



Affiliated to Cycling Ireland

**CANCELLATION NOTICE**

**FOR**

**ANNUAL HARRY REYNOLDS, BEN MCKENNA AND JIM "JAZZER" WHERITY**

**MEMORIAL RACES**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**Balbriggan Cycling Club (BCC), has been running cycling road race events safely and successfully, without incident over many years. Unnecessary restrictions were imposed on the running of the Club's Annual Memorial Races in 2014 which it dealt with and overcame at the time. In the meantime there have been ongoing discussions with Cycling Ireland, the governing body of cycling in Ireland, and the various statutory bodies including Fingal Co. Co. which has failed to resolve the matter. The preparatory work, the financial outlay involved and the management structures have been in place for some time for this year's events. However, because of the continuing difficulties with the statutory bodies, BCC regrets that, at this late stage, it is necessary to cancel this year's cycling road races.**

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## **Background information:**

The Club has been informed by the Balbriggan Swords Operations Department of Fingal County Council (FCC), the Road Authority under Section 74, Roads Act, 1993, that it has no objection to the holding of the races subject to, among other requirements that “A Temporary Road Closure Order is in place with local access maintained for the full duration of the races and in this regard an application under Section 75 of The Roads Act 1993 is required”. BCC has had a number of meetings and correspondence with FCC following its submission, in January, of all the relevant documentation involved in organising and running of these events and considers this requirement, which refers to Section 74 of the Act and which has yet to become operable, unnecessarily restrictive. FCC has eventually conceded after eight weeks interaction that it does not have this role. The race documentation was also sent to An Garda Síochána, Balbriggan contemporaneously and has yet to be acknowledged. A further communication with An Garda Síochána has now elicited the response that a policing presence would only be provided if a Temporary Road Closure Order was in place. BCC cannot believe that An Garda Síochána would support unnecessary restrictions in the running of a race in memory of a former colleague and not facilitate the continuation of traditional annual community based events on relatively quiet roads in north Fingal as heretofore.

The Ben McKenna Memorial Races have been run by Balbriggan Cycling Club, initially in conjunction with the Garda Cycling Club (GCC), for the past twenty two years. The GCC

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resumed its involvement again this year. The Race Headquarters for the inaugural event was Balbriggan Garda Station. The Harry Reynolds Memorial Race has been run since 1941. The Jim Wherity Memorial Race has been run since 2005. These Memorial Races have been organised and run successfully, with safety as the primary objective and without incident over these years.

BCC questions and fails to understand the apparent absence of integration and collaboration between statutory bodies in practice as the introduction of these restrictions is in direct conflict with the Department of Sport's goal viz. "To increase participation and interest in sport, to improve standards of performance and to develop sports facilities at national, regional and local level, thereby contributing to healthier lifestyles and an improved overall quality of life, through a Departmental policy and resource framework in partnership with its Agencies, other Government Departments and the National Governing Bodies of Sport".

Ben McKenna was a Garda Sergeant with the Traffic Corp based in Dublin Castle and up to the time of his untimely death in 1992 went over and beyond the call of duty to facilitate the safe running of cycle road races throughout Ireland. He is one of only two cyclists inducted into the Garda Sports Hall of Fame. A former winner of the Rás he also made a major contribution to the sport of cycling both at national and international level as an administrator and race commissaire. His family has strong connections with Balbriggan.



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**Harry Reynolds, Ireland's first World Cycling Track Champion was a native of Balbriggan and a world renowned sportsman and tenor. It took one hundred and seventeen years for his achievement to be emulated, by another north Fingal resident, Martyn Irvine, of Walshestown , Lusk. FCC has named Balbriggan's inner relief road after Harry Reynolds.**

**Jim Wherity was a famous Balbriggan stone mason, builder and community stalwart. A latecomer to cycling sport, Jim, affectionately known as "Jazzer" embraced it enthusiastically and used it to raise considerable funds for charity and in particular Cystic Fibrosis.**

**BCC has run its races as part of the many community events that take place in rural North Fingal annually. Safety is its prime concern along with minimum disruption to other road users and understanding that community is about sharing and that roads are not exclusively for the use of mechanised forms of transport. The Club and its race organisers act in a voluntary capacity to provide recreational and competitive opportunities for athletes to achieve their full potential. In addition, their events enable the health and social objectives of the Departments of Health, Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS) be realised. The events also greatly contribute to local business and generate community interest.**

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2015.**

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