the local people has been unwavering and without them, this event could not happen,” said clerk of the course Sean Moriarty. “We are looking forward to celebrating a unique weekend of motorsport and motoring culture.”

Classic car and motorcycle show

The Killarney Valley Vintage and Classic Club is hosting a static car show on Sunday.

Over 200 cars are expected to go on show on the Farmer’s Bridge side of the village and this show will open to the public at around 10 am on Sunday.

There will also be a static display of road racing motorcycles in the heart of the village.

Road racer Anthony O’Carroll is racing at the Southern 100 road race in the Isle of Man this week.

Already a winner on two-wheels at hill climb racing, he will drive his father Neilus's Ford Escort G3 at the event after making the overnight trip from the Isle of Man. The two Kawasaki bikes he will use in the Isle of Man will go on display just opposite the gable of the Shanty Bar on Sunday.

Access

Access to the event is by buying an official programme. Programmes have gone on sale locally since last weekend and holders of pre-purchased programmes will be granted access to the four different car parks and access points (see map). Alternatively, programmes can be bought from the car park attendants at each of the four gates.

Traffic Management

On Sunday, roads close at 8 am and an extensive traffic management plan will be in place for the day. There are four access points:

Car Park A

Traffic approaching from the easter side of Ballyfinnane should leave the N22 Tralee to Killarney Road at the Currans flyover exit.

Car parks will be signposted from this point onwards but the car park has been moved from the original one published in the programme and will now be located much closer to Ballyfinnane village. This eliminates the need for a shuttle bus at this point.

No parking is allowed on the road approaching this car park, as this is the dedicated ambulance evacuation route. This road will be monitored by motorcycle marshals and tow trucks will be in operation.

Car Park B

Fans approaching from the Firies side will find a dedicated car park beside the Maine Bridge. A free shuttle bus will run from this car park as the only available parking is some distance from the venue and the approach road will be used as the official pit stop and service park

Car Park C

From the Castlemaine side, patrons will find a car park just to the west of Kiltallagh Church. This is only accessible from the Castlemaine side and the Ballygamboom road will be limited to local and emergency access only.

There is no shuttle bus service from car park C but it is only a short walk to the paddock area and hillclimb start area near Aubee Bridge.

Car park D

Fans approaching from Tralee and Farmer's Brdige can access the event from the Quill's Cross side of Ballyfinnane.

A one-way system will operate on the Garraun road, with access to the event just north of Ballyfinnane.

The car park here is shared with the classic car show and there is also a dedicated disabled parking zone available to Blue Badge holders in the old creamery yard.

Media should also access the venue from this point.

All Ireland football semi-final

Organisers are aware that the All Ireland football semi-final is taking place between Kerry and Derry the same day and while the road is closed from 8 am until 6 pm organisers will endeavour to have the event completed before match time.

“We cannot account for unseen delays,” added Mr Moriarty, “But we know our large team of volunteers will want to watch the game and we will do our utmost to complete the event on time. It is dependent on weather and other factors.”

Big Screen TV

The Shanty Bar has secured a big screen TV for the big match and prizegiving for the speed hillclimb will take place at the same venue a short time after the game.